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NTRCs I² Competition climaxed with Grand Finale and Prize Giving Ceremony

The NTRC's Ideas and Innovations (I²) Competition climaxed with a Grand Finale and Prize Giving Ceremony on Tuesday, February 12th 2014 which was held at the National Insurance Services (NIS) Conference Room in the NIS Building on Upper Bay Street. A number of groups from secondary and tertiary institutions through-out St. Vincent and the Grenadines competed for the coveted prizes during the finals of the I² competition.

Several prizes were awarded to the first, second and third placed groups in the Ideas and Mobile Application category for both Secondary and Tertiary zones. Additionally, mentors of the winning groups and also the School with most entries received prizes. The prizes awarded included: trophies, cash prizes ranging from EC\$3,500.00—\$500.00, smartphones compliments Digicel and LIME, and one year of broadband service compliments Karib Cable.

The I² competition which was funded by the NTRC's Universal Service Fund provided a forum for the Secondary and Tertiary students to display their innovations in producing mobile applications or ideas that would essentially aid the Government's operations resulting in saving financial resources. Some of the Ideas / applications proposed ranged from taking a number of government services online including license, paying bills and taxes, and electronic sign-in to hospital systems among others. All Ideas and Mobile Applications are available publicly on our website at www.ntrsvg.com/i2 for review. The NTRC anticipates that some of these Ideas and Applications will be implemented to improve the services for all Vincentians while saving financial re-sources in the process.

Plans are currently being put in place for the 2014 I² Competition which is scheduled to be opened in September 2014.

Cyber Tips



Microsoft Plans to end support for Windows XP and Microsoft Office 2003 on April 8, 2014.

After April 8, 2014, Microsoft will no longer provide security updates or technical support for Windows XP and Office 2003.

If you are using Windows XP, you will no longer be considered protected after April 8, 2014 and as such, the following are some solutions to having a secured system:

- Migrate to a current supported system such as Windows 8.1
- Upgrade to Microsoft Office 2013 if you are still using Microsoft Office 2003
- Purchase a Mac OS enabled system.
- The more tech savvy individuals can consider migrating to open source operating systems of Linux such as Ubuntu.



ECTEL hosts ITU ICT Indicators Workshop



Presentation at the ICT Indicators Workshop in St. Lucia

Multi-State Telecommunications regulator Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority ECTEL along with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) held a four (4) day workshop in St. Lucia between February 24th—27th 2014.

The objective of the workshop was to discuss how to collect and measure ICT Indicators within the Caribbean and to align these indicators with the frame-work that was put in place by the ITU. There were two main presenters from the ITU, namely Mr. Ivan Vallejo, Market Analyst, ICT Data and Statistics Division, ITU and ITU's Senior Statistician, Miss Esperanza Magpantay.



Mr. Ivan Vallejo, Market Analyst, ICT Data and Statistics Division, ITU.

During the opening ceremony of the workshop, Mr. Embert Charles, Managing Director of ECTEL said that it has been a problem for its member states to gather and produce statistical ICT data. He added that he anticipates that the workshop would help the member states to provide quality and timely data and also to develop working relationships between the regulators and statistical departments across the region.

The workshop was attended by representatives of regulatory and statistical bodies of twelve Caribbean countries including Bermuda, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, St. Lucia, Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname and Brazil.

During the workshop, ECTEL launched the Annual Electronic Communications Sector Review for the year 2013. The Annual Electronic Communications Sector Review presents information on the performance of the sector – telecommunications services, broadcasting services; levels of investments. It also presents an analysis of trends in consumption and other main indicators.

ECTEL also launched its revamped website during the workshop. Managing Director Embert Charles said the new website will be a more user-friendly site that will allow customers to interact with the regulatory body. Amongst many improvements of the website was the inclusion of social media plugins which would enable the public to interact with the organization or share articles of interest.



St. Lucia launches Local Internet Exchange Point (SLiX)

The St Lucia exchange (SLiX), was launched on February 28, 2014 under the umbrella of a broader World Bank-funded Caribbean Communications Infrastructure Program (CARCIP), coordinated by the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU).

The IXP is a critical component of the overall project, which seeks to increase region-wide access to and uptake of broadband Internet service.

The CTU has been engaged to coordinate CARCIP, which is a partnership between the World Bank and the governments of St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada.

Christopher Roberts, St. Lucia's CARCIP coordinator noted that the establishment of the St Lucia IXP is a triumph not of technology, but of the spirit of collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders in a highly competitive and restricted market.

With SLiX, for the first time in St Lucia's history, local internet service providers (ISPs) have agreed to exchange locally destined internet traffic between their respective networks.

Source: [AntiguaObserver](#)

Brazil speeds up availability of 2.5 GHz, 700 MHz bands for LTE

Brazilian carriers that bought spectrum licenses in the 2.5 GHz frequency band at an auction in June 2013 have until April to provide LTE coverage to all the offices of the Confederations Cup, they must also provide coverage to the branches and sub-offices of the 2014 World Cup. Of the four carriers who received licenses only Claro has launched commercial LTE services.

In addition to the carriers' efforts, Brazil's government is working to speed up deployments. Earlier this year, the Brazilian telecom regulator Anatel demanded microwave (MMDS) pay-TV providers to empty the 2510 MHz to 2570 MHz and 2630 MHz to 2690 MHz bands, which will be used for LTE.

Initially, MMDS providers had until June 30 to empty the bands, but they have now been asked to leave them by April 12. The measure was taken specifically with the six FIFA Confederations Cup host cities in mind.

In a statement, Anatel noted its concerns over the LTE schedule. MMDS operators that fail to release the spectrum in these cities before the deadline could have their licenses suspended and their base stations closed.

Anatel is also speeding up the use of the 700 MHz spectrum band for LTE. Anatel got the green light to debate the matter in February, when the Brazilian Ministry of Communications (Minicom) published its decision in the official gazette (Diário Oficial) to allow the allocation of the 700 MHz spectrum band for LTE mobile broadband. Currently, the 700 MHz spectrum is allocated for analog television in Brazil.

Source: [RCR Wireless](#)



Bahamas concerned about its ICT Statistics

The Bahamas government says the island's main economic pillars were coming under "fierce competition" from fellow Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries as it welcomed the latest technology to improve telecommunication services.

"The Bahamas economic pillars of tourism, banking and financial services are under fierce competition from our Caribbean sister countries. I want to underscore the significance of super-fast broadband and the importance of The Bahamas being ahead of the curve," National Security Minister Bernard J. Nottage said.

Nottage indicated that a Report by the Broadband Commission sanctioned by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) last year had noted that the percentage of Individuals using the Internet in Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, Luxembourg and Finland were all above 90 per cent and that there is only one Caribbean country – Antigua and Barbuda – above 80 per cent and ranked as number 20th in the world.

Nottage said the Bahamas is rated in 40th in the world or fourth in the Caribbean with 71.7 per cent. But he noted that in the category of "Percentage of Households with Internet", Korea is number one with 97.4% in the world.

He added that for the percentage of Individuals using the internet, Bahamas is rated in 40th in the world or fourth in the Caribbean with 71.7 per cent. But he noted that in the category of "Percentage of Households with Internet" Korea is number one with 97.4% in the world. "Barbados leads the way in the Caribbean as number 15 in the world with 57.9 per cent. The Bahamas is not even listed because no Data was available," he said, adding that in the category of "Mobile Broadband Penetration per 100 Population" Singapore leads the way with 123.3 per cent with Barbados again leading the Caribbean with 36.4 per cent in 45th place.

Nottage said that the 2013 ITU report noted that only Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean was providing more than 20 per cent of its customers Fixed Broadband Rates of greater than 10 Mbit/s and 60 percent of its customers between 2 Mbit/s and 10 Mbit/s. Nottage welcomed the launch of the BTC's Lte Network noting that the Global Mobile Suppliers Association (GSA) had confirmed that 260 LTE networks have been commercially launched in 95 countries, 13 of which are in the Caribbean.

Source: [AntiguaObserver](#)



T-Mobile Plans to Upgrade 2G EDGE Network to 4G LTE

T-Mobile is celebrating the one year anniversary of its 4G LTE network launch with the announcement that it plans to upgrade its 2G EDGE service. The carrier intends to transition half of its EDGE network to 4G LTE by the end of the year, with the full completion of the upgrade by the middle of 2015.

Though T-Mobile has fast network speeds in cities and metro areas, those speeds drop off sharply outside of the major markets. By upgrading the EDGE network to 4G, the carrier will be able to maintain LTE service and speeds for customers beyond city limits. The plan will make use of the 700 MHz A-block spectrum that T-Mobile purchased from Verizon earlier this year.

While the carrier intends to keep some 2G service to support M2M connections and lower-end phones, the plan is another big step forward for T-Mobile's LTE expansion. Though it was the last of the major U.S. carriers to launch its 4G LTE network and is still far behind market leaders Verizon and AT&T, T-Mobile has been making rapid progress. The carrier plans to cover 230 million people by the middle of 2014 and 250 million by the end of the year.

Source: [Telecom Monthly](#)



Netflix Reaches Another Traffic Agreement with Norway's Telenor

Netflix's recent peering arrangement with Comcast was thought to be the first of many such deals and so it's no surprise that the video-streaming company has reportedly signed another similar agreement. What is surprising is that the agreement is not with a big U.S. Internet service provider, but with Norway's Telenor.

Reports from Norway provide some details on the deal. The arrangement will see Netflix pay rent to place its own content-filled servers within Telenor's datacenter. This setup is actually similar to Netflix's OpenConnect proposal, which offered ISP's the chance to have Netflix servers within their datacenters, though the big difference is that Netflix is paying Telenor.

While the deal doesn't initially seem like a paid peering arrangement, it ultimately comes down to the same thing. As with Comcast, Telenor's speeds for Netflix traffic have been slowing down and this agreement is intended to fix things by dealing directly with the ISP. Though both providers claim that they are not prohibited from charging Netflix for access and will not provide it with any preferential treatment, consumer rights group are wary of the implications for net neutrality. A large part of the concern is that the majority of the particulars of the deals remain unknown to the public.

After Comcast and now Telenor, it appears that Netflix is likely to reach similar agreements with other ISPs sooner rather than later

Source: [Telecom Monthly](#)



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