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Cyber Security presentation being done at Adelphi Secondary School.

NTRC concludes School discussions for the year 2015

The National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission has concluded its series of schools discussions at various secondary and tertiary institutions across St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The final schools discussion was held at the Adelphi Secondary School on June 22, 2015 as many schools were in their examination period. Although having implemented open wifi at all 107 schools in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and other public locations via the Universal Service Fund (USF), many students were not aware of the Commission's functions. As a result of this, the Commission conducted these schools discussions as a part of its public awareness plan for 2015. As part of the public awareness plan, various secondary and tertiary institutions were visited nationwide where educational and interactive sessions were delivered. These schools discussions normally begin with a brief overview of the NTRC, how it was formed and the duties according to the Telecommunications act of 2001. Additionally, students would be given short presentations on the projects implemented using the Universal Service Fund (USF) - a fund managed by the NTRC to compensate any telecommunications provider to provide Universal Service or to otherwise promote Universal Service. The topic of Cyber Security was also part of the discussion held with students. Students were educated of the different types of cyber crime activities that are being conducted on the internet by cyber criminals such as internet fraud, identity theft, cyber bullying and hacking. For each type of cyber crime, they are advised on ways that they can protect themselves online such as using unique strong passwords; being careful on the links that they click on webpages and within emails; ensuring that they are operating in a secure browsing session when using sensitive information online; and not sharing too much information on social networks, among others.

The Commission also promoted its 3rd annual Ideas and Innovations Competition (i^2 Competition) at these events. Students were given a brief overview of the competition and were shown videos of entries made at the past competitions to motivate them to enter in the competition which launches on September 10, 2015.

Source: NTRC

How to Protect your Mobile Devices



Symantec reports that nearly 40% of mobile device users have experienced mobile cyber crime. Here are some tips on how to protect your device(s).

- 1. Install applications from trusted sources.** Users must recognize that some applications may be malicious. If an app is requesting more permissions than seems necessary, do not install it.
- 2. Don't jailbreak your device.** To "jailbreak" or to "root" a device means to bypass important controls and gain full access to the operating system. Doing this will usually void the warranty and enables applications, including malicious ones, to bypass controls and access the data owned by other apps.
- 3. Disable unwanted services.** Capabilities such as Bluetooth and NFC can provide ease and convenience in using your smartphone. They can also provide an easy way for a nearby, unauthorized user to gain access to your data. Turn these features off when they are not required.
- 4. Keep Software Updated.** Updated software normally contains fixes to security vulnerabilities on your mobile device.

Cross Border Interference and Frequency Allocation Plan Workshop held in Grenada

The Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) has held a Cross Border Interference and Frequency Allocation Plan Workshop from June 1st—5th 2015 at the Radisson Beach Hotel, Grenada. This workshop was planned as part of a series of workshops which are a result of the Caribbean Telecommunications Union's (CTU) implementation of the Harmonised Caribbean Spectrum Planning and Management Project (HCSP&MP) with technical cooperation support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and Compete Caribbean. The specific objective of the Project is to deepen the harmonization of spectrum planning and management policies and practices across the Caribbean Region. The objectives of this series of workshops include but are not limited to the review of reports, findings and recommendations of the consultancy "Report on the Analysis of Cross Border Interference and the Report on Framework to Minimize Cross Border Interference"; Gain consensus on the findings of cross border interference for both the IDB and OECS countries; recommend framework to minimize cross border interference in both the IDB and OECS countries.

During the workshop, it was identified that The OECS Countries do not have comprehensive allotment plans. In the case of the broadcast bands, the countries should have allotment plans that clearly defines the use of the bands, such as NTSC band, bandwidth, as well as other broadcast parameters. It was also discussed that in advanced mobile systems, many Caribbean countries are following a mix of North American and European (CEPT) band plans. Their different spectrum utilization policies typically result in incompatible band plans, specifically where the uplink and downlink overlaps result in interference.

The workshop concluded that these issues can be managed with sharing of information, coordinating allotments and planned assignments before authorization, and well as using common protection criteria.

Source: NTRC



ECTEL to further discuss LIME—Flow Merger

The Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority-ECTEL says it has commenced engagement with Cable and Wireless to address the impact of its merger with Columbus Communications Ltd, on Member States.

In a statement issued from its Castries Headquarters, ECTEL says it has written to Cable and Wireless with proposals for: "modifications of its existing licences in order to address a number of potential negative impacts of the merger on the telecommunications markets in its Member States."

A meeting to discuss those and related matters will be held in July 2015.

Cable and Wireless Communications (CWC) bought over Flow's parent company Columbus International Inc. in a deal which was closed on March 31, 2015, worth just over US\$3 billion.

ECTEL has outlined some concerns about the merger that it says have been highlighted by the members of its Council of Ministers. Those include: open access and wholesale cost for access to networks, fibres, poles, ducts and facilities at cost-based prices; offering customers the option to migrate to the most favourable existing service plan in the market; treatment of the new merged entity as a dominant provider in relation to fixed broad-band, fixed voice and cable television subscriber service; and guaranteed access and protection for third parties and compliance with regulations in respect of equal and indirect access.

"In addition to the specific matters which will be discussed with Cable and Wireless, Plc., ECTEL will also engage licensees in its member states to review and make recommendations on several other issues including: removal of voice data roaming charges in ECTEL member states; commitment to improving mobile broadband, commitment to introducing local number portability for both fixed lines and mobile services and offering of broadband service without the requirement for a voice subscription," the statement indicated.

The ECTEL Council of Ministers, at its 31st Meeting in St Lucia in May, reiterated its commitment to safeguarding competition in the telecommunications sector and ensuring that the citizens of the region continue to enjoy the benefits of liberalization.

Source: [Caribbean360](#) , [St. Kitts Observer](#) via [ICT Pulse](#)

Number Portability now a reality in Jamaica



Effective midnight, June 22, 2015, Jamaican consumers were able to switch from one telecommunications network to the other and maintain their numbers.

Speaking with The Gleaner-Power 106 News Centre en route from Russia, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining Phillip Paulwell said all telecommunication providers have completed their testing and are ready to facilitate local number portability (LNP) without any charge to the consumer.

"I've just got a report from all the providers that they are all ready, they have done the testing, and the facility that will assist Jamaicans to virtually own their own number will be in place at midnight to tonight," Paulwell confirmed yesterday.

"The subscriber will be able to move from one provider to another without many difficulties, and also the provider from which he is leaving will not be able to charge for the porting to the new provider," he continued.

Under the Telecommunications Act (Number Portability) Rules 2014, providers cannot charge subscribers who wish to switch from one network to another. The minister noted that telecoms companies have also assured that they would not be seeking to charge consumers.

Number portability should have taken effect on May 31, but was delayed because LIME asked for an extension to conduct tests and correct glitches.

The introduction of LNP follows the granting of a 10-year licence in March this year to Porting Access B.V. of The Netherlands to administer number-portability services in Jamaica. Under the licence, Porting Access B.V. will operate, manage, coordinate and maintain a number portability central reference database and an automated central order handling system, as well as other related activities for the provision of number portability.

Number portability should be available for both mobile and fixed line services.

Source: [Jamaica Gleaner](#) via [ICT Pulse](#)

Over the Top discussions in Trinidad

Digicel, which has taken the lead in making hard moves on the issue of Over the Top (OTT) services by blocking, albeit briefly in T&T, third party Voice over



IP (Voip) software, spoke first on the matter in a discussion with representatives of TATT, TSTT and Columbus Communications.

Acknowledging that OTT services are generally positive, Digicel's General Counsel David Geary lamented that the company was forced into competition with providers "that are not required to hold a concession and who are not subject to the same rules." "If a class of activity is regulated," Geary argued, "then just because it is carried across the Internet does not make it immune from regulation."

OTT services such as Voip, Geary said, are in direct competition with the revenue streams of licensed companies but pay no taxes and provide no ancillary services, such as emergency calling, which Tatt requires of its concessionaires. They contribute nothing to the infrastructure that they use to deliver those services and exist outside of the legal frameworks of this country.

Those revenue declines are likely to be the largest issue on the agenda of any telecommunications company objecting to the presence of Voip software on their networks. Citing research on the subject, Geary noted that the drops will be significant. Estimates in global revenue drops for mobile operators estimate that voice and SMS income on incoming international calls will drop by 30 to 40 per cent while overall revenues look to decline by as much as 25 per cent.

Digicel, he said, had seen a 40 per cent drop in international calls over the last 18 months. "It will not be possible for increases in data usage to make up that shortfall," Geary said. The statements from TSTT's Christa Leith were more conciliatory, offering a hands off position on how customers used their network but declaring the company to be willing to seek collaborative arrangements with such providers.

Source: [Guardian](#) via [ICT Pulse](#)

EU Roaming charges to be scrapped by 2017

EU citizens travelling to any of the 28 member countries will be able to use their mobile phone without having to pay roaming charges from June 2017.

Following 12 hours of negotiations, the European Commission said on Tuesday morning (30 June) that it, along with the European Parliament and Council, have reached an agreement on key elements for a single market in telecoms, which will end roaming charges when travelling in the EU by June 2017.

The elimination of roaming charges within the EU has been something which has been under discussion for the last eight years, though European commissioners had hoped to have eliminated the charges by July 2014.

What the agreement means in practical terms is that from 15 June, 2017 you can use your mobile device when travelling in the EU and pay the same prices as at home. For instance, if you pay for a monthly volume of minutes, SMS and data in your country, any voice call, SMS and data session you use while travelling abroad in the EU will be deducted from that volume as if you were at home, with no extra charges.

The reason the Commission has given for the delay in getting roaming charges eradicated is the need for a "thorough review" of the prices that operators charge each other for the use of their networks.

Ernest Doku, telecoms expert at uSwitch.com, hopes there won't be another U-turn from the EU:

"We've heard this before. Data roaming charges were due to be abolished in the EU at the end of 2015 and the U-turn confused and frustrated people."

Source: [IBTimes](#)



ECTEL holds QoS Consultations in Member States

The Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL) has commenced consultations that are expected to lead to the revision of Quality of Service (QoS) Standards, to be adhered to by telecommunications providers in its member states.

Quality of Service Standards ensure that consumers have access to high quality telecommunications service by setting basic minimum quality levels for all public telecommunications operators. These standards define the lower and or upper bounds of acceptability of such technical issues as transmission rates, error rates, call completion rates, etc. and commercial consumer issues such as access to customer help lines, billing integrity and other characteristics that can be measured and improved.

The ECTEL Board of Directors mandated the consultations at its 67th meeting. The new draft Quality of Service Regulations is now available in member states for comments until July 24.

Persons wishing to make a contribution to the consultation may do so by contacting the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission NTRC in their territory and following the instructions outlined in the consultative document.

The consultation document on Quality of Service standards is available on the websites of ECTEL and the NTRCs in the five ECTEL member states. Meetings with target interest groups and communities are also being planned to facilitate the consultation process. Responses to the consultative document should be sent to the Managing Director of ECTEL by email (consultation@ectel.int) or fax: (758)458-1698.

Source: [J-Witness News SVG](#), [ECTEL](#)

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