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TOPIC

MIC's Website (ICT Policy Webpage) now Provides ICT-related Information on Countermeasures against Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Following establishment of the Basic Policies for Novel Coronavirus Disease Control by the government, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) has released its basic policies on countermeasures against COVID-19. Recognizing that our COVID-19 responses are critical issues in terms of crisis management, the MIC, local governments and designated public institutions* under the MIC's jurisdiction are collaborating and cooperating to protect people's lives and enable Japan to overcome current difficult situation, by accurately grasping the situation surrounding the disease.

As a part of such efforts, the MIC's ICT Policy webpage now provides information on MIC's ICT-related countermeasures against COVID-19.

https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/joho_tsusin/eng/COVID-19/index.html

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The screenshot shows the MIC website's 'Information and Communications Policy Site' with a navigation menu including 'Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)', 'Press Release', 'News Letter', 'White Paper', and 'Policy Material'. The main content area features a 'Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)' header and several categorized links: 'Telework', 'Telephone / Internet charges', 'NHK* Receiving fees', 'Related test information', and 'Other Arrangements'. A prominent blue link reads 'Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) Measures against Coronavirus Pandemic (Japanese)'. A 'Contact us' button and 'ICT × Japan - Policy Information -' logo are also visible. A 'Translations of Japanese Laws' button is at the bottom right. A footer note explains the importance of telework for reducing infection risk.

*Designated public institutions: Japan Post Co., Ltd., Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone East Corporation, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone West Corporation, NTT Communications Corporation, NTT Docomo Inc., KDDI Corporation, SoftBank Corp., and Japan Broadcasting Corporation

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MIC's Website (ICT Policy Webpage) now Provides ICT-related Information on Countermeasures against COVID-19

The main contents provided by the ICT Policy webpage are as follows:

1) Information on Telework

Telework is an effective measure to prevent the spread of the disease, as it enables workers to avoid commuting rush hours and crowds and makes it possible to work from home.

The MIC and related ministries and government agencies provide support for the introduction of telework. Since we have confirmed some cyberattack cases that took advantage of the confused pandemic situation, the website provides information on appropriate security measures for conducting telework.

2) Information on Telephone and Internet Charges

The MIC requested four industry associations** composed of telecommunications carriers and providers on March 19, 2020, to extend the payment deadline for fixed-line and mobile phones in order to respond to increased impact by the disease.

As a result, these payment deadlines have been extended and other measures such as the free charge of usage exceeding data cap have been taken for students' distance learning.

3) Information on NHK Reception Fees

The MIC requested Japan Broadcasting Corporation (also known as NHK) on March 18 to take appropriate measures regarding the handling of payment delay of reception fees due to the expansion of the impact of the disease, and on March 30 to consider reducing reception fees for small and medium-sized businesses including inns and hotels.

NHK set up a consultation desk for the payment of reception fees and is implementing measures to reduce the burden of NHK reception fees.

4) Information on National Examinations

The webpage carries information on the cancellation of the national examinations for radio operators (for April through July 2020), the first FY2020 examination for Installation Technicians, and the first FY2020 examination for Chief Telecommunications Engineers.

** **Four industry associations composed of telecommunications carriers** : The Telecom Services Association, the Telecommunications Carriers Association, the Japan Cable and Telecommunications Association, and the Japan Internet Providers Association

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5) Information on MIC's Other Efforts

- MIC requested each ministry, government agency, and local government on April 30, 2020, to improve accessibility of information provided through websites regarding the disease.
- MIC requested the abovementioned four associations of telecommunications industry on April 23, 2020, to inform individual users about fraudulent acts that may take advantage of the government's distribution of the special fixed-sum cash benefit (tentative name).
- MIC requested the Telecommunications Carriers Association on April 17, 2020, to step up its efforts to prevent the spread of the disease at sales' shops of mobile communications and other telecommunications services.
- MIC requested digital signage-related industry associations on March 13, 2020, to distribute advertisements related to the disease using their signage.
- MIC requested NHK to pay particular attention to the latest domestic situation regarding the disease in its implementation of international broadcasting (international television broadcasting and international radio broadcasting).
- MIC requested that the designated public institutions continue their businesses while taking countermeasures against the disease.
- The **CO**uncil for **Ne**twork **E**fficiency by **C**ross-layer **T**echnical Members (CONNECT) was established on April 10, 2020, which has been promoting information sharing and linking since then.
- MIC provided information on March 31, 2020, to prefectures and designated cities on data disclosure for websites regarding the disease.
- A project called #Private Support Information Navi has been implemented since March 9, 2020. This project publicizes a variety of information on grant aids provided by enterprises in response to the disease, using standardized data format
- On March 31, 2020, the Cabinet Secretariat, MIC and relevant ministries jointly requested platform operators and mobile operators to provide statistical data that help the prevention of the spread of the disease.
- Mobile network operators are cooperating to provide their results of big data analysis on the flow of people at major geographical areas in Japan, thus contributing to countermeasures against the disease.

Future Plans

The ICT Policy webpage will continue updating and posting information on ICT-related countermeasures implemented by the MIC. Your time-to-time visit is welcomed.

https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/joho_tsusin/eng/index.html