



THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY COMMISSION

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35 Vincentians benefit from NTRC's 1st GMDSS Radio Training

Thirty-Five (35) Vincentians are now better equipped in using GMDSS enabled devices to communicate at sea in emergency and non-emergency cases at a GMDSS (Global Maritime Distress and Safety System) Radio training. The training, which is the first in a series of five sessions was held at the Fisheries conference room.

The training session was opened with a few brief remarks from Mr. Kyron Duncan, USF Administrator at the NTRC and Mrs. Jennifer Cruickshank-Howard, Chief Fisheries Officer at the Division of Fisheries.

Mr. Duncan informed the audience that the GMDSS radios use an MMSI (Maritime Mobile Service Identity) number which can be obtained from the NTRC. This unique identifier allows the coastguard to immediately identify a vessel in the event that a distress call is issued. He added that the GMDSS radios are better suited to be used at sea compared to cellular phones because they have a wider operating radius of 40 miles compared to 20 miles for cellular phones.

The training was conducted by members of the SVG coastguard, Mr. Grayson Stephens assisted by Mr. Garrett Glasgow. The coastguard officers demonstrated the features of the GMDSS radios, illustrating how they can be used in emergency and non-emergency cases. Attendees were subsequently given the opportunity to participate in simulation exercises using the radios to communicate with each other.

At the conclusion of the training, 85% of the attendees expressed interest in purchasing the radios as they understood the benefits of having such a device in their possession while at sea. The NTRC will be hosting four (4) additional training sessions in different areas across St. Vincent and the Grenadines, namely, Calliaqua, Barrouallie, Bequia and Union Island.



Tips to Help Stop Cyber Bullying

Here are a few tips to help stop Cyber Bullying.

Don't respond or retaliate.

Sometimes a reaction is exactly what aggressors are looking for because they think it gives them power over you, and you don't want to empower a bully.

Save the evidence. The only good news about bullying online or on phones is that it can usually be captured, saved, and shown to someone who can help.

Use available tech tools. Most social media apps and services allow you to block the person. Whether the harassment's in an app, texting, comments or tagged photos, do yourself a favor and block the person. You can also report the problem to the service. If you're getting threats of physical harm, you should call your local police.

Protect your accounts. Don't share your passwords with anyone – even your closest friends, who may not be close forever – and password-protect your phone so no one can use it to impersonate you.

Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines offers funding to local business to train staff in ICT

On Friday April 15, 2016, the Ministry of Economic Planning, Sustainable Development, Industry, Information and Labour launched its second Call for Proposals under the Training Grants Programme of the CARCIP Project. Through this programme, local businesses and Non-Government Institutions seeking to enhance the skill set of their employees in the Information Communication Technology (ICT) field would have access to grant funding of up to EC \$100,000 (US \$37,200).

To be eligible, a business must be legally registered with the relevant authorities in SVG; be legally and financially autonomous; operate under Commercial law and not be dependent on the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. A business may partner with another business for purposes of the project and in which case, the lead organization must be legally established in SVG. It must also provide counterpart funding of 35% of the cost of the project (35% can be in-kind, an equivalent monetary amount or a combination of both) and accept the financial requirements of the program. The proposed training must be ICT related and offered to a minimum of 15 persons. The call for proposals will close on May 18, 2016. Interested applicants can contact the Telecommunications Office at 784-456-1223 or email: carcipsvg@gov.vc.

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is also funding training for individuals seeking to develop their skills in ICT related areas. This initiative, is being implemented by the Ministry of Economic Planning, through CARCIP SVG in collaboration with the SVG National Centre of Technological Innovation (SVGNCTI).

Under this training programme, qualified applicants would receive a grant of up to 80% of the total cost of the course. Interested persons can visit <http://www.svgncti.org/carcip/> for more information.

Source: [CARCIP SVG](#)



ECTEL council improves legislation

Ministers with responsibility for telecommunications in the region of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) met in Saint Lucia on April 13, 2016, to discuss new legislation designed to strengthen consumer rights and ensure that the climate for investment remains competitive.

The main agenda item for the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL) Council of Ministers' 33rd meeting was the new draft Electronic Communications (EC) Bill. The EC Bill contains changes to the licensing process that will facilitate investment in all ECTEL member states; new rules that address competition issues facing the sector; and recommendations for strengthening the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commissions (NTRCS) to make it more effective. The bill also contains improved rules for resolving quality of service issues faced by consumers.

At the meeting, the ECTEL Council of Ministers additionally discussed new quality of service regulations, consumer protection regulations, retail pricing, wholesale pricing, and the sharing of infrastructure; and considered a recommendation on measures to address the impact of the merger of Cable & Wireless Communications and Columbus International in light of the impasse in negotiations between ECTEL and the companies.

Managing Director of ECTEL, Embert Charles, said the meeting is an important one that will advance the policy objectives of member states.

"These submissions to the ministers are in response to the directives of the ECTEL Council of Ministers late last year for the Directorate to advance the process of regulatory reform, in order to address the wide range of emerging issues in the electronic communications sector in ECTEL member states." Following deliberations, the approved new regulatory instruments including the EC Bill and an amended ECTEL Treaty will be submitted to the member states for promulgation.

The ECTEL Council of Ministers is made up of ministers responsible for telecommunications in the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The governments of Antigua and Barbuda and Montserrat have been participating, as observers, in the deliberations of the ECTEL Council of Ministers since 2012.

Source: [ECTEL](#), [Gov LC](#)



Barbados Fair Trading Commission limits FLOW

Telecommunications company Cable & Wireless (Barbados) Limited (C&W), trading as FLOW, will not be able to increase prices on non-competitive services above three per cent for the next three years under the new Fair Trading Commission's (FTC) Price Cap Plan 2016.

This notice comes days after the company advised its customers of price increases and additional speed to most of its internet services.

The FTC announced its decision on a new Price Cap Plan 2016 for all customers of C&W, including those acquired as part of the acquisition of Columbus Telecommunications.

The FTC said in a statement that effective April 1, 2016, the overall price increase on non-competitive services would be below or equal to the level of inflation, or three per cent per year, if inflation exceeds three per cent during that year.

In the case of negative inflation, the allowable overall price increase will be zero for that year, the FTC said.

The Price Cap Plan 2016 will be based on two service baskets – basket one for 'competitive' services and basket two for 'non-competitive' services.

According to the FTC, competitive services include "all regulated services for which the level of competition is deemed to be sufficient to prevent excessive pricing by the company".

Non-competitive services, on the other hand, include "all regulated domestic voice, fixed lines, associated value added services and domestic private leased circuits" as well as all services previously offered by Columbus Telecommunications.

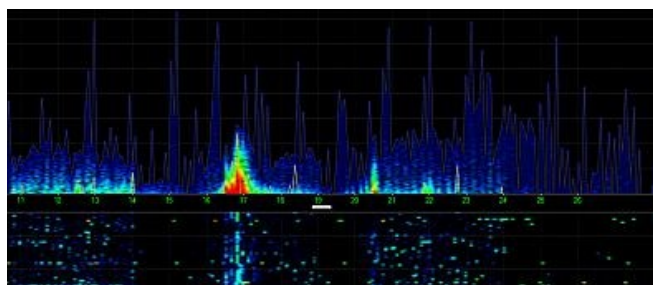
The FTC said while competitive services would not be subject to an overall price cap, advance notification requirements would be set out in the forthcoming Price Cap Compliance Rules and Procedures 2016.

The regulatory body added that given the importance of residential services to customers, "a sub-cap with similar conditions to those imposed for the non-competitive services has also been placed on fixed-line services.

In each year, the company's ability to raise the prices of these services will be restricted, such that annual price increases will be below or equal to the level of inflation or three per cent a year in case inflation exceeds three per cent during that year," the FTC said.

In its notice to customers, the telecommunications company outlined that its Basic plan would attract a price increase of \$5; Essential will cost \$3 more while there would be a \$10 increase for the Plus, Max and Turbo packages. The Ultra plan will remain unchanged.

Source: [Barbados Today](#) via [ICT Pulse](#)



Latin America fails to hit ITU's suggested spectrum allocation targets

Latin America has failed to achieve mobile communication spectrum allocation goals recommended by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), industry body 5G Americas said.

ITU had suggested, in its ITU-R M.2078 study, that countries should free up by the end of 2015 at least 50% of 1,300MHz of radio spectrum for reallocation to mobile services. The recommendation for 2020 is to have freed up for reallocation 1,700MHz.

"The lack of sufficient spectrum for the development of mobile services has a negative impact on both consumers, who are deprived of innovative services with optimum performance, and the telecommunications industry, whose growth potential is limited," said José Otero, director of 5G Americas for Latin America and the Caribbean.

According to the white paper, four countries in the region allocated over 30% of ITU's suggested 2015 quantity: Brazil (41.7%), Chile (35.8%), Nicaragua (32.3%) and Argentina (31%). Brazil leads with 542MHz destined for wireless services, 5G Americas said.

5G Americas said all four markets allocated the 700MHz band but in some cases, such as in Brazil, this frequency is not yet available for use.

Three markets allocated less than 20% of the total suggested for 2015: El Salvador (16%), Guatemala (16.2%) and Panama (16.9%). The remaining Latin American countries allocated between 20% and 30%.

Source: [CANTO](#)

Facebook's Terragraph and ARIES antennas bring Internet to underserved areas

On April 13, 2016, Facebook announced two new connectivity projects at its F8 developer conference, Terragraph and Project ARIES, both of which focus on using terrestrial antennas — but in very different ways — to exploit different wireless techniques to cover both urban and rural areas.

Terragraph equips lightpoles and other “street furniture” with antennas to blanket cities in WiFi, and ARIES packs tons of antennas into a big array to beam connectivity into the distance.

Terragraph combines Facebook's knowledge of software-defined networks (which essentially moves many of the networking techniques that previously required highly specialized hardware into off-the-shelf software tools) and the WiGig standard, which can handle transmission rates of up to 7 Gbits.

WiGig uses the 60 GHz frequency band, which is unlicensed in most countries (just like the 2.5 GHz and 5 GHz bands Wi-Fi uses). The problem with 60 GHz, though, is that it can't really penetrate walls, but the signal can travel about 200 to 250 meters and Facebook wants to use these Terragraph systems to offer street-level connectivity in urban areas.

In the end, of course, this WiGig connectivity has to be translated to Wi-Fi, which will be the job of WiGig client nodes.

Source: [TechCrunch](#)



WhatsApp Goes Through Judicial Revolving Door in Brazil

A Brazilian court on May 2, 2016 overturned a different court's order that blocked WhatsApp, the messaging site owned by Facebook, amid a criminal investigation into drug trafficking in the state of Sergipe.

The earlier judicial demand that WhatsApp provide data considered critical to the investigation came soon after a ramp-up in the level of encryption built into the app. Five major Internet service providers faced hefty fines of about US\$142,000 daily if they failed to comply with the order.

The ban resulted in more than 100 million people temporarily losing access to the service.

This is not WhatsApp's first brush with Brazilian law. Facebook Vice President Diego Dzodan earlier this year was jailed for a day after WhatsApp failed to comply with a data demand in connection with a prior drug case. WhatsApp said that it could not access messages sought by legal authorities as evidence in that case, and the executive was held briefly in contempt.

WhatsApp upgraded its internal security protocols to create full end-to-end encryption, which appears to be a growing trend among Silicon Valley firms to increase their security following a high-profile legal battle between Apple and the FBI.

Source: [Tech News World](#)



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