

Jamaica 4TH in Region in Internet Use

The latest report on Internet saturation across the Caribbean indicates that over half of Jamaica's 2.87 million people or about 55.1 per cent, are using or has access to the internet.

This places Jamaica at an impressive fourth place in the Caribbean, bettered only by the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Puerto Rico. The survey, conducted by Internet World Stats, a division of the Miniwatts Marketing Group operating out of Colombia, provided statistics up to December 2011. Minister of State in the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining Julian Robinson, said that the report "is a very accurate reflection of the totality of the country's internet usage". "The measurement of internet users has primarily been defined by persons, who access the Internet from home and as such, the figures have revolved around 15 to 18 per cent. We have always argued that those figures do not accurately represent persons, who access the internet via smart devices like smart phones, public access points like schools and libraries or from work," he said. The State Minister said the report affirms the government's efforts to make computer technology available to every strata of the society. "Government, through the Universal Service Fund, has made computers and internet access available in schools, libraries, post offices and community centres across the island. It's something we continue to do through our Community Access Point (CAP) programme by building out our broadband network," he stated. The State Minister pointed out that an examination of the usage by those accessing the Internet would help to determine whether access is being gained solely for social media interactions. He added that investigation of how to migrate that usage and encourage persons to use the technology for entrepreneurial endeavours, would prove to be extremely useful. In the meantime, he said the Government will be using the report as a springboard to advance the e-government initiative. "What it is saying is that we can move more services online because there are more Jamaicans actually on-line. These figures are saying to us, in addition to taxes which can now be paid on-line, the Government must start to move more services online because the figures demonstrate that 55 per cent of the population has access," he argued. "I think it is encouraging for the Government and it is something that we will push because it makes more sense to put more of our services online, because it makes service delivery easier and more convenient, as individuals can access service in a timely manner," he further contended.