The 5G Reality Check: Closing the Gap Between Coverage and Usage

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Executive Summary: Beyond the "5G" Icon

Nigeria is deploying 5G, but having the infrastructure is only half the battle. A true 5G experience means high speeds, low delay, and seamless connectivity.

This report analyses the **"5G Gap"**—the difference between the theoretical capacity of the network (what it *could* do) and the actual experience users are getting (what it *is* doing). Our goal is to identify exactly where investment is needed to turn "coverage" into "real-world performance."

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What is the "5G Gap"?

We looked at every **Local Government Area (LGA)** in Nigeria to measure a "Deployment Opportunity Score." This score combines:

- **Network Performance:** How fast are the download and upload speeds really?
- **User Pain:** How often are users struggling with buffering or lag?
- **Adoption:** Is the 5G infrastructure actually being used, or is it sitting idle?

The Finding: In many areas, the towers are there, but the experience hasn't caught up. This "gap" represents a massive opportunity for improvement.

Operator Landscape: Who is Closing the Gap?

We analyzed how the four major operators are managing this transition.

MTN: Currently shows the **smallest gap**, meaning their deployed infrastructure is closely aligned with actual user experience.

Airtel: Shows mid-range performance. The gap here is often due to a lack of compatible devices in certain areas, not just the network itself.

Glo: Shows a **higher gap**, indicating that while infrastructure exists, it is not yet consistently translating into sustained high-speed usage for all customers.

T2: Shows **high variability**. In some LGAs, the service is excellent; in others, the gap is critical, limiting the advanced connectivity experience.

Priority Zones: Where Do We Need to Invest?

The report identifies specific LGAs that are "Priority Zones" for investment. These are areas with high population density but a high "Deployment Score" (meaning they need a network upgrade).

Top Opportunities for Improvement

Operator Focus	Key Areas (LGAs) Identified for Upgrade	Why? (The Opportunity)
T2	Abuja Municipal, Ibeju Lekki, Oredo	High user density but significant room to improve consistency.
Airtel	Balanga, Doma, Idemili South	Rural and semi-urban areas where adoption is lagging behind potential.
Glo	Ahoada West, Akuku Toru, Onna	Areas where infrastructure exists but needs optimization to reach users.
MTN	Kaduna North, Odogbolu, Bassa	High-traffic zones where keeping the gap small requires constant upkeep.

What This Means for the Future

For consumers, this analysis pushes operators to do more than just "launch" 5G. It encourages them to:

1. Optimize Existing Towers: Fix the "gap" so users feel the speed they were promised.

2. Target Investment: Don't just build anywhere—build in the LGAs (like the ones listed above) where people are waiting for better service.

3. Improve Devices: Ensure that users in these areas actually have phones capable of using the network

Thank You