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St. Lucia's *Internet Fiesta*

Internet Fiesta is an activity which started in Europe about five years ago and has been included in the events calendar of many countries around the world. Four islands in the Eastern Caribbean: St. Lucia, Antigua & Barbuda, St. Kitts & Nevis and St. Vincent, in collaboration with Martinique, participated in the Fiesta for the first time in 2004. The theme for Internet Fiesta 2004 was "Internet for All".

The main objectives of the Internet Fiesta are: to increase awareness of the possibilities of the Internet among the young and the old, and among private and public sector workers in a fun environment; to initiate and expand an electronic network between people across national borders and language barriers and to host an event with a Caribbean flavor, promoting education and training in the usage of the Internet as a valuable resource for economic development and social interaction in an enjoyable way (see: <http://www.internetfiesta.lc/>).



Some activities of the Internet Fiesta in St. Lucia included: computer lab decorating and website building competitions in Schools; technology quizzes on national radio stations and crossword puzzles in newspapers and youth magazines; setting up of internet access points in remote and rural communities with tutors available to conduct orientation sessions for first time computer/internet users; the illustration of technology themes to school children and rural



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communities through DVD movies on a big screen (for example I-Robot with Will Smith) and technology related dance/drama theatrical performances in Village and Town Centers around the island.

Here are Excerpts from the media release on the Launch of Internet Fiesta below:

On Monday, May 23rd 2005 after much preparation and anticipation, the St. Lucia leg of *Caribbean Internet Fiesta* was officially launched, at the Castries City hall.

The opening ceremony consisted of the Prime Minister's address delivered by the National Co-ordinator for Internet Fiesta: Dr Cletus Bertin, and it focused primarily on the advantages of a more computer literate society. Ensuing was a series of presentations by the various facilitators and stakeholders of the event including an address by: OECS representative Mrs. Candia Alleyne, Marketing Manager of Cable and Wireless Mr. Anselm Mathurin, St. Lucia Blind Welfare Association representative Ms Jessica Jacobie; and short addresses from the computer dealers who were sponsors of the event

Throughout the rest of the day, the town hall, well equip with functioning computers and Internet access, was opened up to the general public. St. Lucians came out in large numbers. The gradual inflow of curious citizens included some who had never used a computer before; in which case hands-on *beginners orientations* was provided by our skilled group of NSDC computer assistants; to those who simply wanted to set up or check e-mail.

Later in the day, many primary, secondary, and community college students then on study leave, came in to research educational material and of course to indulge in the plethora of fun and educational games available online. Many of these students also took this opportunity to keep in touch with friends and family right here and all over the world via e-mailing and instant messaging.



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Far from the lay person's casual interest in merely chatting online and listening to music though, many persons expressed interest in surfing the net to explore the wide expanse of information available with just one click.

However, due to the limited facilities available at the town hall, such persons had to be referred to one of the list of five "Free internet access" venues which continued to offer their services free of charge until the end of the week.

Due to the magnitude of interested St. Lucians that Internet Fiesta invoked, activates had to be further extended to the following day until 3:00pm

Source: <http://www.internetfiesta.lc>



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