

POST-EVENT REPORT



TTIGF
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM
2024
The Internet We Want
JANUARY 25TH & 26TH | 2024
HYBRID



**PROUD
PARTNERS**



About the Trinidad and Tobago Internet Governance Forum (TTIGF)

The TTIGF was held as a hybrid event over two (2) days on Thursday 25th and Friday 26th January, 2024. The theme entitled *The Internet We Want*, was selected to reflect the current climate in Trinidad and Tobago after being forced into a digital age.

The target audience for the event included:

- Academic Community
- Technical Community/ ICT Civil Society
- Civil Society
- Commercial / Business
- Government
- Students
- All Internet Users.

The IGF is valued as a resource for networking with peers, a forum for sharing information and experiences and “a non-judgmental venue for members to openly discuss their challenges and perspectives”.

The TTIGF is hosted annually by the **Trinidad and Tobago Multistakeholder Advisory Group (TTMAG)**. TTMAG is an independent entity for the promotion and development of best practice policy standards for the .tt country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD) and the local Internet ecosystem in the interest of the Internet Community. The entity aims to continue the mandate of the United Nations Secretary-General, to:

1. maximize the opportunity for open, inclusive dialogue and the exchange of ideas on Internet governance (IG) related issues;
2. create opportunities to share best practices and experiences;
3. identify emerging issues and bring them to the attention of the relevant bodies and the general public;
4. contribute to capacity building for Internet governance;
5. facilitate inclusive, productive discussions on Internet-related public policy issues from a general perspective, while keeping all stakeholders involved.

Audience and Impact

- Zoom: - 126 attendances on Day 1 & 78 attendants on Day 2
- TTIGF Youtube: 75 views on Day 1, TTIGF Youth Forum: 24 views and 51 views on Day 2
- 20 Speakers and 6 Partners.

TTIGF 2024: DAY 1

9:00 - 9:05 am

Opening Remarks:

- Dev Gosine, Chair, *Trinidad and Tobago Multistakeholder Advisory Group (TTMAG)*

9:10 - 9:30 am

Introductory Keynote Addresses

- His Excellency, Peter Cavendish, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, *Delegation of the European Union*
- Carol Roach, UN IGF MAG Chair, *United Nations, Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)*

9.30 - 11:00 am

Panel Session: Unlocking T&T's ICT Potential for Global Markets

- Moderator: Tracy Hackshaw, Director, *TTMAG*

Panelists:

- Camille Selvon Abraham, Head of Animation, *The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT)*
- Vashiti G. Guyadeen, Chief Executive Officer, *Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries (TTCSI)*
- Neville Alexander, Assistant Director Trade Promotion & Development (Ag), *Ministry of Trade and Industry*

11:10 - 12:40 pm

Panel Session: Training for Digital Transformation

- Moderator: Jacqueline Morris, Director, *TTMAG*

Panelists:

- Carlton A. Samuels, ICT4D Consultant, *Carlton Samuels and Associates*
- Kern Elliott, Team Lead, Software Development (Software Development Unit), *National Information and Communication Technology Company Limited (iGovTT)*;
- Lorcan Camps, Founder & CEO, *Nio Digital*.

TTIGF2024: DAY 2

9:00 – 11:00am

Youth Forum: Topic: Let us work together to build the Internet of tomorrow. What are your ideas?

1:00 - 1:10 pm

Opening Remarks: Dev Gosine, Chair, *TTMAG*

1:10 - 2:40pm

Panel Session: Beyond Fintech: Navigating T&T's Current Trends Towards the Next Financial Wave

- Moderator: Jarryon Paul, Director, *TTMAG*

Panelists:

- Wesley Gervais, Digital Nomad, Custodian - GoStables Protocol
- Carlos Newton, Manager - Fintech Sector Development, TT Financial Centre (TTIFC)
- Lystra Lucillio, Deputy CEO, TT Securities and Exchange Commission (TTSEC)

2:40 - 2:50 pm

Partner Showcase - Trinidad and Tobago Network Information Centre (TTNIC)

2:50 - 4:20 pm

Panel Session: The AI We Want - Where Is It At and Where is it Heading?

- Moderator: George Gobin, Director, *TTMAG*

Panelists:

- Craig Ramlal, Lecturer Control Systems, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, UWI
- Javad Sajad, Technology Consultant and Lawyer, AI Regulation and Policy
- Curtis Charles, Director of Academic Affairs, 5 Islands Campus, School of AI and Computer Science

4:20 - 5:00pm

Open Forum

5:00 - 5:10 pm

Closing Address: Jacqueline Morris, Vice-Chair, *TTMAG*

Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all to the TTIGF. Mr. Dev Gosine shared that the Internet is a canvas of boundless opportunities and a catalyst for change. He stated that the Internet we want should amplify voices that empower and foster inclusivity. The Internet is a space where innovation flourishes, ideas thrive and innovation knows no bounds.

Mr. Gosine further stated that the TTMAG believes that privacy and security are key in this digital landscape. He recalled that the 2023 TTIGF showcased the issue of cybersecurity and reiterated that a resilient and reliable internet infrastructure is vital. He went on to emphasize the following:

- In the Internet we want, digital manipulation and misinformation should be addressed through collective responsibility;
- There should be media literacy programs to empower users to evaluate information;
- The ideal Internet encourages a diverse and competitive landscape. Open standards and interoperability should be promoted;
- Cultural diversity should be celebrated; and

“The Internet we want is a tool for positive change”

Keynote Addresses



His Excellency welcomed all and began by sharing the history behind the World Wide Web (*www*) which included the view of the European scientists who felt that the *www* should be a gift to humanity. The European Union (EU) has legally protected the *www* so no commercial entity can take control of it.

Ambassador Cavendish indicated that every decade, new technologies arrive. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now the new issue which is going to transform societies and governments must ensure that its people have the skills required to keep up with these transitions.

Ambassador Cavendish spoke about the misuse of information and the criminal activity on the Internet and stated that there is now more cross border cooperation than ever before, however, national and international legal systems will need to adapt to provide a paradigm for lawful users and protect abuses. He went on to highlight the many initiatives that the EU supports in Trinidad and Tobago and within the region which are related to security, inclusive of cyber capacity building.



Ms. Roach began by sharing that she is a strong advocate for the inclusion of small island developing states (SIDS) given her Caribbean heritage.

Ms. Roach gave an update on the United Nations (UN) global IGF which was held in Japan in October 2023 and covered similar themes to the TTIGF such as AI. She emphasized that it is crucial to involve communities and people with diverse backgrounds as we realize AI's potential.

There was mention of the IGF leadership panel appointed by the UN Secretary-General (SG) which plays a critical role in supporting and strengthening the IGF and therefore, the Internet we want. The Internet we want is a call for collective action for all stakeholders to contribute to, and shape the future of the internet to one that is inclusive, trustworthy, safe and secure. Ms. Roach urged persons to consult the vision paper and share views. She invited all to the 19th IGF in Saudi Arabia in December 2024, as well as the Caribbean IGF later in the year.

PANEL SESSION 1

UNLOCKING T&T'S ICT POTENTIAL FOR GLOBAL MARKETS



The graphic features a red background with a white circular graphic on the left containing the TIGF logo and the text 'PANEL Unlocking T&T's ICT Potential for Global Markets igf.tt'. On the right, five white-bordered boxes contain portraits and names of the panelists and moderator.

TIGF
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

PANEL
Unlocking
T&T's ICT
Potential for
Global Markets
igf.tt

Camille Selvon Abraham
Head of Animation
UTT

Vashti G. Guyadeen
Chief Executive Officer
TTCSI

Kendall Tull
Chief Commercial Officer
Teleios Systems Limited

Neville Alexander
Assistant Director Trade
Promotion & Development (Ag)
Ministry of Trade and Industry

Moderator:
Tracy Hackshaw
Director
TTMAG

Moderator: Tracy Hackshaw, Director, *TTMAG*

Panelists:

- Camille Selvon Abraham, Head of Animation, *The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT)*;
- Vashti G. Guyadeen, Chief Executive Officer, *Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries (TTCSI)*;
- Neville Alexander, Assistant Director Trade Promotion & Development (Ag), *Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)*;
- Kendall Tull, Chief Commercial Officer, *Teleios Systems Limited*.

Panel Overview

The ICT Industry is huge and rapidly growing. ICT accounts for a wide range of activities including industries related to telecommunications, hardware, software, internet services, data processing and much more. Several interconnected factors account for growth in the ICT industry. Among these are technological advancements and innovation; an increasing demand for digital transformation; growing connectivity and internet penetration; increasing reliance on data analytics and cybersecurity, expansion of e-commerce and digital services and support from the government in the form of ICT policies and ICT-related initiatives.

Around the mid-2000s, Trinidad and Tobago began leveraging its skilled workforce to attract Global Business Process Outsourcing Companies offering a range of ICT-enabled services in areas such as customer service, IT help desk, data entry and back-office operations to name a few.

With this in mind, this panel sought to discuss whether small island developing states (SIDs) like T&T only resign themselves to attracting BPO clients, or if there is capacity in other ICT areas that are export-ready to enter global markets? The panel addressed market access limitations for T&T's ICT products and services and offered insights into addressing these challenges.

The key points from the discussions are captured below.

Neville Alexander

- T&T can do more in terms of moving forward in export and trading given our connectivity, infrastructure and literacy rates.
- There is potential for the private sector to expand and penetrate markets.
- There are not many services trade agreements but the ones in existence give access to markets around the world so efforts need to be focused on taking advantage of these.
- The MTI has been working on a new e-commerce strategy.

Camille Selvon

- There are many successes but they are not often in the public domain. For instance, the Animae Caribe festival which has been running for 22 years is a success story.
- UTT's intention to embrace digital media has been successful.
- There is a need to invest in the industry and build a cadre of 21st-century graduates for future work.
- Technologies have the potential to significantly transform the tourism industry but government buy-in is required. Virtual reality and gaming can be sectors which are harnessed to boost tourism.

Kendall Tull

- There is potential for exporting services and there are opportunities via Microsoft marketplace for applications to be developed and marketed globally.
- There is a need to understand the regulatory environment as it relates to data, particularly the certification required to gain access to each jurisdiction.
- There is a need in the local finance sector to understand and support companies that produce IT services.

Vashti Guyadeen

- The pandemic was a blessing in disguise as many people realized how they could use technology to sell their services.
- Most institutions are geared towards supporting the manufacturing and energy sectors. The TTCSI can support the services sector.
- The GoGlobalTTServices project was launched in 2012 and it seeks to build capacity to export competencies globally.
- There is a national services exporters portal launched by the TTCSI and has approximately 515 firms.
- Marketing and finance is a core challenge when it comes to exporting services.

QUESTION: WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN AS SUCCESSES IN THIS SECTOR?

Neville Alexander

- Government has a role in creating an enabling environment and success can be based on how this is achieved.
- The Digital Readiness Assessment 2022 showed that connectivity and infrastructure for the country is in the middle of the rating system.
- Areas for improvement include:
 - Mobile broadband connectivity and reliability: The Ministry has sought to help that space by encouraging investment in that area.
 - Literacy: How do we ensure that the tertiary level graduates have the right skill sets to do more? There must be a private sector partnership with academia to work on relevant curriculums.
 - Legislative and regulatory process: Successes to the Computer Misuse Act, Electronic Transaction Act, and Data Protection Act.

Vashti Guyadeen

- A lot of development work needs to be done to grow a cadre of exporters. What has been done for the manufacturing sector has not been done for services.
- The issue of certification is being addressed. TTCSI is working with the IDB and Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI) to develop an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) tracking mechanisms for service providers.

Kendall Tull

- Telios has a platform which allows companies to communicate with their customers via messaging applications. As the world moves to providing more online services, there is a need to communicate with customers which is an opportunity and area for growth.
- There are opportunities for software and solutions development. Telios developed a National Health Insurance system for a regional government.

- Access to markets and understanding the needs of customers to efficiently and effectively develop solutions is a challenge which Telios has seen some achievement.
- Significant investment is required to address challenges and meet these opportunities.

Tracy Hackshaw

- Market analysis is required if there is to be success in this area.

QUESTION: WHAT MAKES FOR A SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR IN THE SECTOR AND WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

Camille Selvon

- A young industry such as gaming and digital media requires support and investment in capacity development.
- Access to industry-specific training is needed. Universities do not provide this type of training given the rate at which technology develops.
- The new procurement legislation can pose challenges. Projects are going to halt to adhere to the act.

Tracy Hackshaw

- There is a start-up culture but not a scale-up culture.

Neville Alexander

- It is a challenge to get feedback from stakeholders.
- T&T exports more goods than services. The types of services exported are minuscule when it comes to IT services.
- There are missed opportunities to capitalize on global trends. There are supply issues in the sector (reliability of infrastructure and not enough trained persons) and not enough is done to attract investment. Data collection in the services sector is needed.
- There are also challenges with respect to the movement of persons about visa requirements.

Vashti Guyadeen

- The TTCSI has been successful with having high participation in surveys. Surveys are short and digital which makes it easier for persons to complete at any time on any device.
- The right data will inform policy

Kendall Tull

- Given employment opportunities globally, skilled labour has been lost and this is a challenge to bear in mind.

Key Takeaways

- Fast paced digital ecosystem. Policy needs to understand and adapt to nuances
- Accelerate legislative and regulatory reform
- Partner with private sector to develop skills
- Strengthen data collection

PANEL SESSION 2

TRAINING FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

TTIGF
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

PANEL

**Training for
Digital
Transformation**

igf.tt

Carlton A. Samuels
ICT4D Consultant
Carlton Samuels and
Associates

Kern Elliott
Team Lead, Software
Development
iGovTT

Lorcan Camps
Founder & CEO
Nio Digital

**Moderator:
Jacqueline Morris**
Director
TTMAG

Moderator: Jacqueline Morris, Director, *TTMAG*

Panelists:

- Carlton A. Samuels, ICT4D Consultant, *Carlton Samuels and Associates*;
- Kern Elliott, Team Lead, Software Development (Software Development Unit), *National Information and Communication Technology Company Limited (iGovTT)*;
- Lorcan Camps, Founder & CEO, *Nio Digital*.

Panel Overview

Digital transformation (DT) is being undertaken in countries worldwide to improve their efficiency, effectiveness and ability to compete in world markets. However, in T&T and the wider Caribbean, most of the population is not yet digitally literate to the extent needed for a full digital transformation. DT can allow us to increase the cadre of homegrown developers, who can help us create the Internet we want.

The panel will focus on the need for training the population to take advantage of the benefits of DT, the challenges inherent in such training and discuss ideas to overcome those challenges and design successful training to support DT.

The key points from the discussions are captured below.

QUESTION: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DT PROJECTS BEING DONE IN YOUR AREA AND WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

Lorcan Camps

- A case of a company project was provided where digitalization happened internally before launching a website with public services.
- New business models can open up from the digitalization of projects.

Carlton Samuels

- Digital literacy is lagging behind. There are changes within the school curriculum and in public policy to help enable access.
- Community access points are being developed.
- Most retail businesses have an online presence.
- A hindrance to rapid development in the area of DT is government policy.
- Jamaica has adopted a policy where it is seeking to manage technology for the public good.
- There is a need to examine the skills needed to power a digital economy and engage the regulatory frameworks to actively support utilization.
- While the perspective is Jamaican based, there are the same challenges which emerge across islands.
- While there is not enough development of digital skill sets, the persons trained tend to migrate and thus, the skill is lost. There needs to be consideration of creating frameworks to engage persons from the diaspora.

Kern Elliott

- As part of TTWIFI project, libraries are a place where you can access the Internet. The project has expanded to have access in other public spaces.
- ttconnect service centers allow for public access and assistance.
- Persons may have challenges with digital literacy and access and are hesitant to change and embrace technology.
- Service centers will be created to deal with digital matters where persons can receive assistance.

QUESTION: WHAT MINIMUM DIGITAL SKILLS DO WE NEED?

Carlton Samuels

- There are basic skills that are needed such as knowing how to type, being able to access the Internet, having the ability to use the tools available for communication, and being able to complete online forms.
- Community wireless access points are being rolled out in Jamaica and public infrastructure is being expanded.
- Technology is always changing. What is important is to make users more aware of cybersecurity risks.
- Narratives drive engagement in the DT process.

Kern Elliott

- The skills needed depend on the stakeholder.
- Those who have to interact with the systems need a level of confidence to operate the devices. At the executive level, there needs to be understanding on how to implement and drive solutions.
- There needs to be more marketing and understanding of services and how to access assistance.

Carlton Samuels

- In Jamaica, there is a move to ban smartphones in school but what if students are using the phones to contribute to the learning process? Smartphones, and technology can be seen as an opportunity rather than a distraction.
- Educators and policy makers need to open their minds to the fact that learning happens in different ways. There are multiple ways to learn outside of the classroom.
- One of the biggest challenges is access to data. The collection and storage of quality data is critical as **data fuels DT and the digital economy.**
- Forming partnerships is a way to advance the digital agenda.

Lorcan Camps

- Digital training and adoption needs to be accelerated

QUESTION: THERE ARE MANY PERSONS TO BE CONSIDERED IN TERMS OF AGE, THE WAY THEY FEEL ABOUT TECHNOLOGY, AND THE AMOUNT OF ACCESS THEY HAVE. HOW DO WE WORK A SYSTEM THAT CAN MANAGE TO TOUCH ALL OF THESE DIFFERENT GROUPS?

Kern Elliott

- With every initiative attempted, there needs to be data that is collected to determine if it was successful. Documentation is critical.

Lorcan Camps

- Target the early adopters group.
- TT is at the early market stage when it comes to technology.
- A barrier to digital acceleration is the lack of training and change management.
- Open source software should be made available to all to allow for training. There should be attempts to create a virtuous relationship between consumers and producers of technology.
- There needs to be a shift from a society of consuming software to one of creating software. Supply and demand is required for this to happen.

QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OF COMPANIES WITH REGARD TO NEW STAFF/START-UPS?

Lorcan Camps

- In larger companies, there has to be new positions. Web developers, data scientists are persons which most companies will need. These positions are different to the role of an IT Administrator.

Kern Elliott

- There are steps to be taken before creating jobs. A data engineer for instance, cannot be hired when there is uncertainty as to where data is to be collected. There needs to be analysis and planning.

Carlton Samuels

- Hiring based on attitude is critical, for instance, someone who demonstrates critical thinking skills.

Kern Elliott

- There is usually a specified criteria for employment in certain positions and it is difficult to find persons with those relevant skills for the salary being offered.

Lorcan Camps

- AI is going to become part of the norm in areas such as education.

Carlton Samuels

- Role of data management is still very critical as the quality of data is important for AI.
- Understanding of set theory and vector theory is foundational for AI .

Kern Elliot

- AI should be viewed as a tool and it is being built into devices which will change the way we use these devices.

Key Takeaways

- DT is a gradual journey and has to be led by all stakeholders
- DT involves a change in mindset
- DT has to be inclusive and skills have to be cultivated
- Data collection is critical

PANEL SESSION 3

BEYOND FINTECH: NAVIGATING T&T'S CURRENT TRENDS TOWARDS THE NEXT FINANCIAL WAVE



Moderator: Jarryon Paul, Director, *TTMAG*

Panelists:

- Wesley Gervais, Digital Nomad, Custodian – GoStables Protocol;
- Carlos Newton, Manager – Fintech Sector Development, TT Financial Centre (TTIFC);
- Lystra Lucillio, Deputy CEO, TT Securities and Exchange Commission (TTSEC).

Panel Overview

As T&T begins to adopt Fintech locally, what is on the horizon Beyond Fintech? The panel discussed the current state of Fintech in the country and where it is headed.

The key points from the discussions are captured below.

QUESTION: WHAT IS FINTECH?

Carlos Newton

- Fintech stands for financial technology which is a broad term that encompasses a technology tool or some sort of innovation that automates financial services.

- The focus of fintech is on the user experience.
- Mobile banking and cryptocurrency are examples of fintech.

QUESTION: WHERE ARE WE WITH FINTECH IN TT?

Lystra Lucillio

- The local market is provoking the regulator to get things done.
- In the market we have e-money issuers and regulatory technologies.
- From a regulator perspective, these fintech services are able to exist as there is some sort of regulation to provide guidance.
- Regulation gives credibility and would encourage the public to participate as it gives some security.
- Expansion of regulation is needed to leverage other types of fintech.

QUESTION: HOW DO YOU RELATE TO THE WORD FINTECH?

Wesley Gervais

- Fintech is a tool that can provide disruptive solutions.
- Blockchain technology for instance enabled persons to do international transactions as it's a global system.

QUESTION: WHAT ARE WE DOING WELL WITH REGARD TO FINTECH AND WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FOR FINTECH IN TT?

Carlos Newton

- TT has a state entity which is mandated to build out the fintech industry.
- There are initiatives to support fintech through types of incentives as one example.
- A fintech center was launched in July 2023 which is the first in the Caribbean. It allows fintech stakeholders to meet, collaborate and seek advice.

Lystra Lucillio

- Regulators are working together.
- There are challenges regarding the legislative process as this takes time.
- There is a lack of real and adequate understanding of the issue for policy makers.
- More interaction with the market is needed to understand the issues and help with investor protection
- Innovators may not understand risks involved and don't put things in place to mitigate said risks.
- Changing public acceptance is a challenge as is seen based on the uptake of certain initiatives.

QUESTION: WHAT SUCCESS STORIES CAN YOU SHARE?

Lystra Lucillio

- e-money issuers and the uptake of e-money issuance platforms has been a success.
- There are four (4) issuers in the country and people are becoming more accustomed to these services.
- There is the Regulatory Innovation Hub consisting of the Central Bank, Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and TTSEC. This allows for greater engagement. The International Financial Center (IFC) has also come on board given the types of issues which were being raised.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE ENTREPRENEUR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FINTECH LOCALLY? WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE REGULATOR AND HOW DOES THE ENTREPRENEUR AND REGULATOR CO-EXIST?

Wesley Gervais

- Products or services which are built are usually to solve a basic need, however, there may not be much focus on data protection or consumer security and this is where regulators come in.

Jarryon Paul

- Entrepreneurs may not be as outspoken but there is a role for them to speak up on problems and be able to approach regulators with a problem.

Lystra Lucillio

- The regulator is there to protect. The regulatory role entails monitoring, surveillance, compliance, risk identification, working with the market to foster development, and investor protection.
- Regulators are not technologists.
- Entrepreneurs focus on the development of the solution but when it involves a person's money, there is a need to have a higher level of accountability and responsibility.
- Regulators help to build trust in systems.
- Public private interaction and collaborations are needed. Both can work together for more agile regulation.

QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU WISH PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD ABOUT THE WORK YOU DO TOWARDS THE NEXT FINANCIAL WAVE?

Carlos Newton

- Education and awareness are needed as there is a need to get consumers to understand that the services are meant to help.
- More people should be included in the financial ecosystem and be able to know how it benefits them.

Wesley Gervais

- There needs to be greater understanding of one's own personal security. *"Not your keys, not your coin"*

Lystra Lucillio

- Regulators here to protect.
- Having discussions is the first step to implementation.

QUESTION: AS A NATION, HOW DO WE LEAPFROG INTO THE NEXT FINANCIAL WAVE AT THE END OF FINTECH?

Carlos Newton

- Understanding the technology and the need for taking calculating risks will drive forward movement.

Wesley Gervais

- There needs to be embracing and exploring beyond boundaries.
- Decentralized systems can empower persons as it will allow them to have a direct say in matters and can help guide and make decisions.

Lystra Lucillio

- All hands needed on deck with a common goal as to what is to be achieved.
- Persons may need to become uncomfortable as this can propel you to do more.
- Strengths should be for instance, TT has a high mobile penetration rate.

QUESTION: WHAT IS YOUR PREDICTION FOR FINTECH GROWTH IN TT AND THE CARIBBEAN OVER THE NEXT TWO (2) YEARS?

Lystra Lucillio

- There may be more decentralized financing in TT and more financial inclusion products.
- In the Caribbean, there may be a push towards a digital Caribbean currency.

Carlos Newton

- Fintech will be playing a bigger role in getting persons included
- The focus should be to get products throughout the region and not be limited to TT.

Wesley Gervais

- There would be a greater sense of interoperability with the decentralization of systems.

Jarryon Paul

- The Caribbean may have its own version of PayPal but it will not be about competition but rather, collaboration and transparency.

Key Takeaways

- Regulation enables user confidence
- There should be encouragement for fintech entrepreneurs to expand beyond TT to target other islands in the Caribbean
- Collaboration and partnerships are crucial

PANEL SESSION 4

THE AI WE WANT – WHERE IS IT AT AND WHERE IS IT HEADING?

The graphic features a red background with a white geometric pattern. On the left, a white box contains the TTIGF logo, the word 'PANEL' in red, the title 'The AI We Want – Where Is It At and Where is it Heading?', and the website 'igf.tt'. On the right, four white boxes display portraits and names of the participants: Dr. Craig Ramlal, Javed Sajad, Dr. Curtis Charles, and Moderator George Gobin, each with their respective titles and affiliations.

Moderator: George Gobin, Director, *TTMAG*

Panelists:

- Craig Ramlal, Lecturer Control Systems, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, UWI;
- Javed Sajad, Technology Consultant and Lawyer, AI Regulation and Policy;
- Curtis Charles, Director of Academic Affairs, 5 Islands Campus, School of AI and Computer Science.

Panel Overview

This session sought to consider how artificial intelligence can be harnessed to address the unique challenges and opportunities in the region. The focus should extend beyond merely adopting AI technologies and delve into shaping a vision that aligns with the values and aspirations of the region. The Internet We Want should be a space where AI empowers local communities, enhances education, and supports sustainable development.

This entails fostering inclusivity, ensuring ethical AI practices and leveraging technology and training to bridge socioeconomic gaps.

The panel deliberated on frameworks and policies that safeguard against biases in AI algorithms, ensuring that technology is a catalyst for positive change rather than perpetuating existing inequalities.

Moreover, the discussions touched upon the need for collaboration in the region to create a regional approach to AI development and regulation.

By fostering a collective vision for the AI, We Want, the region must navigate the digital landscape with confidence, harnessing the potential of artificial intelligence to drive sustainable development, economic growth, and social well-being.

The key points from the discussions are captured below.

QUESTION: HOW DO YOU SEE THE INTERNET AND AI THAT YOU WANT?

Craig Ramlal

- If developing nations are not part of the global AI landscape then those countries would face significant risks.
- Developing countries become consumers as AI is being created by developed countries. In this regard, technology is not conceptualised for developing markets and as a result, developing countries become disadvantaged in the labour market with low skilled labour.
- Countries developing this technology become more economically viable.
- Difference value systems globally make it a challenge to harmonize policy on AI.

Curtis Charles

- Academic programs were not aligned to 4th industrial revolution.
- School of Science, Computing, and Artificial Intelligence opened at the UWI Five Islands Campus in response to the need for new programmes. The School is designed with collaboration in mind.

Javed Sajad

- The Caribbean is impacted by US, UK and EU laws. The region is not insulated.
- A new EU AI Act has been approved and this will impact on the Caribbean.
- Emerging issues such as deep fakes are prompting discussion on creating legislation in places like the USA.

QUESTION: HOW DOES AI AFFECT THE WORLD OF WORK?

Curtis Charles

- Universities traditionally have not looked at re-training but this is an opportunity to bring persons to universities and examine what skills are required in order to become competitive.

- There is also an opportunity for universities to look at how to re-train government to become data driven.
- As an educator, there is a concern that the Caribbean will be left behind.

Craig Ramlal

- For any country to play in the AI game, there need to be data, talent and infrastructure. These need to be addressed simultaneously.
- Policy makers need to be educated.
- If a region collaborates on data, and can promote niche industries, larger organizations may be willing to provide funding.
- The public perception of AI needs to change and more public discussions are needed on how persons can benefit from AI. Discussions of policy will come in thereafter.

Javed Sajad

- A study done by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology predicts that there will be job displacement due to AI, but this will be gradual.
- Fear hinders progress but AI can be used to innovate and be leveraged to benefit the economy.

Curtis Charles

- There can be job gain from AI. Governments are not the ones who drive AI so entrepreneurship needs to be encouraged.
- In the Caribbean, failure is seen as a taboo but not in places like Silicone Valley. There is a cultural difference which encourages entrepreneurship.

QUESTION: WHEN WILL IT BE TOO LATE TO START RE-TRAINING OR GETTING STUDENTS READY?

Craig Ramlal

- Most SIDS have limited resources and will therefore, address what is in front of them and not what is ahead.
- If there is no investment into training now, the response will be reactive rather than proactive.

Javed Sajad

- Considerations include how to manage resources that are limited.
- As a Caribbean country, can AI be held accountable for matters?

QUESTION: WHAT SHOULD KEEP US ON COURSE TO START DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY AND MOVE FROM BEING CONSUMERS TO BEING CREATORS?

Craig Ramlal

- There needs to be short, medium and long term goals.
- Public discussions need to be done with a multi-advisory group, meaning there has to be persons from different sectors who engages with their community.

Curtis Charles

- There is a need to 'creolize' AI so that it can reach the average man.
- Collaboration is essential and the mentality has to shift to be able to share information.
- AI is a catalytic tool.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE GOOD, BAD AND UGLY OF AI?

Javed Sajad

- Ethics and ethical AI are to be considered. Morals come from society and ethics change over time.

Craig Ramlal

- The UN does not create bodies without purpose and a High Level Body for AI has been created. Historically, such bodies have been created when a matter has serious societal implications.

Curtis Charles

- The best parts of AI outweigh the bad.
- Remote areas that have no internet connection are at risk of being left behind.
- AI cannot be for educated or wealthy persons only.

QUESTION: HOW DO WE GET TO TANGIBLE RESULTS WITH RESPECT TO AI POLICIES WITHOUT FACING DELAYS AND FALLING BEHIND?

Javed Sajad

- There is a lot of bureaucracy involved in getting legislation passed, particularly as extensive consultation is required.

QUESTION: ARE THERE SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS THAT CAN BE IDENTIFIED WHICH CAN BE TARGETED AND RESOURCED?

Craig Ramlal

- A multistakeholder industry panel to look at this matter and come to a consensus is required.

Kevon Swift

- Decision makers may not be affected by issues. There is a cognitive dissonance that needs to be addressed. The Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) previously had an initiative called Futurescape where people could have touched and felt ICT in action.

Key Takeaways

- AI will become the norm
- Policy is slow while technology rapidly evolves
- Cognitive dissonance needs to be addressed
- Education and teaching need to adapt to allow for skills cultivation and competitiveness
- Regional collaboration is essential

YOUTH FORUM



The Youth Forum commenced with a welcome from Mr. Dev Gosine, TTMAG Chair. He thanked the students in attendance for their contributions and video recordings on the subject “the internet of tomorrow”.

Video presentations were shared which were created by individual students or groups of students from particular schools or school clubs.

“Education should not be a privilege, it should be a universal right and the internet can play a pivotal role in making this a reality”

Holy Faith Convent Couva

- The Internet can bring people together to share solutions to global issues.
- Education is easier through the Internet, however, there are challenges with respect to free online courses being offered as there are limits to the programs. The Internet can aid in providing quality education to the world.
- The use of the Internet can help improve medicine and patient care. New treatments are always arising and there are groundbreaking technological advancements in areas such as ophthalmology.

Naparima College

- The Internet should be easily accessible to everyone globally, especially those in rural areas.
- The Internet is a world where limitless knowledge can be obtained.
- Less harmful cell towers should be built which will allow for greater accessibility in populated areas.
- Cybersecurity should be implemented through more heavily protected networks.

RSC Tech Club

- The Internet should be made a universally accessible utility.
- The goal should be to extend connectivity beyond conventional boundaries.
- The most underserved regions should be able to benefit from education through the Internet.
- The Internet can create a paper free environment.
- There should be greater empowerment for communities to learn.

Youth Submission – Gabriel and Faith Persad (22 and 29 years old)

- The Internet of tomorrow can be encapsulated into the following thematic areas:
 - Education and empowerment;
 - Inclusivity and sustainability;
 - Innovation and collaboration; and
 - Security and privacy.

San Fernando West Secondary School

- The Internet should be a global right, not a privilege
- The Internet of tomorrow is a safe place for your data

Representative, Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association

- The Internet must be readily available on all devices as access to information is important - school, meetings, social media, gaming, managing business, content creation can all be done on devices.
- The Internet should be accessible to all, including visually impaired persons. Persons with disabilities should be able to use the Internet just as other able bodied persons. This is an opportunity for people to create accessible sites.
- *“Inclusion is not that I prepare for the Internet but the Internet prepares for me”.*

Discussions moderated by Mr. Ken Sooknanan, TTMAG Director:

- The Ministry of Digital Transformation is attempting to roll out ICT centers in rural areas to facilitate access.
- The Internet plays a key role in education and empowerment, however, blended learning is still recommended where physical interaction is required.
- Mentorship and comradery among students and schools can help with digital literacy. The Government also offers digital literacy courses to the public.
- To develop the technology of the future, you must first understand it.

- There needs to be guidelines and procedures formulated by the Ministry for teachers with respect to online classes. There should also be a protocol for students for online classes.
- The pandemic highlighted a social challenge when it came to online education as many could not access their classes.
- Be mindful of your digital footprint

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THERE WAS NO INTERNET?

- Time to look at sitcoms and be outdoors.
- No contact with family and friends overseas.
- Forced to go to libraries.
- Revert to writing letters.
- Encyclopedias would make a comeback.
- Daily routines would be drastically altered.

Common Themes

- Security
- Inclusivity
- Tool for education
- Harnessing technology for good
- Sustainability
- Accessibility

OPEN FORUM



Moderator: Mr. Kevon Swift

Topic: Internet Blocking

- Internet blocking goes by different names which can sound good or bad. For instance, censoring sounds bad but filtering sounds good.
- The Latin America and Caribbean Network Information Centre (LACNIC) is seeing the trend of internet blocking rising globally and in Latin America. There is potential for it to rise in the Caribbean.
- Websites can be accessible from multiple domains so blocking a domain is not as simple.
- Blocking is limited by jurisdictional scope.
- Disabling access can impact economic activity
- There is global consensus on some forms of blocking such as for child online protection.
- Cybercrime laws come into play for internet blocking.

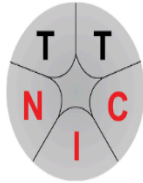
Topic: Global Digital Compact (GDC)

- The UN GDC will be agreed to at the Summit of the Future in September 2024.
- TTAMAG attempted consultation on the GDC at the TTIGF 2023. TTAMAG supported Caribbean IGF (CIGF)/Caribbean Telecommunications Union's (CTU's) submission on the topic and has been participating in the global IGF representing views of SIDS.
- There is a need to keep the open forum going so that information can be shared with stakeholders.
- UNIGF is set to continue in its current format and may possibly evolve into a more substantive issues based forum with outputs. In this sense, the regional and national IGF become more important as they have to now feed these issues.

Topic: Cybercrime

- There was an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Cybersecurity which was tasked with developing the National Cybersecurity Strategy and Cybercrime Bill.

- The draft Bill raised concerns from the media.
- There is a new UN Convention on Cybercrime which is expected to be finalized in the next month. There has been a joint statement by civil society statement circulating which criticizes the instrument as rights of people will not be respected as it leaves broad interpretation what crimes.
- The process used to draft the Cybercrime Bill in 2021 was a multi stakeholder one
- The main challenge is government buy-in and how do we “sell” the idea of the need for this to politicians. There was no one in government to drive the process and for politicians to actually understand the issue.
- There will always be a balance to be met between the provisions in law and freedoms. For cybercrime, to be able to track criminals you need provisions to allow, in theory, the violation of privacy. Safeguards would also be required as there should be special circumstances for such ‘violations’ to be allowed. There must be models in existence which are acceptable.
- A webinar which discussed the UN Cybercrime Convention and issue of mass surveillance raised concerns on the retention of data and cross border sharing of data.
- The Computer Misuse Act was amended based on the Budapest Convention.



**PROUD
PARTNERS**

