THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY COMMISSION

ICT NEWSLETTER

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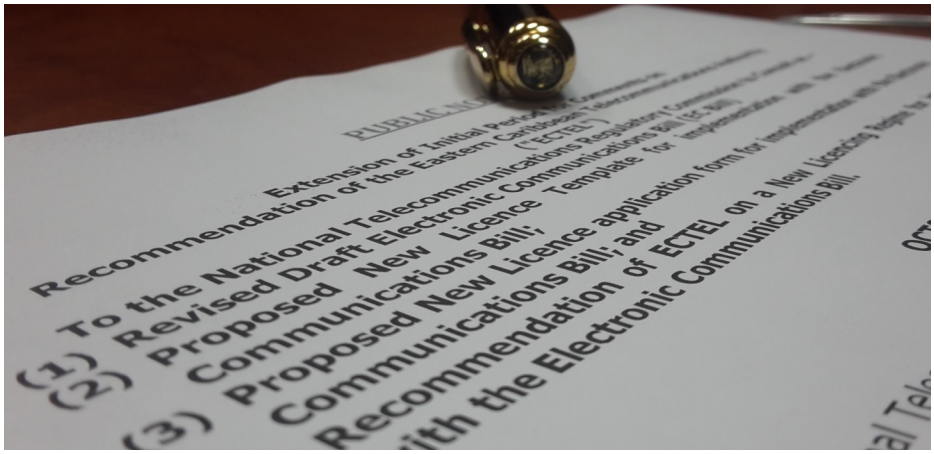


ECTEL extends deadline to the period of initial comments on consultation for proposed Electronic Communications Bill

The Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL) has extended the deadline to the period of initial comments for its submission on: (i) Revised Draft Electronic Communications Bill (EC Bill); (ii) Proposed New Licence Template for implementation with the Electronic Communications Bill; (iii) Proposed New Licence application form for implementation with the Electronic Communications Bill; and (iv) Recommendation of ECTEL on a New Licencing Regime for implementation with the Electronic Communications Bill.

The comments period which was initially set for the period October 12, 2015 to November 11, 2015 has now been extended to October 12, 2015 to November 30, 2015. ECTEL made a decision to extend this deadline to allow interested parties more time to submit their comments due to the keen interest expressed by stakeholders and also considering the requests that they have received thus far.

The purpose of the EC Bill is to reform the legislation relating to telecommunications in the ECTEL Contracting States by repealing and replacing the Telecommunications Acts with legislation which given the converged environment is broader in scope to encompass electronic communications. The Bill is aimed at allowing a liberalized and non-discriminatory entry into the electronic communications sector and enabling a robust competitive environment in which there is fairness, transparency and accountability on the part of the regulators of the sector.

For more information on this consultation,
visit: http://www.ntrc.vc/providers/consultations/

Spyware

What is Spyware?
Despite its name, the term "spyware" doesn't refer to something used by undercover operatives, but rather by the advertising industry. In fact, spyware is also known as "adware." It refers to a category of software that, when installed on your computer, may send you pop-up ads, redirect your browser to certain web sites, or monitor the web sites that you visit. Because of the extra processing, spyware may cause your computer to become slow or sluggish

How can you prevent spyware from installing on your computer?

Don't click on links within pop-up windows - Because pop-up windows are often a product of spyware, clicking on the window may install spyware software on your computer. To close the pop-up window, click on the "X" icon in the title bar instead of a "close" link within the window.

Choose "no" when asked unexpected questions - Be wary of unexpected dialog boxes asking whether you want to run a particular program or perform another type of task. Always select "no" or "cancel," or close the dialog box by clicking the "X" icon in the title bar.

Don't follow email links claiming to offer anti-spyware software - Like email viruses, the links may serve the opposite purpose and actually install the spyware it claims to be eliminating.

US-Cert

NTRC takes Public Drive to Georgetown

Ms. Gineal Joseph, NTRC speaking to residents of Georgetown.

On October 15, 2015, staff of the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) journeyed to the Georgetown to continue its public awareness drive activity.

The visit was done to raise awareness of the NTRC amongst the residents of the communities and gather feedback on the quality of telecommunications services that they receive. Residents learnt about some of the projects that the NTRC has implemented throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines through the use of the Universal Service Fund. Residents were specifically interested in the SMART Project whose contract was signed with Telecommunications Provider LIME in 2012 for a total of EC$1.6 Million. Some of the components of the SMART project include: The delivery of Cyber Security and Mobile Application Development Programs at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College; Subsidised internet for 340 needy households; handing over a state of the art lab with iMac and Windows based computers.

The NTRC also took the opportunity to encourage youngsters to sign up for the NTRC's 3rd annual i^2 Competition which was launched on September 18, 2015. This competition gives youth the opportunity to put forward innovative ideas or mobile applications to improve services offered by the public sector. Students can win prizes up to EC$3,500.00 along with smartphones compliments Digicel and LIME, cash prizes compliments Fanfare Events, 1 Year Free broadband compliments Flow and tablets complements King Computer corporation. The competition is now in its second phase—Good Tips presentation where students will be given more information about the competition and other required presentation tips.

ECTEL rejects FLOW's Broadband Price Increase

THE Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL) says it has rejected amendments to an agreement for a merger between Cable and Wireless and Columbus International's FLOW which recently announced an increase in broadband rates. ECTEL took this decision at its Council of Ministers meeting held in St Kitts recently. It said that at a meeting with the merging parties three months ago, Cable and Wireless and Columbus Communications Ltd. had expressed their commitment to the goals proposed by the Council on matters relating to net neutrality and the unrestricted use of Over the Top Services, roaming, a harmonized entry level broadband package and permitting customers to migrate to the most favourable service plan for them.

The merging parties had also committed to working with the Council of Ministers and ECTEL to ensure that services were offered at affordable prices and at the highest quality levels.

During that meeting, the merging parties accepted the conditions proposed by ECTEL for approval of the integration of their business. These conditions include:
(i) Access by other licensed telecommunications providers to the facilities of the merging parties on a non-discriminatory basis;
(ii) Provision of basic retail broadband internet service in each of the Member States with transmission speeds of at least 5 Mbps, priced per year at not more than 3% of GNP per capita;
(iii) Allowing their customers of fixed broadband, fixed voice and subscriber television services to migrate to another plan without the imposition of penalties;
(iv) Compliance with the principles of Internet Neutrality which enables access to content and applications without favouring or degrading access to websites or content.
Subsequently, ECTEL submitted a draft of the Agreement reached for perusal by the merging parties. ECTEL said that on September 14, it received in response an amended version of the draft Agreement from the merging parties adding: "Having reviewed the amendments it was found that they rendered the Agreement unenforceable. The proposed amendments from the merging parties have therefore been rejected by ECTEL". ECTEL said it was unacceptable that at this time when the wordings of conditions agreed to were being finalized, FLOW had announced its intention to increase broadband rates in the territories affected by the merger. "This announcement goes against the spirit of the discussions between the merging parties and the Regulator", the ECTEL release said. It added:. "The Council demands that the merging parties honour the commitments including the provision of services at affordable prices, which have been made to the Regulator and also announced publicly.

The Voice SLU

Every secondary and college student now equipped with a tablet in Dominica

Students at Tablet handing over Ceremony

Every student in Dominica at the secondary school and College level are now equipped with a tablet, Acting Prime Minister Rayburn Blackmoore has announced.

The 'One Tablet Per Child Program' which is said to have benefited close to 7,000 students across the island was promised during the 2014 election campaign by the Dominica Labour Party (DLP)

"Young people, students, our greatest legacy, by the end of this day the 22nd of October 2015 every student at the secondary school level, and every student at the Dominica State College level will have a tablet," he said while addressing a handing over ceremony of the tablet devices to students of the Dominica State College (DSC) on Thursday. "We are honouring our promise; we are honouring our obligation…"

According to Blackmoore the DLP gives credence for the fundamental principle that education is not a privilege, "but it is a right."

"And consistent with that principle we believe strongly that every child, notwithstanding his or her social space is entitled to the highest quality of education," he said.

Minister for Information, Science, Telecommunication and Technology, Kelver Darroux said the 'One Tablet Per Child Program' will transform the way that information technology is viewed in Dominica.

"It signals a clear demonstration of the seriousness being displayed by the government of Dominica to keep a promise to our young people," he stated. "We have delivered, we have silenced our doubters and this is no coconut tablet."

Darroux strongly believes that information technology has played a key role in the transformation of the Dominican economy and the government of Dominica, "will ensure that we have a workforce ready to take on the challenges of the 21st century."

He revealed that the government of Dominica has invested to the tune of $114,918 for wireless broadband and two internal fibre links at the Dominica State College.

Minister of Education, Petter Saint Jean noted that the DSC has served as a pathway to success for thousands of young persons in Dominica.

"Gone are the days when only the wealthy among us could receive an opportunity to go to secondary school or college," he remarked. "Our education system has evolved."

Source: Dominica News Online

Regional ICT development conferences being held in Belize

Bevil Wooding

A full line-up of international tech experts are gathering in Belize from November 2 to 6, for a historic regional ICT development conference.

Among the expert facilitators is Bevil Wooding, the Founder and Executive Director of the Caribbean Network Operators Group (CaribNOG), Guillermo Cicileo, the Security, Stability and Resiliency Coordinator at the Latin American and Caribbean Internet Addresses Registry (LACNIC); and Shernon Osepa, the Manager of Regional Affairs for Latin America and The Caribbean at the Internet Society (ISOC).

Held jointly by LACNIC and CaribNOG, the gathering will provide a space for various key actors in the Latin American and Caribbean Internet to network together and strengthen relationships.

The week long conference will address topics ranging from cloud computing, Internet peering, IPv6, DNSSEC, RPKI, and cybersecurity.

"The growing importance of computer networks to Caribbean enterprise cannot be separated from the costly impact of the cyber attacks these networks constantly face. Caribbean Cybersecurity needs Caribbean cyber-defenders," said Bevil Wooding, one of the co-founders and a director of CaribNOG.

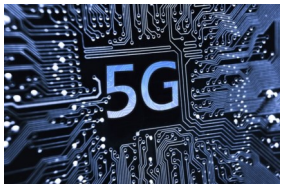
"The Caribbean has to invest in development of indigenous human capacity to defend its networks and manage its critical telecommunications and networking infrastructure. Through CaribNOG we are raising a cadre of Caribbean experts to do just that."

The meeting is hosted by the Belize Public Utilities Commission, and supported by an impressive list of high-profile international organisations including Google, the American Registry for Internet Numbers, Packet Clearing House, BrightPath Foundation, the Internet Cooperation for Assigned Names and Numbers, the Internet Society, the Amsterdam Internet Exchange Caribbean and the Caribbean Telecommunications Union.

The conference is actually two events in one: a joint meeting of LACNIC Caribbean on the Move, and the highly anticipated tenth installment of CaribNOG's regional gatherings.

Source: Silicon Caribe

5G speeds of 3.6Gbps achieved by Huawei and NTT DoCoMo in first ever large-scale field test



Telecoms giant Huawei and Japanese mobile operator NTT DoCoMo have demonstrated mobile internet speeds of 3.6Gbps in the world's first large-scale public network test of 5G. The field trial was conducted in the city of Chengdu in Sichuan Province, China, on 7 October.

All 24 user devices across the city were able to get download speeds of 3.6Gbps on a wireless network frequency running at sub-6GHz. This is a first since all previous 5G tests have been carried out indoors in controlled environments, rather than outdoors in a city where buildings and infrastructure can block mobile frequencies.

In comparison, EE's 4G network in the UK, which is the biggest in Europe, offers only 300Mbps maximum data speeds. We're only just getting used to 4G but mobile operators are planning for the future as people keep coming up with innovative ways to use smartphones and tablets, which means huge amounts of mobile data is being used.

If everyone is streaming YouTube and Netflix to their phones while downloading a multitude of apps and uploading videos and photos to social media, plus the mobile network is also supporting connected cars and Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled smart devices, then the network will quickly become congested and customers will become unhappy.

To meet these demands, the telecommunications industry hopes to commercialise 5G by 2020, with China and the European Union working together to jointly research the technology so that the beginnings of 5G wireless standards can be established in 2016.

Source: IB Times

UK 2.3 GHz and 3.4 GHz spectrum auction to happen in early 2016

Ofcom has confirmed plans to release new high capacity options to mobile broadband service providers in 2016 as it unlocks previously ring fenced Ministry of Defence spectrum.

It claims it will prioritise those bidders who can make the most efficient use of the spectrum and won't block operators that create economies of scale by buying up large adjacent blocks of spectrum. For this reason, it says, there are no plans to stop a bidding war.

In early 2016 a total of 190 MHz of high-capacity spectrum will become available in two bands, 2.3 GHz and 3.4 GHz, which are suited carrying large amount of data. This will be the biggest advance in mobile broadband capacity since 2013 when it released three-quarters of the spectrum in the 4G auction, said Ofcom.

Ofcom has set reserve prices for £70 million for the spectrum as it publishes details of the auction process. There will no cap on bidding, as Ofcom says limits could prevent a bidder from buying large blocks of adjacent spectrum, as blocks create the potential for supporting very fast download speeds and pave the way for 5G.

Ofcom says auction is designed to be fair and transparent and proposes to auction the spectrum in lots of 10 MHz for the 2.3 GHz band and 5 MHz for the 3.4 GHz band.

Many existing mobile handsets from major manufacturers, including the Apple iPhone 6, HTC Desire and Samsung Galaxy, are already compatible with the 2.3 GHz spectrum. The band is so far being used for high-speed 4G mobile broadband networks in ten countries outside Europe, including China, India and Australia.

The 3.4 GHz band is currently being used for 4G wireless broadband in six countries including the UK, Canada and Spain.

Spectrum fuels the UK's wireless economy, said Ofcom Spectrum Group Director Philip Marnick. "This auction is an important step in ensuring that the UK has the wireless capability to deliver and support new technology," said Marnick.

As demand for mobile data services surges, it's not just more spectrum that's needed but new technology to allocate it more efficiently and networks of small wireless cells to provide greater capacity over local areas. "Part of our plan to meet this demand is by making new spectrum available and allowing it to be used in a number of different ways," said Marnick.

Source: Telecoms

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