

ACE Africa cable to go online late next year: France Telecom

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Technicians display the ACE (African Coast to Europe) submarine fiber optic cable in October 2011, on the seashore of Libreville. A fibre-optic cable from France to South Africa will go online in the second half of 2012, bringing high-speed Internet links to a host of west African countries, France Telecom said Wednesday.

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The 17,000 kilometre (10,500-mile) underwater Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) cable was originally due to become operational in early 2012, according to the statement from [France Telecom](#), which heads the 17-member consortium running the project.

The cable runs from Cape Town along the west coast of Africa, through Portugal and to France, connecting 23 countries en route including Mauritania, Gabon and the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#). Landlocked Mali and Niger will be connected via overland cable.

The ACE project is one of a handful of submarine cables that have been launched in recent years connecting Africa with Europe.

In April a 14,000-kilometre (8,700-mile) West Africa Cable System (WACS) fibre optic line linking South Africa's Western Cape province to London landed in the country. The cable has landing points in 10 other countries along Africa's western coast.

All of the projects hold the promise of an [Internet boom](#) for Africa, where only 9.6 percent of people are web users, compared to 65 percent of Europeans.

The capacity of Africa's [fibre optic cable](#) connections has expanded dramatically since 2009. Previously the continent relied mainly on slower satellite connections.

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