



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

NEWS RELEASE

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Subject: Caribbean Open Data Conference and Code Sprint

ST. AUGUSTINE, Trinidad and Tobago – On January 26th and 27th 2012, the Faculty of Engineering, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, will host the local segment of a landmark regional initiative, “*Developing the Caribbean.*” As the first of its kind, the three-country event will be streamed live from the host countries: Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and the Dominican Republic. The Trinidad segment comprises the *Caribbean Open Data Conference and Code Sprint* which will take place on the St. Augustine Campus. The event is aimed at raising awareness of the critical role that open data can play in the design and development of software solutions to address social problems indigenous to the region. The local segment is coordinated by the Faculty of Engineering’s Caribbean ICT Research Programme (CIRP).

The two-day event is focused on building awareness of the potential of open data, as well as on demonstrating to national audiences the types of quality services and products that can be developed by skilled Caribbean programmers with access to these open data sets. The term “open data” refers to non-personal data that is made freely available to the public for re-use without restrictions from copyright, patents or other mechanisms of control. The goals of the open data movement are similar to those of other "open" movements such as open source, open governance, and open access. In addition to its support of greater efficiency, transparency and accountability of public offices, open data provides relevant information which developers can use to build real-world, problem-solving applications.

The Conference boasts an impressive selection of invited guests and knowledgeable speakers from the private and public sector, as well as the international community, all of whom have a keen interest in the open data movement.

The Conference and Code Sprint has generated support from key national institutions such as NIHERST whose ongoing relationship with NASA has fully sponsored international speaker Ray O'Brien, CTO of IT at NASA's Ames Research Center. Similarly, Platinum Sponsor Blink Broadband has applauded the initiative and lent its support. Trevor Deane, Executive Vice President Marketing, Strategic Analytics and Carrier Business states, "The local development of software applications is a frontier that has an immense part to play in diversifying and growing the country's economy. Over the years we have invested in making our communications network a modern, state of the art conduit for data to serve as a foundation for moving Trinidad and Tobago to a knowledge-based economy. A critical but missing link in the country's technology ecosystem is the capacity to consistently create and market, high quality, value-added software applications, and so we wish to compliment UWI for taking this initiative to host the Caribbean Open Data Conference and Code Sprint. Blink Broadband is very pleased to partner with them in taking this very important step towards making technology fulfil a more fundamental role in impacting the quality of life for citizens of Trinidad and Tobago."

With no age restrictions on participation, the event is expected to attract software developers from across the country and to engage them in high level competition. Interested persons can register at <http://developingcaribbean.org/>.

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