THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY COMMISSION

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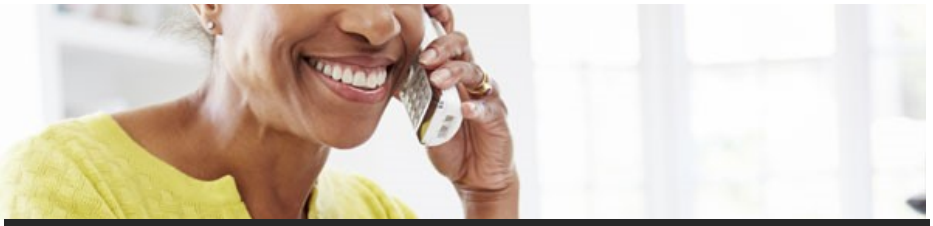

NTRC to host Town Hall meeting to discuss Consumer Protection Regulations

The National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) will be hosting a town hall meeting on March 10, 2016 at 4:30 PM to discuss the Consumer Protection Regulations which were recently recommended for consultation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines by the Eastern Caribbean Telecommunications Authority (ECTEL). As the consumer protection regulations will impact the consumers of various telecommunications services, the meeting is being held to allow consumers to express their views so that their comments can be incorporated into the draft regulations This meeting will take place at the NIS Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, NIS Building, Kingstown St. Vincent.

The draft consumer protection regulations seeks to ensure that residents have reasonable quality of service regardless of their location; consumers can make free emergency telephone calls; net neutrality exists; there are good procedures for the resolution of customers' complaints and disputes; advertising and sales practices do not take advantage or mislead consumers amongst several other issues.

The town hall meeting will comprise presentations from the Hon. Camillo Gonsalves, Minister responsible for Telecommunications, Mr. Junior Bacchus, President of the Consumer Affairs Association and officials from ECTEL and the NTRC.
These presentations will be followed by a full question and answer session where consumers will be able to seek clarification on matters presented as well to voice their opinions on telecom issues affecting them that they would like to see addressed. Persons who are unable to attend will be given the opportunity to do so online via live streaming on the internet (www.ntrc.vc/ stream). Additionally, questions / comments will be accepted online via the NTRC's website, email and facebook page.

Cybersecurity 101

At home, at work, and at school, our growing dependence on technology demands greater security online. Individuals are our country's first line of defense in guarding against online risks. For this reason, cybersecurity is a shared responsibility, requiring awareness and vigilance from every citizen, community, and country.

No citizen, community, or country is immune to cyber risk, but there are steps you can take to minimize your chances of an incident:

- *Set strong passwords, change them regularly, and don't share them with anyone.*
- *Keep your operating system, browser, and other critical software optimized by installing updates.*
- *Maintain an open dialogue with your friends, family, and colleagues about Internet safety. o Use privacy settings and limit the amount of personal information you post online.*
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St. Vincent and the Grenadines receives ISO 27001:2013 Certification

St. Vincent and the Grenadines received its ISO 27001:2013 certification on March 1, 2016 at a handing over ceremony at the SVG E-Government centre, 3rd floor, CLICO Financial Centre. This certificate forms part of the Taiwan financed SVG EGovernment Centre, which is an agreement between the Republic of China (Taiwan) and St Vincent and the Grenadines on cooperation in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), with the main purpose of enhancing the efficiency of the government agencies and their staff.

The ISO 27000 is a family of Information Security standards helps organizations keep information assets secure. Using this family of standards helps organizations manage the security of assets such as financial information, intellectual property, employee details or information entrusted to them by third parties.

ISO/IEC 27001 is the best-known standard in the family providing requirements for an information security management system (ISMS). An ISMS is a systematic approach to managing sensitive company information so that it remains secure. It includes people, processes and IT systems by applying a risk management process.

It can help small, medium and large businesses in any sector keep information assets secure.

St. Kitts and Nevis launches e-Gov website and announces new ICT Board

The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis (SKN) launched its e-Gov website on Thursday, 18 of February 2016, introducing the Unity Government's first phase of a nation building platform that is "...a way in which we can deliver on the promises we made," asserts the Attorney General (AG) Vincent Byron of SKN (in a recent interview).

Also introduced is the ICT Governance Board—a newly-created national governing body operating as an "umbrella" ICT group designed to oversee Informations and Communications Technology. The board is composed of senior departmental members ensuring the success of government ICT platform to maintain its relevance and sustainability.

Nations which have undertook such a monumental feat—engaging various departments with its own comparable IT staff to come together in a commitment of exemplifying "unity" with the consolidation of "16 or so disparate websites"informed by the Attorney General Byron. This was done in this manner to ensure its goal of end-user satisfaction--both public and private stakeholders..

AG Byron expects "business people, residents, and visitors" to be served more efficiently, stating the "transformational aspect" of the platform with the beginning of yesterday's e-Gov website unveiling. He noted of the Federation's citizens that the seeds are now being sown to "create a paradigm shift of how we live, how we work, how we play."

Citizens, visitors and business investors alike may expect this e-governmental platform to not only allow for the processing of payments to governmental departments (i.e. utility, electricity, water or tax bills) but to request information and documents (i.e. birth certificates and driver's licenses and renewals) and other desired transactions with its receipt within minutes not days or hours as is currently the case in most departments.

Source: SKN Vibes via ICT Pulse

Cable & Wireless & WhatsApp Sign Partnership

MIAMI – Cable & Wireless (C&W) and WhatsApp have entered into a strategic marketing partnership. A first for the Caribbean, this exciting deal offers C&W customers access to the full range of WhatsApp features across the company's networks. As a result of this partnership, C&W will introduce a suite of innovative packages with additional benefits for customers, which will be unveiled across all its markets in the coming months.

Cable & Wireless's brands – Flow, BTC, and LIME – are currently the only officially authorized providers of WhatsApp data bundles in the Caribbean region.

The agreement between Cable & Wireless with the world's leading mobile messenger application, WhatsApp, highlights C&W's commitment to bring the best value to customers through strategic partnerships.

"Since the emergence of Over The Top (OTT) Communication services, Cable & Wireless has maintained our commitment to work with authorized service providers to ensure customers have access to world-leading services on their devices, running on the region's best networks," said John Reid, C&W's Consumer Group President.

"We are excited to work with Cable & Wireless to help people across the Caribbean stay better connected with friends and family," said Brian Acton, Co-Founder of WhatsApp.

The most popular cross-platform mobile messaging app available today, WhatsApp Messenger is used by more than 900 million people worldwide to communicate with friends and family, near and far. The application enables WhatsApp calls, the sharing of photos, videos and audio messages, and allows the user to engage in multiple messaging conversations simultaneously on mobile phones and via WhatsApp Web.

Reid added, "This partnership with WhatsApp will improve ease and convenience of communication technology, enrich our customers' experience, and is therefore consistent with our mission – "Connecting Communities… and Transforming Lives."

Source: Dominica Vibes

T&T regulator committed to universal broadband access

The Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT) has underscored the country's commitment to deepening the penetration of broadband access in T&T, even though the country remains without a 4G/LTE operator nearly two years after the TATT recommended that two licences should be awarded.

CEO of TATT Cris Seecheran spoke in favour of universal access to broadband in T&T in a statement promoting the authority's hosting of the 2016 Caribbean Broadband Forum.

The forum will be organised by the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) and is due to be held on July 14 and 15 at the Hyatt Regency hotel in Port-of-Spain.

Seecheran said: "Trinidad & Tobago is committed to universal access to broadband, as we recognise the important contribution fast and reliable access to the Internet makes to our economic development. Since this event is open to all Caribbean islands and not just members of the Commonwealth, it will be an opportunity to collectively address some of the common challenges we still face, and so we look forward to welcoming delegates from the whole region in July." TATT is responsible for developing a world-class competitive telecommunications and broadcasting infrastructure, vital to the economic development of T&T. The organisation's vision is to become a global exemplar in telecommunications and broadcasting regulation.

The forum expects to deepen the penetration of broadband access to Caribbean people, said Shola Taylor, Secretary-General of the CTO.

"We understand the peculiar challenges faced by most countries of the region, not least the growing spill over of broadcasting audiences embracing on-demand viewing alternatives over broadband networks. Nevertheless, broadband access should be a right for all, not a privilege of a few, and so this event is part of our efforts to help accelerate universal broadband access for all Caribbean citizens.

Source: Trinidad Guardian

India blocks Facebook's free net app

India's telecoms regulator has blocked Facebook's Free Basics internet service app as part of a ruling in favour of net neutrality.

The scheme offered free access to a limited number of websites.

However, it was opposed by supporters of net neutrality who argued that data providers should not favour some online services over others.

The free content included selected local news and weather forecasts, the BBC, Wikipedia and some health sites.

"No service provider shall offer or charge discriminatory tariffs for data services on the basis of content," ruled the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

The body had been investigating whether any online content should be prioritised over others, or offered for free while others were not.

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg said he would work to make Free Basics legal.

"While we're disappointed with today's decision," he wrote. "I want to personally communicate that we are committed to keep working to break down barriers to connectivity in India and around the world."

"Connecting India is an important goal we won't give up on, because more than a billion people in India don't have access to the internet. We know that connecting them can help lift people out of poverty, create millions of jobs and spread education opportunities."

The World Wide Web Foundation, founded by Sir Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the web, welcomed the regulator's decision.

"The message is clear: We can't create a two-tier Internet - one for the haves, and one for the have-nots," said programme manager Renata Avila.

"We must connect everyone to the full potential of the open Web"

Source: BBC News

'Thousands of popular sites' at risk of Drown hack attacks

Websites have been warned they could be exposed to eavesdroppers, after researchers discovered a new way to disable their encryption protections.

The experts said about a third of all computer servers using the HTTPS protocol - often represented by a padlock in web browsers - were vulnerable to so-called Drown attacks.

They warn that passwords, credit card numbers, emails and sensitive documents could all be stolen as a consequence.

A fix has been issued, but it will take some time for many of the website administrators to protect their systems.

The researchers have released a tool that identifies websites that appear to be vulnerable.

They said they had not released the code used to prove their theory because "there are still too many servers vulnerable to the attack".

As yet, there is no evidence hackers have worked out how to replicate their technique.

An independent expert said he had no doubt the problem was real.

"What is shocking about this is that they have found a way to use a very old fault that we have known about since 1998," said Prof Alan Woodward, from the University of Surrey.

"And all this was perfectly avoidable, It is a result of us having used deliberately weakened encryption, which people broke years ago, and it is now coming back to haunt us."

Source: BBC News

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