

## **TOWARDS A NATIONAL DIGITAL STRATEGY.....A DIGITAL JAMAICA**

### **Greetings**

Chairman of the Jamaica Broadcasting Commission, Cordell Green, Managing Director, Staff, Company CEO, Commission Members, All.

I wish to commend The Jamaica Broadcasting Commission on their theme “**PEOPLE – TRANSITIONING – DIGITAL**”. We celebrate with you this milestone and we are appreciative of what you have managed to achieve in 25 years. We recognize as well that we have witnessed a dramatic change in the work, focus and functioning of your organization over the years and commend you for ‘moving with the times’.

### **Digitalization---What it all means.**

Let’s explore first, what’s digitalization. Apologies to English purists, “digitalization” is not an authentic word. Though maybe it should and soon will be. Very precisely, digitization is the process of converting information into a digital format. In this format, information is organized into discrete units of data (called bits) that can be separately addressed. This is the binary data that computers and many devices with computing capacity process (such as digital cameras and digital hearing aids.). More loosely speaking though, Digitalization is the integration of digital technologies into everyday life by the digitization of everything that can be digitized. The digital economy is the global network of economic and social activities that are enabled by information and communications technologies, such as the internet, mobile and sensor networks

### **Why is it important**

The digital revolution (and I know we all recognize it as being a full blown revolution) encompasses, whether we know it or not and whether we like it or not all facets of our lives. Digital technology continues to disrupt traditional markets, creating disproportionately profitable opportunities for firms that are able to reorganize around them.

***Cite Example here of CHAT ACQUISITION – Use of Secondary Sales Force for online credit card transaction and changing one’s mind mid stream. The inherent capacity of the digital world now enables us to transform what was once a sterile non-interactive environment into a digitalized customer touch point with two-way communication!***

Through participating in the digital economy, we in Jamaica can boost our productivity, global competitiveness and social wellbeing. Participating in the digital economy also provides opportunities to improve access to services and help deliver improved wellbeing in the form of better economic, education, health, social and environmental outcomes.

The ever increasing availability of high-speed broadband connections and the establishment of an effective online presence will allow Jamaican businesses to further participate in the global marketplace. Greater use of online opportunities, enable businesses to conduct their existing business processes more efficiently to maximize their overall competitiveness, grow revenues and increase productivity

Of the many areas that we could look at in terms of the impact of the digital landscape, for us in this room, we are at an inflection point; digital technology is challenging us to rethink some fundamental aspects of marketing and communications.

I crave your indulgence over the next 5 to 7 mins to explore the impact of Digitalizaion on:

- The **business environment** in general
- The **Anbell experience** specifically
- The Jamaican ICT sector and building the digital age literacy skill
- My thoughts on the need to move towards a structured **National Digital Strategy**

## The Business Environment

Businesses in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, large and small, take for granted the internet-driven and facilitated Global Marketplace in which we operate. The bottom-line for all entities is directly and positively impacted and so we willingly embrace it. Never before in the history of the mankind has, especially, a small business owner, had these cost effective opportunities available to them.

- The containment of costs using digital products
- The expanded network of potential suppliers making available a wider range of competitively priced goods and services.
- Apps and business solution on your terms – Example the Business Model Toolbox

Toolbox for iPad combines the speed of a napkin sketch with the smarts of a spreadsheet. It enables you to map, test, and iterate your business ideas — fast. It allows you to sketch your business model, add ballpark figures for market size, revenue streams, and costs faster than using a spreadsheet and test the profitability of your ideas with a quick report and breakdowns by offer, customer segments, and costs. In essence it helps you to get a better understanding of your business, test the model, collaborate and create a solid basis for your plan. And this is one app costing USD\$29.

## The Anbell Story

Allow me to use my own example...

Anbell started way back in 1992 and was the among the first mobile dealer to represent Telecommunications of Jamaica (C&W/Lime). At the time we only had analogue handsets. (Motorola 'brick phone"). Our business fortunes increased when they decided to go Digital....launching the "Switch to Digital" campaign..... the first time we were seeing anything like that. Their switch to digital allowed for more talk capacity and more handsets on the network thus growing our business. Then came Digicel ... the rest is history. After the 'mobile' era we began to find new ways to leverage this emerging digital landscape and since ventured out further into Internet and VOIP. Thereafter, in a true testament of digitalization we launched two new companies;

- The First – Intelligent Multimedia Limited, IML, is about Digital Signage. It capitalizes on the targeted nature of advertising, geo location, consumer lifestyle and activities, as well as time of day, to new levels of market reach; facilitating us to be able to better target specific market segments. This allows for 1:1 interaction – a radical departure from traditional media. IML is built on the premise of Digital Out-of-Home (DOOH) 'narrowcasting' communications as opposed to broadcasting....delivering targeted messages to specific locations at specific times; it is the delivery of visual content to a precisely targeted audience through a network of LCD screens.

This digital target approach to advertising is an acknowledgement that the approach of bombarding and interrupting customers with a stream of ads everywhere they turn (on the back of supermarket receipts, pizza boxes, urinals etc.) is no longer working as well as it used to. Consumers are largely pushing back and becoming resentful of the old intrusive way of communicating and they are 'fighting back' with the advent of TiVo/Roku, iPods and iPads, the remote control and many other devices – they are literally tuning us out. Yet through digital means of Meaningful marketing and more precisely, meaningful advertising a not so quiet revolution is taking place in the media industry. On the one hand there is the admitted fragmentation of the media landscape (more radio and television stations, more print options, mobile marketing on your smart phones and other devices etc) and on the other hand, exploiting digital applications to more targeted advertising means. Meaningful marketing/advertising simply put, is about "people choosing to engage with you in an exchange that they perceive as adding value to their lives; whether or not they immediately buy what you are selling" (Bob Gilbreath from The Next Evolution of Marketing).

***Not for one moment do we pretend that Digital Signage is replacing traditional media. What we are saying however, is that they playing different yet complementary roles and must be combined coordinated into a single cohesive and impactful communication package. Digital Signage, has become the newest addition to your advertising arsenal and a very***

***necessary component to your integrated communication program.***

- **The Second company, and most recent (and by the way, the one I am perhaps the most proud of because of the ability to be a true ‘game changer’ is the Anbell Trade Exchange. A Trade Exchange is a member based community that promotes bartering, yes bartering, with a 21<sup>st</sup> Century twist. Not only does this help business by leveraging their excess capacity for goods and services they need thereby reducing cash, but it enables members to use the technology to help themselves and by way of trade to incorporate other digital services via the network in their business that they might have not otherwise had. It opens the door for new media advertising, social media and content creation using their excess capacity as currency. The members of the exchange get the benefits of an on-line real time marketplace and get exposure to the digital trading floor.**

### **The ICT Sector Experience – Building Digital Age Literacy Skill Set**

**We noticed early that one of the challenges we faced was finding the requisite skill sets to help us take advantage of the Digital Opportunities in a marked way. We recognized the strong need to build a collection of new skill clusters to include alongside the traditional standards. Two of these skill clusters are, digital age literacy and inventive thinking.**

**To this end, Our Hon PM is keen on developing public private partnerships with the ICT Sector and I am proud that two areas of particular interest are being addressed, which is a great example of public/private participation.**

- 1. Aligning education with the needs of the ICT Sector The Ministry of Education (MoE) is committed to improving access to quality education in Jamaica for all students..**
- 2. Effectively coordinating investment and philanthropy in the education sector In this regard, the MoE, has established the National Education Trust (NET), as its executing agency which is responsible for realizing the strategic objectives of enabling and maintaining investments in education.**

**A note on the ICT scope. People tend to think of ICT as call centres but in reality its much as it consists consists of IT as well as telecommunication, broadcast media, all types of audio and video processing and transmission and network based control and monitoring functions. The term is now also used to refer to the merging (convergence) of audio-visual and telephone networks with computer networks.**

**I think it is of some significance that the Canadian government in its own efforts has identified a strong synergy between digital literacy and economic development. For our part, this promises opportunities that we need to exploit to the fullest.**

**The ICT sector is a very dynamic and fast moving digital marketing scenario that is growing, mutating and self correcting.** "In the shortest span of time -- less than the age of a teenager -- a lot has happened to our digital landscape. Consumers have moved from simply researching, to buying and now virtually living online," said Payton Dobbs, Manager of Google's Financial Services Online Sales, at a conference for insurance executives in June of this year.

## **Moving Towards a National Digital Strategy**

### **CALL TO ACTION – Building a National Digital Strategy**

Jamaica's holistic Vision 2030 roadmap is in place. There is a list of national outcomes in the section "Where do we want to be by 2030. On that list # 11 is " A technology Enabled Society". As commendable as that is, it is an **IMMEDIATE PREQUSITE** for all of the other areas...so much that it is my view that we need to do more now. I hasten to point out that there are several organisations, present company included, that are actively engaged some aspects of this. If properly realised the benefits from these developments could be considerable. However, they will not happen automatically, there are many issues that need to be tackled before they can be fully achieved. Given the nature of the Internet these issues are as much economic, social, legal and regulatory as they are technical and, critically, these issues have been tackled together to provide an holistic and complete solution.

All this points to an **absolute** recognition that A Digital Jamaica is our key to industrial strength and competitiveness across all sectors and so the Government must prioritize this more.

I am suggesting that under the OPM a unit be immediately established to spear head the **Digital Jamaica Vision** keeping in mind the following areas:

1. Capacity to innovate using digital technologies
2. Building a world-class digital infrastructure
3. Growing the information and communications technology industry
4. Creating Jamaica's digital content advantage ...ensuring we have the legal and regulatory framework
5. Building digital skills for tomorrow
6. Research in the digital era

Participation is critical to ensure we deepen our understanding of the evolving digital economy, its opportunities, challenges and impacts on society, industry, individuals and the environment;

**I call on you all to support a National Digital Strategy to help us grow and build our nation.**