



TTWiFi Rollout in Public Spaces

A Statement by Senator the Honourable Allyson West, Minister of Public Administration



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It is with great pleasure today, that I announce to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago the implementation of TTWiFi, Government's national free WiFi initiative that will provide WiFi in public libraries, transport hubs and waiting areas of national health facilities across the country in the coming weeks and months.

The fact that many of you are reading this statement online or on a mobile device right now is testament to how far the world in general and Trinidad and Tobago's, in particular, has progressed along the digital spectrum.

Our children can swipe on a tablet screen before they can walk and talk, and they are graduating with certificates in UX/UI Design and Digital Marketing from schools with no physical address. Products and services across social media platforms have connected us to each other on a global scale in ways that were previously unfathomable.

Yet, many of us right here at home find ourselves living outside of the digital landscape, unable to actively or creatively participate in the digital economy. While the internet, which provides increased access to information, goods and services, has been the great equalizer among developing and developed nations, it has also created a new divide at the community and social levels.

This "digital divide" distinguishes between fully engaged e-citizens and those who have the potential to but do not have the infrastructural, financial or knowledge resources to take full advantage of the educational, business and social opportunities that the Internet offers. It means then, that some members of our population do not have an equal opportunity to learn and develop and to contribute to national development via the global marketplace.

As the Minister with overall responsibility for the National ICT portfolio, I can tell you without exaggeration that there are many aspects of our technology sector of which we should be proud. These include our infrastructure and sound investments in information and communications technology (ICT) in both the public and private sectors.

I am heartened to see the ongoing implementation of projects under the ICT Blueprint, Trinidad and Tobago's National ICT Plan for the period 2018 to 2022. Many Ministries, Government Departments and Agencies, are now offering e-services to our citizens, and during 2020 we are making further strides through the introduction of e-ticketing, e-payments e-appointments and e-applications which will significantly improve the ease of interaction with the government.

However, such advances are of little value as a mobile device is not really mobile if it cannot be used on-the-go. This is why TTWiFi is so important, and this is why I urge you to take full advantage of the many opportunities it presents to bridge the digital divide, to accelerate our development and ultimately, to drive our economic, social, and educational growth.

What is TTWiFi?

TTWiFi is a country-wide public Wi-Fi Internet, broadband network for Trinidad and Tobago. Wherever you see our beautiful hummingbird logo with the Wi-Fi symbol in its wings, in our national colours of red, white and black, you can expect free and reliable access to the Internet.

This initiative was previously launched on July 29, 2016 on PTSC busses but had its challenges. The next stages of the roll out will be more widespread, more comprehensively organised and will benefit from a greater spirit of collaboration among the various stakeholders, including ICT service providers.

With the full support of two of the Ministry's implementing Agencies, namely the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT) and iGovTT, we can look forward to the availability of free public Wi-Fi at more locations in the future, starting with transport hubs, waiting rooms at health facilities and public spaces at libraries, and eventually at government offices, public recreational spaces and underserved or unserved locations throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Locations

In the first quarter of 2020, TTWiFi will become available at:

- City Gate PTSC Terminal, Port of Spain (bus terminal and maxi-taxi platforms)
- San Fernando PTSC Bus Terminal
- Sixteen (16) public libraries across Trinidad and Tobago

In the ensuing months, TTWiFi will become available in waiting areas in hospitals, health centres and other transportation hubs.

The Value

The overarching aim of TTWiFi is to increase access to and utilisation of the internet and promote wider public interest in ICT. The TTWiFi initiative will, therefore, feature educational and awareness-building campaigns on topics ranging from data protection, accessing free academic resources at our libraries, and starting an online business. All of this is in line with the thrusts of our National ICT Plan

The Vision

Today, Internet access is fuelling everything, from technology innovation and the growth in small digital businesses to tourism booms. It is my hope that we will open the minds of our citizens to the possibilities of truly having the world at their fingertips – to create content and just not merely share it. It is this Government's vision that by laying the foundations for broad-based, inclusive participation in societal benefits, we will leave no one behind as we embrace the digital transformation. There is no age limit when it comes to connectivity, no geographic boundaries, no class or racial or social restrictions. We all grow together.

Dis is how we connect!
– to each other, and to the world –

Senator the Honourable Allyson West

