



NTRC concludes its 5th Annual Ideas & Innovation Competition.

The National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission awarded several winners in its 5th Annual Ideas and Innovation Competition held at the Kingstown Methodist Church Hall on Wednesday, November 15, 2017.

Jared Nichols 12, and Stanislaus Gomes 11 both of the St. Vincent Grammar School were the winners of the Secondary Schools Mobile Application Category. The duo who entered under the group name “Astra” won themselves 4 tablets compliments Express Data Systems, a cash prize of EC\$3,000.00 compliments NTRC along with a first place trophy. The group presented a mobile app “AIA Access” which allows persons to book and track flights, browse events and shops among other things at the newly commissioned Argyle International Airport. The duo was assisted by their mentor, Mr. Jason Alexis.

In the secondary schools’ innovative idea category, the energetic duo of Nyron Collis and Phyziah Craigg of the Petit Bordel Secondary School (PBSS), going by the name PBSS Innovators, placed first. The form four students, assisted by Stanley Jocelyn, presented an idea, if implemented will see the islet located in the waters off Chateaubelair transformed into an eco-friendly lodge. The group was awarded cash prize of EC\$2,000.00 from the NTRC, smartphones compliments Digicel and four cases of Vitamalt compliments St. Vincent Brewery Ltd.

In the newly introduced Open Category that catered to Vincentians under 35 years, the group LX2, made of a husband and wife—Terby and Jana Lewis emerged as winners. The couple presented a car pool mobile application which allows Vincentians to summon a taxi using their smartphone. The duo was awarded EC\$5,000.00 compliments NTRC, four tablets and six mobile power banks from King Computer Corporation (USA) and one case of Vitamalt compliments St. Vincent Brewery Ltd.

Second and third place positions in each of the categories were also awarded cash prizes compliments the NTRC.

Source: [NTRC](#)

DNSSEC – What Is It and Why Is It Important?



To reach another person on the Internet you have to type an address into your computer - a name or a number. That address has to be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN coordinates these unique identifiers across the world. Without that coordination we wouldn't have one global Internet. When typing a name, that name must be first translated into a number by a system before the connection can be established. That system is called the Domain Name System (DNS) and it translates names like www.icann.org into the numbers - called Internet Protocol (IP) addresses. Recently, vulnerabilities in the DNS were discovered that allow an attacker to hijack this process of looking some one up or looking a site up on the Internet using their name. The purpose of the attack is to take control of the session to, for example, send the user to the hijacker's own deceptive web site for account and password collection. DNSSEC is a technology that was developed to, among other things, protect against such attacks by digitally 'signing' data so you can be assured it is valid. The deployment of DNSSEC will ensure the end user is connecting to the actual web site or other service corresponding to a particular domain name.



NTRC facilitates the signing of IXP Agreements between Digicel and Flow

On Thursday, November 30, 2017, the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC), facilitated the signing of Internet Exchange Point (IXP) agreements between Digicel and Flow at a ceremony held at the NTRC's Conference Room located on the second floor of the NIS Building, Kingstown, St. Vincent.

Speaking at the ceremony, Director of the NTRC, Mr. Apollo Knights indicated that the IXP is important as it makes the internet better for consumers. He explained that without an IXP, local internet traffic between customers on different ISP networks (eg Digicel and Flow) must leave St. Vincent on one network and return on another network. With an IXP, local traffic on different networks no longer need to leave St. Vincent, rather, it would be exchanged locally at the IXP.

Mr. Knights went on to further state that sending traffic back and forth increases costs and latency, and so, having our own IXP is a boost.

Mr. Hannif Sutherland, featured speaker at the ceremony outlined that the IXP means that St. Vincent and the Grenadines can have benefits that lead to a more developed e-society and urged the local ISPs to develop server farms to offer local hosting of websites and other cloud applications.

Also giving brief remarks at the ceremony were the country managers of Digicel and Flow, Mr. John Davies and Mr. Wayne Hull respectively. Both outlined the importance of the IXP and its importance for improving the internet experience of consumers.

At the end of the ceremony, both country managers signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Internet Exchange Point Governance Agreement. These documents outline the rules on how the IXP is managed and the rules on how traffic should be passed.

Source: [Searchlight](#)

Telecommunications Service Providers continue to restore Services in Dominica.



As of November 27, 2017, 39 of Flow's 49 mobile sites have been restored in the island of Dominica allowing customers to use voice and data services from Flow. Flow mobile service now reaches 91% of the population.

Voice and internet service has been restored to 83% of major business customers and 85% of Government's major locations in the city. Service has also been restored to major health centers, police stations and secondary schools in Roseau & Portsmouth.

Flow is committed to restoring its service to all communities across Dominica and will keep customers updated on service restorations in a timely manner.

Similarly, Digicel has been successful in restoring Home TV and Internet services in key areas on the island.

Roseau and the surrounding areas of Bath Estate and Pottersville can once again enjoy their favourite TV shows and connect online to the people and things they love.

Digicel customers in areas still to be re-connected, are urged to keep their equipment – namely the modems and set top boxes – safely secured.

However, in the eventuality that their equipment has been damaged, Digicel will replace the equipment, at no additional cost.

As the reactivation of Digicel's Home TV and Internet continues, subscribers should also be mindful that Digicel can only re-engage their services after power has been returned by the Dominica Electricity Services Ltd (Domlec) to the affected customers.

Digicel's engineers remain hard at work on total network restoration in the shortest possible time.

Source: [Dominica News Online](#) via [ICT Pulse](#)

OECS prepares for 'Cloud for Development (C4D)' pilot

The OECS is moving towards the implementation of disaster-proof innovation and infrastructure with the pilot of the World Bank's Cloud for Development (C4D) project in Member States.

C4D is a joint OECS Commission, World Bank and Amazon Web Services (AWS) initiative that aims to enable national statistical offices (NSOs) and the rest of the public sector in developing countries to securely store, access, analyse and share survey and administrative data.

The OECS Commission in collaboration with the World Bank recently convened a C4D conference at the Cocoa Palm Hotel in Gros Islet, Saint Lucia, from November 13th to 15th 2017, to confirm the feasibility for piloting the C4D project within the OECS Member States.

Specific objectives were:

- to present a set of tools that are available on the cloud;
- to share the experiences of countries that have already been using cloud storage to store and, analyse their data; and
- to discuss legal issues related to hosting sensitive data on the cloud.

The World Bank, leading this initiative, will partner with major global cloud providers such as AWS, Microsoft and Google to develop and test the technological and legal frameworks to introduce cloud computing to the Member States.

Michael Lokshin, Lead Economist and Manager in the Development Data Group of the World Bank, acknowledged the technical challenges and risks associated with cloud computing technology and proposed "public-private partnership for resilient digital infrastructure." He said "NSOs' reliance on local IT infrastructure makes the hardware and software highly vulnerable to natural disasters."

The cloud for development initiative is consistent with the OECS Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS). The RSDS has five strategic priorities, one of which is to "join the data revolution" – this calls for exploring and exploiting information technology more aggressively and innovatively than ever before. Modern ways of collecting/capturing/gathering, integrating, accessing and storing data are fundamental to this priority.

Source: [St. Lucia News Online](#)

Airbnb launches Trips in Jamaica



Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett is elated that community tourism got a major boost after Jamaica's tourism officials deepened ties recently with Airbnb, the world's

largest home lodgings platform.

Airbnb launched its Trips platform in Jamaica, adding the 'Land of Wood and Water' to a growing list of international destinations offering bookable local experiences, making it easier for entrepreneurial Jamaicans to share their passions and interests with people from across the globe.

"This is a major development for Jamaica and positions us as a pioneering destination regionally and internationally. We are the second island in the Caribbean to have this. We have been very serious, via our Linkages programme, about spreading the benefits on tourism into communities across Jamaica and not just limit it to traditional resort areas. This move will assist in changing the dynamics to the benefit of many Jamaicans," Tourism Minister Bartlett stated.

"From learning how to cook traditional dishes to discovering the rhythms of local genres of music and more, these new, locally-led experiences will allow visitors to see Jamaica in a unique way."

The Airbnb Trips launch took place at the Global Tourism Conference held last week at the Montego Bay Convention Centre. The Conference on Jobs and Inclusive Growth: Partnerships for Sustainable Tourism was spearheaded by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the Ministry of Tourism, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and Chemonics.

Meanwhile, Chris Lehane, head of Global Policy and Public Affairs for Airbnb, was also excited about the launch.

"With this movement, Airbnb moves one step closer to bringing people and places together in one travel platform by enabling people-powered experiences to be listed alongside the thousands of homes already available to book through the home-sharing platform.

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

Microsoft provides Emergency Communications in Puerto Rico & US Virgin Islands



TV white spaces (TWWS) technology provided by Microsoft is helping people in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands

reconnect with people outside their immediate communities. More than two months have passed since Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands were ravaged by hurricanes, knocking out internet and cell communications as well as many basic services that still haven't been restored. Across Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, there are still widespread power outages, nearly 40 percent of cell sites are still down, most people don't have internet service and many TV and radio stations aren't yet operational, according to a Microsoft blog. Microsoft, in partnership with NetHope, government agencies, local Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and local TV broadcasters, has deployed TV White Space (TWWS) technology from the company's Airband initiative to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to meet some of those communications needs.

TWWS are unused blocks of broadcast spectrum. Technology operating in those bands supports wireless broadband connections over great distances and in rugged terrain, with no line of sight.

In Utuado, TWWS has been used to re-establish internet connectivity to a food distribution site, a health clinic and the University of Puerto Rico. These sites also serve as internet hotspots where people in the community can come and connect with their family and friends.

In addition to Utuado, Microsoft has TWWS sites up and running in Humacao, Puerto Rico; and in the U.S. Virgin Islands in St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas, according to the blog. TWWS is expected to be working in Barranquitas and San Lorenzo in Puerto Rico. "Our hope is that TWWS broadband connections will hasten the recovery in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, making it a little less difficult for people in the region to communicate and to recover," the blog said.

Source: [Telecompetitor](#)

Google makes a big play for the mobile Internet market in India



India has a population of 1.4 billion (and rising) and, so far, less than 30 per cent is either online or has access to wireless broadband.

Google wants a piece of what will be a very lucrative sector and so is focusing on the Indian market and investing heavily in a new version of its popular Android operating system (and associated apps) that will work well with relatively inexpensive smartphones that come with far fewer of the costly bells, whistles and go-faster stripes which put top-of-the-range handsets beyond the grasp of cash-strapped but highly aspirational (and predominantly young) Indians.

Their budgets and disposable income might be less than those enjoyed by their contemporaries in the West but there are millions of new-to-the-smartphone-world consumers across the sub-continent desperate for the opportunity to join the information society. If Google can capture a goodly share of this new market – and keep it loyal – continued growth will be assured. Each and every week, one million new Indian subscribers are getting online for the very first time, the vast majority gaining access through smartphone wireless technology.

To that end, Google is drafting in a phalanx of its best developers and designers and tasking them to come up with ways either to adapt existing popular apps and services or scrapping the rule book altogether to create innovative new products from scratch. As Caesar Sengupta, the vice president responsible for Google's "Next Billion Users" division, says, "Figuring out how to build the right products for them is a top priority for Google". The Indian mobile communications market is wide-open and booming and price wars are commonplace. However, much of that freebooting applies to the lower, basic end of the market and competitive and innovative data plans for the aspirational middle classes have been few and far between.

The sector would grow so much more quickly if inexpensive smartphones able to store big video files and run apps were to become easily available in combination with data bundles big enough and manageable enough for subscribers to learn to measure and tailor their usage as their experience of the mobile Internet and its vagaries improves.

Source: [ITU](#)

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