Attendees at the National Broadband Plan Consultation

National Broadband Plan Consultations concluded at Methodist Church Hall

The Ministry of Economic Planning, Sustainable Development, Industry, Labour and Information in collaboration with the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) through the World Bank funded Caribbean Regional Communication Infrastructure Program (CARCIP) has developed a draft National Broadband Plan for St. Vincent and the Grenadines that covers the years 2017-2021. This Plan was developed to address the critical ICT gaps in broadband as a means to stimulate private sector investments, innovations, lower prices, increase speeds, improved quality of service and provide better options for our citizens.

Five consultations were held throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines to gather feedback from the public before the draft plan is finalized. The final consultation took place on February 16, 2017 at the Methodist Church Hall in capital city Kingstown.

The key speakers of the event were Mr. Richardson Franklin, consultant for the Caribbean Regional Communication Infrastructure Program (CARCIP), Mr. Sylvester Cadette, Programme Officer for the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Mr. Apollo Knights, Director of the NTRC and Mr. Anthony Regisford, Executive Director for the Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

In his remarks at the final event, Mr. Apollo Knights, Director of NTRC said their goal is to bring faster, more consistent and more affordable internet services in SVG. Mr. Knights said from the surveys done nationally they were not happy with the levels of internet penetration as well as the quality of it and that is why the Broadband Plan has been developed.

Mr. Franklin in his presentation discussed the plan in the detail outlining goals for improving broadband with eight focus areas. The areas are as follows: the provision of costumer requested levels of high speed broadband access to citizens, businesses and other institutions; the provision of affordable and universal broadband services; the strengthening of the universal service fund; the protection of users' privacy and rights, through modernised legislation and regulations; the introduction of a Government Wide Area Network with associated applications, IP-PBX and Undersea connectivity for the Grenadines; the increased usage of broadband access to allow small and medium sized enterprises to innovate and access new regional and international markets; the strengthening of on-going telemedicine programmes; and the introduction of computer science at all levels of education, which will make students the makers of technology.

The presentations were followed with questions and feedback from attendees at the event.

Source: NTRC

IT Tips

Boost Your WiFi

Reception

Place your router to maximize effectiveness.

Where you place your router has a lot to do with how it performs. Consider the following when placing your router:

1. Place your router near center of the house, on a top floor; on a wall or shelf. Radio waves best travel downwards and laterally.

2. Place router as far as possible from your neighbours' router and also using a different channel.

3. Place away from cordless phones and microwaves, which operate on the same 2.4-Ghz frequency.

4. Place away from power cords, computer wires. These wires can interfere with radio reception.

Evesham Resident wins 6 Months Free Broadband compliments NTRC

Ms. Magdalene Williams of Evesham is now the lucky winner of six (6) months FREE broadband compliments the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) .

Ms. Williams was selected as the lucky winner of a raffle hosted by the NTRC. To be eligible for the raffle, persons had to register their name and contact information at any of the five (5) broadband plan consultations held between January 31, 2017 to February 16, 2017 across St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The lucky winner was selected during a Facebook live session at the NTRC's conference room on February 17, 2017.

Source: NTRC

St. Kitts Government launches Five New Mobile Apps

Basseterre, St. Kitts, February 15, 2017 (SKNIS): The launch of five new interactive mobile apps forms part of the government's strategy to strengthen Information Communication and Technology (ICT) in St. Kitts and Nevis and increase the exchange of information, said the Honourable Shawn Richards, Deputy Prime Minister.

The five apps include SKN Shopper App, which allows persons to get a broader perspective on goods sold in supermarkets by comparing costs across the federation and highlighting the best ones; SKNIS (St. Kitts and Nevis Information Service) App which is the portal to public service information, news and information from the government; the Government Directory App, allows for persons to easily find contact information for any ministry, department, agency, unit or statutory corporation of the government; the Crime Reporter App allows for persons to report offences to the police; and the Government Events App will cater to those who want to stay up to date with the calendar of national events.

Source: St. Kitts Nevis Observer

Nevis observes ICT Week

February 19, 2017 - Mr. Embert Charles, Managing Director of the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL), was the feature speaker at the Delta Awards Dinner and Ceremony on Saturday, February 18, 2017, in Nevis for the closing of Nevis' ICT Week.

Mr. Charles spoke on the topic "Telecommunications, a Regional Perspective – Establishing the Framework for Positive Social and Economic Development."

The Delta Awards Dinner and Ceremony is part of a series of activities held to observe ICT Week, hosted by the Nevis Island Administration's Information Technology Department.

This is the IT Department's first Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Week. It is being held under the theme "An Introduction to ICT for Positive Social and Economic Development," from February 12 -18, 2017.

During the week, several events geared toward increasing knowledge and heightening awareness of ICT were held, with the aim to connect ICT solutions providers with solution seekers; promote the growth and development of the local ICT sector; raise awareness about critical ICT issues such as cyber-security, cyber-bullying and artificial intelligence and; generate interest in ICT as a career for young people.

Source: St. Lucia times

5G Americas report outlines LTE, 5G evolution

5G Americas, the industry trade association and voice of 5G and LTE for the Americas, on February 17, 2017 announced the publication of Wireless Technology Evolution Towards 5G: 3GPP Release 13 to Release 15 and Beyond which outlines the progress and evolution of LTE technology and the developing 5G standards.

"Dozens of 5G trials are occurring around the world, and the process of information gathering by leading operators and manufacturers to feed into the 3GPP standards process is underway," commented Vicki Livingston, Head of Communications, 5G Americas and a contributing writer to the report. "Both LTE and 5G will work together to form our connected future."
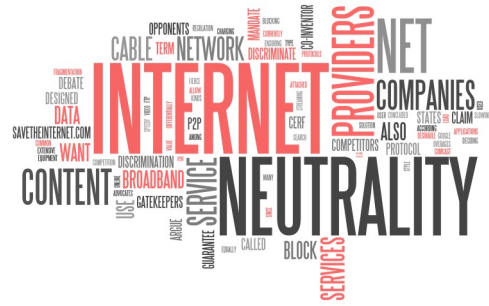
3GPP's strong history of standardizing the technologies that drive the largest mobile wireless ecosystems from GSM to LTE and now to 5G creates the backbone for this whitepaper by 5G Americas. LTE is expected to be the dominant mobile wireless technology well into the next decade with LTE-Advanced Pro in Rel-13 completed in 2016. The 5G Americas white paper provides a detailed discussion on the key feature enhancements that were included in 3GPP Rel-13, such as:

- Enhancements to support Active Antennas Systems (AAS)
- Licensed Assisted Access (LAA)
- Aggregation of LTE and WLAN (LWA and LWIP)
- Low power / wide area coverage for IoT applications through Cellular-IoT
- Enhancements to previously introduced LTE technologies
- Advanced Multiple-Input Multiple-Output (MIMO) antennas
- Self-Organizing Networks (SON)
- Carrier Aggregation (CA) and Dual Connectivity (DC)
- Proximity Services and Device-to-Device Communication for Public Safety (ProSe/D2D)

The white paper also provides a detailed discussion of the LTE enhancements being worked on as part of Rel-14 including further MIMO enhancements, CA enhancements, enhanced LAA (eLAA), enhanced LWA (eLWA), Voice over LTE (VoLTE) enhancements and enhancements to ProSe/D2D.

Jim Seymour, Principal Engineer, Mobility CTO Group, and co-leader of the 5G Americas report explained, "3GPP Releases 13 and 14 provide additional innovative technical enhancements for the evolution of LTE as the 5G and LTE standards develop in parallel at 3GPP."

Source: CANTO

General Counsel for Digicel Caribbean compares Net Neutrality to Brexit

Speaking at the 11th Capacity Caribbean Conference in Puerto Rico held on February 7 and 8, 2017, David Geary, General Counsel for Digicel Caribbean, compared the debate on Net Neutrality to that of Brexit in the United Kingdom.

In his presentation, he outlined that no one really knows what either Brexit or Net Neutrality means as both mean different things to different people, and like the debate about 'Soft Brexit' and 'Hard Brexit,' some people are in favour of very extreme Net Neutrality – or 'Hard Net Neutrality' rules. "'Hard Net Neutrality' will be very damaging to the Caribbean," said David Geary, during the panel discussion on the topic.

'Soft Net Neutrality' rules protect consumers, ensuring that there is no blocking of internet content. 'Hard Net Neutrality' rules go too far and are an attempt by Internet giants like Google to impose rules on the internet that suit them but put local companies at a disadvantage. "Instead of copying other regions, the Caribbean needs to decide what is best for Caribbean consumers to promote jobs and investment in the region," Geary continues.

He welcomed the case for co-regulation recently presented by the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL), and also praised the leadership of the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) on its initiative to formalise the partnership between industry, government and regulators by launching the Caribbean ICT Collaboration Committee. This Committee will consider all of the priorities of the Caribbean and propose the best approach to Net Neutrality for the Caribbean. It is due to produce these recommendations in 2017.

"The Caribbean region needs to be at the centre of the new digital economy and we cannot afford to sit back while jobs and investment go to other parts of the world," closed Geary.

Source: St. Lucia News Online via ICT Pulse

South Korea tops in LTE network speeds, U.S. continues to lag

The latest LTE network testing numbers from OpenSignal showed South Korea remained world's fastest, with the U.S. wallowing at one-third the speed.

South Korea again came out on top in terms of cellular network data speeds among 87 countries included in the latest worldwide network testing conducted by OpenSignal.

The latest findings showed South Korean mobile customers experiencing average network speeds of 37.5 megabits per second, with various iterations of LTE technology most likely supporting those speeds. The country – along with Singapore – topped OpenSignal's previous network testing, though with an average speed of 45 Mbps.

Cellular customers in Norway recorded the second highest average speeds at 34.77 Mbps, followed by Hungary at 31.04 Mbps, Singapore at 30.05 Mbps and Australia at 26.25 Mbps.
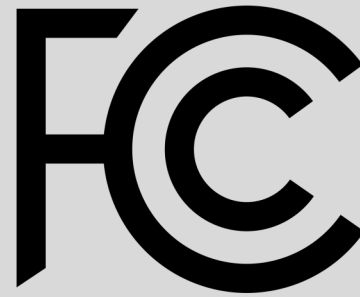
In terms of North America, Canada was No. 12 on the list with an average speed of 20.26 Mbps, the United States was No. 36 at 12.48 Mbps and Mexico was No. 49 with an average speed of 9.91 Mbps. For the U.S., the latest results were down from the 13.03 Mbps speeds recorded in the previous testing period.

OpenSignal noted its numbers are based on data recorded from smartphones that had downloaded the OpenSignal application and run over a three-month period beginning last November. The company noted the results included more than 19.2 billion data points from nearly 1.1 million users and involved both indoor and outdoor usage.

"For our Global State of Mobile Networks report, OpenSignal looked not at 4G or 3G speed individually, but rather at the aggregate speed our users experienced across all of a country's mobile data networks," the company explained. "We feel that measurement paints a more holistic picture of the typical mobile data experience as it factors in not only the performance of different types of networks, but the amount of access customers have to each of them."

Source: RCR Wireless

FCC opens bandwidth to new LTE-U technology

WASHINGTON — Federal regulators said on February 22, 2017 that they will allow certain new wireless devices to use a portion of unlicensed airwaves now used largely for Wi-Fi, a move aimed at ending a long-running dispute between industries.

The Federal Communications Commission said it would open up currently-unlicensed airwaves for use by new 4G LTE wireless devices known as LTE-U (for "unlicensed"). The move will allow wireless providers to deliver mobile broadband service while "sharing the road" with Wi-Fi, FCC chairman Ajit Pai said in a statement.

Ajit Pai, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission added that industry testing "demonstrated that both these [LTE-U] devices and Wi-Fi operations can co-exist…This [announcement] heralds a technical breakthrough in the many shared uses of this spectrum."

LTE-U will provide customers with another option that offers the extra capacity of unlicensed spectrum, but also the added security and faster speeds of LTE, a wireless broadband technology. Both Verizon Communications Inc. VZ, +1.26% and T-Mobile US Inc. TMUS, -1.72% , said on Wednesday that they would launch LTE-U network capabilities and devices in the spring.

Source: Market Watch

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