

Communications are kept in times of pandemic

By: Vladia Rubio / CubaSi
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These days, Cubans have leaned on communications like never before.

Social isolation has made us trade kisses and hugs for non-in-person bonds, while this life-threatening situation has multiplied our contacts with those who live in other provinces, or abroad.

Similarly, the use of videoconference among authorities from different government bodies and their subordinates has skyrocketed, which is intended to monitoring the implementation of strategies, and hence improve those already set while fighting Covid-19.

And Cuba's Ministry of Communications has paved the way to meet these demands. Before this rise in internet traffic, both the telecommunication network and the broadcasting network managed to

secure the network vitality and stability. In this regard, it was paramount to optimize services and resort to all available infrastructure.



It was influenced by a substantial rise in the use of cell phones to the point that, from January on, cell phones calls increased in 10% whereas internet access grew to 90%.

In the run-up to June 11, 1.298 services had been installed; namely, 865 were fixed services, 147 in alternative fixed telephony, 112 mobile services, 33 data services, and a total of 141 base stations, which are the pillars of this work.

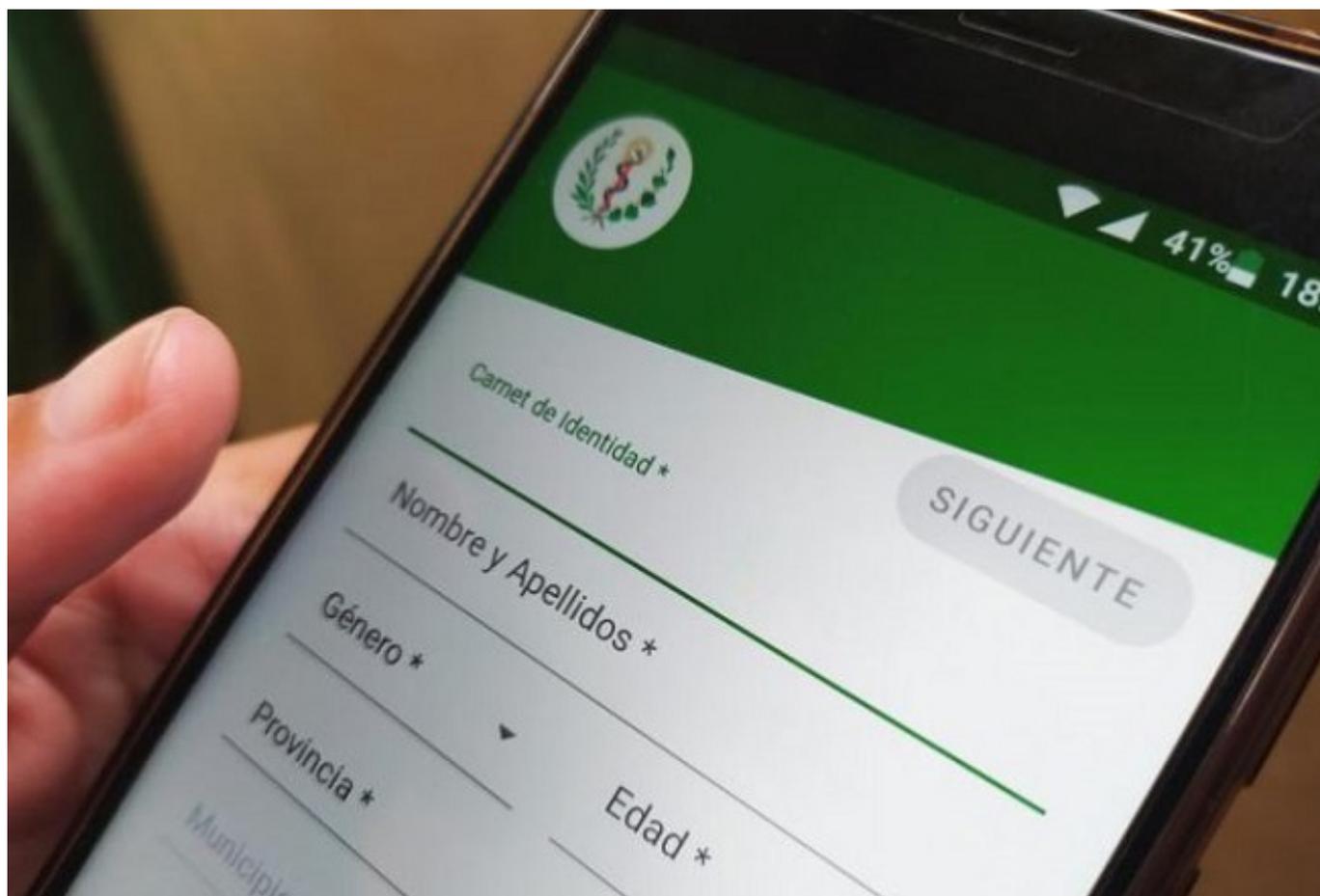
The aforementioned was confirmed by the Minister of Communication in Cuba, Jorge Luis Perdomo Di-Lella, in the TV program *Mesa Redonda*. He also pointed out that 60 new standards and high-definition transmitters had been installed. As a result, 58 new communities were benefitted as none previously enjoyed any of these services, or if any, they enjoyed it with poor quality.

All being said, there is now a 76% standard definition coverage and 45,7% high definition coverage, which includes all provincial capital cities as well as the Special Municipality Isle of Youth.

E-commerce

Even when the rise in the e-commerce has been paired with setbacks in times of Covid-19, especially related to the services of **tuenvio.cu**, this idea embraces several points of view. All in all, the Ministry of Communication has provided plenty of support.

That is the case of online payments of utilities such as electricity, water, and gas bills by e-commerce platforms like **Transfermovil** and **EnZona**, which skyrocketed in the last few months due to necessary social distancing.



Simultaneously, deadlines to pay invoices and carry out procedures were extended aiming at avoiding the access to commercial and customer service offices.

On the e-commerce issue, Perdomo Di-Lella confirmed this is here to stay. “We managed to maintain the main commercial services that enabled communications with the people. In this line, the development and generalization of computing platforms were boosted in order to provide a qualified analysis and control of the pandemic, coordinated with several enterprises and universities in the country,” he stated.

Here to stay

Just as e-commerce will stick around for a while, while improving and expanding, other modalities will also remain in the communication field; for instance, free access to the applications (**apk**) linked to emergency

situations like the virtual case-finding software created by UCI (University of Computing Sciences), the sending of newsletters, and of public service to clients of mobile telephony on the basis of prior authorization by a competent authority.

It is worth mentioning that others applications — whose usefulness has been proven — will continue developing. One of them is the case-control by active case finding created by Cinesoft, which relies on maps generated by Geocuba. The President of Cuba has highlighted several times the importance of joint work between science and government, whose results are evident in the handling of the pandemic.

The portal www.cubaeduca.cu will remain cost-free as well as the e-commerce platform **EnZona**. Thus, you do not need to buy a data package.

These and other actions may be summed up easily in statistics, but all are supported by material resources, investment, and sacrifice made by our workers, who — as health personnel, transportation workers, cops, and many others have done — put their lives on the line for everyone's sake. That is how we improve communications in times of pandemic.

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff
