

.POST plays an increasingly important role in Eastern and Southern African Posts

November event highlights the potential of .POST in the digital transformation of the global postal sector

.POST is a secure and trusted Internet space to serve the needs of the global postal community in the digital economy.

Serving as the online identity for the postal sector, .POST is the foundation of a network of trust, providing postal operators with the ability to deliver secure Internet services.

The .POST platform was showcased on 25 and 26 November 2021 at the UPU workshop on the digital transformation and diversification of postal services in Eastern and Southern Africa, supported by the African Union Commission. At that virtual event, several postal operators from Eastern and Southern Africa highlighted the benefits and potential of .POST.

It was very clear that the postal sector in Eastern and Southern Africa has advanced by leaps and bounds in recent years, with several Posts noting the catalyzing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their digital transformation plans.

Daraus Muhwezi from **Posta Uganda** stated that while they have not yet implemented the .POST platform, their intention is to use it to facilitate their activities related to e-commerce and online shopping.

Angel Banda of **Malawi Posts Corporation** (MPC) highlighted that the operator has benefited a great deal from the use of .POST since joining the domain in 2016, noting that they “cannot overemphasize the importance of the .POST domain”.

Further, MPC pointed out that .POST is secure and that they have never had any security incidents or unplanned downtime. According to the operator, “since 2016, it has been a reliable mail solution and we hope to use it even more, to introduce more users”.

The philately web shop, IPS.post, IFS.post and CDS.post were all identified as being both secure and very affordable.

MPC also underscored the benefits of .POST in terms of capacity building, especially cybersecurity training.

Fifi Kulwa, Electronic Business Manager at Tanzania Posts Corporation (TPC), highlighted the use of stamps.tz.post and postashoptz.post.

TPC started selling stamps online in 2016 on stamps.tz.post. Customers are able to buy stamps, and other collectors can link to the site to sell their philatelic products. On the impressively multilingual e-commerce platform postashoptz.post, TPC supports over 500 small and medium-sized enterprises, helping them to securely do business with customers throughout Tanzania, and also globally with robust tools such as Global Track and Trace.

Mr Kulwa explained, “all our e-commerce systems are hosted using .POST because it is more secure”.

Also weighing in on the benefits of .POST was Prince Ildephonse of Rwanda’s National Post Office (Iposita). He indicated that Rwanda has been actively and successfully using IPS.post (for track and trace) and CDS.post (for data exchange) for quite some time.

Massimiliano Aschi, Chair of the .POST Group, delivered an impassioned plea to operators, urging them to take cybersecurity seriously and put the requisite resources behind implementing a robust and resilient cybersecurity infrastructure that is at once proactive and preventative.

Mr Aschi observed that cybersecurity services can be very expensive and difficult to deliver for postal operators attempting to do it entirely on their own. That is why .POST offers managed services that could be very valuable to postal operators as they seek to prevent cyberattacks and protect their businesses. The .POST portfolio of cybersecurity tools and solutions can perform regular and automated domain security compliance checks, including:

- Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC);
- Vulnerability assessment of web server hosting environments;
- Presence of a Sender Policy Framework (SPF) record for example.post;
- Presence of a Domain Keys Identified Mail (DKIM) record for example.post;
- Presence of a Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting and Conformance (DMARC) record for example.post.

Your .POST things to do checklist

- ✓ Implement the UPU cybersecurity policies
- ✓ Join the UPU .POST Group
- ✓ Learn from the online training courses/bootcamps
- ✓ Use the self-service cybersecurity policy monitor
- ✓ Register your .POST domain names

In addition to the testimonials provided by postal service providers, the event also saw presentations by .POST Group associate members STAMPSSDAQ and Ship2MyID.

Andrii Shapovalov, founder of STAMPSSDAQ, an Estonian start-up focused on building a blockchain-driven platform and marketplace for crypto philately and crypto art, stated that its main objective is to digitize the existing 12 billion USD traditional stamps market with 180 years of philatelic heritage. In January 2021, STAMPSSDAQ signed its first exclusive licence agreement with Côte d'Ivoire's La Poste and is currently in discussions with over 20 postal operators in a bid to accelerate their digital transformation agendas.

Santosh Gopal, founder of the digital addressing platform Ship2MyID, demonstrated how postal operators can develop new revenue streams by unlocking the sector's ability to become a national data hub. The presentation focused on how the company's patented technology delivers lifetime digital addresses, linking these addresses to identities to facilitate multiple solutions and revenue streams, including delivery to places without addresses and optimized digital marketing, all the while ensuring high levels of data security, data privacy and fraud protection.

In the final analysis, the event once again emphasized the true and increasing potential of .POST as a trusted enabler of a robust cybersecurity shield for postal operators, as well as a facilitator of digital transformation and digital innovation within the global postal sector.