

THE 5TH EDITION

SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT LEADERS ON X 2024

Study by



INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, where every voice carries the weight of hope, frustration, and resilience, social media has become more than just a platform for conversation – it’s a lifeline for connection, accountability, and action.

Platforms like X (formerly Twitter) have grown into critical spaces where leaders and citizens can meet, exchange ideas, and grapple with the pressing issues that shape our everyday lives.

For government leaders, X should represent more than just a space to share announcements; it should be an opportunity to truly engage with citizens, understand their struggles, and collaborate on solutions

But for this potential to be realised, leaders must move beyond token online interactions. They must embrace transparency, empathy,

and the courage to have difficult but necessary conversations with the people they serve.

Five years ago, Decode Communications began asking a bold question: **Do our government leaders see Twitter as a mere nice-to-have or as an essential tool for meaningful citizen engagement?**

This question has never been more urgent in a country where potholes on our roads, rising food prices, never-ending water shortages, and high crime rates dominate the national discourse.

From Diepsloot to Sandton, Mitchells Plain to Bishopscourt, rural Eastern Cape to suburban Pretoria, South Africans have transformed X into a virtual imbizo where traditional hierarchies fade, and direct

engagement with leaders has become not just possible, but expected.

Today, as our nation experiences its first governance through a coalition at national and two significant provincial governments (Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal), this question has evolved into something far more significant for every South African seeking to be heard.

Since the 2024 general election, that conversation has reached a defining moment, a year South Africans changed the trajectory of their democracy, ushering in a coalition government – the Government of National Unity.

With this historic shift, the need for genuine, ongoing dialogue between leaders and citizens has never been greater. People



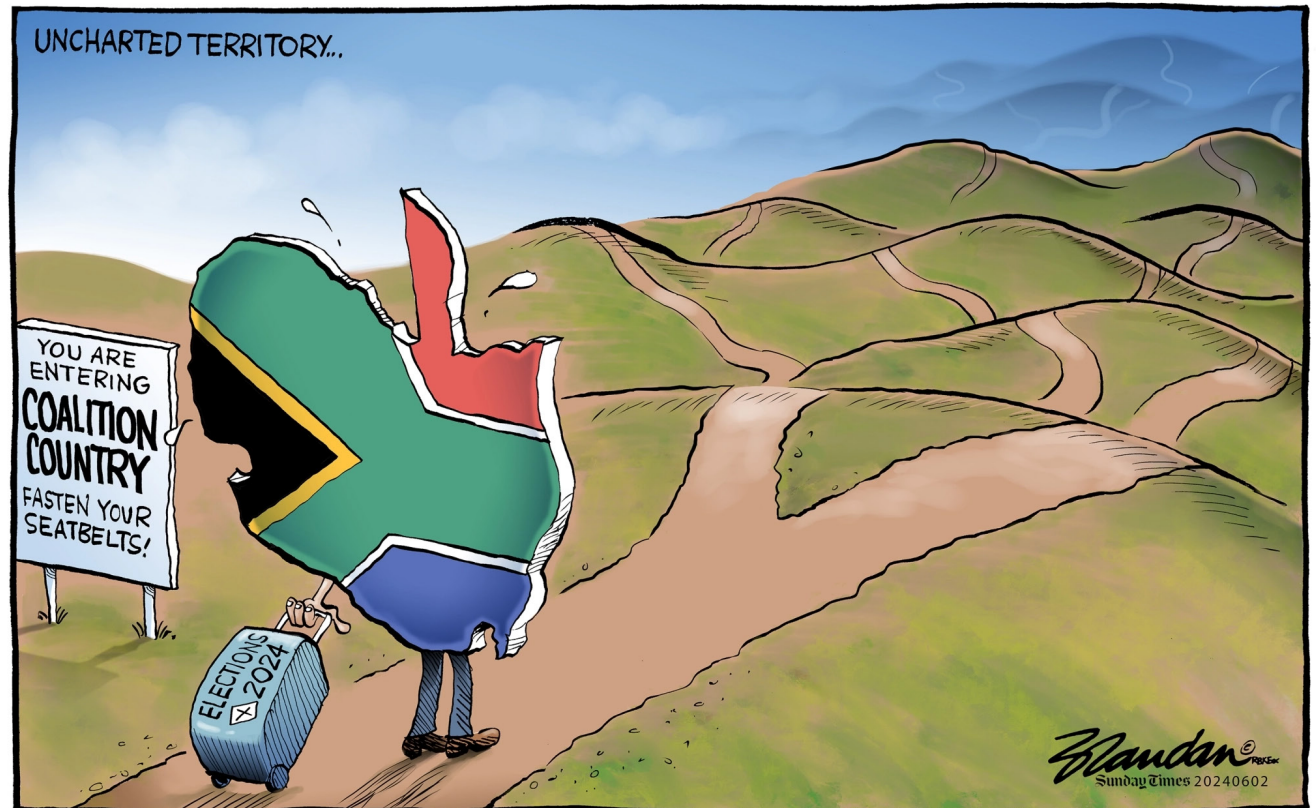


aren't just asking for solutions – they're demanding leaders who listen, engage, and show that they understand the daily realities of life in South Africa.

This fifth edition of the *South African Government Leaders on X study* is more than a milestone; it's a call to action.

It marks a pivotal moment in interrogating how government leaders understand citizens' relationships with technology and whether they use it effectively to connect with those they serve. It examines whether leaders use X to address frustrations, celebrate victories, and build trust in a country hungry for progress and unity.

As we share the findings from this year's study, we reflect on how far we've come and challenge our leaders to embrace digital platforms as a way to bridge the gap between the people and the state.



5TH ANNUAL SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT LEADERS ON X

The Annual South African Government Leaders on X is a critical benchmark for assessing how cabinet members, their spokespersons, and now deputy ministers engage with citizens through X.

By expanding its scope to include deputy ministers, this edition offers a more comprehensive reflection of how government leaders use the platform to foster transparency, build trust, and drive meaningful public discourse.

The 2024 report delves into the activity and influence of cabinet members, deputy ministers, and Ministerial Liaison Officers (MLOs), spotlighting those who set the standard for impactful and inclusive citizen engagement in the digital space.

” AUTHOR’S REFLECTIONS

In 2020, we used data on South African cabinet ministers’ X (formerly Twitter) presence to create an annual leaderboard.

Over the past 5 years, we shared some actionable insights with government leaders based on the knowledge from the data to achieve several outcomes, such as asking the right questions, sparking conversations, agitating and advocating for change, and we even created a knowledge exchange platform to public sector communicators – the annual Social Media Summit for Government.

This is not just about communication – it’s about building trust, fostering collaboration, and proving that leadership in South Africa is as committed to the people as the people are to their hope for a better tomorrow.



Lorato Tshenkeng
Founder and CEO of Decode
Communications



5 YEARS OF ADVOCACY FOR IMPROVED CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Five-year journey of the report – The evolution from 2020-2024

We made bold recommendations to influence government leaders and public sector communicators.

20

The pandemic effect – Covid-19 exploded the internet and social media

We introduced noteworthy events with the highest conversation peaks.

21

R50 billion shock – the July Unrest reported to have cost the South African economy, jobs and lives were lost – and social media was a big factor and purveyor of information.

We advocated for a standard to set for government leaders accounts.

22

The genesis of a Fiefdom – Twitter was acquired by Elon Musk and the platform has never been the same as new players surfaced, including Meta owned Threads and many others.

We improved our methodology including 4 pillars – Accountability, Trust, Relevance and Humanisation.

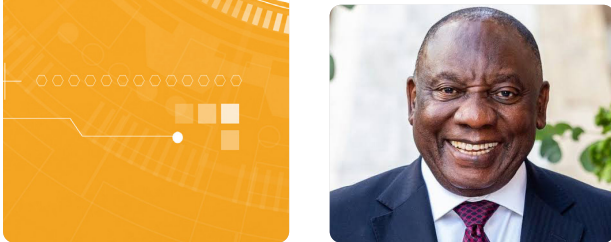
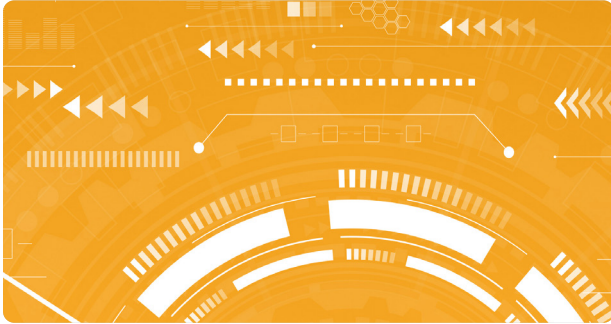
23

New game is Pay to play – In the year that Twitter rebranded to X it changed the verification badge from earned to paid putting to question the credibility of 'verified' accounts.

A first – Now the report has included deputy ministers.

24

A year of two halves – with the national general elections that gave South Africa the Government of National Unity (GNU), the politics of collusion play out in public, everyday.



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WHY X?

X stands out as a dominant platform in the South African political landscape for several reasons.

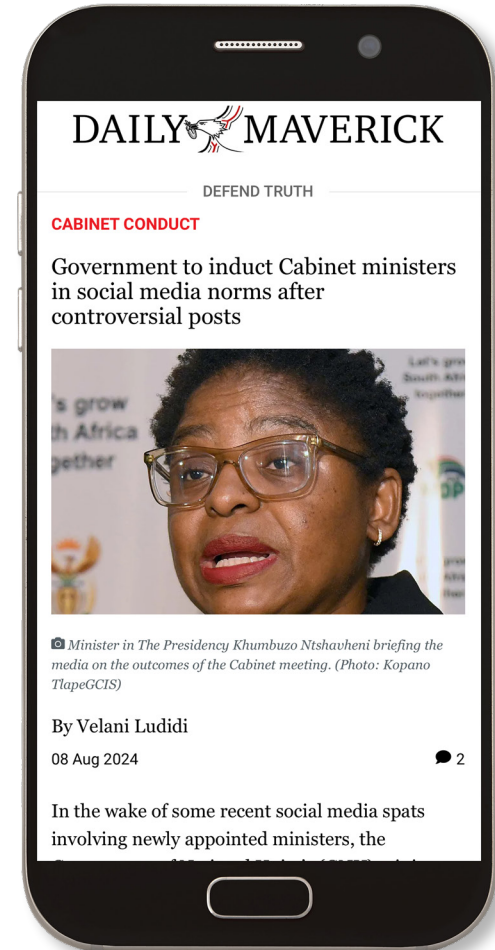
As a real-time news-sharing platform, it has long been the preferred digital tool for journalists, policymakers, and citizens alike to disseminate and consume news.

X's status as a news-friendly space makes it the perfect venue for political leaders. It allows them to directly engage with both the media and the public on issues ranging from governance to urgent national matters.

Additionally, X offers officials a chance to gauge public sentiment immediately, an essential feature during politically charged transitions like the one experienced in 2024.

Beyond its journalistic utility, X is also unique in fostering public discourse. It provides an unfiltered space for leaders to comment on breaking news, share policy announcements, and respond to public opinion.

Unlike other social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, which may prioritise visual storytelling or community building, X thrives on rapid information exchanges and public dialogue. These characteristics make X an invaluable tool for government leaders to disseminate messages and maintain a direct line of communication with citizens during key moments of change.



METHODOLOGY

The 5th edition of the South African Government Leaders on X Report marks a significant evolution in methodology, emphasising depth and quality over purely quantitative metrics. This year, the report pivots to a more holistic approach, focusing on foundational pillars that extend beyond conventional communication and social media performance indicators.

THE FOUR PILLARS

ACCOUNTABILITY

Evaluating transparency and responsiveness in leadership communication.

TRUST

Measuring the consistency and credibility that leaders establish with their audience.

HUMANISATION

Highlighting empathy and relatability in digital engagements.

RELEVANCE

Assessing the alignment of leaders' messages with societal issues and public sentiment.

METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS:

The report draws from extensive monitoring of X (formerly Twitter), examining the presence and activity—or lack thereof—of government leaders and their official spokespeople.

A detailed qualitative analysis was conducted on the top 10 most-followed accounts and an additional five accounts of strategic interest.

Data collection spanned the entire year, from 1 January to 31 December 2024.

This methodology not only provides a clearer view of leadership on digital platforms but also delves into the critical interplay between online behaviour and public perception.



IF CONTENT IS KING, CONTEXT IS GOD

SOUTH AFRICA'S SOCIAL MEDIA EVOLUTION BY NUMBERS

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Active Social Media Users	22 Million	25 Million	28 Million	25.80 Million	26 Million
 INTERNET	36.54 Million	38.19 Million	41.19 Million	43.48 Million	45.34 Million
 MOBILE CONNECTORS	103.5 Million	100.6 Million	108.6 Million	112.7 Million	118.6 Million
 YOUTUBE	N/A	24 Million	25.30 Million	25.80 Million	25.10 Million
 FACEBOOK	20 Million	23 Million	24.20 Million	22.15 Million	26 Million
 X (TWITTER)	2.28 Million	2.30 Million	2.85 Million	3.65 Million	4.10 Million
 INSTAGRAM	4 Million	5.40 Million	6.20 Million	5.65 Million	6.95 Million
 LINKEDIN	7.60 Million	8.30 Million	9.50 Million	11 Million	12 Million

Source: Global Digital Series by We Are Social



2024 - THE YEAR OF TWO HALVES

2024 marked a significant moment of transition in South Africa, where leadership changes in the government offered new challenges for digital communication strategies.

The theme, **“The Year of Two Halves,”** underscores the distinct challenges and strategies that emerged as the outgoing administration worked to secure its legacy, while the new administration aimed to build trust and establish a fresh vision for the country.

First Half of the Year: The outgoing administration focused on legacy-building, communication of its achievements, and ensuring transparency. The emphasis was on maintaining public trust and reinforcing the government’s accountability.

Second Half of the Year: The new administration, eager to establish its mandate, outlined its priorities for the future and took steps to engage with citizens. The approach revolved around addressing citizens’ concerns, communicating a new vision, and rebuilding relationships between the state and the people.

This dual dynamic provides a rich case study of the role digital platforms like X played in facilitating meaningful communication and engagement during times of political transition.

THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY (GNU) CABINET



CABINET FACTSHEET

10 KEY FACTS ABOUT THE CABINET OF SOUTH AFRICA

1

It is the most **senior** level of the executive branch of government.

2

President Cyril Ramaphosa and **Deputy President Paul Mashatile** lead it.

3

It comprises **34 members** – the president, deputy president and 30 ministers (from 28 before the GNU).

4

The executive includes **43 deputy ministers** (from 36 before the GNU).

5

Of the 11 parties forming the GNU, 9 (**ANC, DA, PA, FF+, IFP, GOOD, PAC, UDM and AI Jama-ah**) have members in the executive.

6

The provincial **Executive Councils** are led by a premier and **10 Members of the Executive Council (MEC)**.

9

The **spokespeople** are based in the offices of the cabinet members, **premiers and MECs**, and although they are not heads of communication in the respective departments – both national and provincial – they also speak on behalf of the departments.

7

The Northern Cape premier **reduced the provincial MECs to 7** (from 10).

8

The president, deputy president, premiers, and all ministers and MECs are supported by **spokespeople**, also known as **ministerial liaison officers (MLO)**, advisors and other personnel.

10

The **Chief Executive Officer** of the Government Communication and Information Systems (GCIS) is the **spokesperson of the Cabinet**.



KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS

TOP 5 MOST FOLLOWED GOVERNMENT LEADERS ON X



President Cyril Ramaphosa 2,95 Million



Deputy Minister of Defence Bantu Holomisa 682K



Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi 569K



Minerals and Petroleum Resources Gwede Mantashe 545K



Sports, Arts and Culture Minister Gayton McKenzie 390K

KEY FINDINGS

TOP 5 MOST ENGAGED GOVERNMENT LEADERS ON X



President Cyril Ramaphosa



Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi



Sports, Arts and Culture Minister Gayton McKenzie



Home Affairs Minister Dr Leon Schreiber



Energy and Electricity Minister Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa

KEY FINDINGS

TOP 5 MOST ENGAGING GOVERNMENT LEADERS ON X



Sports, Arts and Culture Minister Gayton McKenzie



Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube



Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi




























Communications and Digital Technologies Minister Solly Malatsi



Trade, Industry and Competition Deputy Minister Zuko Godlimpi

KEY FINDINGS

MOST INFLUENTIAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS

	X ACCOUNT	ACCOUNTABILITY	TRUST	HUMANISATION	RELEVANCE
	President Cyril Ramaphosa				
	Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi				
	Sports, Arts and Culture Minister Gayton McKenzie				
	Energy and Electricity Minister Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa				
	Home Affairs Minister Dr Leon Schreiber				

 Rate high
  Rate moderately
  Rate low



LEADER BOARD

TOP 10 MOST FOLLOWED ACCOUNTS - NATIONAL CABINET



CYRIL RAMAPHOSA | President

X @CyrilRamaphosa 2024 (2023) 2,95M (2,76) 6.67%



GWEDA MANTASHE | Mineral and Petroleum Resources

X @GwedeMantashe1 2024 (2023) 545K (535K) 1.78%



GAYTON MC KENZIE | Sport, Arts and Culture

X @GaytonMcK 2024 (2023) 390,510 Newcomer



JOHN STEENHUISEN | Agriculture

X @jsteenhuisen 2024 (2023) 244,359 Newcomer



PATRICIA DE LILLE | Tourism

X @PatriciaDeLille 2024 (2023) 224K (224K) -0.69%



RONALD LAMOLA | International Relations and Cooperation

X @RonaldLamola 2024 (2023) 176K (141K) 24.31%



DR KGOSIENTSHO RAMOKGOPA | Electricity and Energy

X @Kgosientsho_R 2024 (2023) 158K (148K) 7.29%



STELLA NDABENI-ABRAHAMS | Small Business Development

X @Stellarated 2024 (2023) 92,4K (84,1K) 9.78%



BLADE NZIMANDE | Science, Technology and Innovation

X @DrBladeNzimande 2024 (2023) 69,3 (67,7K) 2.33%



LEON SCHREIBER | Home Affairs

X @Leon_Schreib 2024 (2023) 53,058 Newcomer

KEY TRENDS AND FINDINGS

1. **30** of the **34** ministers are on X.
 - Only **10** of the **30** ministers on X have the grey checkmark, which indicates that their accounts represent an official government, multilateral organisation, or individual.
 - Importantly, in the age of mis and disinformation, the grey checkmark adds credibility to an account and helps with quickly resolving against fake accounts.
2. **Four** of the ministers on X have inactive accounts
 - Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Chikunga's inactive



- account is often tagged by the department account
- Transport, Barbara Creecy's inactive account is verified with a grey government badge

- Public Service and Administration, Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi's account has not tweeted since joining in October 2024



KEY TRENDS AND FINDINGS



- COGTA, Velenkosini Hlabisa was last active in 2020

Crises and controversy significantly contribute to follower growth and increased engagement rather than communicating public policies, department programmes and messages.

3. From the previous administration, Police Minister Senzo Mchunu experienced the highest triple-digit Y-O-Y growth at **228,7%**, gaining **6,989** followers. Unsurprisingly followed by:
 - Deputy President Paul Mashatile with **43.46% (10,313 followers)**; then by

- Minister in the Presidency, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni with **38.56%** (9,064 followers)

4. Tourism Minister Patricia De Lille continues to experience negative growth at **-1%**, losing **1,559** followers in 2024. Last year, she saw a **0.13%** growth, the lowest among cabinet members.
5. Since we started tracking Y-on-Y growth, President Ramaphosa's growth has declined. In 2021, it was **24%**, dropping to **20.25%** in 2022 and **9.22%** in 2023; now, in 2024, it only grew by **6.25%**.



KEY TRENDS AND FINDINGS



- Although the President did not receive the highest Y-O-Y growth in 2024 (**6.25%**), he gained **184,656** followers.
6. From the ministers that were appointed on 30 June 2024, growth tracked between 01 July and 31 December 2024, Home Affairs Minister, Dr Leon Schreiber experienced the highest growth at **200,46%**. Unsurprisingly followed by:
 - Basic Education Minister, Siviwe Gwarube at **108,11%**; then by
 - Sport, Art and Culture Minister, Gayton McKenzie at **39,99%**.
 7. McKenzie gained the most followers – **26,945** – between 8 to 15 July 2024, while Dr Schreiber gained **12,723** and Gwarube gained **7,641** in the same period.
 8. Of the 30 ministers on X, four joined after their appointment in July 2024:
 - Higher Education and Training, Dr Nobuhle Nkabane
 - Employment and Labour, Nomakhosazana Meth
 - Public Service and Administration, Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi,
 - Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Dion George.

CABINET MEMBERS' SPOKESPEOPLE

Based on the trends observed since we started tracking cabinet members' spokespeople in 2020, we have decided to stop producing a leaderboard as fewer and fewer are on X, and most of those on it hardly ever use it as a useful tool for their work.

Seemingly, the declining engagement signals a significant shift in government communication patterns that requires strategic consideration and adaptation.

Between 2020 and the end of the last administration in June 2024, former journalists and media personalities dominated the leaderboard.



TOP 10 MOST FOLLOWED ACCOUNTS - DEPUTY MINISTERS



BANTU HOLOMISA | Defence and Military Veterans

X @BantuHolomisa

2024 **682,537**



BUTI MANAMELA | Higher Education

X @ButiManamela

2024 **156,376**



SIHLE ZIKALALA | Public Works and Infrastructure

X @sziks

2024 **136,298**



NONCEBA MHLAULI | Presidency

X @NoncebaMhlauli

2024 **80,608**



MKHULULEKO HLENGWA | Transport

X @MkhulekoHlengwa

2024 **36,677**



ZUKO GODLIMPI | Trade, Industry and Competition

X @Zuko_Godlimpi

2024 **20,553**



REGINAH MHAULE | Education

X @ReginahMhaule

2024 **17,349**



MONDLI GUNGUBELE | Communications and Digital Technologies

X @MondliGungubel_

2024 **11,995**



DAVID MASONDO | Finance

X @DrDavidMasondo

2024 **8,620**



ANDREW WHITFIELD | Trade, Industry and Competition

X @andrewhitfield

2024 **8,142**

TOP 10 MOST FOLLOWED ACCOUNTS - NATIONAL DEPARTMENTS



PRESIDENCY

X @PresidencyZA 2024 (2023) 2,57M (2,46M) 4.44%



SA POLICE SERVICE

X @SAPoliceService 2024 (2023) 1,32M (1,22M) x.xx%



HEALTH

X @HealthZA 2024 (2023) 412 (408K) 1.06%



BASIC EDUCATION

X @DBE_SA 2024 (2023) 305K (302K) 1.01%



SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

X @SportArtsCultur 2024 (2023) 247K (239K) 3.26%



HOME AFFAIRS

X @HomeAffairsSA 2024 (2023) 228K (203K) 10.79%



FINANCE

X @TreasuryRSA 2024 (2023) 151K (151K) -0.36%



GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

X @GCISMedia 2024 (2023) 138 (135K) 1.83%



EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR

X @deptoflabour 2024 (2023) 133K (124K) 6.10%



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

X @DIRCO_ZA 2024 (2023) 120K (112K) 6.55%

TOP 10 MOST FOLLOWED ACCOUNTS - PROVINCIAL CABINET



PANYAZA LESUFI | Premier

X @Lesufi

2024 (2023) 569K (497K) 14.48%



DR ZAMANI SAUL | Premier

X @dr_zsaul1

2024 (2023) 53,1K (47,9K) 10.74%



DR PHOPHI RAMUTHUBA | Premier

X @PhophiRamathuba

2024 (2023) 87,9K (73,4K) 19.74%



DAVID MAYNIER | MEC

X @DavidMaynier

2024 (2023) 30,5K (30,3K) 0.37%



LEBOGANG MAILE | MEC

X @LebogangMaile1

2024 (2023) 78,5K (70,2K) 11.81%



TASNEEM MOTARA | MEC

X @TasneemMotara

2024 (2023) 18,2K (17,5K) 3.37%



ALAN WINDE | Premier

X @alanwinde

2024 (2023) 61,4K (58,1K) 5.56%



RICARDO MACKENZIE | MEC

X @ricardomackenzi

2024 (2023) 10,3K (9,615) 6.91%



FAITH MAZIBUKO | MEC

X @FaithMazibukoSA

2024 (2023) 60,4K (60,2K) 0.27%

































JACOB MAMABOLO | MEC

X @JacobMamaboloSA

2024 (2023) 9,618 (9276) 3.69%

TOP 10 MOST FOLLOWED ACCOUNTS - PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS

 <p>PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT</p> <p>X @GautengProvince  2024 (2023) 332 (309K)  7.37%</p>	 <p>SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>X @gpgSocDev  2024 (2023) 34,9K (34,6K)  19.49%</p>
 <p>HEALTH AND WELLNESS</p> <p>X @GautengHealth  2024 (2023) 115K (107K)  8.04%</p>	 <p>EDUCATION</p> <p>X @DBE_KZN  2024 (2023) 22,5K (22,1K)  2.09%</p>
 <p>PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT</p> <p>X @Kzngov  2024 (2023) 62,7K (56,7K)  10.61%</p>	 <p>TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY</p> <p>X @TransportLimCom  2024 (2023) 21,7K (20,9K)  3.98%</p>
 <p>PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT</p> <p>X @WesternCapeGov  2024 (2023) 59,8K (57,8K)  3.60%</p>	 <p>EDUCATION</p> <p>X @EducationGPI  2024 (2023) 20,9K (16,6K)  26.12%</p>
 <p>PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT</p> <p>X @OtpLimpopo  2024 (2023) 42,9K (35,7K)  20.11%</p>	 <p>HEALTH</p> <p>X @NorthWestDOH  2024 (2023) 19,9K (19,3K)  3.83%</p>



KEY TAKE OUTS

KEY TAKEOUTS

WHAT ARE WE NOT SEEING:

Optimizing X for Citizen Engagement in South Africa

Social media platforms, especially X (formerly Twitter), are crucial tools for modern governance. However, what we are not seeing in South Africa is a strategic and unified approach by government leaders to harness these platforms effectively for citizen engagement. This gap not only undermines trust but also limits the opportunity to connect meaningfully with citizens in real-time.

KEY TAKEOUTS

WHAT'S MISSING?

1. Verification and Credibility Gaps

Many government accounts remain unverified, leaving citizens questioning the legitimacy of updates. Only **10 of South Africa's 30** ministers have verified accounts, a glaring oversight in an age where misinformation spreads rapidly. Without clear account verification and naming conventions, citizens struggle to distinguish official updates from fake news.

2. Reactive Rather Than Proactive Communication

Too often, government accounts focus on crisis-driven updates, such as service

delivery protests or natural disasters.

While these posts may generate engagement, they fail to build trust. Proactive communication—highlighting achievements, explaining policies, and showcasing service delivery—remains inconsistent.

3. Dormant and Inactive Accounts

Several ministers and departments have dormant X accounts, sending a message of disengagement to the public. This inactivity contrasts sharply with the public's expectations of a transparent, approachable government in a digital age.

4. Missed Opportunities for Citizen Trust-Building

Leaders like **Panyaza Lesufi, Gayton McKenzie** and **Dr. Kgosientsho Ramokgopa** demonstrate how regular, authentic, and direct engagement can foster trust. However, these success stories are not consistently replicated across the government. Many leaders fail to integrate community feedback into their messaging or use the platform to provide real-time issue resolution.

KEY TAKEOUTS

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

1. Credibility Through Verification

- Every minister and key government official must prioritize obtaining grey verification marks on X.
- Standardized account naming conventions are essential to maintain consistency and professionalism (e.g., @MinisterSurname_Dept).
- Implementing regular security audits and a verification guide for new appointees can further bolster credibility.

2. Proactive Content Strategies

- Shift focus from reactive crisis communication to balanced content strategies that include:
 - **Policy explanations:** Break down complex legislation like the BELA Act into easy-to-digest threads.
 - **Success stories:** Showcase tangible achievements, such as infrastructure improvements or community programs.
 - **Citizen engagement:** Use polls, Q&As, and other interactive tools to involve citizens in decision-making.

3. Active Digital Presence

- Reactivate dormant accounts and establish consistent posting schedules to maintain public interest and trust.
- Align content across platforms to ensure a unified government voice while adapting messaging to audience demographics.



KEY TAKEOUTS

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?



4. Fostering Engagement and Trust

- Adopt practices from high-performing leaders, such as transparent communication, progress updates, and regular citizen interactions.
- Incorporate community feedback into policies and use X to visibly address issues raised by citizens.

5. Crisis Preparedness

- Develop and test standardized crisis communication protocols to ensure rapid, coordinated, and consistent messaging across departments.
- Establish real-time response mechanisms to keep citizens informed and assured during emergencies, much like updates during the KZN floods.

CONCLUSION

CALL TO ACTION: BUILDING NATIONAL UNITY THROUGH STRATEGIC DIGITAL LEADERSHIP

In South Africa's new coalition governance landscape, effective digital communication isn't just about information sharing—it's a critical tool for national cohesion and democratic stability.

The Stakes Are Higher Than Ever

- Public trust hangs in the balance
- Social cohesion requires careful nurturing
- National stability depends on clear communication
- Service delivery needs unified messaging
- Democratic institutions require consistent voice
- Coalition dynamics demand strategic alignment

Why It Matters

South Africa's political landscape is increasingly defined by fragile coalition governance, where public trust and political stability are at their most delicate. In this environment, communication is not just a tool—it is the glue that binds government and citizens together. X (formerly Twitter) offers a unique platform to address these challenges, build trust, and foster unity in a nation yearning for cohesion and effective leadership.

However, what we are not seeing is a cohesive, strategic communications approach that embraces X as a nation-building tool, capable of cutting through misinformation and creating platforms for participatory democracy.

The question is no longer if social media should be a priority but whether South Africa's government is willing to adapt and optimize its approach to meet the digital age head-on. The time to act is now.

The Time to Act Is Now

In today's volatile political environment, failure to act risks further alienating citizens, eroding trust in coalition governance, and fueling misinformation. Government leaders must embrace X as a tool to engage, inspire, and unite the nation.

“ **South Africa deserves leadership that speaks not only to its challenges but to its hope and resilience. It's time to lead the conversation – and the nation – forward.** ”

DEDICATION TO LUZUKO SABELO KOTI (1974-2022)

This 5th edition of the South African Government Leaders on X report is dedicated to Luzuko Sabelo Koti, whose profound impact on South Africa's communication landscape continues to resonate. As a master storyteller, strategic thinker, and champion of democratic communication, Luzuko's influence on public sector communication was both profound and transformative.

A former journalist, government communicator, spokesperson for the Nelson Mandela Foundation, and Business Manager of SABC's Channel Africa, Luzuko was instrumental in shaping not just this report series, but our entire approach to working with and supporting government communicators. He understood, perhaps better than most, that government communication was not merely about

disseminating information—it was about building bridges, fostering dialogue, and strengthening our democratic fabric.

Luzuko was integral to the conceptualisation and development of this report, spending countless hours critiquing and reviewing research data from previous editions. His extensive experience in government communications and unwavering commitment to excellence helped establish the foundation for analysing government communication in the digital age. He believed firmly that **“when government communicators win, citizens win”** – a principle that continues to drive our work.

Though he left us in March 2022 after a brief battle with leukaemia, his vision of communication as a force for social good lives on through this report and the

countless lives he touched. His spirit of excellence, thoughtfulness, and dedication to strategic communication continues to inspire all of us at Decode Communications.



*Long Live the Spirit of Luzuko Sabelo Koti!
Long Live!*

ABOUT GOVCOMMS SOCIAL

#GovCommsSocial – an initiative of Decode Communications – is a platform that supports public sector social media professionals and government communicators by:

1. **Facilitating TRAINING**
2. **Hosting EVENTS**
3. **Organising a COMMUNITY of digital marketers across Africa.**

Our mission is to connect government communicators, public sector digital marketers and social media professionals with their peers, representatives from the major social networks for education and networking, and the private sector companies that can assist them through case studies and best practices.

We offer training using established social media and digital marketing best practices from the experts through:

1. **Face-to-face and Online workshops**
2. **Keynote addresses**
3. **Coaching internal teams**

We also provide social media crisis management support during disasters.



ABOUT DECODE

Decode Communications is a Pan-African reputation management agency headquartered in Johannesburg.

Owned and led by Rams Mabote, the quintessential media man and Lorato Tshenkeng, an ex-military air traffic controller-turned-communication strategist, Decode aims to positively influence how business is done in Africa with our integrated strategic communications solutions.

Decode works with brands to do meaningful work, helping them make meaningful connections with people who matter to their success.

Both Lorato and Rams believe that Public Relations is not about publicity or making brands great at social media. Its only objective should be to have a positive impact on business goals and financials.



YOU'VE READ THE REPORT.

If you need **more information** or you wish to **inquire about the social media training for public sector communicators** –

Contact Us : hello@decode.co.za / lorato@decode.co.za

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