NTRC's myApp Summer Program participants at SVGCC Division of Technical and Vocational Education , SMART Lab.

NTRC launches summer program to teach youths how to code

The National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission has launched its first annual summer program dubbed "myApp" which begun on July 20, 2015 at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College - Division of Technical and Vocational Education. The program is being delivered in the "SMART Lab" - a state of the art lab which was retrofitted with Windows and Mac based computers by the NTRC through the Universal Service Fund (USF). The program caters for a maximum of 15 students between the ages of 13 and 18.

The objective of the NTRC's myApp Summer program is to teach participants who may or may not have previous exposure in coding mobile applications. It is the NTRC's hope that if provided with the chance to create applications of higher standard and better quality, the younger population will be the driving force behind a new and competitive technological era in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Furthermore, the program will introduce participants to ways in which they can portray their acquired skills in larger, incentivized forums such as the annual NTRC's i^2 Competition.

During the program, students are taught how to program using the programming language Java which is a prerequisite for programming on the Android platform. After being introduced to Java, they are then taught how to use development tools in the Android development environment which they would couple with the java programming language to develop applications.

The NTRC plans to expand this program in the coming years at several different locations across St. Vincent and the Grenadines to cater for students who do not live within close proximity to the venue. The myApp program is part sponsored by Telecommunications providers LIME and Flow.

Source: NTRC

Understanding Denial-of-Service Attacks

In a denial-of-service (DoS) attack, an attacker attempts to prevent legitimate users from accessing information or services.

The most common and obvious type of DoS attack occurs when an attacker "floods" a network with information. When you type a URL for a particular website into your browser, you are sending a request to that site's computer server to view the page. The server can only process a certain number of requests at once, so if an attacker overloads the server with requests, it can't process your request. This is a "denial of service" because you can't access that site.

In a distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack, an attacker may use your computer to attack another computer. By taking advantage of security vulnerabilities or weaknesses, an attacker could take control of your computer. He or she could then force your computer to send huge amounts of data to a website or send spam to particular email addresses. The attack is "distributed" because the attacker is using multiple computers, including yours, to launch the denial-of-service attack.

To prevent the likelihood of an attacker using your computer in a DDoS attack, ensure that you install and maintain antivirus software and firewalls to restrict unwanted outgoing traffic from your computer.

US Cert

NTRC executes Public Drive on the Go in the north leeward area of St. Vincent

On July 23, 2015, staff of the National Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) journeyed to Chateaubelair and Fitz Hughes communities in the North Leeward district of St. Vincent to interact with persons within these communities.

Using the slogan "Public Drive on the Go!", these visits are done to raise awareness of the NTRC amongst the residents of the communities. Residents were grateful to learn that there were systems in place to have their complaints resolved if they are not satisfied with an action or conduct of a telecommunications provider against them. Additionally, many parents were elated to hear of the NTRC's subsidised internet plan where needy homes can receive an internet connection for a monthly cost of EC$10 per month. This subsidised internet project is part of the NTRC's SMART Project funded by the Universal Service Fund (USF) where 340 needy households will receive subsidised internet for a period of 24 months.

The NTRC also took the opportunity to speak with the youngsters within the communities regarding the upcoming third annual Ideas and Innovations i^2 Competition which is scheduled to launch on September 10, 2015. This competition gives youth the opportunity to put forward innovative ideas or mobile applications to improve services offered by the public sector. Students can win prizes up to EC$3,500.00 in this competition.

Source: NTRC

Dominican in process of developing 3D animation game

Albert Pierre, 28, of Grand Fond who resides in the USVI is in the process of building a 3-dimension video game which he believes will help market Dominica internationally.

The video game dubbed 'Belle Dominik' features a young female adventurer and her quest to save her island from invaders who want to steal the island's life force.

The game, which explores various aspects of Dominican Culture and Heritage, is a 2d Platformer (similar to that of Super Mario Games). It is being built by Pierre, who has been studying 3d animation and game development by watching YouTube videos and reading tutorials online since 2009.

In the story, the adventurer's task is to rid the island of mechanical creatures who are seeking to absorb all of Dominica's nature energy. They have chosen to target this island because it has the highest concentration of Nature Energy in the World. As the levels progress, the player will encounter newer and stronger enemies all while uncovering secrets and achieving power ups.

Pierre told Dominica Vibes on Monday 20 July 2015, his inspiration to create the video game comes from always having a knack for creating things that were never attempted before.

"I want to be a pioneer at something outlandish so that other generations would also be inspired to do so as well. I didn't want to do another messaging app, or another music app (although those are all good) I thought about it and decided to try out something that would make Dominica stand out," Pierre explained.

Pierre anticipates that this would be a 2-3 year project to complete "because it's not all fiction so getting accurate representations of certain things in the game will take some time".

The team is now in the phase of gathering some sponsorship so that development of the game will not cease.

The finished product will be ported as a free app for Android, iOS and Windows.

Source: Dominica Vibes via ICT Pulse

Cable and Wireless Communications rebrands in Barbados

Cable & Wireless Communications (C&W) has officially launched its retail brand, Flow, saying goodbye to LIME and promising that Barbados would be in line for major investments.

The company said it is investing US$160 million into the country as it rolls out the new brand following its merger with Flow's parent company Columbus Communications. The country is also in the running to be the location for the company's regional call centre.

The disclosures were made at a media briefing that followed an in-house event at which approximately 500 employees of LIME and Flow became one – the first of such exercises in the region as the new brand is rolled out over the next 12 months.

"We are investing in Barbados approximately US$160 million over the next few years," said C&W's chief executive officer Phil Bentley, adding that Barbados would also get a share of the 500 jobs that will be created over the next two years.

"The story of this merger is investing and bringing world-class telecommunications to Barbados. Barbados is a very important market. It is the first launch of the new brand and then we will roll over the Flow branding across all our old LIME and Cable & Wireless markets. The next island will be Jamaica."

Barbados and Jamaica are the first two islands to say goodbye to LIME and are also the only two under consideration for the new entity's call centre.

Bentley also disclosed that there may be some job losses with the merger, but assured more would come on stream later.

"If we have two people doing the same job we will look to see if we can retrain people, but if we can't we may have to let some people go but we are incorporating all of our engineering. In the past, Cable & Wireless outsourced that to third-party contractors; we are bringing those jobs into the home company, we are building a technology centre in Trinidad in connection with the UWI to train and develop engineers. We will create over 500 jobs in the Caribbean over the next two years," he said.

Bentley also told the media that the company was ready for Mobile Number Portability (MNP), but had more to do to be able to offer Local Number Portability (LNP).

As one of the conditions of giving its approval for the merger, the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) had indicated that the merged entity had to be technically ready for LNP by September 30, 2015 and MNP by November 30, 2015.

Source: Dominica Vibes

CCJ rules against Guyana telephone company in VoIP case

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) has upheld a ruling prohibiting the Guyana Telephone and Telegram Company (GTT) from denying internet access to one of its customers who made and received international calls using Voice over Internet Protocol ("VoIP"); technology provided by US Company Vonage.

The ruling could have possibly opened the flood gates for other GTT customers that may have used internet-related hardware or software to get around the company's telephonic regulations and were restricted.

The ruling of the region's highest court was made Monday July 20, 2015 in favour of local businessman James Samuel, who argued that GTT had no contractual right to deny him DSL service because of his use of Vonage. Vonage enables the user to make and receive international calls over the internet. GTT argued that Samuel was aware that contractually, he could not use the apparatus on their service, especially since the company holds the exclusive licence to provide voice and data transmission service in Guyana and pointed to the Telecommunications Act1 (the Act) which prohibit the operation of an unlicensed telecommunications system.

In May, 2009, Samuel took GTT the High Court where he won the case. Trial Judge Justice Rishi Persaud said, GT&T did not give Samuels sufficient notice of the "restrictive terms" which were only brought to his attention after his DSL internet service had been disconnected. The Judge was not convinced that Samuels' use of Vonage contravened the Act either, and noted that the Act was first passed as far back as 1990 and would not have covered recent advances in technology such as VoIP. He said too that GT&T's licence was void in that it contravened the Civil Law Act2 which prohibits illegal monopolies.

Source: News Jamaica

Outernet's Lighthouse gadget brings internet to refugee camps, remote schools and Hospitals

An ambitious plan to deliver the internet to unconnected parts of the world has received a boost from a new gadget designed to receive digital media from a network of internet-beaming satellites.

Outernet, the company behind the initiative, hopes the Lighthouse receiver will be used in refugee camps, low-resource schools and remote health centres.

"Only 20% of humanity has access to open internet and over 50% has no internet access at all," a description on the product's page reads. "Lighthouse goes where the traditional internet cannot.
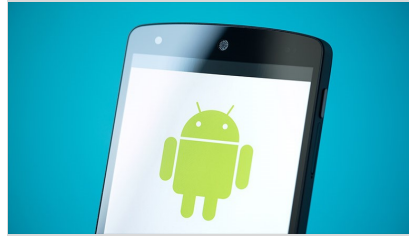
"Lighthouse is perfect for locations where internet access does not exist or is too expensive, slow, unreliable, or limited."

Using Outernet's network of seven geostationary satellites, the Lighthouse receives free digital information from anywhere on Earth. Between 1GB and 100GB of content can be requested through Outernet's Wiki by the Lighthouse and viewed in any browser on a WiFi-enabled device, however it is not able to provide a two-way service.

This means data can only be received, not sent, through the Lighthouse, making emails, messaging and uploading content impossible. Outernet describes itself as "humanity's public library" and content transmitted by the satellite network includes Wikipedia, Project Gutenberg and a collection of copyright-free e-books.

Source: IBTimes

Android phones can be hacked with a simple text

Android phones can get infected by merely receiving a picture via text message, according to research published July 27, 2015. This is likely the biggest smartphone flaw ever discovered. It affects an estimated 950 million phones worldwide -- about 95% of the Androids in use today.

The problem stems from the way Android phones analyze incoming text messages. Even before you open a message, the phone automatically processes incoming media files -- including pictures, audio or video. That means a malware-laden file can start infecting the phone as soon as it's received, according Zimperium, a cybersecurity company that specializes in mobile devices.

If this sounds familiar, that's because this Android flaw is somewhat like the recent Apple text hack.

But in that case, a text message with just the right characters could freeze an iPhone or force it to restart. This Android flaw is worse, because a hacker could gain complete control of the phone: wiping the device, accessing apps or secretly turning on the camera.

In a statement to CNNMoney, Google acknowledged the flaw. It assured that Android has ways of limiting a hacker's access to separate apps and phone functions. Yet hackers have been able to overcome these limitations in the past.

The bug affects any phone using Android software made in the last five years, according to Zimperium. That includes devices running Android's Froyo, Gingerbread, Honeycomb, Ice Cream Sandwich, Jelly Bean, KitKat and Lollipop iterations (Google names its Android versions alphabetically after desserts).

Source: CNN