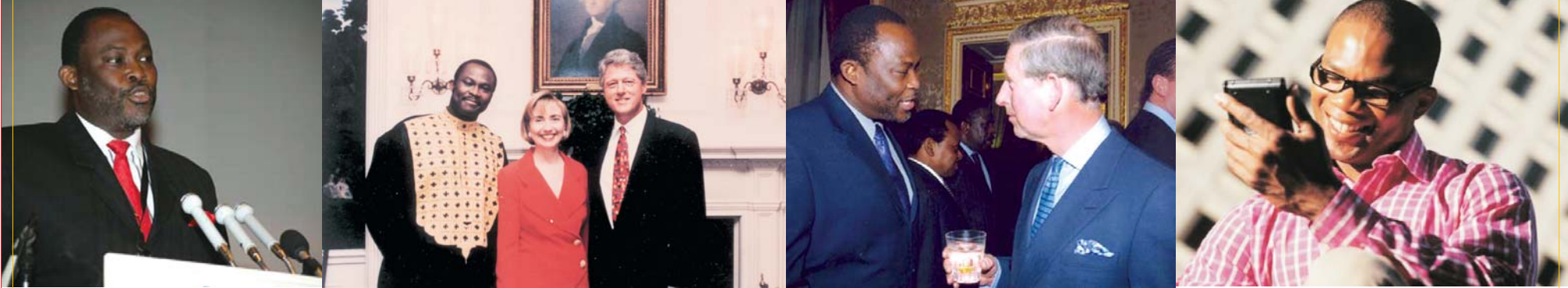




Exclusive Interview

Testimonial

Client Genre: Multinational Organization



London based Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) opts for the latest Dmaxim CMS, E-Shop System & more...

Gemma White, Customer Relationship Manager, Dmax Studios UK interviews Dr. Ekwow Spio-Garbrah, Chief Executive Officer of the CTO

'Dmax has provided a variety of laudable services to the CTO, including research on the prospects for European funding for the CTO, branding proposals for the Organisation, the design and printing of the CTO Annual Report, redesign and update of the CTO website, as well as integration of this website with a new CTO data base'

Dr. Ekwow Spio-Garbrah, CEO

Client Fact File



About the CTO

The Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) is an international development partnership between Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth governments, business and civil society organisations. It provides the international community with effective means to help bridge the digital divide and achieve social and economic development, by delivering to developing countries unique knowledge-sharing programmes in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the specific areas of Telecommunications, IT, Broadcasting and the Internet.

The work of the CTO goes back to its creation in 1901 as the Pacific Cable Board. Since then, the CTO has been at the centre of continuous and extensive international communications development funding, co-operation and assistance programmes.

Since 1985, the organisation has delivered to its recipient members in Europe, the Caribbean, Americas, Africa and Asia-Pacific regions, over 3,500 bilateral and multilateral telecommunications and ICT capacity-building projects in the form of policy, operational and regulatory training and expert assistance.

Read more at www.cto.int

Q. What role does new media plays in and organisational life the CTO?

A. At the CTO, we talk more of information and communication technologies (ICTs), which is a wide subject and includes whatever may be deemed as "new" media. Essentially, any electronic device that allows for the sending, receipt, storage, packaging, aggregation and distribution of information is of relevance to our work.

Our main interest in all media—including "new" media, is the extent to which such media can help to bridge the digital divide between rich-poor, urban-rural, old-young, men-women, public-private sectors, able-disabled and other marginalised elements in society. How accessible and affordable are such "new" media, what content do they carry and how can they help to promote socio-economic development in CTO member countries?

That is our area of interest...

Q. What specific web requirements did you have, i.e. what were looking to achieve with your new website and what was in the brief?

A. The overall goal in rebranding our website was to:

1. To improve the look & feel of our web site to make it more appealing to users
2. To improve navigation to make it easy for users to navigate through the site
3. Allow interested users to register with CTO through a registration form that captures useful information about who they are in their interests relating to ICT.
4. Create a discussion forum to engage registered users in some form of discussion on selected topics regarding issues relating to ICT and events CTO organises
5. To create a user account with personal details, transaction history, news letter services, events and online documentation where users can go and update their details.

Who is Dr. Ekwow Spio-Garbrah?

Ekwow Spio-Garbrah (born 1953) is a citizen of Ghana and currently the CEO of The Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) based in London. He is one of Africa's pre-eminent civil servants, and an authority on mass communications who has held several high profile positions in the field. He is a former Minister of Communication of the Republic of Ghana, one-time Ambassador of Ghana to the United States and Mexico, Minister of Education, Minister responsible for Mines and Energy and a member of UNESCO's Executive Board in Paris. He served in the cabinet during the democratic regime of Jerry John Rawlings between 1994 and 2000.

As a 'Minister of Communication' of Ghana, 1997-98, Dr Spio-Garbrah initiated, developed and implemented policies and programmes that supported the increasing convergence of telecommunications, broadcasting, the Internet, publishing, news media and postal services, all of which were under his supervision. Concurrently, as chairman of the National Communication Authority, he had responsibility for regulating all aspects of the telecom, Internet and broadcasting sectors.

Whilst 'Education minister' from 1998-2002, he was credited with the creation of the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund), which currently mobilises some \$50 million each year from the VAT for educational sector infrastructure and student assistance programmes. Earlier, he had chaired the Public Education Committee that helped to establish the VAT system in Ghana, which currently nets more than \$200 million of additional revenue to support the full range of government expenditures.

As 'Ambassador to the United States', from 1994-97, Dr Spio-Garbrah was noted for his success in rebuilding Ghana's image across the United States, including organising an unprecedented eight-city investment promotion programme for Ghana's President in the USA. As a result partly of the successful bilateral programmes he executed, Ghana became the first country to be visited by President Clinton during his famous five-country Africa visit in 1998.

Before joining the Ghana government, Dr Spio-Garbrah was 'Head of Communications' at the 17 member-nation African Development Bank from 1991-94, where he directed the bank's global corporate and marketing communications and acted as institutional spokesman. Earlier, from 1988-91, he had performed similar functions as an 'External Relations Officer' at the International Finance Corporation, the World Bank affiliate, in Washington.

His previous experience included working as a 'mortgage banker' in New Jersey, as an award-winning sales executive with Southwest Bell, and as 'chairman of the Middle East Africa Group' within the international public relations firm of Hill and Knowlton in New York. In that capacity, he provided investment, export and tourism promotion counsel to the governments of Indonesia, Turkey, The Netherlands, and Austria, financial relations advice to the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank, Credit Agricole of France, UBAF-Arab American Bank, and energy sector intelligence to the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Photographs left: Dr. Spio-Garbrah, delivering a speech; Right: Dr. Spio-Garbrah meeting US President Clinton and first lady Hillary at the White House in Washington;