

UG's brief descent into digital withdrawal

For a country that swears it can survive anything, Uganda exposed itself the moment the internet went off. Just one small click somewhere at UCC headquarters and an entire nation started malfunctioning like a cheap Android with low storage. Let us be honest; we are addicted. Deeply. Spiritually. Medically. The internet is no longer a luxury; it is a basic human right right after oxygen and mobile money, okay that sounds extreme but you get what I mean.

At first, we joked. We laughed. Ugandans always laugh first because that is our trauma response. Finally we started greeting neighbours, and almost calling radio stations to request songs like it was 2006. Some stood on balconies staring at the sky; phones now did not look any different

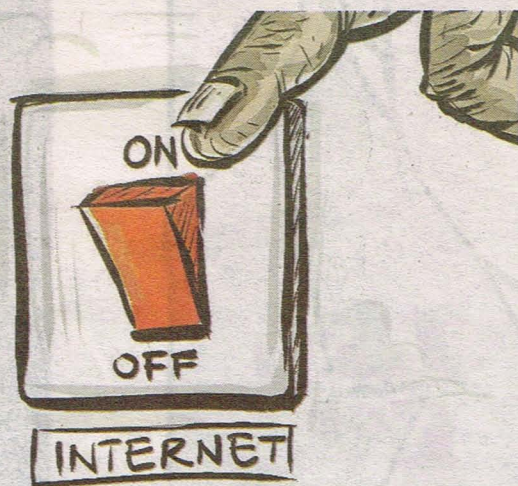
from walkie talkies. People refreshed apps with the confidence of people who believe persistence alone can summon signal, *ati* faith can move mountains.

Then came the madness. SIM cards reportedly started selling at prices that suggested they were dipped in gold. *Mbu* there were people selling simcards at \$100 with guaranteed internet connection, and yes some people were online the entire time. Mobile money agents sat idle like statues. Online businesses collapsed in real time. Influencers had nothing to influence. Students had nothing to submit.

Emotionally, things got darker. Phantom vibrations haunted our thighs. People kept unlocking phones, forgetting there was nothing to see. Anxiety levels rose. Silence became loud. We discovered we do

not actually know what to do with free time. Scrolling had been filling emotional gaps we did not know existed.

People conversed, Radios gained listeners. Board games returned. Couples spoke to each other without emojis. And just when we were adjusting, the internet returned. Phones exploded with notifications. Peace was restored. Addiction resumed, we go again. Now lawyers are suing UCC, MTN, Airtel because apparently switching off a whole country without explanation is unconstitutional. UCC please understand: you did not just switch off the internet. You interrupted our coping mechanism. Next time, at least send a warning... scratch that, do not deny the first warning. Or better yet, do not touch it. We are not as strong as we pretend to be.



“... and then the lord said, ‘let there be NO INTERNET’...”

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