

The Media, Communications and Information Technology

Hong Kong's lively news media and world-class telecommunications provide ready access to a wealth of information and entertainment. Some 770 daily newspapers and periodicals are published in Hong Kong, more than 83 per cent of households are broadband service subscribers and the mobile subscriber penetration is over 238 per cent.

Hong Kong has one of the most successful telecommunications markets in the world. The market is fully liberalised and highly competitive, providing a wide range of innovative and advanced telecommunications services at reasonable prices to consumers and business users. It has a vibrant broadcasting industry offering a wide range of services to the community and is also one of the world's major film production centres, while through its Digital 21 Strategy, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau strives to establish Hong Kong as a leading digital economy.

The Mass Media

Hong Kong's mass media at the end of 2013 included 55 daily newspapers (including a number of electronic newspapers), 715 periodicals, two domestic free television programme service licensees, three domestic pay television programme service licensees, 19 non-domestic television programme service licensees, one government funded public service broadcaster and four sound broadcasting licensees.

The availability of the latest telecommunications technology and keen interest in Hong Kong's affairs have attracted many international news agencies, newspapers with international readership and international broadcasters to establish regional headquarters or representative offices here. The production of regional publications in Hong Kong underlines its importance as a financial, industrial, trading and communications centre.

Registered Hong Kong-based press at year-end included 28 Chinese-language dailies, 12 English-language dailies, 10 bilingual dailies and five in Japanese. One of the English dailies publishes a daily Braille edition, in conjunction with the Hong Kong Society for the Blind. Of the Chinese-language dailies, 22 mainly cover local and international news, four specialise in finance and the rest focus on horse racing. The larger newspapers include overseas Chinese

communities in their distribution networks and some have editions printed outside Hong Kong, in particular in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Hong Kong is the regional base for a number of international titles such as International New York Times, The Financial Times, THE NIKKEI, The Wall Street Journal Asia and USA Today International. International wire services with significant operations in Hong Kong include Agence France-Presse, Bloomberg, Dow Jones and Thomson Reuters. International broadcasters with studios in Hong Kong include Channel News Asia, CNBC, CNN and Phoenix TV.

Several organisations represent people working in the news media in Hong Kong. The Newspaper Society of Hong Kong represents Chinese and English newspaper proprietors. It is empowered to act in matters that affect the interests of its members.

The Hong Kong Journalists Association is the biggest industry-wide union of journalists and one of the most active. Formed in 1968, it has more than 500 members. It pays special attention to a range of press freedom and ethics concerns, as well as to professional training and the handling of labour disputes.

Other media organisations include the Hong Kong Federation of Journalists, the Hong Kong News Executives' Association and the Hong Kong Press Photographers Association. The long-established Foreign Correspondents' Club offers its members a range of professional activities (including news conferences and briefings) as well as social facilities.

With the co-operation of trade associations and professional bodies such as the Hong Kong Advertisers Association, the Hong Kong Journalists Association and the Hong Kong News Executives' Association, the Vocational Training Council's Mass Communications Training Board continues to run training programmes to help people working in the media, advertising and public relations sectors to improve their skills.

Information Policy

The Secretary for Home Affairs has overall responsibility for policy on information and related matters, while the Director of Information Services advises the government on the presentation of its policies and on public relations matters generally, in Hong Kong and overseas. The main aims are to ensure an open exchange of information in the community, to keep the media fully informed of government plans, policies and activities, and to promote Hong Kong's image abroad.

Information Services Department

The Information Services Department (ISD) is the government's public relations consultant, news agency, publisher and advertising agent. It provides a link between the government and the media and, through the latter, enhances public understanding of government policies, decisions and activities. The department has four divisions: Local Public Relations, Publicity and Promotions, Public Relations Outside Hong Kong, and Administration.

Local Public Relations Division

The division oversees the work of the Information Grade officers who serve as Press Secretaries to Principal Officials or work in the 34 information and public relations units in bureaus and departments. They help formulate and implement public relations and publicity strategies, advise their bureau or department heads on public relations matters, answer media enquiries and questions from the public, prepare press releases, and organise press conferences and special promotional activities.

The News Sub-division operates a 24-hour press enquiry service. During typhoons and other emergencies, the ISD's Combined Information Centre co-ordinates responses to media enquiries and disseminates information and public announcements promptly.

The Government News and Media Information System channels press releases, photographs and video clips through a single system accessible to journalists on the internet. All press releases are uploaded onto the internet at www.info.gov.hk/gia and major government press conferences and events, including the Chief Executive's annual Policy Address and the Financial Secretary's Budget Speech, are webcast live.

The government's online news platform, news.gov.hk, presents news and information every day in a dynamic multi-media fashion. News items and messages are also disseminated through smartphones, mobile devices and social media such as YouTube, Twitter and Weibo. By the end of 2013, news.gov.hk had posted over 7,900 news and feature stories, with about 960 video highlights. Users may sign up for free daily news summaries and weekly City Life email alerts. The e-bulletin has about 11,700 subscribers, and attracted more than 17 million visitors and 392 million page views in 2013.

The Media Research Sub-division keeps the government informed of public opinion expressed in the news media. It produces daily reports summarising news and editorial comments in the Chinese and English press and radio phone-in programmes. It also produces special reports on subjects of interest to the government.

Publicity and Promotions Division

The division helps bureaus and departments mount publicity campaigns and promotion drives and is responsible for advertising, creative design, photography, videography and the production of many government publications. Local campaigns conducted or supported by the division in 2013 included 'Hong Kong: Our Home', Food Wise Hong Kong, public consultation on constitutional development, public engagement exercise on population policy, poverty alleviation, anti-drug efforts, environmental protection, road safety, fight crime and fire prevention.

The division also helps organise major promotional activities such as exhibitions, cultural performances, film festivals and media partnerships overseas and in the Mainland.

The division handles about 3,200 titles and produces a wide variety of government publications, including this yearbook and its internet and iPad versions. Each year the division distributes a large number of free publications, including fact sheets, brochures and posters. In 2013, the

division sold photographs and, through its sales outlet and online bookstore, 157,552 government books and miscellaneous printed items.

Public Relations Outside Hong Kong Division

The division helps develop and implement the government's public relations and communications strategy outside Hong Kong, working closely with the government's offices overseas, in the Mainland and Taiwan. Its Overseas Public Relations Sub-division promotes and monitors Hong Kong's image overseas. The sub-division is in close liaison with some 86 foreign media organisations based in Hong Kong, handling press enquiries, disseminating news and arranging briefings and interviews. It also runs a programme for visiting journalists, produces summaries of overseas reports on Hong Kong and distributes promotional material on Hong Kong worldwide. In addition, it co-ordinates and implements overseas publicity projects to tie in with senior officials' visits abroad.

The Brand Hong Kong Management Unit handles the Brand Hong Kong (BrandHK) programme, promoting Hong Kong as Asia's world city locally and around the world. To ensure the brand's consistent application, the unit develops advertising campaigns and publicity material in print and electronic formats to support the government's Economic and Trade Offices' activities, senior officials' visits and major promotional programmes outside Hong Kong. The unit also seeks opportunities to highlight the brand and collaborates with organisers of major events of international significance in Hong Kong to bolster the city's image. BrandHK souvenirs are available for sale to members of the public.

The Visits and International Conferences Sub-division runs the department's Sponsored Visitors Programme for opinion formers, political leaders and think-tank members to visit Hong Kong to enhance their understanding of the city. The sub-division also helps draw up programmes for influential visitors on private trips to Hong Kong. In addition, it runs an Overseas Speakers Programme which arranges for senior government officials and prominent members of the community to address targeted audiences abroad, enabling them to better understand Hong Kong's strengths and latest developments.

Promoting Hong Kong Worldwide

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government's offices overseas and in the Mainland, as well as the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office in Taiwan, play an important role in promoting Hong Kong globally. They do this through regular meetings with counterparts and contacts in the territories they cover, through visits by senior Hong Kong officials and by staging or taking part in cultural events or promotional activities such as film festivals, exhibitions and performances by Hong Kong artistes.

Europe

In 2013, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (ETO) in Brussels organised the visit of the Financial Secretary, Mr John C Tsang, to Paris to promote bilateral exchanges and opportunities in Hong Kong's offshore Renminbi business. Other visiting officials included the Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC, who attended the 120th anniversary of The Hague Conference on Private International Law to promote Hong Kong as a regional premier arbitration centre; the

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, who visited Brussels and Paris to promote Hong Kong's economic and trade interest in Europe; and the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Professor Anthony Cheung Bing-leung, who visited Brussels, Florence and Milan to promote Hong Kong as the regional logistics and services hub.

The Brussels ETO organised or co-organised ten business seminars or luncheons in the countries under its purview, and receptions in 11 cities for 1,500 guests to celebrate Chinese New Year. It also supported or organised many arts and cultural events, including hosting its annual Hong Kong Film Panorama in eight European cities, and sponsoring the world-renowned Udine Far East Film Festival in Italy and the Sitges Fantastic Film Festival in Spain, all showcasing Hong Kong's cinema.

Other highlights included supporting a group of young Hong Kong designers, in co-operation with the Hong Kong Ambassadors of Design, to present their fashion-related products under the annual design event 'Design September' in Brussels. The exhibition promoted Hong Kong design to Belgium, the partner country of Business of Design Week 2013 in Hong Kong.

In 2013, the London ETO organised seven visits by HKSAR Government principal officials to the countries under its purview, including visits by the Financial Secretary to Russia in September and to London in November.

During the year, the London ETO organised many business seminars and receptions in countries under its purview to promote Hong Kong as the preferred gateway to China and Asia. The London ETO also organised or supported many arts and cultural events, including festivals showing Hong Kong films and exhibitions in London and Moscow; a theatre performance, a children's choir's concert and the Dragon Boat Festival in London; and Chinese orchestral performances in Russia. The office took part in the City of London Lord Mayor's Show. In addition, for the second time the London ETO staged a competition to encourage UK students to study in Hong Kong.

In 2013, the Berlin ETO organised the visits to Germany of the Secretary for Security, Mr Lai Tung-kwok; the Secretary for Food and Health, Dr Ko Wing-man; and the Secretary for Transport and Housing.

Besides regular meetings with government officials, business communities and think tanks, the Berlin ETO organised or participated in 17 business seminars and exhibitions during the year and hosted or supported eight arts and cultural events, and 15 receptions to promote Hong Kong. These included film festivals, theatre and concert performances by Hong Kong-based groups, a Chinese cuisine and wine-pairing lunch to promote Hong Kong as Asia's culinary and wine trading centre, and Chinese New Year receptions in countries under the Berlin ETO's purview. The Berlin ETO, working with the Information Services Department and the Hong Kong Tourism Board, sponsored and supported the production of two TV programmes on Hong Kong's latest developments which were screened on German national news channel, n-tv.

North America

In 2013, the ETO in Washington, DC organised the visits of the Financial Secretary when he attended the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group in October and of the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor KC Chan, in April.

From June to August, the Washington ETO presented the annual 'Made in Hong Kong' Film Festival, co-sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution's Freer Gallery of Art.

In 2013, the New York ETO directorate visited over 20 East Coast cities to promote Hong Kong. The office also assisted in arranging the visits to New York by the Chief Executive Mr C Y Leung (his first official visit there), the Financial Secretary, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development and the Secretary for Education, Mr Eddie Ng Hak-kim, and to Chicago by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury.

The New York ETO used its 30th anniversary celebrations to promote Hong Kong through special business and cultural events, including a 'Hong Kong Day' for legislators in Boston and Maine. The office's 2013 publicity programme to promote the creative industries, particularly films, included sponsoring a record 25 Hong Kong films at the New York Asian Film Festival (NYAFF). Film directors and actors from Hong Kong attending the various promotional events included Jackie Chan (who received the Star Asia Lifetime Achievement Award from the NYAFF), Herman Yau Lai-to, Wong Kar-wai and Adam Wong Sau-ping.

The New York ETO and the Asian Cultural Council jointly launched a fellowship programme providing grants for three outstanding Hong Kong artists to visit the US in 2014. The office also organised the Third Hong Kong Cup Chinese Speech Contest among university students and sponsored the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival in New York, Atlanta and Boston.

In June, the San Francisco ETO hosted various events for the visiting Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development. He addressed more than 200 business leaders and entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley on Hong Kong's growing prominence as an intellectual property trading and management centre and in Los Angeles he spoke to leaders in art and culture communities in Southern California about the development of Hong Kong's creative industry.

The San Francisco ETO organised or participated in events in over 20 cities across nine different states to promote the strengths of Hong Kong as the preferred gateway to China and Asia and as a wine trading hub. The office also organised or supported many arts and cultural events, including the international film festivals in San Francisco and Seattle, an international dragon boat festival, a film festival dedicated to Hong Kong movies and the debut exhibition by a Hong Kong contemporary artist, Lam Tung-pang, in San Francisco.

In 2013, the Toronto ETO organised a series of business seminars and events in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec and Manitoba to promote Hong Kong as Asia's world city and the gateway to China and Asia. A business networking event held in Ottawa in November highlighted Hong Kong's unique role in the development of trade relations between Canada and China.

In March, the Secretary for Education led a delegation to Toronto and met government officials, members of the Council of Ontario Universities, and university presidents.

In January, the Hong Kong Dance Company staged the North American premiere of 'Qingming Riverside' in Toronto, supported by the Home Affairs Bureau and the Department of Culture of Guangdong Province. The Toronto ETO also supported the international dragon boat race festivals held in Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver.

In July, the Toronto International Film Festival included 30 classic Hong Kong movies in 'A Century of Chinese Cinema', a major retrospective of films from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Hong Kong film talents and professionals attending the event included Mr Jackie Chan, Mr Chris Doyle, Ms Nansun Shi and Mr Johnnie To. In November, two Hong Kong films were featured in the 2013 Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival.

North Asia

In 2013, the 25th anniversary of its establishment, the Tokyo ETO conducted in Fukuoka the largest ever Hong Kong promotion campaign in Kyushu in co-operation with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, InvestHK and the Hong Kong Tourism Board. The campaign included the Focus on Asia International Film Festival Fukuoka 2013 in September, with a special focus on Hong Kong cinema, and the 'Think Global, Think Hong Kong' Symposium in October aimed at promoting Hong Kong as an ideal partner for Japanese companies looking to develop their business in the global market.

The Tokyo ETO presented or supported a number of business seminars, receptions, and arts and cultural events in Japan and Korea, including the Special Focus on Hong Kong in the Osaka Asian Film Festival, the Yokohama Dragon Boat Race, two art exhibitions in Seoul, concerts by the Asian Youth Orchestra in Osaka, Kamakura and Tokyo, and the Hong Kong Cup English Speech Contest for university students in Japan.

Visits to Japan and Korea by government officials were also arranged, including by the Secretary for Justice, the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, the Secretary for Education, and the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury to Korea, and by the Secretary for Transport and Housing to Japan.

Southeast Asia

In 2013, the Singapore ETO organised and supported 15 visits by 10 senior officials to the region: the Chief Executive; the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mrs Carrie Lam; the Financial Secretary; the Secretary for Justice; the Secretary for Transport and Housing; the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development; the Secretary for Education; the Secretary for Food and Health; the Secretary for the Environment; and the Secretary for Development, Mr Paul Chan Mo-po.

The Singapore ETO continued to promote cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and ASEAN. It organised the first ever Hong Kong Film Week in Vietnam in March, sponsored the Asian Youth Orchestra's concert tour in Asia in August, and in October sponsored a retrospective organised by the National Museum of Singapore of Cantonese movies, starring Hong Kong

actors and actresses, produced by the Kong Ngee Film Company founded by two Singaporean brothers in the 1950s and 1960s.

In July, the Director of the Singapore ETO led a delegation of some 100 creative entrepreneurs and arts practitioners from ASEAN to a four-day conference, 'Asia on the Edge 2013', in Hong Kong. The event, co-organised by the Singapore ETO, the Hong Kong Fringe Club, the Old Parliament House Limited (Singapore) and Intermedia Global (Singapore), enabled creative leaders in the region to exchange and share experience and ideas and to explore business opportunities.

To celebrate the Chinese New Year, the Singapore ETO co-hosted with its partners receptions in Singapore and Malaysia and organised a Hong Kong Movie Night in Thailand.

Australia and New Zealand

The Sydney ETO organised visits by senior HKSAR Government officials to Australia and New Zealand, including those to New Zealand by the Chief Justice, Mr Geoffrey Ma, in March and the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development in August, and to Australia by the Secretary for Education in July.

The Sydney ETO continued to organise or participate in business road shows in various cities in Australia and New Zealand, including new destinations Newcastle and Wollongong.

In September, some 5,000 people (including players, coaches, teachers, family and friends) participated in the inaugural Hong Kong New South Wales Schoolboys Sevens 2013 Championship, co-organised by the Sydney ETO and the New South Wales Rugby Union.

To introduce Hong Kong's job opportunities to young people, the Sydney ETO took part in or held careers talks and exhibitions, including (with the Education Bureau) a 'Study and Exchange Opportunities in Hong Kong' roving exhibition.

The Sydney ETO co-organised or supported a range of cultural events, including the City of Sydney Chinese New Year Dragon Boat Race, the Auckland and Christchurch Lantern Festivals, five film events in Australia and New Zealand featuring Hong Kong films, and arts and cultural exhibitions at Hong Kong House, the Sydney ETO's base.

Besides its existing Facebook page, the Sydney ETO launched a new LinkedIn group in March to share Hong Kong news and information relevant to Australia/New Zealand businesses, professionals and students.

Mainland and Taiwan

In 2013, the Beijing Office (BJO) and the three Hong Kong ETOs in Guangdong, Shanghai and Chengdu conducted a number of activities to promote Hong Kong's strengths and advantages. These included the 'Hong Kong – Asia's World City' roving exhibitions and 'Hong Kong – Art Events Capital' exhibition launched by the BJO; the '2013 Fujian Xiamen Hong Kong Week' organised by the Guangdong ETO; the 'Hong Kong and China – Same Roots, Same Heart' 2013

roving exhibitions launched by the Shanghai ETO; and a concert staged by the Chengdu ETO in Chengdu in which a Hong Kong music group was invited to take part.

The BJO and the Mainland ETOs also organised seminars and visits to different parts of the Mainland for Hong Kong business delegations and organisations. The Investment Promotion Divisions of the BJO and the Mainland ETOs liaised closely with Mainland enterprises intending to invest in Hong Kong and assisted them in setting up businesses here.

In 2013, the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office (HKETCO) continued to establish contacts with various sectors and the cities and counties in Taiwan to promote bilateral economic, trade and cultural exchanges, to promote Hong Kong, and to assist Taiwan enterprises in setting up businesses in Hong Kong. Activities organised by the HKETCO included a series of large-scale art performance and exhibitions in the 'Hong Kong Week – 2013'.

Government Home Pages on the Internet

In line with the government's commitment to openness, transparency and accountability, government bureaus and departments use the internet to communicate with the public and to disseminate information on their policies, services and activities. All government home pages (including those produced for special events and topics) are in Chinese and English and can be accessed through the government's one-stop portal, GovHK, at www.gov.hk. The public can easily access government information and electronic services through the portal or their personalised MyGovHK accounts. Many bureaus and departments also make use of popular social media such as Facebook, Youtube and blogs to reach stakeholders and the public.

Code on Access to Government Information

As an open and accountable government, all government bureaus and departments are committed to making information available to the public in accordance with the Code on Access to Information. The code sets out the types of government information the public may have access to, and the grounds on which disclosure may be refused. The public may complain to the Ombudsman if government bureaus and departments do not comply with the provisions of the code.

The Communications Authority

The Communications Authority (CA) is an independent statutory body established under the Communications Authority Ordinance (CAO) on 1 April 2012. It is a unified regulatory body conferred with the functions previously performed by its predecessors the Broadcasting Authority and the Telecommunications Authority. The CA comprises 10 non-officials from various sectors of the community and two public officers. It regulates the broadcasting and telecommunications industries in Hong Kong in accordance with the Broadcasting Ordinance, the Telecommunications Ordinance, the CAO and the Broadcasting (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance. The CA also enforces the Unsolicited Electronic Messages Ordinance.

The Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA), (the CA's executive arm and secretariat), assists the CA in administering and enforcing the relevant ordinances governing the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors.

Telecommunications

The government's telecommunications policy is to facilitate the development of the telecommunications industry and enhance Hong Kong's position as the region's telecommunications hub.

Hong Kong's telecommunications markets are fully liberalised. Being one of the world's most competitive and affordable markets for telecommunications services, keen competition has benefited consumers in terms of prices, service quality and choices. This demonstrates the success of the city's pro-competition policy and pro-market approach, which enables consumers and business users in Hong Kong to enjoy high quality telecommunications services at affordable prices.

Mobile Communications Services

Five mobile network operators provide second generation (2G), third generation (3G) and fourth generation (4G) services in the city. As at December 2013, there were over 17.19 million subscribers to mobile communications services. This represents a population penetration of 238 per cent, one of the highest in the world. The number of 3G/4G users also continued to rise and reached 11.85 million in December 2013. Mobile data services are available at downlink speeds of up to 150 Mbps using Long Term Evolution technology.

With the increasing popularity of smart phones, the monthly mobile data usage surged to 12,073 Terabytes (12,073,456 Gigabytes) in December 2013, representing 1.57 times and 2.92 times the monthly usage over the same period in 2012 and 2011 respectively. On average, each 2.5G/3G/4G mobile user used 996.6 Mbytes per month.

To enable the mobile network operators to deploy state of the art mobile broadband technologies and provide the necessary network capacities to further develop 4G mobile telecommunications services in Hong Kong, the OFCA assigned by auction an additional 50 MHz of frequency spectrum in the 2.5/2.6 GHz band in March.

To best meet the multiple objectives of spectrum re-assignment (ensuring customer service continuity, efficient spectrum utilisation, promotion of effective competition, and encouragement of investment and promotion of innovative services), the CA announced in November after two rounds of public consultation that a hybrid approach would be adopted for re-assigning the frequency spectrum in the 1.9 – 2.2 GHz band, which is being deployed for the provision of 3G services, when the existing assignments expire in October 2016.

Fixed Communications Services

The local fixed communications services market was fully liberalised in 2003. There is no preset limit on the number of licences that can be issued, nor any deadline for the submission of applications. By the end of 2013, there were 21 local fixed telephone network licensees,

providing 103 telephone fixed-lines per 100 households, one of the highest in the world. As a result of the government's policy to promote facility-based competition in the local fixed services market, 86.8 per cent and 77.8 per cent of residential households enjoyed a choice of at least two or three self-built local fixed customer access networks respectively as at March 2013.

Fixed Broadband Services

Hong Kong has one of the world's most advanced fixed broadband network infrastructures and a high household fixed broadband penetration rate of 83.2 per cent. According to the 'State of the Internet 2nd Quarter, 2013 Report' published by internet content delivery provider Akamai in October 2013, Hong Kong has the world's fastest broadband, with an average peak connection speed of 65.1 Mbps.

Hong Kong comes third in global ranking in deploying an optical fibre access network, according to information published in December 2013 by the Fibre-to-the-Home Council. As at December 2013, the OFCA's voluntary building registration scheme recorded about 13,600 fibre-to-the-building or fibre-to-the-home residential buildings, covering about 83 per cent of Hong Kong households. The corresponding number of non-residential buildings registered under the scheme was over 1,300.

Hong Kong's fixed broadband services are competitively-priced and very affordable — they are offered at a monthly rate as low as around \$220, or US\$28 for broadband internet access service at a speed up to 1Gbps.

Hong Kong is also at the forefront in the provision of public Wi-Fi service. At the end of the year, there were 20,307 Wi-Fi hot spots in about 6,615 areas across the territory.

Mobile TV Services

Broadcast-type mobile TV service was launched in February 2012. Mobile TV service offers a wider choice of high quality TV programmes and strengthens Hong Kong's status as a world-class wireless city.

Migration to the Next Generation Network

The Next Generation Network (NGN) embraces multiple services such as voice, data and multi-media delivered over a single Internet Protocol-based platform. To facilitate the industry's smooth migration to NGN, the OFCA has formed a working group with the stakeholders to discuss and tackle issues relating to NGN.

External Telecommunications Facilities and Services

The external telecommunications facilities market was liberalised fully in 2000, and by December 2013, 41 licensees were authorised to provide cable-based and/or non-cable-based external telecommunications facilities. Hong Kong has seven submarine cable landing stations and is connected to nine regional and trans-Pacific submarine cable systems. It is also connected to the Mainland's three overland cable networks. The equipped capacity of the external telecommunications facilities in December 2013 totalled over 13,589 Gbps.

Satellite Communications

The two Hong Kong companies licensed to operate and provide satellite communication services were operating nine satellites at the end of 2013. Some of these satellites have been in service for more than 15 years and will soon reach the end of their designed operation lives. The two companies have entered a new investment cycle of launching new satellites for replacement and provision of new business.

Combating Unsolicited Electronic Messages

The Unsolicited Electronic Messages Ordinance (UEMO) regulates the sending of commercial electronic messages (CEMs), including fax, pre-recorded voice messages, short messages and emails. Under the UEMO, senders of CEMs are required to comply with specific sending rules. There are three 'do-not-call' registers (DNCs) for fax, short messages and pre-recorded telephone messages respectively. Senders are prohibited from sending CEMs to the DNC-registered numbers without the consent of the number's registered user. By 31 December 2013, more than 2.6 million numbers were registered in the three DNCs.

Since the introduction of the UEMO in 2007, the CA has received over 25,000 reports of suspected contraventions and has issued 606 warning letters and 23 enforcement notices to senders. The number of reports fell from 6,100 in 2009 to around 2,000 in 2013, a testimony to the effectiveness of the regulatory regime. The HKSAR Government continues to work with other countries and regions to combat spam or unsolicited e-mails sent indiscriminately.

Protection of Consumers

The booming mobile telecommunications market, growing number of smart phone users and rapid technological developments in recent years have generated a number of consumer issues, such as service quality, billing and contractual disputes, which the OFCA has been working closely with the industry to resolve. From 2010 onwards, the OFCA and the industry started to adopt a number of initiatives to tackle issues concerning chargeable mobile content services, mobile bill shock, contractual disputes, implementation of fair usage policy by telecom operators, billing information and payment collection, and performance of mobile broadband services.

To resolve billing disputes in deadlock between telecommunications service providers and their customers, the telecommunications industry set up a Customer Complaint Settlement Scheme (CCSS) for a trial period of two years from November 2012 with funding support from the OFCA. The CCSS seeks to resolve the disputes through mediation, which is considered to be more efficient, effective and less costly than formal litigation. Eleven major telecommunications service providers and six mobile virtual network operators participate in the scheme.

International Activities

Hong Kong continues to be an active player in international telecommunications forums. In addition to being a member of the Mainland delegation to conferences and meetings organised by the International Telecommunication Union, Hong Kong participates as an independent member at meetings of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity and the Telecommunications and Information Working Group of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-

operation. In 2013, Hong Kong attended 22 international and regional conferences and meetings.

Broadcasting

Hong Kong is a forerunner in the adoption of advanced broadcasting technologies. The government's broadcasting policy objectives are to widen programme choice and diversity through competition, to facilitate the introduction of new, innovative broadcasting services and to enhance Hong Kong's position as a regional broadcasting hub.

To achieve these objectives, Hong Kong adopts a facilitating and pro-competition approach to promote the application of various innovative broadcasting technologies, and provides a liberalised and light-handed regulatory environment for new broadcasting services to flourish. This allows Hong Kong to enter into a new era of broadcasting, with broadened programming choice and innovative services available to the viewing and listening public. At the end of 2013, Hong Kong had some 700 satellite and pay television channels available in digital format, and was the world leader in deploying Internet Protocol Television technology, with over one million subscribers. There were also 19 licensed satellite television broadcasters providing more than 200 channels for the Asia-Pacific region. The two incumbent terrestrial television broadcasters launched digital broadcasting officially in December 2007. By the end of 2013, there were 15 free-to-air television channels (four analogue and 11 digital free TV channels, of which six are high-definition TV channels). Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), Hong Kong's public service broadcaster, produces programmes of public interest for broadcast on free and pay TV channels. As at the end of 2013, there are five radio stations, including four commercial operators and RTHK, providing a total of 13 analogue and 16 digital audio broadcasting channels in Hong Kong.

Regulatory Approach

Provision of television programme services and the carriage networks in Hong Kong are regulated separately. A television programme service provider may hire any transmission network operator to transmit its service instead of investing in transmission infrastructure itself. This arrangement facilitates market entry and encourages competition.

Under the Broadcasting Ordinance, the four categories of television programme services — domestic-free, domestic-pay, non-domestic (mainly satellite television services targeting the Asia-Pacific region) and other licensable television programme services (mainly television services for hotel rooms) — are regulated according to their characteristics and pervasiveness rather than their transmission mode. The provision of sound broadcasting services is regulated under the Telecommunications Ordinance and the Broadcasting (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance.

As a result of its liberalised, light-handed and pro-competition regulatory approach, Hong Kong enjoys a vibrant broadcasting industry and a multitude of television and radio channels with diversified programming.

Public Service Broadcasting

RTHK is a government department that serves as the public service broadcaster for Hong Kong. It provides editorially independent, professional and high quality radio, television and new media services. The RTHK Charter enshrines RTHK's editorial independence, and sets out its public purposes and mission and its relationship with the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the CA and the Board of Advisors.

RTHK currently operates 12 radio channels, with three of them using FM, four using AM transmission and five digital audio broadcasting. The station produces around 1,075 hours of radio programmes of different genres in Cantonese, English and Putonghua every week.

RTHK produced about 786 hours of television programmes for broadcasting on Hong Kong's two local free television stations and pay-TV platforms in 2013. Since 1 July 2012, RTHK has been conducting signal tests for three digital terrestrial television (DTT) channels. Seven transmission stations were completed by the end of 2013, extending RTHK's DTT network coverage to about 75 per cent of Hong Kong's population. Upon successful completion of the signal test, RTHK will start the DTT channel trial run.

In addition to 20.3 hours of new school educational television programmes and pre-primary school programmes, an interactive learning platform, eTVonline, provides educational information to complement the government's education policies. RTHK also provides local and overseas broadcasters with audio and video pool feeds of events of public interest, such as the annual National Day celebration and flag raising ceremony, the national leaders' official visits, the delivery of the Chief Executive's Policy Address and the ceremonial opening of the Legal Year.

The RTHK website (www.rthk.hk) has an average daily page view of 3.6 million. RTHK continues to harness the multi-media potential of the different emerging media platforms, including providing applications for mobile services ('RTHK Cube', 'RTHK On the Go', 'RTHK Thumb' and 'RTHK Node') and applications for tablet computers ('RTHK Prime'). These bring RTHK productions to local and overseas audiences for their enjoyment any time, anywhere, by any device.

'RTHK Memory', a large-scale online programme archive project launched in 2012, offers public access to over 100 hours of audio and visual contents on the RTHK Memory website (<http://rthk.hk/rthkmemory/>), including productions from the early years and much invaluable historical footage.

RTHK launched the Community Involvement Broadcasting Service in 2013, devoting part of its airtime to provide a platform for the community, non-governmental organisations and the underprivileged to participate in broadcasting. The first programme was launched in July and two hours of airtime will be provided every day in the first year.

Recent Developments

The government encourages the deployment of DTT broadcasting technology in Hong Kong to enhance spectrum efficiency and enable the provision of television services of higher quality.

The two incumbent terrestrial television broadcasters launched DTT, including the broadcasting of free high-definition television programmes and channels in 2007. Currently, about 80 per cent of Hong Kong households receive digital television. The two broadcasters achieved digital coverage of about 99 per cent of the population by the end of 2013, approximately the same as that of analogue television broadcasting. Having regard to the actual implementation and market situation of digital terrestrial TV development, including the respective coverage and take-up rate of DTT, the government decided in mid-2011 that the end of 2015 should be the working target for ending analogue television broadcasting.

The government announced on 15 October that the Chief Executive in Council had granted approval-in-principle to two applicants for a domestic free television programme service licence. After reviewing further information submitted by the two applicants, the CA will submit its recommendations to the Chief Executive in Council on whether they should each be formally granted a licence under the Broadcasting Ordinance.

Postal Services

Hongkong Post provides an efficient, reliable and affordable postal service to the public, with overall customer satisfaction reaching 98.5 per cent. It handled 1.25 billion postal items in 2013, of which 84.2 per cent were local items and the rest were for delivery outside Hong Kong, mainly Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Mainland of China.

Speedpost

Speedpost celebrated its 40th anniversary. Publicity programmes, including monthly lucky draws and a newly-designed JOY Pack, were launched.

New and Enhanced Services

Smart Post was launched in April, providing economical local mail delivery with mail-tracking function and a choice between mail delivery and counter collection. An online, one-stop Direct Marketing DIY Promotion Platform (www.DMDIY.hk) was introduced in June to enable small and medium enterprises to plan, create, produce and distribute Direct Mail for marketing purposes. Enhancements to the online EC-Ship platform included segregating e-Express items addressed to the US and including EPS and cash as payment options in addition to credit cards.

Promoting Philately

Hongkong Post issued 11 sets of special stamps and sheetlets in 2013 on various themes, including the Year of the Snake, Revitalisation of Historic Buildings in Hong Kong, Kai Tak Cruise Terminal, Hong Kong Buses and Our Legislative Council. A roving stamp exhibition marking the 150th anniversary of stamp issuance in Hong Kong drew many visitors and helped foster interest in philately.

Central Mail Centre

Construction of the Central Mail Centre, incorporating eco-friendly designs, was completed in July. This new mail processing facility amalgamates the International Mail Centre and the General Post Office Sorting Office to enhance operational efficiency. Relocation began in late 2013, to be completed by the end of 2014.

Retail Network

Cheung Sha Wan Post Office was relocated in March to make way for site redevelopment.

International Participation

Of particular note in 2013 were Hongkong Post's chairmanship of the Asia Pacific Post Co-operative Management Board and its participation in the XI Asia-Pacific Postal Union Congress in Delhi, India, in September.

Revision of Principal Postage Rates and Postal Fees

Hongkong Post adjusted its postage rates from 1 October and some miscellaneous postal fees from 1 December broadly in line with the cumulative inflation since the last adjustments to offset escalating costs.

Information Technology

Digital 21 Strategy

Hong Kong is a digital city. The government's 'Digital 21 Strategy', updated regularly (most recently in 2013) in line with global trends and the community's aspirations, has produced the right environment, infrastructure, skills and culture for the development of information and communications technology (ICT), as reflected in Hong Kong's mobile subscription rate of 238 per cent and household broadband penetration rate of 83 per cent, which are among the highest in the world.

Driving E-business

To support the continuous development of a digital economy, the government has established a clear legal framework for the conduct of secure electronic transactions through the Electronic Transactions Ordinance. Two certification authorities are recognised under the ordinance to issue digital certificates.

The government encourages small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to take advantage of ICT and cloud computing services to enhance efficiency and productivity. Initiatives include the Sector-Specific Programme and an information portal, InfoCloud, which provides useful information for SMEs on cloud computing.

ICT Manpower

The government works with the industry and academia to map out strategies and measures to nurture a well-qualified IT workforce. In 2013, the government commissioned the 'iCity' project to arouse students' interest in ICT. A Task Force on ICT Professional Development and Recognition was formed in November 2012 to consider establishing a framework for ICT professional recognition in Hong Kong, with reference to practice elsewhere. The task force has come up with a proposal on the framework and, subject to public consultation, the new framework will be launched by the end of 2014.

Information Security

The government's information security portal (InfoSec.gov.hk) provides the latest IT security news, protection measures, best practices and guidelines, and short videos and radio episodes, helping to raise the public's awareness of security threats and to protect their computer systems and data. The Hong Kong Computer Emergency Response Team Co-ordination Centre also provides computer security incident response services for local businesses and the general public.

Facilitating the ICT Industry

The government is committed to cultivating a vibrant, competitive and innovative ICT industry. Under the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, Hong Kong service suppliers can apply for qualification certification of computer information system integration and provide various IT services in the Mainland, including software implementation and data processing services, database services, and online data processing and transaction services. Hong Kong residents can take qualification examinations on computing technology and software, and provide computer and software services in the Mainland. In addition, Guangdong and Hong Kong have implemented a scheme for the mutual recognition of electronic signature certificates to facilitate secure cross-boundary e-commerce.

The government collaborates with the local ICT industry in organising the Hong Kong ICT Awards, recognising outstanding ICT inventions and applications. In 2013, Hong Kong's ICT products and solutions won six grand awards in three prestigious international awards: the World Summit Award Mobile, the World Summit Award and the Asia Pacific ICT Awards.

Since 2010, the government has allocated over 15 hectares and reserved two hectares of land in Tseung Kwan O for the development of high-tier data centres. The first data centre site was sold in October 2013. Two incentive measures were introduced in 2012 to encourage the conversion of industrial buildings into data centres and the development of high-tier data centres on existing industrial lots. As at the end of 2013, eight applications had been received, of which five had been approved. Since its inception in July 2011, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer's Data Centre Facilitation Unit has handled about 300 enquiries, providing assistance to parties interested in setting up data centres in Hong Kong.

Held over two weeks in April, the first ever International IT Fest attracted 46,000 participants to 25 ICT events showcasing Hong Kong's achievements as a regional ICT hub.

Facilitating Development of Cloud Industry and Standards

In 2013, the government produced a Practice Guide for Procuring Cloud Services to promote cloud computing adoption among local companies, especially SMEs. The Hong Kong and Guangdong governments also launched their cross-linked one-stop cloud (InfoCloud) portals that provide useful guidelines and information for cloud users and service providers on choosing and managing cloud services. The two governments also jointly organised meetings and forums to promote the development of cloud industry and standards.

Cyberport

The 24-hectare Cyberport is home to 140 local, Mainland and overseas companies specialising in ICT applications, digital entertainment and multi-media content creation. Cyberport also provides the ICT and digital media industries with infrastructure, technical assistance and facilitates the development of local SMEs and ICT startups through various support programmes.

Developments in E-government

Building on the foundations laid down over the past few years, Hong Kong has launched the next stage of e-government. Key developments include:

(a) Mobile applications

The government is keen to expand mobile e-government services for greater convenience of the public 'on-the-go'. As at the end of 2013, a total of 83 government mobile apps are available for public use.

(b) Data.one

The government's Public Sector Information portal (<http://data.one.gov.hk>) provides for free re-use information in 15 categories, comprising over 2,000 datasets.

(c) Electronic Health Records

The first stage of the electronic Health Record (eHR) Programme, expected to be completed in 2014, is targeted to: (1) set up the eHR sharing platform for connection with all public and private hospitals; (2) have electronic medical/patient record and health information systems available in the market for private doctors, clinics and other healthcare providers to connect to the eHR sharing platform; and (3) formulate prior to the commissioning of the eHR Sharing System, a legal framework to protect the system security and data privacy.

(d) City-wide Wi-Fi

The GovWiFi Programme provides free Wi-Fi at over 2,300 hotspots in 430 government premises. The service will be extended to more government premises in 2014. Government-related organisations such as public hospitals will also start to provide Wi-Fi services in 2014. To assist public access, common branding will be established for the free Wi-Fi services offered by the public and private sectors.

(e) Government Cloud Platform

In 2013, the government launched a cloud platform to facilitate more agile and cost-effective delivery of common e-government services such as electronic record-keeping and collaborative working systems for shared use by government departments.

Digital Inclusion

ICT opens up ample opportunities to enhance the quality of living of the disadvantaged. The government implements a digital inclusion programme covering various needy groups,

including students from low-income families, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and the underprivileged.

Internet Learning Support Programme

Some 80,000 families have enrolled in the government's Internet Learning Support Programme, which helps students from low-income families acquire affordable computers and internet access services, and supports them in using the internet effectively for learning. Following a 2013 review of the programme, additional products were introduced to meet different needs.

Promoting ICT Adoption among Persons with Disabilities

To facilitate access to online information and services by persons with disabilities, the government encourages accessible website design and 90 per cent of government websites conform to the latest international standards on web accessibility. The government organised activities to raise awareness and impart technical know-how, produced accessible website templates for ready deployment, and encouraged tertiary institutions to incorporate web accessibility in their ICT curriculum. The government's Web Accessibility Recognition Scheme (introduced in 2013) provides free advisory services to over 100 participating organisations, and 70 of these won awards for successfully implementing web accessibility in their websites.

Encouraging ICT Adoption among the Elderly

In 2013, nearly 2,000 elderly persons won awards in the government's Smart Elderly Awards, a scheme to encourage ICT usage among the elderly.

Supporting Underprivileged Groups

Nine ICT-based assistive tools and applications funded by the government were made available to persons with special needs. Two of them won renowned local and international ICT awards.

The government supported the development of seven mobile applications providing practical contents and services for various needy groups, including persons with disabilities, autistic children, ethnic minorities and the elderly. All the applications are available for free download and use.

Film Classification System

Hong Kong adopts a three-tier film classification system: Category I (suitable for all ages); Category II, which is subdivided into Category IIA (not suitable for children) and Category IIB (not suitable for young persons and children); and Category III (for persons who have attained the age of 18 years only). The aim is to allow adults wide access to films while protecting young persons under the age of 18 from exposure to potentially harmful materials. Category IIA and IIB classifications are advisory while the age restriction for Category III films is mandatory.

In 2013, 1,945 films were submitted for classification, compared with 1,878 in 2012. Of these, 681 were classified Category I, 566 Category IIA, 513 Category IIB, and 185 Category III. Film trailers, instructional films and cultural films intended for public exhibition can be exempted from classification. During the year, 11,554 such films were examined and exempted from classification.

Film classification standards are kept in line with society's expectations by regular surveys of community views and consultation with a statutory panel of advisers, comprising about 300 members drawn from different levels of society.

The Board of Review (Film Censorship), established under the Film Censorship Ordinance, is empowered to review the film censors' decisions on film classifications upon request. The board comprises nine non-official members appointed by the Chief Executive, plus the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development as an ex officio member.

Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance

The policy objective in regulating obscene and indecent articles is to preserve public morals and protect young people from the harmful effects of obscene and indecent materials while preserving the free flow of information and safeguarding freedom of expression. The publication (including distribution, circulation and sale) and public display of obscene and indecent articles (including printed matter, sound-recordings, video-tapes, discs and electronic publications) is regulated by the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance.

Under the ordinance, 'obscenity' and 'indecenty' include violence, depravity and repulsiveness. An article may be classified as Class I (neither obscene nor indecent), Class II (indecent), or Class III (obscene). The relevant enforcement agencies (the Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration, the Police, and the Customs and Excise Department) and the Secretary for Justice may submit articles to the Obscene Articles Tribunal for classification. Publishers, authors, printers, manufacturers, importers, distributors and copyright owners may also voluntarily submit articles to the tribunal for classification rulings before publication if in doubt.

The government is reviewing the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance and is considering the way forward having regard to views received in the public consultation conducted in 2012.

Websites

Access to Government Information: www.access.gov.hk
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau: www.cedb.gov.hk
(links to related departments and agencies)
Communications Authority: www.coms-auth.hk
Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau: www.cmab.gov.hk
Cyberport: www.cyberport.com.hk
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Digital television: www.digitaltv.gov.hk
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