

## **Jamaica Computer Society General Meeting**

PCJ Auditorium, Tuesday, June 23, 2003.

### **1. Welcome**

Welcome, and thank you for sharing in the future of the Jamaica Computer Society. I've asked you here this evening to discuss a matter of grave importance. I crave your attention.

The JCS as we know it, faces a danger...unlike any other we've seen before.

In the last year although not obvious to all, a lot has happened with the JCS. I guess the most important lesson we've learnt is: -

- The fact that the JCS has been around for years does not guarantee that it will be there forever.

I've also come to realize that like other professionals; IT practitioners need to have their own professional organization

The issue is relevance. The challenge is survival.

So we've had some time...

Today we have a new Council of Management, committed and focused on strengthening and advancing the aims and objectives of the society. The feedback and recommendations we have received from you and other interested parties have been invaluable. We have begun the work, and with your continued involvement and support we will be successful.

Allow me to spend the next 30 minutes to present our plan at a very high level. For those of you who need additional details, our plans will be available on the JCS website [www.jamaicacomputersociety.com](http://www.jamaicacomputersociety.com). Also, our council and committee members will be happy to discuss the finer details.

## **2. Introduction**

Before preceding any further, it is my pleasure to introduce to you the new council of management.

<Introduce the members of the Council>

- Garfield Campbell – President/Chairperson
  
- Richard Shaw - Deputy President; Chairman of the Communications committee
  
- Dr. Patrick Dallas – Managing Director of Infotec and Control;
  
- Dean Smith – Formally of Electoral Office of Jamaica and now at JHF Director of IT; Finance committee chairperson
  
- Hugh Campbell – CEO of Emoquad Internet Services; Conference committee chairperson
  
- Garth Gibson – Membership committee chairperson
  
- Charmine DeLisser – Lecturer in the department of Computer Studies UTECH; Standards/Accreditation chairperson
  
- Nigel Henry – Own and operate an Information Consulting business

These are the folks that have been entrusted with the society for the remainder of the year.

Our number 1 priority is survival...it is what drives us. There are three things we need to achieve with great urgency:-

1. Get back in front of the JCS membership and Develop and strengthen the relationship.
2. Address the financial matters facing the society.
3. Successfully stage the main annual conference.

The good news is, we're confident the society will shortly reclaim its rightful place in the minds of IT professionals in Jamaica everywhere.

The JCS will be a creditable resource centre serving the industry.

JCS will take a leadership role in maintaining and promoting standards for the industry.

### **3. JCS Transformation**

In recent years, a number of key initiatives such as the development of a new vision and mission have pointed to a need for JCS to re-invent itself. To assure a viable, growing Society some important long-term strategic questions need to be addressed.

The transformational efforts of the society are gaining momentum fueled by a need to increase the relevance of the society.

A new Executive Committee portfolio will be created this year to oversee the strategic transition of the Society. The mandate of the JCS Transition Committee is to assist the Council in managing the transition of the organization into the envisioned “professional society”. This specifically includes the following:

- Refining and communicating the vision for the organization;
- Identifying the strategic changes required to transform the current organization into the vision; and
- Providing input and guidance to the tactical business planning process.

Members of JCS have a unique opportunity to create a powerful new force for the Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) industry. The new JCS will be driven by industry leaders from companies that are re-shaping the business landscape, the public services and the society, in general.

JCS will be a new body representing individuals and companies involved in the supply of enabling technologies and services.

***JCS will act to make Jamaica the best environment for its members to conduct business and provide world-class services to help them succeed in that environment.***

It is important that JCS attracts new members and companies central to the growth of Jamaica's information economy.

#### **4. Financials**

Dean M Smith – Committee Chairperson and Treasurer

The current financial situation the JCS find itself in requires financial prudence and control. The qualifications, skill set and enunciated dedication of all committee members is a good foundation from which to launch a recovery.

The committee's plans include setting priorities for the current set of obligations of the Society, diligently following the plans for achieving revenue targets and exercising strict control over costs.

Full recovery is not expected within the first year of revived operations but we do expect to be in a healthy position within a year.

The main source of income for the JCS is membership dues, as of such, the quality of service to it's members is directly proportional to the size of dues amount.

This revived JCS committee has wonderful plans for all members and the focus of these efforts will be to enhance the value to each member.

Additional income is expected from rental of all available areas of the JCS HQ not used for JCS operations. To this end, work has already started.

Our major payments will be for outstanding arrears in several areas and debts incurred over several months. The main feature of our plan is a refinancing of a mortgage on our building. This is expected to save the JCS significant sums in the short and medium term.

Innovative ways will be devised to fund interim financing for continuing operations, making full use of the goodwill the JCS has built up over the years.

## **5. Conference**

Hugh Campbell – Committee Chairperson

### ***Information Technology and Management Showcase***

This is the largest and most prestigious Information technology forum in the Caribbean. It facilitates industry specialists, decision makers, and end users to exchange ideas, share experiences, and demonstrate innovations in the application of information technology to meet contemporary and future information needs.

Plans are well advanced. The Conference Committee has been meeting for the past two months and additional Showcase details and information will be announced on July 8. The conference is scheduled for October 30 to November 2, 2003 at the Jamaica Grand Hotel in Ocho Rios.

The showcase is not just a rebranding of our annual conference, but rather it represent a significant shift in the how we respond to the needs of our membership and marketplace.

We have developed a program with more educational topics, sessions, and tutorials - some geared towards professional certification. The exhibits will be first class and you will be able to conduct hands-on test drives of the latest technologies, attend panel discussions, presentations, and interact directly with industry experts.

3 Forums – Tech, Business, Executive Day

The call for papers is posted on the [www.jamaicacomputersociety.com](http://www.jamaicacomputersociety.com). Other details such as registration procedure, rates and organization of the sessions will follow soon

## **6. Communications**

Richard Shaw – Committee Chairperson and Vice President

To provide and foster timely, accurate, and pertinent communications among the members of the Jamaica Computer Society, the council of management

and the information technology community.

The opportunity exist to create communication channels that utilize and showcase current and emerging technologies while enhancing the effectiveness of the communication between the members, the public and the management.

Traditional communication between a society and its members utilized channels such as telephone, email, letters, and word-of-mouth.

Current trends now include web-based channels

Future solutions will take advantage of devices such as PDAs and cell phones

### **Core Communications Strategy**

- A JCS Web-site and Portal will be the primary communications medium.
- Consolidate the various JCS web sites
- Provide an inbound email facility
- Provide an “easy”, auditable upload facility for management and committees to disseminate information
- Establish relationship with various media houses (television, radio, and print)
- Communicate/advertise availability of services to members
  
- ✓ Three month objectives (by Oct. 1, 2003)
  - Finalize “version 1” of the JCS portal
  - Provide personal email addresses and facilities to members
  - Provide chat and newsgroup facilities (moderated and non-moderated?)
  - Finalize policies on content submission, review acceptance and posting
  - Weekly/monthly technology “spot” via various media houses
  
- ✓ One year objectives (by Oct. 1, 2004)
  - Finalize “ comprehensive version – project X” of the JCS portal
  - Implement communication solutions based on PDA, cell phones and other “bling” technologies
  - Provide fee-based advertising

- Provide communications services to other computer and information technology “partners” worldwide

Website development, hosting and maintenance will be funded primarily through volunteers and other costs will be handled on a free or “negotiated” basis

To achieve our objectives we need to identify resources such as hosting facilities and demo systems and devices. We also need to identify among the membership individuals volunteers for the roles of Web Master, Media Relations Manager, Chief Developer and Auditor.

Key to the plan is a strong partnership with Computer and Information Technology organizations and with Government agencies with ICT portfolio.

## **7. Membership**

Garth Gibson - Committee Chairperson

The organization seeks to broaden its membership base, so that it reflects the diverse groups of professionals and businesses that make up a dynamic and ever-evolving ICT industry.

It is also envisaged that the organization will have vibrant affiliates in the more significant tertiary institutions across the island

Membership cards will have real value for their holders - for example, through discounts negotiated by the organization

### **Members Benefits**

The Jamaica Computer Society is currently pursuing the following benefits for its members:

- Membership cards and Pins

- The revival of the Group Health Insurance scheme with Blue Cross of Jamaica, which was once offered by the JCS.
- Discounts on membership to International Organization(s).
- Access to JCS publications such as 'Bits n Bytes'.
- Discounts at JCS sponsored events, including the Annual Conference.
- Access to Information Technology Special Interest groups affiliated with the JCS.
- Discounts on the purchase of I.T. based goods and services, e.g.
  1. Internet Service
  2. Equipment
  3. Software
  4. Training (including at the annual Conference)
  5. Consulting
- Discounts on the purchase of non-I.T. based goods and services, e.g.
  1. General Insurance
  2. Security
  3. Training (e.g. Project Management)
  4. Accounting
- Access to Online Technology forums hosted (on our Website) by the JCS.
- The opportunity to publish professional qualifications on the Jamaica Computer Society's skills database.
- Access to the Jamaica Computer Society's skills database.

In addition, the JCS will be actively pursuing the strengthening and development of Overseas JCS groups such as the one in Toronto, Canada. This in an effort to provide access to services outside Jamaica.

## **8. Standards & Accreditation**

The JCS, through the volunteer efforts of its Members, is involved in a number of initiatives related to setting standards within the IT profession. Two of the main programs are: the certification of individual IT practitioners and the accreditation of computer science programs in Jamaican Colleges and Universities.

Certification contributes to a strong professional image, profile and credibility, high standards of practice and ethics, public protection and individual career development. We're currently looking at Certification and studying the efforts of the Canadian Information Processing Society (CIPS) as they move towards implementation of their Information Systems Professional of Canada designation, (I.S.P.)

Employers who hire a Member of JCS who has received certification can be confident about the quality of that person's work.

A standard level of professional knowledge among all IT professionals relies on standard education approaches and curricula. JCS seeks to develop a rigorous process to examine and accredit university computer and information science programs and college information technology programs as high quality IT programs.

Accreditation recognizes that training programs meet published, generally accepted, criteria for sound education in the discipline and provides evidence of its quality.

## **9. Next Steps**

1. Conference 2003 Launch - July 8
2. JCS Social - June 27
3. Monthly Meeting – July 22
4. Consolidate the various JCS web sites – end of July
5. Members Benefit Rollout - August

## **10. Closing**

In closing, let me once again welcome you back to the new JCS. We are truly excited about the changes we have implemented and look forward to working to serve you better.

Our immediate focus is on the rebuilding and revitalization of the Jamaica Computer Society and we're confident that we can achieve our objective with your help.

Thank you in advance for your support and please feel free to contact me or other council members at (876) 929-5307.