

US Embargo Against Cuba Hinders Information Technology Development

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One of the effects of the U.S. blockade of Cuba, in place for more than 50 years, has been the stifling of Cuba's information technology sector. For example, Cuba's Information Technology and Advanced Telematic Services (Citmatel), part of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, has not been able to reach its full potential, explains Beatriz Alonso, Manager of Citmatel in a recent interview with Prensa Latina.

"We constantly face the fact of not having access to technologies, certain software and very limited marketing of our products and this prevents us from enjoying the most modern technological breakthroughs and flexible financial systems for our products in the market," she said.

The U.S. economic war also prevents Citmatel specialists from attending courses on state-of-the-art technologies, among other training actions, Alonso added.

Founded 15 years ago, Citmatel develops and commercializes IT applications, projects, equipment and technical assistance, multimedia products, audiovisual materials and online publications through science and innovation, as well as integrating solutions with new information and communication technologies.

Citmatel operates an important scientific network for Cuba's scientific institutions, and it runs the <http://www.cuba.cu> website, with multimedia and editorial content in various formats covering several fields and provided in several languages. It also provides e-commerce and online education services, and is responsible for granting and registering Cuba's country code top-level domains (.cu).

Despite all this, Citmatel will continue the development of internet-based technologies, focusing on issues related to e-commerce, as well as new forms of printing on demand, including publishing books on several topics, she said.

Alonso added that Citmatel will also continue dealing with issues related to the use of phones and tablets for the national intranet, the design of educational games for children and youngsters, as well as audio-books for the blind and visually impaired, among other electronic products and features.

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