Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad & Tobago

Strive

Endless Possibilities

When We Work...You Strive

Contents

Strive
Endless Possibilities

TATT celebrates 18 years of Operation

The year 2022 marks TATT's 18th Anniversary of regulating Trinidad and Tobago's telecommunications and broadcasting sectors.

Since its establishment in July 2004, TATT has paved the way for affordable, widely available quality telecommunications and broadcasting services by liberalising the sector.

Over the years, TATT has established industry standards, solid policies and frameworks, equipment and service quality guidelines, and supporting regulations to keep local telecommunications and broadcasting abreast of global technological and digital advancements.

The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have solidified the need for accessible, affordable, good quality, and reliable telecommunications and broadcasting services. These should be provided over robust infrastructure, as they are essential to business continuity and the overall economic and social well-being of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

During the challenging times of the pandemic, these resources:
1. enabled remote work
2. allowed access to services from both the public and private sector entities
3. allowed educational pursuits, entertainment opportunities and other social benefits.

As TATT continues to contribute to the government's thrust towards national digital transformation, we are also focusing on encouraging local and foreign investment in the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors.

New investment will allow for continued growth and innovation within the sectors, ensuring:
1. improved access to all categories of telecommunications and broadcasting service
2. adoption and integration of new technologies
3. enhancement of consumer experience
4. facilitating consumers' demand, as well as the reduction of the digital divide.

Currently, TATT is focused on fulfilling its initiatives which support the country's National Development Strategy of Trinidad and Tobago (2016 – 2030)—Vision 2030. Vision 2030 highlights the relevance of ICT regulation and governance and its contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) and the overall well-being of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Some of TATT's strategic initiatives in support of Vision 2030 are:
1. Completing the 2021 National Digital Inclusion Survey and Report. This provides comprehensive guidance on which communities are underserved by telecommunications and broadcasting services. This allows TATT to enhance its ICT policy development, facilitate bench-marking, and improve the regulation of the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors so that persons in these areas may receive equal service.

2. Introducing fixed 5G Internet.

3. Strengthening of the country's human resource capacity within the local telecommunications and broadcasting sectors through a range of measures, including:
   a. special skills training programmes for girls and women
   b. contributing to the ICT Curricula in Secondary Schools and Tertiary Institutions
   c. provision of bursaries to selected university ICT students
   d. offering certified ICT training for at-risk youth and working along with the Ministry of Education to include ICTs in secondary schools' curricula
   e. collaborating with the Trinidad and Tobago Publishers & Broadcasters Association to enhance the quality of broadcasts through workshops for broadcast journalists and a broadcast engineers apprenticeship programme.

4. Partnering with the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) and Tobago Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) to prepare the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP) 2022.

5. Publishing of:
   i. domestic retail prices for telecommunications and broadcasting services; results of radio frequency radiation measurements
   ii. statistics on consumer complaints received by TATT
   iii. trends within each industry market through the Annual and Quarterly Market Reports.

6. Collaborating with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, TATT has implemented Free Public WiFi Hotspots in key public areas, including land and sea transportation hubs and health facilities.

TATT remains committed to being a leading ICT regulator that enables an empowered and connected society in this digital era. In so doing, we will provide invaluable support for our multiple stakeholders while striving to create endless possibilities for the national community through telecommunications and broadcasting services.

Promoting Robustness and Resilience of Public Telecommunications and Broadcasting Networks

TATT continues to work on several initiatives to strengthen the ability of public telecommunications and broadcasting networks to withstand the effects of natural and man-made disasters. The following highlights some of these initiatives over the past five years:

1. 27th ICT Open Forum - "Resilient Communications: Staying connected during a disaster."

In 2017, TATT hosted its 27th ICT Open Forum titled *"Resilient Communications: Staying connected during a disaster"*. At the forum, TATT—together with: Trinidad and Tobago Publishers and Broadcasters Association, Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management and CANTO presented on various aspects of the topic, and members of the public that were present—engaged the panel with questions. The elements of resilience discussed at the forum included:
1. TATT's strategic initiatives
2. Network threats
3. Achieving resilience
4. Challenges to resilience

This forum successfully met its objective of initiating a discussion on the need to enhance the robustness of public telecommunications and broadcasting networks.

2. Technical Standards for Public Fixed Telecommunications Networks

In 2020, *TATT published the Technical Standards for Public Fixed Telecommunications Networks in Trinidad and Tobago*. This document establishes the technical standards to enhance the robustness of public fixed telecommunications networks in relation to making the facilities within these networks resilient to natural and man-made disasters and implementing redundancy into critical aspects of the networks.

TATT developed this standards document in collaboration with a Technical Working Group (TWG) of representatives of fixed network operators. The final document was published on TATT's website.

The standards established were adopted from several internationally recognised standards bodies such as the International Telecommunication Union, and cover the numerous areas of public fixed telecommunications networks, including outside plant facilities, the access network, optical transport networks and points of interconnection. New networks seeking to operate in Trinidad and Tobago must adhere to the approved standards outlined in the document, before providing services. Some parts of existing networks would have already adhered to the internationally accepted standards.

TATT continues to collaborate with existing network operators to allow applicable time-frames for upgrading those parts of their networks that do not currently comply with the approved standards.

3. Technical Standards for Public Fixed Wireless Telecommunications Networks

TATT is working on another standards document titled Technical Standards for Public Fixed Wireless Telecommunications Networks in Trinidad and Tobago. This standards document has the same purpose and objectives as *Technical Standards for Public Fixed Telecommunications Networks in Trinidad and Tobago*, but applies to public wireless networks such as cellular mobile, broadband wireless access and broadcasting networks.

It was also co-developed with telecommunications and broadcasting network operators in a TWG. The areas of wireless networks covered in this document include towers, the mobile access network, transport networks and studio-to-transmitter links. This document is scheduled to be completed in 2022 and will be available on TATT's website at www.tatt.org.tt.

4

4. National Emergency Communications Plan

TATT was invited to co-partner with the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) and Tobago Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) to prepare the National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP). The NECP will outline:

     a. emergency/disaster telecommunications and ICT systems
     b. the roles and responsibilities of responder agencies
     c. trends in disaster management and emerging technologies.

TATT's primary responsibilities related to the NECP include preparing and maintaining the NECP, establishing regulatory frameworks based on the policies of the NECP, and ensuring compliance by network operators. The NECP will be finalised in 2022 and available on websites:

     TATT www.tatt.org.tt ODPM www.odpm.gov.tt

5. Island-wide Electricity Outage and Action Taken

On 16th February 2022, Trinidad experienced an island-wide electricity outage, with some areas impacted for approximately 12 hours. This event, classified as a man-made disaster, required the implementation of some of the policies and measures contained in the existing NECP.

The event also highlighted the need for adequate standards for stand-by power supplies in the telecommunications sector and applicable technical standards to ensure uninterrupted service availability during electricity outages.

Feedback from public telecommunications network operators indicated that telecommunications and broadcasting services were affected to varying degrees during the event, based on the nature and type of the stand-by power systems available at sites. For example, some systems remained up for as little as two hours, whereas others remained up for the duration of the outage.

Notably, telecommunications services to Tobago remained uninterrupted whilst telecommunications services affected by the electricity outage in Trinidad were restored soon after electricity returned.

Arising from this scenario, TATT has enhanced its efforts to work with telecommunications and broadcasting networks and service operators to gather the information that will inform future revisions of TATT's technical standards, viz service availability during prolonged electricity outages.

TATT will continue to fulfil its mandate to develop regulatory frameworks, technical standards and other tools which promote robustness and resilience of telecommunications and broadcasting networks while ensuring that network operators consistently comply.

To learn about more TATT initiatives, please visit our website at www.tatt.org.tt.
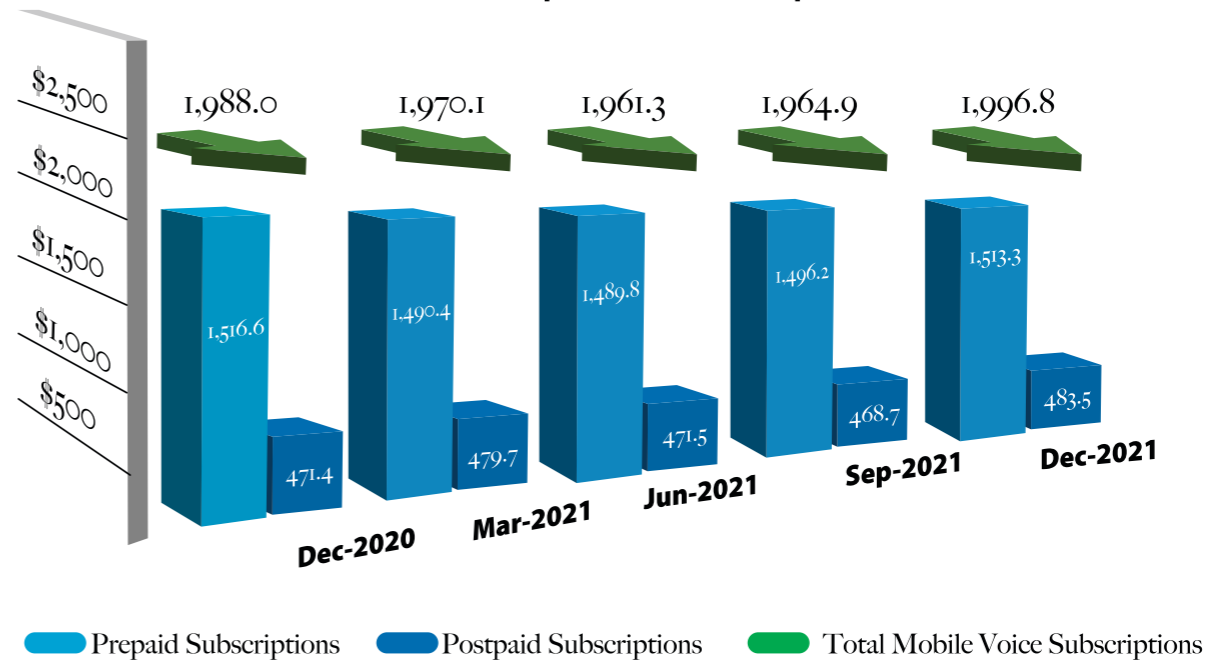
The number of mobile voice subscriptions remained relatively stable in 2021

Trinidad & Tobago had approximately 2 million mobile customers by the end of 2021, comprising 1.5 million prepaid subscriptions and 0.5 million postpaid subscriptions, according to preliminary estimates. There was a very minor increase of 0.4% in total subscriptions compared to the same period in the previous year. An increase of 12,000 postpaid subscriptions contrasted with a reduction of 3,000 prepaid subscriptions.

Additional information on the mobile market's performance, as well as the performance of other sectors of the telecommunications and broadcasting industry, is available in TATT's quarterly market updates.

Please visit: Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (tatt.org.tt) to access the reports.

Number of Mobile Voice Subscriptions from Q4 2020 to Q4 2021

	Dec-2020	Mar-2021	Jun-2021	Sep-2021	Dec-2021
Total Mobile Voice Subscriptions	1,988.0	1,970.1	1,961.3	1,964.9	1,996.8
Prepaid Subscriptions	1,516.6	1,490.4	1,489.8	1,496.2	1,513.3
Postpaid Subscriptions	471.4	479.7	471.5	468.7	483.5

Prepaid Subscriptions   Postpaid Subscriptions   Total Mobile Voice Subscriptions

Tech4Girls Workshop Helped Participants Manage their Online Reputations

Ms Denyse White, Deputy National Chief Digital Officer at the Ministry of Digital Transformation

On April 30th, 2022, TATT, in collaboration with the Ministry of Digital Transformation (MDT), CANTO, and Tobago Information Technology Limited (TITL), hosted a free virtual workshop to commemorate Girls in ICT Day.

Tech4Girls: Masterclass in How to Build Your Online Personal Brand provided an opportunity for females aged 18 years and older to explore the strategies of developing a compelling online personal brand, and applying the knowledge gained to create their own branded websites using Google Site.

Of the 206 participants who attended, 158 successfully completed this intensive masterclass workshop.

Most of the 158 participants joined the workshop from their homes. At the same time, several gained access from three of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's ICT AccessTT Centres, as located at Todd's Road, Marac and Carenage.

Female leaders within the ICTs sector in Trinidad and Tobago—such as Dr Kim Mallalieu, Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors, TATT; Ms Ruth Campbell, Chief Executive Officer (Ag.), TITL; Mrs. Jacqueline Wilson, Strategic Advisor, MDT and Mrs. Teresa Wankin, Secretary-General, CANTO—delivered inspiring and motivational remarks during the opening ceremony.

Dr. Mallalieu emphasised that the objective of this event was to enable young girls and women to 'walk out of the workshop with the ability to build a compelling online brand which will help propel their ambitions and dreams forward'.

Ms. Nikkia Reveillac and Ms. Abby Charles, co-founders of the "Who She Feel She Is" initiative, who also spoke at the opening ceremony, cautioned participants against placing limits on themselves, and stressed that branding is about how persons want to be known and remembered.

During this free virtual event, participants were taught the following:

1. Fundamentals of personal branding
2. How to incorporate passion into your career
3. Networking tips on how to develop and build relationships
4. Do's and don'ts when developing your personal brand online
5. A checklist for what will your personal brand look like
6. Cybersafety tips

Back Row from left to right: Ms Leona Charles, Communications Officer, TATT; Mrs Lianne Dieffenthaller, Operations Specialist, CANTO; Ms Denyse White, Deputy National Chief Digital Officer at the Ministry of Digital Transformation (MDT); Ms Debbie-Ann Jollie, Marketing Strategist and CEO of Hashspace Limited; Mr Raj Ramdass, Director at Restore A Sense of I CAN (RSC) International Limited; Ms Neala Bhagwansingh, 2nd Place Prize Winner; Ms Yolande Agard-Simmons, Communications Manager, Cable and Wireless Communications/Flow Trinidad

Front Row from left to right: Ms Sherry McMillan, Executive Officer, Corporate Communications, TATT; Ms Arlene Patrick, Prize Winner (Accessibility Prize); Ms Princess Semper, 1st Place Prize Winner; Ms Khailah Bernard, 3rd Place Prize Winner; Mrs Sugan Ramdass, Director at Restore A Sense of I CAN (RSC) International Limited; Mrs Cynthia Reddock Downes, Chief Executive Officer, Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT)

From left: **Ms. Neala Bhagwansingh**, 2nd Place Prize Winner and **Mrs Cynthia Reddock Downes**, Chief Executive Officer, Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT)

From left: **Ms Debbie-Ann Jollie** Marketing Strategist and CEO of Hashspace Limited (Personal Brand Facilitator of the workshop); **Ms. Neala Bhagwansingh**, 2nd Place Prize Winner and **Mrs Cynthia Reddock Downes**, Chief Executive Officer, Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT)

From left: **Mrs Cynthia Reddock Downes**, Chief Executive Officer, Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT); **Ms Arlene Patrick**, Prize Winner (Accessibility Prize) and **Ms Denyse White**, Deputy National Chief Digital Officer at the Ministry of Digital Transformation (MDT)

From left: **Mrs Lianne Dieffenthaller**, Operations Specialist, CANTO; **Ms Khailah Bernard**, 3rd Place Prize Winner and **Ms Yolande Agard-Simmons**, Communications Manager, Cable and Wireless Communications/Flow Trinidad

As part of this fun and engaging initiative, attendees were encouraged to enter the *Personal Branding Website Competition* for the opportunity to win prizes which will assist them in developing their personal brands.

Sixty-five participants responded to the call to compete for these prizes by submitting their branded websites which highlighted their portfolio of work, services and products.

The winners of this competition were:
1st Place - Ms. Princess Semper. Prize Awarded: one Samsung Smart Phone, 6-months Bmobile Data Plan & one Pro Green Screen "Go Live Package" for Vlogging that includes an 8.5x10FT Backdrop Stand with LED Photography Lighting, 5500K Umbrella Sobox kit with three Photography Props & Muslin Green Screen.

2nd Place - Ms. Neala Bhagwansingh. Prize Awarded: A Samsung Smart Phone, 6-months Bmobile Data Plan & one Movo iVlogger- iPhone/Android Compatible Vlogging Kit that includes: Phone Tripod, Phone Mount, LED Light and Cellphone Shotgun Microphone for Phone.

3rd Place - Ms. Khailah Bernard. Prize Awarded: A Samsung Smart Phone, 6-months Bmobile Data Plan & one Movo iVlogger- iPhone/Android Compatible Vlogging Kit.

4th Place - Ms. Terry-Lyn Anthony. Prize Awarded: A 6-months Bmobile Data Plan & one Movo iVlogger- iPhone/Android Compatible Vlogging kit.

5th Place - Ms. Shantil Warner. Prize Awarded: A 6-months Bmobile Data Plan & one Movo iVlogger- iPhone/Android Compatible Vlogging Kit.

Other prizes were awarded at this event. Ms Tarinda Williams was randomly selected for submitting the post-survey event form, and Ms. Arlene Patrick was awarded the "Accessibility Prize" for participating at one of the AccessTT Centres. Ms Williams won a 6-month Bmobile Plan and Ms Patrick was awarded one Movo iVlogger-iPhone/Android Compatible Vlogging Kit.

Ms. Reinika Howard, one of the participants, said: "Today, a personal brand is of utmost importance. It involves showing the world who you really are and what truly makes you unique."

Another participant, Ms. Ariel Deonanan, described the workshop as being truly inspiring and informative, whilst Ms. Monique Clement stated: "one of the things I enjoy the most about the ICT sector and being a Girl in ICT, is the challenge to continue always to progress and learn as the sector advances."

The workshop was supported by the local telecommunications service providers - Bmobile and FLOW and facilitated by Ms. Debbie Jollie, Social Media Marketing Strategist and Restore A Sense of I Can (RSC).

Anyone interested in developing their personal brand can download a copy of the Personal Branding Workbook at https://tatt.org.tt/Media/GirlsinICTDay2022-Tech4Girls.aspx.

TATT remains committed to improving gender equality and empowering women and girls through the annual Girls in ICT Day initiatives. For more information about collaborating with TATT on this initiative, please send an email expressing your interest to info@tatt.org.tt.

Checklist for Creating a Brilliant Online Personal Brand

1. Prepare a SWOT analysis
Take the time to discover your strengths and weaknesses, what you want to share with the world and what you want your brand to represent.

2. Develop your Elevator Pitch/Unique Selling Proposition
This phrase summarises who you are and what solution your brand provides.

3. Take an awesome headshot
A picture can tell a thousand words. Make it worth the while!

4. Discover your passion
Personal branding is a long game. It takes many years to fully understand, develop and monetise your passion. Be open to learning and growing.

5. Learn to Network
You learn more from others than when you are on a singular journey. Meeting and engaging with the right persons can take your careers to the next level and open up doors and opportunities.

6. Develop an online strategy for personal branding:
   a. Audit your social channels
   b. Curate appropriate content
   c. Stay consistent with your messaging and branding

Radio Broadcast Techniques
and On-Air Journalism Virtual Series

During February and March this year, TATT, in partnership with the Trinidad and Tobago Publishers and Broadcasters Association (TTPBA), hosted the Radio Broadcast Techniques and On-Air Journalism Virtual Series.

Sixty-four persons, including 33 journalists and 31 Mass Communications students from the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAAT), participated in the six half-day online sessions.

The topics explored included:

1) *The Basics of an Effective News Story*

2) *What Makes a Great Radio Feature and Scripting a Radio Feature*

3) *The Business of Radio – Business Model and Operation*

4) *Fact-checking When the Pressure is On, In-session*

5) *Writing News for Social Media Platforms*

6) *Media Law – Libel, Slander, and More, Legislation and the Media*

All sessions included a question-and-answer segment with veteran broadcasters.

The workshop was held in response to TTBA's advising TATT that over the past decade there has been a noticeable challenge in accessing well-trained reporters for radio newsrooms. This was a result of:

a) lack of training opportunities for broadcast journalists

b) development and focus on the digital landscape

c) lack of mentoring and in-house training because of time constraints and limited newsroom resources.

The Radio Broadcast Techniques and On-Air Journalism Virtual Series were developed to address this situation by upskilling journalists and students of mass communications, preparing them for the demands of radio newsrooms.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
publishers &
broadcasters
ASSOCIATION

In her welcome remarks TATT's Chief Executive Officer, Mrs. Cynthia Reddock-Downes, informed that TATT's strategic plan for 2019 to 2022 includes three initiatives aimed at the continuous development of the broadcasting sector.

1. **Training and development of broadcasters through the Annual Broadcasters' Forum**

2. **Training for journalists in key areas as agreed with the sector and**

3. **Development of broadcasting apprenticeship programmes.**

Mrs. Downes stated that the idea of the Broadcasters Forum was conceptualised out of a desire by TATT to enhance the skills of the country's broadcast journalists and provide an opportunity for collaboration on key industry issues. TATT's first Broadcasters Forum was held in September 2017.

On the matter of training for journalists, this series of workshops comprised the added component of the inclusion of students of Mass Communications studies. The training for journalists started in July 2020 when TATT and the TTPBA collaborated to host a two-day Webinar Series covering elections, where participants included 24 journalists and 14 COSTAATT students. This was timed to treat with the General Elections of August 2020.

These programmes aim to ensure the broadcasting industry has a pool of excellent persons to staff the broadcasting sector.

She stated that TATT held discussions with broadcasters and was advised of a potential shortage of skilled broadcast engineers as broadcasters are currently relying on a few long-standing persons to provide services to the industry.

The agenda for the Radio Broadcast Techniques and On Air Journalism Virtual Series was as follows**:**

a. *The Basics of an Effective News Story, Writing News for Broadcast – Getting to the Point, What Makes a Great Radio Feature and Scripting a Radio Feature*

b. *The Art of the Radio Interview, Covering a press conference – What You Need to Do and Ask, and In-session:* Mock Press Conference

c. *The Business of Radio – Business Model and Operation; Branded Content in Radio, Podcasting – What it is and How to do it Effectively and The Current Affairs Radio Show – Techniques and Style*

d. *Fact-checking When the Pressure is On, In-session – Write this for Radio and Don't Forget to Fact Check, Writing News for Social Media Platforms and In-session – Write this for social media*

e. *The Mock Radio Newsroom – We Prepare for a Newscast*

f. *Media Law – Libel, Slander, and More, Legislation and the Media and Q & A with Veteran Journalists – The Media Industry Now and into the Future*

Mrs Cynthia Reddock Downes,
Chief Executive Officer, Telecommunications
Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT)

A distinguished group of media practitioners delivered these sessions, including:

1) **Kiran Maharaj** – Member of the TTPBA and Co-Founder and current President of Media Institute of the Caribbean and Caribbean Investigative Journalism Network.

2) **Julian E. Rogers MBE** - one of the most recognised media practitioners in the Caribbean. His distinguished career was recognised by Her Majesty the Queen when the Barbados Government recommended him for his 50 years in the media industry.

3) **Peter Richards** - former Bureau Chief of the Caribbean News Agency (CANA) and now the Editor of the Barbados-based Caribbean Media Corporation (CMC). He is a founding member of the Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM) and has served on the executive of media associations in St. Lucia, Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago.

4) **Garfield King** – Micro Bio Media trainer, public speaking coach, independent radio producer and presenter. In his 40 years of broadcast experience, he has worked as a reporter, announcer, News Director and Assistant Station Manager.

5) **Tony Fraser** - well-known senior freelance journalist in Trinidad & Tobago. His long career in journalism spans four decades, with work in television, newspapers, magazines, and radio.

6) **Wesley Gibbings** - an award-winning Trinidadian journalist, media trainer and press freedom campaigner. He is the founding President of the Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM), former President of the Media Institute of the Caribbean (MIC), and a Member of the Steering Committee of the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD). He is a current Council Member of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX).

7) **Justice Kathy Ann Waterman Latchoo** - a former award-winning journalist and Editor who was called to the Bar in 1998. Since June 2017, she has served as a High Court Judge in the Criminal Division. She is the author of "*Newsroom Law - A Legal Guide for Commonwealth Caribbean*".

8) **Rachael Espinet** - a writer, journalist, social media content specialist and community manager. She was a feature writer at Trinidad Newsday and digital media manager for T&T Guardian, managing the website and social media channels.

9) **Heneka Watkis-Porter** - an entrepreneur, corporate podcast Host/Producer, coach, author, international speaker and host of eEntrepreneurial You Podcast and TV Show.

10) **Anil Seerattan** - has been working in the local broadcast media for almost 18 years. He is presently the news director at a network of three radio stations and also lectures in media and journalism courses at two local colleges.

In the closing remarks, Ms. Sherry Mc Millan, TATT's Executive Officer, Corporate Communications thanked the presenters for a job well done. She noted that their communication style made it easy for the participants to understand the subject matter and engage in discussion on the various topics.

She added that whilst reading books and scholarly articles and attending seminars on journalism has great utility, there is no substitute for having virtual "face-to-face" interactive sessions with seasoned journalists who can give insights on journalistic techniques.

TATT, in collaboration with TTPBA, will be hosting the next Annual Broadcasters Forum titled "Self-regulation in the Broadcasting Industry: Individual Choice or Industry Standard" in September 2022.

TECHNOLOGY TIPS
for Seniors

According to Ofcom, United Kingdom's Communications Regulator, in their **Adults' Media Use and Attitudes report 2018**, *"more than a quarter (28%) of people over the age of 75 now use tablets—an increase of 15% from 2015. The 2020 report found that 21% of over-75s have a social media account. The majority of older people favour Facebook as their social media platform of choice."* Although these reports are encouraging, there remains a problem: as many seniors are still intimidated by existing and emerging digital technologies.

The gravity of the problem surfaced over the last two years as seniors who would not have ordinarily embraced modern technology were forced to remain connected to friends and family and conduct business using digital technologies because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The most vulnerable group in society—the seniors—were advised to remain at home and avoid visitors to protect themselves from the virus. This marked the start of isolation, loneliness and depression for seniors worldwide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) document online, "older persons were challenged by requirements to spend more time at home".

While in Trinidad and Tobago, many seniors live in extended families, some challenges would have been experienced as contact with community groups and visits to places such as banks and shopping centres had to be curtailed.

The communication gulf was bridged for those with access to and who could use digital technologies. However, seniors unfamiliar with these technologies would feel the gloom of loneliness.

This challenge did not have its genesis during the COVID-19 lockdown and certainly will not end when the pandemic is no longer with us. COVID-19 merely exacerbated an existing problem.

Information and how-to guides may be an excellent place to start to assist, support and encourage senior citizens with the use of technology.

In this article, a guide to the existing technologies is provided as well as tips on how they may enhance the lives of senior citizens.

Internet

For older persons, the use of the Internet might seem quite daunting. However, a better understanding of this technology, how positively it can impact lives, and its endless possibilities, may lead more seniors to become less resistant.

The BBC Web Wise website provides the following simplified definition of the Internet:

"A network of computers that works much like the postal system, only at sub-second speeds. Just as the postal service enables people to send each other envelopes containing messages, the Internet enables a computer to send one another small packets of digital data."

An Internet connection affords seniors the opportunity to:
1. *connect* with friends and family
2. *easily share* photographs and videos with friends and family members
3. *shop* on sites such as **Amazon.com** for anything their hearts desire and can afford
4. *conduct* business transactions such as online banking
5. *play* games with family and friends

Security will be their number one concern. However, if made aware of the necessary precautions, they may feel more inclined to engage in online activity comfortably.

To mitigate risks here are some tips on how to **Stay Safe Online**:

a. **Email scams.** Be aware of fake emails requesting personal or financial information. Scam emails might appear to be authentic and originate from legitimate companies. Keep an eye out for language or grammar errors, as well as warnings such as—*"unless you act now, an offer may expire, or your account will be cancelled"*. Genuine organisations will never request personally identifiable information such as usernames, passwords, or bank account information.

b. **Health scams.** Be aware of false or misleading claims made about medical-related products, such as "miracle health cures".

c. **Internet Jargon.** It is useful to know certain terms or Internet jargon. For a guide to basic Internet terms or jargon, the following link may be useful:

https://www.allconnect.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Allconnect_Internet-Basics-for-Seniors_Terms-and-Definitions_0525-1.pdf

Mobile Phones

There are mobile phones that cater for older persons with features such as large buttons and large, clear screens.

Apart from the basic use of the phone for making and receiving calls, there are several "Apps" (an abbreviation for the word Applications) that may be helpful to older persons.

These Apps, when downloaded, have an icon on the screen for ease of reference. In addition, Apps are available for a wide range of services, such as:
- **Video conferencing,** through portals such as Zoom. Zoom can be used to participate in video calls with family and friends around the world, at no extra cost once connected to WiFi.
- **Games** or **puzzles** can be accessed through particular Apps to keep the brain active, alert, and helps with memory.
- **Alerts –** There are Apps which can be used to remind users when to take medication and keep medical appointments.

Tablets

Tablets are similar to the smartphone but are more widely used for games/puzzles, video-conferencing and some Apps. Generally, smartphones and tablets come with various features that may be customised to ensure the device meets the specific needs of seniors. Here are some tips on how to make your devices easier to use:

- **Adjust display settings.** Adjust the accessibility features to increase font sizes. Adjustments can also be made to have App icons appear larger.
- **Use voice activation.** A variety of functions can be performed without having to touch your phone such as opening Apps, calling someone by saying their name, sending voice notes, and writing texts and emails.
- **Set up your device to read aloud.** You can set up your phone to read notifications, messages and emails and web pages aloud to you. To do this, adjust your phone's accessibility settings.

Fitness Devices

As people age, staying healthy is a priority, particularly if they are prone to lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and heart issues. Some devices can be worn like wrist-watches and used to track heart-rate, calories, daily steps and sleep patterns. Some also come with technology that can connect to mobile phones to view and record heart-rate, calories and sleep pattern results. The tracking aspect of these devices serves as motivation to engage in a healthier lifestyle, allowing comparisons to be made to show progress.

Health & Safety Devices

In addition to fitness devices, several other devices are designed for older persons who prefer to live independently in their own homes. These devices are alarms or alert systems designed to monitor the health and safety of seniors. This service entails wearing a pendant around the neck or wrist. For example, some devices monitor the heart-rate and record blood pressure measurements of heart patients to alert family members or medical practitioners if any irregularities warrant immediate emergency health care.

Additionally, these devices can alert loved ones if the senior is in distress, whether due to a fall or other potential safety risk. Response teams can be dispatched once the alarm is triggered. In Trinidad and Tobago, several companies are offering these services. Some offer solutions best suited to the needs of the individual.

In this ever-increasing digital world, seniors often become overwhelmed by all the new technology available. Still, the reality is that smartphones, social media, tablets, banking machines, and computers are all around us. Therefore, it may be challenging for seniors to avoid their use. But, seniors should not be afraid of technology. Technology can be a great tool to help seniors stay connected to their family and friends, remain safe, relieve boredom and loneliness, and improve one's physical and mental well-being.

In this rapidly changing world, being a technologically savvy senior is simple once the effort is made to understand.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES
for Older Persons and Healthy Ageing
A WTISD event

> "*For more than two years now, older people and other vulnerable groups have borne the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic. For them, digital technologies have become a real lifeline.*"
> **- Houlin Zhao, International Telecommunications Union Secretary-General**

Houlin Zhao made this statement during his message for World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) 2022, themed *'Digital Technologies for Older Persons and Healthy Ageing'*.

In keeping with this theme, TATT hosted a one-hour television discussion programme on the local free-to-air station, CNC3, to commemorate WTISD. The broadcast was aimed at encouraging the use of digital technologies by this country's silver generation to connect with friends and family and generally become independent digitally.

In her opening statement, Mrs Cynthia Reddock Downes, TATT's Chief Executive Officer, said that TATT saw it necessary to "continue to raise awareness among our senior population of the significant role of ICTs in supporting healthy ageing". Mrs. Downes stated that the programme aimed at encouraging more of this country's silver generation to use digital technologies to promote a more digitally inclusive society.

The panel in the studio were: Dr. Jennifer Rouse, Gerontologist; Mr. Edson Eastmond, Head, TTConnect, and Mrs. Neeala Maharaj-Racha, Head of the Consulting Unit, both representing iGovTT; and Ms. Cherylann Quamina-Baptiste, Librarian IV of the National Library and Information System Authority.

During the discussion, Dr. Rouse highlighted stumbling blocks and fears experienced by seniors when using or attempting to use digital technologies. Dr. Rouse encouraged senior viewers to seek help from persons they trust to learn to use these technologies, citing some of her original hesitations. However, she told seniors they could use these digital tools to connect, entertain themselves and access services online, emphasising this could contribute to their physical and emotional well-being.

Promoting access and availability of national library e-resources was Ms. Quamina-Baptiste, who informed the television audience of NALIS' "Bring your Device and Come" programme. This programme allowed seniors to be taught how to use their personal devices, such as cell phones, tablets, laptops, and other special privileges. The programme, she said, was specially developed for NALIS' 'golden' members.

Mrs. Maharaj-Racha and Mr. Edson Eastmond highlighted a range of iGovTT online services from which senior citizens can benefit. Features of GovPayTT—a system allowing for cashless payments of government services and the government e-appointment portal—were explained during the programme.

Sharing testimonies on their digital experiences via pre-recorded videos were: members of the Adult Literacy Tutors Association (ALTA) and the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Retired Persons (TTARP). ALTA representatives spoke about using the Zoom platform to access classes virtually. At the same time, TTARP members told of their experiences participating in virtual community discussions on: topics of interest to seniors and on the benefits of online banking services.

Mr. Wendell Etienne was the moderator of the programme.

The complete one-hour programme is available on TATT's YouTube channel and can be accessed via the link below.

WTISD 2022 'Digital technologies for Older Persons and Healthy Ageing' - YouTube

TechTips

Moving Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) into the Digital Market Space

As Internet services become increasingly more accessible in Trinidad and Tobago, many buyers search online for a product or service before making their buying decision.

As a result, there are huge opportunities for MSMEs to transition into and participate in the digital market space.

What is the digital market space? It is an electronic information exchange environment that integrates the elements of traditional marketplaces (buyers, sellers, products, services, commerce, marketing, etc.) through technology. Therefore, it is also called an electronic market space.

How do MSMEs survive and boost profits from the digital market space? Here are some explanations:

Increased business reach – In the digital market space, the products and services offered by MSMEs can be viewed by a more significant number of consumers compared to those in the traditional marketplace.

Digital marketing levels the playing field - Small and big businesses alike can compete seamlessly for the same customers' attention in a digital market space. The great thing about digital marketing is that with creativity, you can win anyone's attention—and dollars!

Affordability - Traditional marketing tactics are quite expensive. Small businesses cannot afford to pay for radio, television, billboard or poster advertisements. However, digital marketing using low-cost social media tools can be affordable for any business scale.

You will learn more about the customer's needs - All businesses first need to understand what their audience needs from them. Participation in the digital market space helps small businesses identify their audience's online behaviour and deliver the best products or services more efficiently—on a low budget. Many online advertising platforms offer analytics or insights on consumer behaviour to aid businesses with marketing strategies.

How can MSMEs participate in the digital market space?

Step 1- Register your business. Go to the URL https://www.mybiztt.com/ and follow the steps to become a registered business entity in Trinidad and Tobago. The entire registration process can be done online!

Step 2- Read up on the potential of local digital marketing. According to the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI, 2021), there is a growing trend in consumers buying more locally-made goods and services. This has been facilitated by the emergence of domestic market platforms in many countries, including Trinidad and Tobago, giving rise to a new phenomenon known as **"digital localism".**
Read more about this at URL https://tradeind.gov.tt/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/MTI-Encourages-ecommerce.pdf

Step 3- Move your business online with the right advice. For further advice on moving your business online, meeting your existing customers' needs, taking advantage of local e-commerce opportunities, and promoting your business in the digital market space using platforms that suit your type of business, see URL https://tradeind.gov.tt/advice-to-entrepreneurs/

Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago

@theofficialtatt

@tatt2004

tattorg

TATT TnT