

DRAFT (as of 18 APR 2016) CONCEPT PAPER  
Community Information Technology Innovation (CITI) Center

**- Proposal Concept**

To develop a *community-sited* applied research, technology transfer, and technology incubation center, established and managed by the College of Applied Technology & Applied Arts of Trinidad & Tobago (COSTAATT). CITI Center would focus on information technology, and will have as its primary purposes engaging the community and students at all levels in the technology of their future, offering venues for technology companies to demonstrate and explore applications of their products and services, as well as supplementing & enriching the classroom and experiential learning opportunities available for use in COSTAATT curriculum. CITI Center would not be associated with any particular academic department or program, and would be offered as a COSTAATT-wide resource for developing the community, business alliances, and industry-specific education & training opportunities.

**- Primary Audiences**

1. software and hardware developer and user communities
2. business and industry
3. primary and secondary school students
4. COSTAATT faculty and students

**- Services and Activities**

Focusing CITI Center on community, business, and student engagement with technology creates opportunities for developing and offering innovative programs and services, such as:

1. user groups meeting and networking [“The Future of Tertiary Education and Skills Training 2015-2025” <http://test.gov.tt/portals/0/Documents/Publications/TESTNationalPolicyFramework2015-2025.pdf> 7.3.3 & 7.3.4]
2. community-oriented technology trainings and demonstrations by faculty and students [policy framework 7.3.4]
3. hands-on workshops focusing on “making things” to popularize science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education and youth engagement, thus developing basic information and communications technology (ICT) skills (for examples, see <http://www.blackgirlscode.com/programsevents.html>) [policy framework 7.3.6]
4. presentations to encourage and develop community interest in emerging areas of ICT (examples: gaming & interactive media development, robotics, drones, app development, mobile, information & network security) [policy framework 7.3.3 & 7.3.6]
5. base for developing a technology incubation center (for examples, see <http://disrupt-africa.com/2016/02/african-vcs-selected-for-inaugural-capria-accelerator/> & <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IHub> ) [policy framework 7.3.3 & 7.3.6]

## - Facilities

Various options for housing the proposed Center should be considered. The preferred option is a free-standing facility, to encourage community participation and program responsiveness. For example, using a storefront or industrial space located in an existing “Silicon Alley” area in Port-of-Spain would have synergistic value & further existing development. Other considerations for the facility should include:

1. both open labs/bays with multi-purpose work benches (to provide flexible learning spaces) and some smaller meeting/lecture rooms (to provide community activity and presentation spaces), or ability for space to be reconfigured
2. both hard-wired and wireless connectivity (to provide a “living lab”) to an internal local area network (LAN)
3. dependable power and “broadband” Internet connectivity for CITI Center users
4. projectors with both HDMI and VGA inputs, overhead/built-in preferred
5. some computers with high-end 3D modeling software and on-site 3D printing facilities to explore the future of prototyping and just-in-time fabrication preferred

## - Personnel

A critical position for CITI Center would be that of “Technologist in Residence”. The *Resident Technologist* would provide flexibility, regularly changing curriculum, and rapid response to national trends (e.g. the expanding local need for trained network security personnel). The *Resident Technologist* would work concurrently on community presentations and ongoing faculty education, as well as on raising local business awareness of emerging ICTs. The *Resident Technologist* would have academic rank and a faculty position at COSTAATT.

CITI Center should have a small permanent support staff, to provide administrative and management support (site operations, event PR & scheduling, equipment & supplies ordering, etc) for site operations, and to facilitate the work of the *Resident Technologist* who would supervise the support staff.