



Jamaica Research &  
Education Network

# Connect!

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JUNE, 2013

## UWI-Mona DP appointed to Chair JREN



**JREN CHAIR**  
**Professor Archibald McDonald**  
**Deputy Principal**  
**The University of The West Indies**  
**Mona**

The interim JREN Task Force welcomes Professor Archibald McDonald, Deputy Principal, of UWI-Mona as its new Chair, continuing the work started by Dr Canute Thompson, a strong advocate for NREN development.

In addition, Professor McDonald has been nominated as Jamaica's representative to the Board of the Caribbean Knowledge & Learning Network, CKLN.

Students in the Faculty of Medical Sciences at UWI, now accessing electronic medical texts by SmartPad at a fraction of the cost of printed material, are beneficiaries of the vision and passion that Professor McDonald has for the application of technology to research and teaching and learning.

Professor McDonald brings the same level of passion to JREN, with the aim of transforming how ALL research and teaching is conducted in Jamaica.

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But don't we have the  
Internet already?

## Why does Jamaica need an NREN?

NRENs, are closed, user groups of research, academic and other institutions within a country that engage in knowledge creation and sharing over a special purpose, closed, high bandwidth telecommunications network.

- NRENs facilitate transfer, manipulation and analysis of BIG DATA – i.e. datasets whose size are **beyond** the ability of typical database software tools to capture, store, manage and analyze. Our BIG DATA producers in environmental sciences and seismology for example, can obtain access to super computers to process their data through JREN.

- NRENs facilitate e-health services, including real-time access to the national, regional and global medical research community; high definition interactive videoconferencing for synchronous analysis of patient data and safe, secure authentication schemas to large medical databases developed collaboratively by the medical community nationally, regionally and from around the world.

- NRENs give access to applications, software, and shared services for collaboration and research, e.g. knowledge management platforms and mirrors of development Data Warehouses.

- NRENs support the increased flow of educational and research content, resources and opportunities for collaboration among schools, colleges and universities on a national, regional and global scale.

- NRENs can facilitate cost sharing among institutions for the acquisition and application of bandwidth through the aggregation of bandwidth requirements. JREN will be positioned to negotiate the bulk purchase of bandwidth and licenses at reduced costs.

**All of these can be facilitated by JREN, bypassing the spam and other commercial traffic associated with commodity internet.**



# 2nd C@ribNET Assembly of NRENs

## Jamaica's delegation to the Assembly (l-r)

- Jackie Cousins, CKLN
- Christopher Hewitt, MoE
- Dr. Jean Beaumont, MoE
- Maxine Henry-Wilson, J-TEC
- Prof. Archie McDonald, JREN Chair, UWI
- Avrill Crawford, e-Learning Jamaica Ltd
- Nicholas Samuels, e-Learning Jamaica Ltd
- Kerry-Ann Henry, Edna Manley College, EdTech
- Winston Henry, Edna Manley College
- Jeremy Whyte, UWI Mona
- Dr Jeanette Bartley-Bryan, UTech Jamaica
- Prof. Robert Lancashire, UWI

Not shown - Steve Anderson, HEART and Roland Lattery, MSTEM

The 2nd C@ribNET Assembly brought together representatives from the Caribbean's emergent NRENs, leadership from the academic and research community, as well as CARICOM and government agencies.

The Assembly enjoyed the support of representatives from partner RRENs and NRENs in Africa, North America, Latin America and Europe including GEANT, DANTE, RedCLARA, CUDI, MAGPI, and RNP, who shared experiences and advised re best practices and lessons learned in building sustainable R&E networks.



**C@ribNET was officially launched at the 2nd C@ribNET Assembly on February 26 in Port of Spain, Trinidad, under the theme “Collaboration, Cooperation, Community”.**

### Presentations focused on:- NREN Development

The NRENs in the Caribbean are all emerging, and in these presentations more established NRENs shared development strategies that can serve to guide Caribbean NRENs as they strengthen and evolve.

### Building Communities of Interest

Virtual communities of interest collaborate using specific media to pursue mutual interests or goals. These presentations demonstrated ways that RRENs and NRENs are facilitating a range of communities of interest.

In addition, presentations by existing Caribbean communities of interest suggested ways in which engagement with C@ribNET and its NRENs, can further their goals.

### Share in the Launch of C@ribNET

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0-PddK29W0&feature=youtu.be>

### e-infrastructure

Research is increasingly carried out through distributed regional, national and global collaborations enabled by the e-infrastructure deployed by regional and national RRENs.

These collaborations are built upon an infrastructure of grid computing software that can provide researchers with benefits including shared access to large data collections, advanced ICT tools for data analysis, large-scale computing resources, and high-performance visualization.

These presentations demonstrated how e-infrastructure embraces and integrates networks, grids, data centres and collaborative environments.

See the Assembly presentations at  
<http://www.ckln.org/home/content/2nd-cribnet-assembly-february-2013-1>



# JREN Retreat - March, 2013

## Retreat Objectives & Process

- Review the Implementation Plan set out in the Jamaica NREN Blueprint
- Assess our status in relation to the Tasks 1-15 set out in the Jamaica Blueprint
- Identify the challenges
- Collaboratively develop an overall JREN Work Plan and Action Plan, April 2013 - March 2014

## Some key outcomes of the JREN Retreat:

- A cross-institutional JREN Technical Working Group was formed, involving IT personnel from HEART, e-Learning, MoE, UTech and UWI.
- JREN working Groups started their April 2013-2014 work and action plans. These will be presented to the JREN TF for review as soon as possible.
- The Task force reaffirmed its decision to seek to establish JREN as a Company Limited by Guarantee and drafted JREN Membership fee proposals.
- Attaining legal status is a JREN priority.
- The decision was taken to defer the launch of JREN and make it one of the key events on the programme of the 3rd Assembly of C@ribNET NRENs to be held in Jamaica in mid-October.

JREN Governance WG



JREN Marketing & Communications WG



JREN Technical WG



See the Jamaica NREN Blueprint @ [http://www.ckln.org/home/sites/default/files/Jamaica\\_Blueprint\\_final\\_-\\_B\\_&\\_F%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.ckln.org/home/sites/default/files/Jamaica_Blueprint_final_-_B_&_F%20(1).pdf)

# JREN Business & Operational Plan Workshop



Professor Archibald McDonald delivering the Welcome and Opening Remarks



## Consultancies are being carried out to support NREN development in the Caribbean

CKLN has secured the services of consultants through the ACP Connect Initiative. One consultancy team has responsibility for developing Business and Operational Plans for the Region's NRENs. A second team will assist the NRENs with the development of a suite of Knowledge Management and Portal Services, as well as carry out a range of activities designed to strengthen the capacity of the Region's Tertiary Educational Institutions to use Open Educational Resources (OERs)

Between May 13 and 14 two members of the APC Connect consultancy - Dr Lishan Adam and Carlton Samuels - undertook a review of JREN's progress in interconnecting Jamaica's research and education institutions and held a stakeholder consultation and workshop that provided key input to business and operational plans for JREN.



## During the workshop the Consultants required participants to:-

- explore further options for interconnection among Jamaican educational and research institutions to establish a national network that provides affordable network resources to researchers, educators and students throughout the country;
- analyze opportunities for content sharing, access to services and formation of communities of practice that leverage advanced communications networks;
- discuss institutional development options for the Jamaica Research and Education Network;
- explore financing options for the sustainable operation of the JREN; and
- consider how to raise the awareness of users, decision makers and providers as to the full range of benefits to be derived through participation in global RENs.

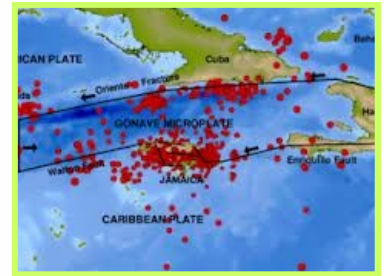
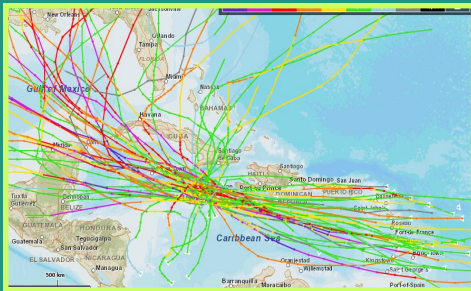
The consultants will circulate draft JREN Business and Operational plans to JREN and its stakeholders prior to a second workshop consultation to be held at the end of August to validate the plans.

## JREN to host Regional Stakeholder's Workshop in July

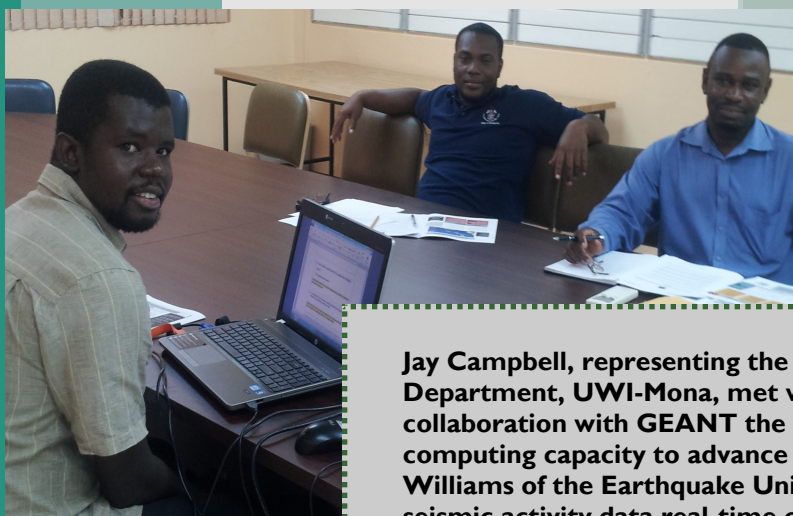
Under the ACP-CKLN consultancies a workshop will be held in Jamaica in July 8-10, for NREN stakeholders from around the Region, to define the **Knowledge Management Framework and related Services** required by the Region's NRENs, **ODL Model, Policies and Action Plans, Capacity Strengthening of TEIs to use OERs** as well as **Strategies for Creating Communities of Interest**.

As a precursor, a survey instrument to assess the awareness, institutional strategy, uptake and production and sharing of OERs has been circulated to sixty Jamaican public and private registered TLI and training institutions, as well as sister Caribbean NRENs. It will provide a snapshot of the current use of OERs - key content supported by NRENs.

# JREN PILOT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES



**GÉANT**



Jay Campbell, representing the Climate Studies Group, Physics Department, UWI-Mona, met with JREN to identify ways that in collaboration with GEANT the Group could have access to massive computing capacity to advance their research. Paul Campbell and Paul Williams of the Earthquake Unit, UWI-Mona, discussed receiving seismic activity data real-time over the JREN network.

## JREN Virtual Continuing Medical Education Pilot

Planning for the course, **Diabetes ~ Quality of Care**, to be delivered by Professor Errol Morrison, globally recognized expert in the treatment of diabetes, and President of UTech Jamaica, is underway.

Instead of delivering a single webinar in April as initially proposed, Professor Morrison has decided to leverage the JREN

network to provide a nine module course targeting health providers around the Caribbean in diabetes mellitus prevention and care.

The first module will be delivered at the end of July, and monthly thereafter.

The Big Blue Button web application set up at UTech will be used to deliver this course throughout the Region.



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