

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Unique Java app enables low-cost smartphone-style Facebook, email and online chat on mid-range handsets in Africa**

ForgetMeNot Africa launches new Chatbox app for mobile device manufacturers including Sony Ericsson

A first-of-its-kind Java application will enable a smartphone-style internet messaging experience on mid-range mobile handsets in Africa, giving users visually attractive access to Internet-free Facebook, email and online chat services.

Called “Chatbox”, the app uses ForgetMeNot Africa’s award-winning Message Optimiser technology which converts internet messages into SMS format and vice-versa. Message Optimiser has already been deployed by six operators in five countries across east, west, southern and central Africa, providing more than 47.5 million people with access to internet messaging services on any basic mobile phone. Chatbox is an enhanced messaging service, providing a richer, more user-friendly Facebook, email and online chat experience for java enabled handset owners.

ForgetMeNot Africa is working with mobile handset manufacturers, including Sony Ericsson, to launch the app to operators and encourage subscribers in non-smartphone markets to adopt mobile data services. Users will be able to browse their Facebook updates, access Facebook Chat, update their profiles, ‘like’ their friends’ statuses and comment on threads, as well as send and receive emails and messages on chat services like MSN, Yahoo! and GTalk – all via the Chatbox app.

Chatbox fills the gap between basic SMS messaging and smartphone messaging. The service has a simple to use interface that introduces smartphone-style messaging to people with little knowledge or understanding of mobile internet services, people who can’t afford high-end handsets and people who are worried about connecting to the Internet via a mobile phone.

Nearly half of the entire African population (45.2 per cent) now have a mobile phone subscription yet only 2.5 per cent of people across the continent have access to mobile broadband, according to the latest ITU figures for 2010. Chatbox enables people to access internet messaging via SMS in even the most remote parts of Africa, bypassing the need for mobile connectivity or fixed telephone line internet access.

Jeremy George, Chief Operating Officer at ForgetMeNot Africa, said: “ForgetMeNot Africa’s award-winning technology enables handset manufacturers such as Sony Ericsson and mobile operators to work in partnership to bridge the digital divide in Africa and create a new messaging generation of young Africans. The demand for more access to services like Facebook, email and online chat services like MSN, Yahoo! and GTalk is incredible across Africa. Now handsets that support Java can have frequent access to the online social networking revolution.

“Chatbox is a cost-effective, fun and lifestyle improving innovation that looks and feels like a smartphone messaging experience but with the simplicity and cost-effective benefits of SMS. People who currently only have access to the Internet at work, at college or in internet cafés can now get online and stay in touch with their friends and family all over the world via Facebook, email and online chat whenever and wherever they like, all from the palm of their hand.”

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**Notes to Editors:**

Figures were sourced from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

For further editorial information, images or to arrange interviews please contact [fmn@pwkpr.com](mailto:fmn@pwkpr.com) or call +44 20 7609 1900

**About ForgetMeNot Africa**

ForgetMeNot Africa Ltd. is a "software as a service" (SaaS) company specialising in unified messaging that supports seamless interoperability between SMS, email and Instant Messaging clients for telecommunications operators. The core product is Message Optimiser which allows telecom operators to immediately provide cost-effective comprehensive unified messaging services to all of their customers without any upgrades to the device or any need for downloading new applications onto the device. This opens up a range of previously inaccessible services to many of their customers including 2-way email and 2-way instant messaging communication capability. For more information call +44 203 176 0763 or visit [www.fmnafrica.com](http://www.fmnafrica.com)