

Keynote Address
Hon. Fayval Williams
Minister of Science, Energy & Technology
Global Digital Marketing Summit
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Salutations:

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Ladies and gentlemen, in the words of Judy Goldberg of Sony Pictures, businesses do not necessarily need a "***digital strategy but a business strategy for the digital age.***"

Whether small or large, public or private sector, all businesses have been touched by the digital revolutions of the 20th and 21st centuries. As society evolves, so do the needs, hence it is absolutely essential that businesses retool, upskill and strategize to remain competitive and relevant to the clients they serve.

This reality is the primary reason that summits such as these are necessary for the fast paced times in which we exist. So industry leaders and sector professionals can find strategies to become more agile for the times.

Technology-Fuelling Business Growth

In this information age, technology is an integral cornerstone for the growth and development of businesses and nations. In today's digital society, we are not only global citizens but also 'netizens.'

Our lives and the transactions we do are characterized by increased automation, utilizing the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchain, augmented reality and a whole host of new and emerging technologies.

The Data Driven Culture

This is a data driven culture where **data is king**. With each browse of the internet, we are leaving behind digital footprint that websites can track to identify us, track our activity and predict or prompt our behaviour. From our search patterns on the internet to our social media posts and online transactions- we are constantly sharing data about ourselves which is being collected to design a unique experience tailored specifically for us.

Data and data analytics are driving digital transformation, creating monetization opportunities, radically changing customer experience and reshaping industries.

As a government, we recognize that digital data is a critical source of innovation and of value to businesses.

After all, this is an opportune time for business leaders to fully harness the power of data in order to drive better and consistent organizational outcomes.

Organisations of all sizes have growing volumes of information flowing into their databases on a daily basis, hence, the finalization of the **Data Protection Bill** is a high priority on our legislative agenda for this year. This legislation will protect the privacy of individuals, setting guidelines of how personal data can be collected, processed, stored, used and disclosed.

Government Driving the Digital Agenda

The Government is also cognizant of the importance of technology to building not just the Jamaican society but the economy as well. As such, the creation of a technologically enabled society and an enabling business environment are key national outcomes under goal 3 of our Vision 2030 National Development Plan.

As a Ministry, we are actively engaged in building the enabling environment so that both business and our people can thrive.

Increasing ICT Access

We are bridging the information divide by providing access to the technology and the information super highway through several initiatives:

Through the Universal Service Fund (USF):

- We have established approximately 300 Community Access Points (CAPs)- which are internet services facilities in underserved communities;
- Seven (7) public Wi-Fi hotspots have been established through the Connect JA Public Wi-Fi project with an additional four (4) projects set to come on stream this financial year; and
- We are provisioning an island wide broadband network that will allow public access to the internet through High Schools, Public Libraries, Post Offices, Health Centres and Police Stations. Through this network, several institutions are now able to reap the benefits of high speed internet connectivity.

Creating an e-Government

The Ministry, through eGov Jamaica will be undertaking several initiatives aimed at enhancing e-Government and improving the pace at which business is conducted across all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

We continue to design and implement a government wide area network (GovNet) which will facilitate a secured, high-speed, reliable and resilient platform to interconnect all government entities. This network will connect government MDAs to facilitate shared services, including data centre computing services (GovCloud), consolidated voice communication system (GovTalk), and consolidated email system (GovMail).

Legislative Agenda

Ladies and gentlemen, technology has increased the ease of doing business and reaching our various client base, but it has also made us vulnerable and open to cyber threats.

Cybercrime is one of the greatest threat to businesses with predictions that it will cost the world \$6 trillion annually by 2021. Cybersecurity is therefore the responsibility of every player at all levels. We must educate ourselves on the threats and institute the necessary safeguards to protect data, our citizens' information and our systems.

For the 2019/2020 financial year, in addition to the Data Protection Bill, the **Information and Communications Technology Act** will be given high priority by the Ministry. This Act will provide the ICT sector with an adequate legislative and regulatory framework which addresses current trends and emerging technologies, competitiveness and consumer protection.

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen, ***the time is right not just for digital strategies but digitally aware business leaders***, who are bold and strategic to evolve with the times.

I wish for you a successful summit and it is my distinct pleasure to declare this event open.

Thank you.