

the premier ICT conference on the continent



Nau, a robot created and operated by a team from the Durban University of Technology, was one of the main attractions at Govtech 2023. Nau is able to perform many actions, including the Orient style of martial arts known as Tai Chi.

GOVTECH CONFERENCE PAVES THE WAY FOR THE ADOPTION OF TECHNOLOGIES THAT CAN SHAPE SOUTH AFRICA'S DIGITAL FUTURE

The three-day State Information Technology Agency's (SITA) Government Technology (GovTech), saw thought leaders from government, technology industry, academia, and think tanks, to network, confer and collaborate in the development of information communication technology (ICT) sector's capabilities to embrace the digital economy, digital transformation and inclusive growth.



INNOVATE. COLLABORATE. ENGAGE

Themed “**Platform Economy for Digital Transformation and Inclusive Growth**” GovTech 2023 examined how digitisation and the platform economy have reshaped the nature of life, work and doing business and discussed how to integrate cross domain capabilities and pursue digital superiority, and examined how government organisations and industries are organising themselves for these new paradigms.

Here are some anecdotes from speeches, panel and roundtable discussions from the conference which began on Tuesday September 12th and ended on Thursday, September 14th at the Durban International Convention Centre.



From left to right, SABC presenter Leanne Manas, SITA Managing Director Dr Bongani Mabaso, Gugu Sema MICTSETA AIR Manager, Trevor Rammitlwa, CEO of NEMISA and Tshepo Mokoena, Chairman of in2IT Technology discussed some of the challenges that come with a shift into a digital economy and digital future on the last day of GovTech 2023

Mondli Gungubele, Minister of the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies:

“A significant challenge lies in the clash between old, traditional systems and new, innovative approaches. The clash between the old and the new in meeting the new demands is a complex issue, with both positive and negative consequences...The adoption of digital technology can negatively affect service delivery due to the inherent clash between traditional and modern systems.

“Policy and regulation in the digital economy pose challenges. There is a need for a streamlined legislative process.”

Mdu Mkhonza (Khanya Africa): The governmental bodies must stablish and support programmes that empower small-scale organizations, underscoring the inclusive nature of this digital transformation.



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Christopher Geerdts (Managing Director, BMIT): “Although significant progress has been achieved in expanding digital connectivity, the formidable obstacle of the “last mile” still persists. To confront this challenge, various strategies are under consideration. These include the widespread deployment of fibre networks in numerous towns, as well as initiatives aimed at testing low-cost connectivity solutions, with affordability as low as R5, to ensure that even individuals with limited resources can access the benefits of digital connectivity.”

Gareth Whitaker (Director, SoftwareAG): The advent of digitalisation has significantly simplified the sharing of data while effectively mitigating security concerns. The synergy of these technologies holds immense promise for the modern digital landscape.

Althon Beukes (CEO, Openserve): “There is a need for models that not only align with the existing economic framework but also add substantial value to it. ”

Mpho Primus, Deputy Director, Institute for Intelligent Systems, University of Johannesburg: “There is a need for a constitutional convention to establish guiding principles and values in the realm of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Additionally, understanding the specific needs of the country and ensuring affordability of AI services are paramount.”

Jonathan Lamb, Head of Platform Businesses, Standard Bank: “Larger organizations often operate in silos and have multiple solutions. I encourage these organisations to adopt a more unified digital presence when engaging with clients. This transformation aligns with the digital economy philosophy; creating new business opportunities.”

Learners from the Douglas Combined School in the Northern Cape stand alongside their robotic prototype of an air-purification device, which traps carbon dioxide and turns it into usable substances.





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Bibi Goba, Oracle Director: “The emerging platform economy is empowering Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises to innovate. Oracle provides cloud infrastructure and AI capabilities for performance simulations, enabling the optimization of digital solutions before deployment.

Facilitating digital transformation will help create a more efficient, user-centric, and technologically empowered society. Oracle is assisting organizations in adapting to the dynamic digital landscape and embracing a more interconnected future.

Philly Mapulane, Deputy Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies: “The following are solutions companies need to do to mainstream cybersecurity into their digital business processes:

- **Awareness and Training:** Educate employees about the importance of cybersecurity, often, human error can be the weakest link;
- **Investment:** View cybersecurity not as a cost, but an investment. This means not only investing in tools and technologies but also in skilled personnel;
- **Regular Audits and Assessments:** Regularly assess and audit your digital infrastructure to uncover and address vulnerabilities.
- **Collaboration:** Cybersecurity is a collective effort. Collaborate with experts, other businesses, and even competitors to share knowledge and best practices and
- **Stay Updated:** The digital landscape is evolving, and so are cyber threats. Staying updated on the latest threats and mitigation techniques is crucial.”

Over the years, GovTech has evolved to become a premiere ICT conference. Some of the 2500 delegates believe GovTech 2023 has paved the way for the adoption of technologies that can both - shape South Africa’s digital future - and drive a new way of work and service delivery improvement.

Victor Mashaba from the Tshwane University of Technology stands next to a working prototype of a robot that was on exhibit at the 2023 Govtech conference.

