

ABSTRACT

The Role of the State in Creating a Knowledge-based Society in a Converging Environment. -

Quo Vadis, Barbados?

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Convergence of the telecommunications, information technology and the broadcasting sectors has been occurring globally at a rapid pace. This has given rise to the term 'information and communications technologies (ICTs)'. Developed countries have been taking advantage of these ICTs to develop their respective socio-economic systems to the point where they are termed variously as 'knowledge-based societies', 'knowledge societies', 'information societies' or 'knowledge-based economies'. This project has explored the impact of convergence on a country's socio-economic development. The project uses the information derived from the literature review and two country case studies to develop a proposed e-Strategy for Barbados. However, it has been found that there are special circumstances associated with developing countries that inhibit their efforts to develop into KBSs and to effectively participate at the global level of the information society. Barbados has performed creditably on several internationally recognised indices with respect to its human development index and its information society status. However, there appears to be no holistic approach to attaining KBS status. The key project output, the e-Strategy, attempts to provide a viable and realistic approach that deploys a four-prong strategic focus: (i) National Capacity-building to enable the establishment of (ii) e-Government, (iii) e-Commerce and (iv) e-Learning systems. The secondary data collection and analysis method has been used mainly because of the time and financial constraints. It has been found that access to data on the Caribbean is extremely difficult and significantly, such data is more readily available from extra-regional sources. Barbados and the wider Caribbean must establish permanent entities to manage our data and statistical needs which would redound to more effective planning and execution of knowledge-based projects among others.

KEYWORDS: Reginald Bourne; Knowledge-based Society; ICT; NGN; Malta, Trinidad and Tobago; Barbados.