



EMPOWERING CONSUMERS

Navigating Fair and Responsible AI in the Digital Age

As the world celebrates World Consumer Rights Day 2024, we must reflect on the evolving landscape of consumer rights, especially in artificial intelligence (AI). In a world increasingly driven by data and algorithms, ensuring fair and responsible AI for consumers has become a pressing concern.

Within the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), the CARICOM Competition Commission (CCC) has consistently championed increased consumer rights in the digital space, with its recent endeavours underscoring the importance of addressing modern challenges while fostering a fair and transparent marketplace.

Given the expanding scope of the digital economy, as consumers, we must educate ourselves on the implications of AI. While AI offers numerous benefits, including enhanced convenience and personalised experiences, it also poses risks, particularly concerning consumer data rights and privacy. By being informed and proactive, we can navigate these complexities and advocate for policies prioritising our interests.

The CCC will soon publish a study on data protection and privacy. The study was commissioned by the CCC, funded by the Commonwealth Secretariat, and executed by London Economics. It delves into the impact of data protection and privacy in regulating competition and consumer protection in the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME). By examining the regulatory framework's adequacy in addressing contemporary concerns, the study lays the groundwork for informed policymaking and future work on how businesses and consumers in the region navigate the digital space.

The CCC's inaugural virtual consumer conference in June 2023, where distinguished speakers discussed modern consumer protection matters, included expert discussions on consumer protection in the digital space. The conference facilitated crucial dialogues on safeguarding the CSME consumer in the digital

economy, consumer-centric digital transformation, and data protection and cyber security. The conference recordings can be reached here.

The CCC's resources on competition law and consumer protection in digital markets are all available:

- Commonwealth/Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) Workshop on Effective Legislative Frameworks for Building the Digital Economy. (here)
- Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU) webinar on Telecommunications Consumer Protection. (here)
- International Telecommunications Union (ITU) workshop on Trends in consumer protection instruments to enable digital transformation. (here)

Considering these discussions, the CCC urges CSME Member States to prioritise the development and implementation of policies and legislation on e-commerce, digital trade, and consumer protection. By fostering a conducive regulatory environment, we can harness the potential of AI while safeguarding consumer rights.

On this World Consumers' Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to fair and responsible AI. Together, we can shape a future where technology empowers rather than exploits consumers. It's time to embrace the digital age with vigilance and integrity. After all, empowered consumers are the cornerstone of a thriving marketplace.

Stay informed, stay empowered.

This World Consumer Rights Day let's champion fair and responsible AI for consumers.

