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NTRC's I Squared Competition moves into Preliminary Judging Phase

The 2017 NTRC's Ideas and Innovations Competition (i² Competition) has now advanced into the preliminary judging stage. The preliminary judging begins on November 24th and will end on December 15, 2016. During the preliminaries, participants will present a detailed description of their idea or mobile application to a panel of judges consisting of key personnel in the private sector of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The tertiary schools will have their preliminaries on November 24th at the NIS Conference room followed by the secondary schools located on mainland St. Vincent on December 14th at the NIS Conference Room. Preliminaries for groups in the southern Grenadine Island of Union Island would be held on December 15, 2016 at the Union Island Secondary School.

Based on the judging of the preliminaries, the top three (3) ranking teams will advance to the finals scheduled for January 2017.

Finalists in the Mobile Application category will be expected to showcase a working prototype or model of their mobile application from the preliminary round. On the other hand the finalists in the Ideas category would be expected to present to the panel of judges what applications / apparatuses or other outcomes may result from their ideas. Students would have a maximum of seven (7) minutes to present and a five (5) minute period for questioning by the panel of judges.

Participants can receive up to EC\$3,500 in cash prizes and other gifts from partners in the competition. The partners for the 2017 i² Competition are St. Vincent Brewery Ltd, Courts, Massy Stores Supermarket, St. Vincent and the Grenadines Broadcasting Corporation, The Searchlight Newspaper, National Insurance Services (NIS), Center for Enterprise Development (CED), National Broadcasting Corporation, Fanfare Events, King Computer Corporation and Right Stuff.

Wi-Fi Security & **Safety Tips**

With many locations having free access to public Wi-Fi, it's a convenient way to check your emails, catch up on social networking, or surf the web when you're out and about. However, cybercriminals will often spy on public Wi-Fi networks and intercept data that is transferred across the link. In this way, the criminal can access users' banking credentials, account passwords, and other information.

Here are some tips to protect vourself on Public Wifi networks.

Be aware Public Wi-Fi is inherently insecure - so be cautious.

Remember - any device could be at risk Laptops, smartphones, and tablets are all susceptible to the wireless security risks.

Wi-Fi Treat all links suspicion Don't just assume that the Wi-Fi link is legitimate. It could be a bogus link that has been set up by a cybercriminal that's trying to capture valuable, personal information from unsuspecting users. everything - and don't connect to an unknown or unrecognized wireless access point.

Consider using your cell phone network

If you need to access any websites that store or require the input of any sensitive information - including social networking, online shopping, and online banking sites - it may be worthwhile accessing them via your cell phone network, instead of the public Wi-Fi connection.



NTRC to hand over computers to various local organisations throughout SVG.

The National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) will be hosting a ceremony to officially hand over computers to various organisations throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These Computers were provided by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

The handing over ceremony will take place on Tuesday December 6, 2016 at 11:00am at the National Insurance Services Training Room on the first floor of the NIS Building located on Upper Bay Street, Kingstown

Source: NTRC



The National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) Grenada welcomes a new member at the Grenada Internet Exchange Point (GREX). On October 14th, 2016, Digicel became a valid peering member at the exchange point. With the inclusion of Digicel to its membership, the number of providers now connected at the IXP jumps to four, with prior membership from LIME, FLOW and Aislecom.

This marks an important milestone in the lifecycle of the Internet Exchange Point as it represents and reinforces the commitment of the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission and the providers towards the continued development of the IXP. As more providers join at the Grenada Internet Exchange Point, the goal of realising more visible benefit for the Internet community of Grenada draws closer to becoming a reality.

Source: NTRC Grenada

CWC revenues down, customer base up in 2nd Quarter 2016 for the Caribbean and Central America



Telecommunications company Cable & Wireless Communications (CWC)

experienced a drop in revenues and the addition of 9,000 organic revenue generating units (RGUs) in the second quarter of this year.

In the preliminary results for the six months ending September 30, the company reported year-to-date revenues of US\$1.14bn, a 2% year-on-year drop on a rebased basis. CWC explained that 10% growth in Jamaica offset declines in other markets resulting from competitive and macroeconomic factors, as well as lower managed services revenue.

Adjusted Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortization (EBITDA) was up 1.5% year-on-year, reaching US\$411mn. EBITDA rose 4% sequentially, or US\$9mn, from 1Q16/17 to 2Q16/17, reflecting a margin improvement of 200 basis points.

CWC made a net loss of US\$18m in the quarter and US\$124m year-to-date. Property, equipment and intangible asset additions declined to 17% of revenue in 2Q16/17 from 25% in the same period of last year.

The telco explained that its BTC (Telecommunications company in Bahamas) brand suffered significant infrastructure damage and business interruption in the Bahamas due to Hurricane Matthew in early October. Total repair costs were estimated at US\$35-45m. However, CWC grew its mobile customer base for the Bahamas by 4,000 or 1%.

In the mobile segment, which represents 40% of total revenue, postpaid subscriber growth was offset by a decline in the prepaid customer base, mainly due to the impact of competitive offers in Panama.

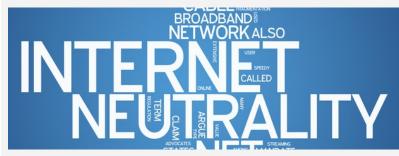
CWC's video, internet, and telephony businesses saw the addition of 9,000 organic revenue generating units (RGUs) during the quarter. In the case of broadband the telco added 7,000 organic subscribers with 5,000 RGU additions in Jamaica and 2,000 RGU additions in Trinidad & Tobago.

Regarding the video segment, CWC added 1,000 RGUs in the quarter. This was driven by the Direct to Home (DTH) business in Panama. The increased RGUs from the DTH business were largely offset by declines in video RGUs in Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago as a result of increased competition.

Liberty Global completed the US\$7.6bn acquisition of CWC in May of this year.

Source: CANTO





Castries, Saint Lucia – November 07 2016: The Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority-ECTEL, is moving ahead with plans for new legislation which will guarantee the citizens of its Member States the unhindered access to the products and services on the Internet.

The new legislation includes provisions for supporting the policy of net neutrality, which is based on the principle that Internet service providers should treat all data on the Internet the same. Due to the increased number of over the top (OTT)services and the growing trend for service providers to block these services, this principle has become very important to protect consumer's ability to access all content on the Internet. The principles of Net Neutrality have been included in electronic communications legislation in the European Union countries, the United States of America, Chile and Canada.

ECTEL's net neutrality journey commenced with a public consultation which was conducted in all Member States between September and November 2013. Submissions were received from Lime, Digicel and Columbus Communications. As a result of these consultations, ECTEL was able to conclude that the principle of an Open Internet should be preserved and maintained, and that the practice of blocking websites potentially inhibits economic development and interferes with customers' privacy rights. Moreover, to do so is in breach of the terms of the current telecommunications legislation and licences terms and conditions. ECTEL will continue to pursue its policy position on net neutrality armed with the new Electronic Communications (EC) Bill which was recently approved by the ECTEL Council of Ministers. The Bill sets the framework for full public consultation on the development of regulations which will specifically address net neutrality.

According to ECTEL's Managing Director Embert Charles: "The policy directive of the ECTEL Council of Ministers to support the principles of net neutrality was aimed at ensuring that there are no arbitrary impediments to accessing all types of information and services which are available on the Internet."

Source: ECTEL

Poor Service – TRC (BVI) threatens action against Flow

The Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (TRC) - BVI has threatened to take action against Flow if it does not address what is described as the poor service being experienced by some users of the telecom provider's fixed line broadband internet. While noting that it has been working closely with Flow for roughly a year to address the situation, the TRC announced that it recently signed a new Customer Charter on Fixed Broadband Service, which has set out a number of targets for Flow to meet.

Under the Charter, which becomes effective on November 15 and affects only fixed broadband services provided by Flow, affected consumers can claim compensation and an alternative mifi device.

"If a customer experiences no service or less than 50% of their sold speed due to a Flow network fault for more than two working days, the customer can and should seek a refund of the bill for the affected period," the TRC advised in a press statement.

"The customer is also entitled to a replacement mifi device to enable the customer to access the internet whilst Flow addresses the problem."

The TRC, which noted that it is very concerned about the poor quality of service, further explained: "The Commission will monitor Flow's performance over 2017 with the Customer Charter performance targets in place. If Flow does not meet its Commitments to customers in relation to compensation and replacement mifi devices, or its Commitments to achieve agreed quality of service targets, then the Commission will consider it a breach of the Customer Commitments."

"In the event that Flow does not rectify a breach within seven days of notification, the Commission will proceed to public notification alerting the public to this news by way of the press, social media and its website," the TRC continued.

"In the event that the Commission determines that performance has not improved satisfactorily over the course of 2017, the Commission may consider the introduction of more severe enforcement remedies, including fines."

Source: BVI News via ICT Pulse

Nominet and Microsoft collaborate on TV white space broadband project for Africa

Nominet and Microsoft have announced a partnership to deliver broadband across the African continent, using Nominet's TV white space database and dynamic spectrum management technology, along with Microsoft's Azure cloud platform, to bring low-cost terrestrial wireless broadband internet to remote and rural communities.

TV white space (TVWS) is the part of the radio spectrum occupied by unassigned or unused UHF and VHF broadcast frequencies, largely unused in many countries since analogue television services started going off air, replaced by digital services. The available set of TVWS frequencies varies from territory to territory, so Nominet developed a geolocation database to tell devices which frequencies they can use in a given area, at what power and for how long.

Radio spectrum supports the majority of internet connections, but it is a finite resource and with the anticipated explosion of wireless broadband services and billions of devices connected to the Internet of Things, effective management of the spectrum will become crucial.

Speaking to Engineering & Technology (E&T) at the launch event, part of Nominet's Internet of Things showcase, Adam Leach, head of R&D at Nominet, said, "As a business, we've been looking at the challenges of IoT. We're looking at the four main areas where we see challenges: interoperability, security, privacy and connectivity.

"In connectivity, what we've been looking at is how dynamic spectrum can be used, how you can allocate spectrum more efficiently to stop the mass of wireless devices causing a spectrum crunch if we get that projected 60 billion devices all connecting to the internet. You've got a tripling of internet traffic and the majority of that being wireless, you've got this pressure on our wireless spectrum that needs to be addressed. We believe that geolocation technologies can be a good way to do that spectrum management.

Source: <u>E&T</u>

Fixed wireless broadband and the 28 GHz spectrum band are driving initial 5G moves

Momentum is definitely on the side of "5G" technology, with most large mobile telecom operators either having already announced plans to begin trials of what they expect to be a technology standard or in the planning stages for such trials.

Among the early domestic movers, two trends have emerged in terms of plans for commercial trials: fixed wireless broadband will be the service, and the 28 GHz spectrum band will be the wavelength of choice. AT&T, Verizon Wireless, T-Mobile US, U.S. Cellular and C Spire have all announced plans to trial 5G services using the nonconventional spectrum band.

However, despite the broad support, the business case for such moves remains in limbo.

Research firm Mobile Experts recently released a case study on broadband-based 5G services focused on return on investment for deployments, noting current technology tied to the limited propagation characteristics of the 28 GHz band come up short in terms of supporting a business case.

The firm said it calculated the potential ROI for operators investing in a pre-5G network using the 28 GHz band compared with LTE costs and "the potential costs for a sub-6 GHz network using 5G technology," and found at "historical prices, 5G will not be successful." To reach the necessary ROI, Mobile Experts said the market would need inexpensive access to large spectrum blocks.

"The business case for 5G fixed broadband is not a slam dunk," said Joe Madden, principal analyst at Mobile Experts. "We expect pre-5G deployment to be a very targeted investment by mobile operators, addressing very specific neighborhoods instead of nationwide deployment."

Madden noted millimeter wave links at 50 meters created a "challenge to the business case, because the number of customers served by each radio will be too small." The firm noted links of at least 200 meters would be required to reach enough users to support sufficient ROI.

Source: RCR Wireless



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