**COUNTERFEIT ICT DEVICES: THE NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVE**

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**ABSTRACT**

**BACKGROUND:**

The Nigerian Telecommunications environment started with a government owned incumbent operator providing wired lines to a very limited number of subscribers: less than half a million lines to over 130million Nigerians up to 2001.

When in 2001, GSM services were launched in the country, wireless communications became the only mode of service deployment and unleashed a rapid uptake that saw the number of active subscriptions shoot to 154.5 million as at December 2016.

Soon after the launch of GSM services the country began to experience Quality of Services challenges which persist up till this day.

In addressing these quality of service challenges, the Commission identified several causes one of which is the proliferation of counterfeit and substandard ICT devices.

There are obviously many consequences of this proliferation of counterfeit devices apart from deteriorating quality of service. One is the obvious loss of revenue to government since a lot of these counterfeits are usually smuggled into the country. But more worrisome are the health and safety implications associated to devices that do not have to conform to radiation standards as well as other parameters that standard devices normally conform to.

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), the regulator of the telecom industry in Nigeria, is empowered by law (NCC Act 2003) to establish and enforce standards for all telecommunications equipment in the country to ensure seamless operations in the telecommunications environment.

The [Type Approval processes](http://www.ncc.gov.ng/docman-main/legal-regulatory/regulations/107-regulations-for-type-approval-1/file) set by the Nigerian Communications Commission are based on international standards. Thus, all equipment manufacturers, vendors and operators are required by law to type-approve their equipment (including customer devices such as mobile phones and wireless adapters) before importing them into the country.

In view of the foregoing, the Commission began to shop for an anti-counterfeit solution which eventually led to expanding its collaboration with Mobile Manufacturers Forum (MMF) now Mobile & Wireless Forum (MWF) to include a search for a suitable solution provider to these growing problems of counterfeit ICT devices.

My presentation is aimed to share with you our journey so far in this search for a solution.