



## NTRC's 4th Annual *i*<sup>2</sup> Competition to be launched soon

The National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission is scheduled to launch its 4th annual Ideas and Innovation (*i*<sup>2</sup>) competition on Friday September 16, 2016 at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College, Glen Campus. The launch will begin at 1:00 PM will include feature addresses from the NTRC and members of the private sector. Students who attend the launch will have the opportunity to win special prizes.

Miss Keisha Gurley, Consumer & Public Relations Manager at the NTRC indicated that the *i*<sup>2</sup> competition focuses on the importance of idea creation and the possibilities that can develop from the seeds of innovation that are planted in the minds of our young people. This will be done by challenging students to develop and present projects in the form of Ideas and Mobile Applications. She added that "the competition will develop the entrepreneurial skills of our youth by looking at the needs in our society and finding ICT solutions for them. Such initiatives can have direct economic benefits for our country while making us more efficient in what we do on daily basis"

For the past three years, the competition was focused on having the youths develop innovative ideas or mobile applications that can improve existing services provided by the public sector through modern ICT solutions. For this year, the competition will be focused on having the youths develop innovative ideas or mobile applications geared towards the private sector.

Plans are currently being executed to promote this year's competition to increase the volume entries. Groups can win up to EC\$3,500.00 along with other prizes from the Competition's sponsors.

Source: NTRC

## WhatsApp's New Privacy Policy

WhatsApp has updated its global privacy policy for the first time in four years, under which it will now share phone numbers of users with its parent company, Facebook.

Here's some information:

1. WhatsApp will begin to "coordinate" accounts with Facebook by sharing WhatsApp users' mobile phone numbers and device information like the type of operating system and other details about the smartphone. The move will help Facebook offer more targeted advertisements on its own platform.
2. WhatsApp will continue to be ad-free and the communication on WhatsApp will continue to be encrypted end-to-end.
3. WhatsApp messages will not be shared onto Facebook for others to see nor will it be shared with third parties.
4. Facebook will also not use user's WhatsApp messages for any purpose other than to assist WhatsApp in operating and providing their services.
5. Businesses will now be allowed to create accounts on WhatsApp

## NTRC's myApp Summer Program concludes



Nineteen (19) Students in the North Leeward district of Petit Bordel are now equipped with the knowledge and skills to develop native Android apps as a result of the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission's (NTRC) second annual MyApp Summer Program. The program which concluded on August 25, 2016 introduced students who had no previous knowledge of programming to develop applications using the Java programming language using Google's recommended Integrated development environment (IDE), Android Studio. One participant, Juneisha Kelley has indicated that she has learnt a lot in the program and expressed her confidence in developing her own application. The NTRC's myApp summer program was executed in collaboration with the summer Crash Academy with sponsorship from telecommunications providers Flow and Digicel.

Source: NTRC

## NTRC Grenada hosts IXP Workshop

The National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission Grenada held a capacity building workshop on July 27, 2016 entitled "The Value of the Internet Exchange Point (IXP) and Building Digital Skills. The key speaker, Mr. Bevil Wooding of Packet Clearing House (PCH) highlighted the progression of localized IXPs within the Caribbean region. He noted that Grenada has been one of the first countries in the English speaking Caribbean to promote and implement a local IXP. Mr. Wooding highlighted that the main advantage of having an IXP is that there would be local content on local infrastructure to reduce cost associated with traffic exchange between regional and international IXPs.

Source: NTRC (Grenada)

## Electronic Communications Sector Investment up in ECTEL Member States

Castries, Saint Lucia. August 8, 2016– Investment in the electronic communications sector has seen yet another increase in ECTEL Member States. That's among the key findings of the most recent review of the electronic communications sector in ECTEL Member States.

For the second year running, sector investment recorded double digit growth. Following the 35 per cent rise in the previous period, investment in the telecommunications sector surged a further 29 per cent to \$157 million. This was again driven by infrastructure upgrades for the launch of 4G/HSPA+ mobile broadband services in the Member States.

Fixed broadband subscription growth also accelerated. The number of fixed broadband subscriptions rose 11 per cent to 97,000 resulting in a fixed broadband penetration rate of 19.2 per cent up from 17.2 per cent in the previous period.

The annual electronic communications review for the period March 2014 to 2015 also indicated that 4G/HSPA+ mobile broadband service is now available in all ECTEL Member States. At the end of March 2015, mobile broadband via HSPA+ technology was finally available in all ECTEL Member States. As consumers in the Member States migrated from 2G to 4G service, the number of mobile broadband subscriptions grew by more than 400 per cent to 205, 000, according to the review.

Call volumes from fixed and mobile networks fell 10 per cent. Fixed originated local calling minutes, fell 9 per cent to 497 million minutes and local calling minutes from mobile networks was 11 per cent less than in the previous period. Overall, consumers generated just over 1 billion local calling minutes.

There was some good news for employment in the sector in at least two Member States. Following a 22 per cent contraction in the number of persons employed full time in the telecoms sector, there was a 1 per cent increase in sector employment.

At March 2015, there were 945 persons employed by telecoms operators. This increase in sector employment was driven by growth in sector employment in Dominica and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL) produces this review of the electronic communications sector annually. The report provides information on the performance and economic contribution of the sector, as well as information on deployment and use of electronic communications infrastructure in the ECTEL Member States.

Source: [ECTEL](#)

## ECTEL Chairman Promotes the Benefits of New Legislation

San Juan, Puerto Rico. August 3, 2016– Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL), Senator Hon. Vincent Byron, says that the new Electronic Communications Bill for Eastern Caribbean States is designed with best intention to serve the public interest, while offering service providers with opportunities to do business in our markets.

Speaking at the 32nd annual conference of CANTO in Puerto Rico, Senator Byron told participants that the draft bill was recommended to the member states of ECTEL after extensive national and regional public consultation. He added that the new legislation will further advance the purposes of ECTEL, which include increasing innovation in service delivery and open competition.

Hon. Byron who is also the Minister with responsibility for Telecommunications in St. Kitts and Nevis said that the issues which are at the heart of electronic communications regulations today for the ECTEL Member States are the reduction of roaming rates, introduction of number portability; over-the-top services and net neutrality. The ECTEL Council Chairman said that: “While we consider all the definitions and biases in the debate on net neutrality rules, the people of our region must enjoy full access to the internet like all other citizens of the world.”

He supported the call by Telecommunications Ministers from Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago for the expansion of broadband services at affordable prices to the people of the region.

The 32nd Canto conference is addressing a wide range of issues such as net neutrality, internet of things (IoT), big data, investment in broadband networks and converged regulations.

The delegates and presenters were drawn from throughout the Caribbean region, North America. and Europe. Twelve ministers are participating from the Caribbean region. The delegation from the ECTEL Member States included staff of the ECTEL Directorate, Commissioners and staff from the NTRCs of Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The CANTO 32nd annual conference and exhibition took place in San Juan, Puerto Rico from July 31 – August 5th 2016.

Source: [ECTEL](#)

## Flow MD defends broadband rates



*Brian Collins, centre, managing director of Flow Trinidad, demonstrates the new Flow sports app to former cricketer Dinanath Ramnarine, left and Brian Lewis, president of the T&T Olympic Committee.*

For the average consumer in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) the cost of broadband services is not prohibitive, says Brian Collins, managing director of Flow Trinidad. Quoting a Caribbean Telecom Union report on the affordability of broadband, he said: “T&T is in the top five of affordability. They looked at the average earnings of somebody living in Tobago and the cost of a broadband package and we are consistently at the very top.

“I don’t think we should be looking at the cost, but affordability. Is it affordable to the vast majority of people and I will always say the answer is yes. There will always be a small minority of people that for whatever the reasons don’t believe they need it or can’t afford. I think what we should be doing with the minister is trying to figure out how we address that market segment.”

Collins’ comments follow calls by Communications Minister Maxie Cuffie for more affordable broadband services,

Noting that 29 per cent of T&T homes had broadband service, Collins said telecommunications companies should get together with the minister to look at different options.

“We are always ready and willing to meet with Minister Cuffie. I think he is doing a good job and I think he can count on our support. We have some ideas we will like to share with him,” he said.

He added that back in 2005 when lawmakers moved to regulate the market, only eight per cent of households in T&T had broadband service.

“We have grown nearly ten-fold with the market that we have and the speeds that we have.

Source: [T&T Guardian](#)

## Yahoo Sells To Verizon In Saddest \$5 Billion Deal In Tech History

Yahoo was once the king of the Internet, a \$125 billion behemoth as big in its time as Facebook or Google are today. Now it's being sold to Verizon for comparative chump change.

On Monday July 25, 2016, Yahoo announced the end of the long process to extricate itself from a mess of its own making with a sale of its core operating business to Verizon for \$4.8 billion in cash. The transaction ends the independence of one of Silicon Valley's most iconic pioneering companies. Yahoo's seventh and final CEO, Marissa Mayer, will reportedly depart upon the deal's conclusion with severance pay worth more than \$50 million.

The sale will unite Yahoo with another fallen star, AOL, the first web portal Verizon bought last year for \$4.4 billion. The United States' largest wireless provider is betting nearly \$10 billion that combining the two formerly dominant websites will give it an edge in mobile content and advertising technology it can leverage across its more than 140 million subscribers.

Yahoo began in 1994 as "Jerry's Guide to the World Wide Web," a list of websites curated by Stanford University students Jerry Yang and David Filo. It grew quickly as millions of Americans began turning on dial-up Internet connections and needed a home page that would direct them to all their essential destinations. In 1996 it went public and rode the dot-com bubble to epic heights, reaching a peak of \$500 a share (or \$125 a share in today's post-split calculations) in January 2000. Yet Yahoo missed the opportunity of a generation to convert its early lead and millions of users into more than just a portal. At the height of the bubble, it spent \$4.5 billion to buy Geocities and \$5.7 billion to buy Broadcast.com, but would later reportedly squander the chance to buy young versions of both Google and Facebook.

Source: [Forbes](#)



## Facebook will soon allow users to activate Safety Check during emergencies

Facebook is working on a way to let users activate Safety Check of their own volition, CEO Mark Zuckerberg revealed Monday August 29, 2016.

Speaking at a Townhall Q&A at Luiss University in Rome, Zuckerberg fielded a bunch of questions from students and the online community. In reference to an earlier question on Safety Check, which Facebook activated following the massive earthquake that hit Italy last week, an audience member asked: "Will users be able to activate it on their own?," which Zuckerberg confirmed: "Yes, we're working on that already."

Facebook launched its Safety Check feature in October 2014 as a way to let users tell friends that they're OK in the wake of natural disasters. The initiative was expanded to include other emergency situations, such as terrorist attacks, but the company has come in for criticism in the past for its selectivity in activating Safety Check for some events but not others. The underlying suspicion in many criticisms was that Facebook was demonstrating a preferential treatment to a specific region of the world, namely "the West."

"If we're building a community product, this is one of the moments of truth for us," Zuckerberg, said.

Source: [Venturebeat](#)



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