The Lwazi Community Communication Service: Design and Piloting of a Voice-based Information Service

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ABSTRACT
We present the design, development and pilot process of the Lwazi Community Communication Service (LCCS), a multilingual automated telephone-based information service. The service acts as a communication and dissemination tool that enables managers at local community centres to broadcast information (e.g. health, employment, social grants) to community workers and the communities they serve. The LCCS allows the recipients to obtain up-to-date, relevant information in a timely and efficient manner, overcoming the obstacles of transportation, time and costs incurred in trying to physically obtain information from the community centres. We discuss our experiences and fieldwork in piloting the LCCS at six locations nationally in the eleven official South African languages. We analyze the usage pattern from the pilot call logs and thereafter discuss the implications of these findings for future projects that design similar automated services for serving rural communities in developing world regions.