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Look Who's Talking: Communications in Costa Rica (Part two of a two-part series)

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In part one of our two-part series, we looked at communications in Costa Rica as it pertained to the Internet and telephones. In part two, we examine communications as it relates to newspapers, magazines, radio and television.

For members of the Hacienda Matapalo community, each month our very own newsletter is chock full of information not only about our property, but about Costa Rica in general. This is our way of keeping you informed. But outside the confines of our community there is a world of information and sometimes it's hard to decipher it all.

When it comes to the written word, Costa Rica has several local newspapers like *La Nación*, *La República*, *La Prensa Libre* and a host of others that cater to the Spanish speaking population. But with such a large number of non-Hispanics now living in Costa Rica, non-Spanish publications have become prominent too like the German language *Costa Rica Aktuell* for example.

But by far the most popular non-Spanish language publications are those printed in English. Although many North American newspapers and magazines can usually be found in Costa Rica's larger cities, with nearly all of them available in one form or another online, none of them seem to focus on the local Costa Rican scene. Fortunately, however, there are several publications written and published in English which are geared toward the American, Canadian and British population who now call Costa Rica home.

Without question, the most popular of these publications is the *The Tico Times*, an award-winning weekly that was the first English-language newspaper printed in Central America. Founded in 1956 by a veteran U.S. newswoman named Elisabeth "Betty" Dyer after a group of students from San José asked her for some journalism tips, *The Tico Times* turns 54-years-old in 2010. And like most newspapers trying to compete and survive these days, *The Tico Times* has an online version too, which can be found at <http://www.ticotimes.net>.

But unlike the printed version of the paper, their online competition is pretty aggressive. Included among those vying for online readers are: *A.M Costa Rica* (<http://www.amcostarica.com>), *The Costa Rica Frog* (<http://www.costaricafrog.com>), *The Costa Rica News* (<http://thecostaricanews.com>) and *Inside Costa Rica* (<http://www.insidecostarica.com>) among others.

However, publications, online or otherwise, aren't the only form of communication in the land of Pura Vida. As technology continues to grow, so does the reach of cable and satellite television. While Costa Rican TV includes only 13 local stations, channels from around the world are commonplace, which means that those who regularly watch Animal Planet, Cinemax, Discovery, ESPN, HGTV, Hallmark and HBO among others can continue to get their daily boob tube fix. And of course CNN International is also available.

While there are various cable providers throughout the country (Amnet (which carries both ABC and NBC broadcast feeds), Cable-Color and Cable-Tica among others), for those living at Hacienda Matapalo, satellite television will surely be the best



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bet as Direct TV, Dish Network and SKY Television offer service in the area. Although Direct TV has only one English language channel, it does offer packages for sports enthusiasts that allow viewers to follow both the NFL and NBA. Dish Network on the other hand offers a wide variety of programming in English, Spanish and pretty much any other language, based on the package that is purchased. As for SKY, although it is based out of Mexico, many U.S. channels and English-language programs are available as the service is considered reliable, but reception varies with the weather. In some areas SKY is the only premium service provider and basic service runs about \$38 USD a month.

Of course with new technology, many people are beginning to use online services like Hulu to watch their favorite TV shows. But instead of watching the shows on a traditional television set, they are opting to watch it on a computer monitor. Of course video junkies can always purchase DVDs of their favorite television shows through global Web sites like Amazon and Overstock.

But if TV or video is not your thing, there is always the old standby – radio!

Most radio stations in Costa Rica play Latin music. However, there are four English language radio stations that play pop, oldies and modern rock. It seems both foreigners and young locals like to listen to these stations since they play a lot of hits. Many local bus drivers also play the music that the English stations offer. Radio Dos, 99.5 FM, is a Top 40 station that plays music from the '60s to the '90s. While 102.3 FM offers soft rock, classics and oldies, 95.5 FM offers a combination of jazz and fusion. But perhaps the most popular English language radio station is 107.5 FM, Costa Rica's only all-English station as it offers a wide selection of rock from all decades.