The Media, Communications and Information Technology

Hong Kong's lively media and world-class telecommunications provide ready access to a wealth of information and entertainment. Some 780 daily newspapers and periodicals are published in Hong Kong, more than 82 per cent of households are broadband service subscribers and the mobile subscriber penetration is over 239 per cent.

Hong Kong has one of the most successful telecommunications markets in the world. Fully liberalised and highly competitive, the telecommunications market provides a wide range of innovative and advanced telecommunications services to consumers and business users at affordable prices. It has a vibrant broadcasting industry offering a great variety of services to the community. Hong Kong also has a long history of film production, 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 2014 included 56 daily newspapers (including a number of electronic newspapers), 725 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 29 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, 23 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 Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Advertisers Association, the Hong Kong News Executives' Association and the Journalism Education Foundation, 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, providing a link between the government and the media and, through the latter, enhancing public understanding of government policies, decisions and activities. ISD 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 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 media 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.

The Government News and Media Information System gives journalists online access to media releases, photographs and video clips through a single system. All media releases are uploaded to www.info.gov.hk/gia, while 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 daily in a dynamic multi-media fashion. Over 9,500 news and feature stories and some 1,500 video highlights were posted in 2014. News items and messages are also disseminated through smartphones, mobile devices and social media, including a new Facebook page published in November. The e-bulletin attracted more than 15 million visitors and 343 million page views in 2014.

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 a range of government publications. Local campaigns conducted or supported by the division in 2014 included public consultation on constitutional development, Bless Hong Kong, the 65th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China, 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 2014, the division sold photographs and, through its sales outlet and online bookstore, 129,930 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 and liaises closely with some 84 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 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.

The Visits and International Conferences Sub-division runs ISD'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 2014, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (ETO) in Brussels organised the visit of the Chief Executive, Mr CY Leung, to Brussels to renew ties with Belgium's political and business leaders and the European Union institutions. Other visiting officials included the Financial Secretary, Mr John C Tsang, to Paris and Milan; the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, to Brussels and Paris; the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Professor Anthony Cheung Bing-leung, to Athens, Rotterdam and Amsterdam; the Secretary for Development, Mr Paul Chan Mo-po, to Paris and Barcelona; the Secretary for Education, Mr Eddie Ng Hak-kim, to Brussels; and the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, to Amsterdam and The Hague.

The ETO organised or co-organised many business seminars in the fifteen countries under its purview to promote Hong Kong's advantages. It also organised or supported many events to showcase Hong Kong art and culture, holding its annual Hong Kong Film Panorama in nine European cities and sponsoring film festivals in Belgium, Italy and Spain. Young directors from two Hong Kong film schools received invaluable exposure when their work was screened at the International Film School Festival in Poitiers, which included a tribute to Hong Kong cinema.

The Brussels ETO also supported performances by Hong Kong artists in Florence, Pordenone, near Venice, and Rome. Other highlights included supporting the Hong Kong Design Centre in hosting an exhibition at the Milan Design Week, and the Hong Kong Tourism Board in bringing a typical Hong Kong-style bistro to the Bordeaux Wine Festival.

In 2014, the London ETO organised 10 visits by HKSAR Government principal officials to the countries under its purview, including visits by the Chief Executive to Sweden in May and the Financial Secretary to the UK in October. The London ETO also provided support to two delegation visits by the Legislative Council.

The London ETO organised seminars and receptions to promote Hong Kong as the preferred gateway to Mainland China and Asia. The London ETO also organised or supported arts and cultural events, including a film festival in Manchester; Cantonese opera performances in London and Edinburgh; contemporary dance performances in Oslo; and the Dragon Boat Festival in London. The office took part in the Lord Mayor's Show in London. In addition, the London ETO held for the third time a competition to encourage UK students to study in Hong Kong.

In 2014, the Berlin ETO organised the visits of the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So Kam-leung (Switzerland); the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mrs Carrie Lam (Austria and Germany); and the Secretary for Education (Germany and Switzerland).

Besides regular meetings with government officials, business communities and think tanks, the Berlin ETO organised or participated in 18 business luncheons, seminars and exhibitions during the year; and hosted or supported six arts and cultural events and 14 receptions to promote Hong Kong. These included film festivals and Chinese New Year receptions in countries under the Berlin ETO's purview. A Gala Dinner was also hosted in Berlin on the occasion of the Chief Secretary's visit.

North America

In 2014, the ETO in Washington, DC organised the visits of the Financial Secretary when he attended the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group; the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury; and the Secretary for the Environment.

The Washington ETO presented a celebration of Hong Kong arts and culture with a bamboo flower plaque by Zuni Icosahedron and the annual 'Made in Hong Kong' Film Festival co-sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution, coinciding with the 2014 Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the National Mall.

In 2014, the New York ETO promoted the strengths and opportunities of Hong Kong in particular in the fields of business, finance, and arts and culture. The office assisted in arranging the visits of the Financial Secretary and the Secretary for the Environment to New York.

Riding on robust trade ties, the office organised the 'Hong Kong Celebrates Massachusetts' Festival in June to promote the city's growing business and cultural ties with Massachusetts. The programme included the 'Enchanting Hong Kong New Cinema' Film Festival at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, a 'Hong Kong Day' reception at Massachusetts State House, and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival featuring the Hong Kong Ballet.

To promote Hong Kong's creative industries, the office organised seven signature Hong Kong film series in major film festivals in New York, Boston and Atlanta. The many Hong Kong film talents attending included actress Sandra Ng; director-screenwriters Alan Mak and Felix Chong; and directors Andrew Lau, Andrew Loo, the late Patrick Lung Kong, and Tsui Hark.

The office sponsored the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festivals in New York, Atlanta and Boston and also jointly organised an arts fellowship programme with the Yale-China Association, allowing two outstanding Hong Kong artists to embark on a residency programme at Yale University in 2015.

The San Francisco ETO organised various events for the visiting Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, in San Francisco; for the Secretary for the Environment in Seattle; and for the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development in Los Angeles.

Staff of the San Francisco ETO visited 20 cities across eight western states during the year to promote Hong Kong. The office staged the 'Journey to Hong Kong' exhibition at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport in July, where a nonstop flight to Hong Kong was launched the month before. The San Francisco ETO also organised or supported a number of arts and cultural events, including promoting Hong Kong films in Dallas, Los Angeles, Portland, San Francisco and Seattle. The office also sponsored the recitals of the Hong Kong Children's Symphony Orchestra in Seattle and Portland in July, and hosted a reception in honour of Mr Danny Yung of theatre group Zuni Icosahedron in San Francisco in August.

In 2014, the Toronto ETO presented various promotion programmes across Canada under the brand name of 'Hong Kong under Spotlight', including the first-ever Hong Kong-Canada Business Achievement Award to showcase the success stories of Canadian enterprises in Hong Kong; a special film gala to highlight Hong Kong's 'can do' spirit and core values; investment pitch competitions for undergraduates; and the launch of an academic research project 'Hong Kong-Canada Crosscurrents'.

The Toronto ETO organised a series of business seminars and events in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec and Saskatchewan to promote Hong Kong's business potential. In April, the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury led a delegation to Ottawa and Toronto and met government officials and members of financial institutions and the academic sector.

Under the patronage of the Toronto ETO, performances by the Hong Kong Children's Symphony Orchestra and Chung Ying Theatre Company were staged in Toronto. Hong Kong movies were also featured at international film festivals in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

North Asia

In 2014, the Tokyo ETO continued to promote closer economic and trade ties as well as cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and Japan and Korea.

The Tokyo ETO presented or supported a number of arts and cultural events in Japan and Korea, including the 'Hong Kong in Miniature' exhibition in Osaka and Tokyo in March and October respectively to showcase Hong Kong's lifestyle and culture through some 40 miniature models of Hong Kong. Other events included the 'Special Focus on Hong Kong' in the Osaka Asian Film Festival, the Yokohama Dragon Boat Race, an art exhibition in Seoul, concerts by the Asian Youth Orchestra in Japan, and the Hong Kong Cup Student Ambassadors English Programme for university students in Japan. The Tokyo ETO also organised business seminars in Daegu, Yamanashi and Kagoshima.

Visits to Japan and Korea by government officials were also arranged, including by the Chief Executive to Korea in November; the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development in February and November (on the latter to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation in the Creative Industries in Seoul); and the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in September to attend the opening ceremony of the 17th Asian Games Incheon 2014.

Southeast Asia

In 2014, the Singapore ETO organised and supported visits by seven senior officials to the region: the Chief Secretary for Administration; the Financial Secretary; the Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen Kwok-keung, SC; the Secretary for Transport and Housing; the Secretary for Home Affairs; the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development; and the Secretary for Development.

To promote cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and ASEAN, the Singapore ETO supported various cultural events, including sponsoring a 'Hong Kong Film Showcase' at the world's largest short film festival in Penang, Malaysia, and two acclaimed theatrical performances ('*The Mad Phoenix*' and '*I have a Date with Spring*')and a concert by the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra in Singapore.

With the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the Singapore ETO organised an exhibition showcasing the evolution of Hong Kong's iconic harbour in Singapore in February/March and in Malaysia in June. In addition to this exhibition, Hong Kong Week in Malaysia in June (organised by the Singapore ETO) included a forum on 'Hong Kong-ASEAN Regional Cooperation' and the 'Spotlight Hong Kong in Penang' festival, enabling exchanges between Hong Kong and Malaysian artists and art administrators in culture and heritage.

Initiated by the Singapore ETO and formally launched by the Financial Secretary in July, the ASEAN Internship for University Students of Hong Kong Scheme's inaugural round in 2014 saw

some 90 Hong Kong students taking up internships in some 30 host organisations in seven ASEAN member countries.

Australia and New Zealand

The Sydney ETO organised visits by government officials to Australia and New Zealand, including by the Secretary for Education, to New Zealand in March; by the Secretary for Security, Mr Lai Tung-kwok, to New Zealand and Australia in June, and by the Financial Secretary, to Australia in November.

The Sydney ETO continued to organise or participate in business road shows in various cities in Australia and New Zealand.

To promote Hong Kong's job opportunities to young people, the Sydney ETO held careers talks and exhibitions in various universities in Australia and New Zealand.

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, film festivals and events featuring Hong Kong films, as well as arts and cultural exhibitions. Hong Kong House (the Sydney ETO's base) participated in Sydney Open – a biennial event presented by the Historic Houses Trust showcasing Sydney's architectural and heritage heart – and over 1,000 people visited the building on the day.

The Sydney ETO continued to make use of social media to share Hong Kong news and information to Australia/New Zealand businesses, professionals and students.

Mainland and Taiwan

In 2014, the Beijing Office (BJO) and the four Hong Kong ETOs in Chengdu, Guangdong, Shanghai and Wuhan conducted various activities to promote Hong Kong. These included an exhibition and 'Harbin-Hong Kong Week 2014' launched by the BJO; a radio serial, 'Guangdong-Hong Kong Under the Same Roof', co-produced by the Guangdong ETO and Radio Guangdong; delicacy and art exhibitions co-organised by the Shanghai ETO and the Hong Kong Tourism Board in Shanghai; 'Chongqing-Hong Kong Week 2014' launched by Chengdu ETO and concerts staged by the Chengdu ETO in Chengdu and Chongqing by Hong Kong music groups; and an exhibition in Wuhan organised by the Wuhan ETO.

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 Mainland offices liaised closely with Mainland enterprises intending to invest in Hong Kong and assisted them in setting up businesses here.

In 2014, 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 – 2014'.

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 access government information and electronic services through the portal or their personalised MyGovHK accounts anytime, anywhere. 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 any government bureau or department does not comply with the provisions of the code.

The Communications Authority

The Communications Authority (CA), an independent statutory body established under the Communications Authority Ordinance (CAO) in 2012, 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, the Broadcasting (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance and the Trade Descriptions Ordinance. It 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 aims 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 and keenly competitive, benefitting service users 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 state-of-the-art technologies in telecommunications at affordable prices.

Mobile Communications Services

Four mobile network operators provide second generation (2G), third generation (3G) and fourth generation (4G) services in the city. As at December 2014, there were over 17.37 million subscribers to mobile communications services, representing a population penetration of 239 per cent, one of the highest in the world. The number of 3G/4G users continued to rise and reached 12.66 million in December 2014. Mobile data services are available at downlink speeds of up to 300 Mbps using Long Term Evolution technology. The World Economic Forum's Global Information Technology Report 2014 ranked Hong Kong first among 148 economies in mobile network coverage.

With the increasing popularity of smart phones, the monthly mobile data usage reached 15,860 Terabytes (15,859,608 Gigabytes) in December 2014, representing 1.31 times the monthly usage over the same period in 2013. On average, each 2.5G/3G/4G mobile user used 1,244.1 Megabytes per month.

Following the CA's 2013 decision to re-assign 118.4 MHz of paired frequency spectrum in the 1.9 – 2.2 GHz band (currently deployed for provision of 3G mobile services) upon the expiry of existing assignments in October 2016, all the incumbent spectrum assignees accepted in August 2014 the right of first refusal to be re-assigned 69.2 MHz of the spectrum. The remaining 49.2 MHz was put to auction in December 2014. The whole 118.4 MHz of the spectrum will be assigned to the incumbent spectrum assignees and successful bidders as the case may be on 22 October 2016, following their payment of the spectrum utilisation fee.

Fixed Communications Services

The local fixed communications services market is fully liberalised and 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 2014, there were 21 local fixed telephone network licensees, providing 102 telephone fixed-lines or internet telephone services 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, 86.9 per cent and 78.8 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 2014.

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 internet content delivery provider Akamai's '*State of the Internet 3rd Quarter, 2014 Report*', Hong Kong has the world's fastest broadband, with an average peak connection speed of 84.6 Mbps.

Hong Kong comes third in global ranking in deploying an optical fibre access network, according to information published in February 2014 by the Fibre to the Home Council Europe. As at December 2014, 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 $178, or US$23 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 more than 30,030 Wi-Fi hot spots in about 7,260 areas across the territory.

External Telecommunications Facilities and Services

The external telecommunications facilities market is fully liberalised and by December 2014, 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 2014 totalled over 21,270 Gbps.

Satellite Communications

The two Hong Kong companies licensed to operate and provide satellite communication services were operating nine satellites at the end of 2014. 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 telephone 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 2014, more than 2.7 million numbers were registered in the three DNCs.

Since the introduction of the UEMO in 2007, the CA has received over 27,000 reports of suspected contraventions, issued 658 warning letters and 24 enforcement notices to senders, and instigated one prosecution for non-compliance with an enforcement notice. The number of reports fell from around 6,100 in 2009 to around 1,900 in 2014, a testimony to the effectiveness of the regulatory regime. The HKSAR Government continues to work with other jurisdictions to combat spam and unsolicited e-mails.

Protection of Consumers

The OFCA works closely with the industry to safeguard consumer interests in using telecommunications services and to resolve any systemic problems that are manifested in consumer complaints. Since 2010, the OFCA and the industry have worked together 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 operators, billing information and payment collection, and performance of mobile broadband services.

To help resolve billing disputes in deadlock between consumers and their telecommunications service providers by means of mediation, the telecommunications industry set up a voluntary Customer Complaint Settlement Scheme for a trial period of two years from November 2012 to October 2014 with funding support from the OFCA. All major telecommunications service providers participated in the scheme and the OFCA and the industry are now assessing its effectiveness before deciding the way forward.

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, the Telecommunications and Information Working Group of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation and the London Action Plan for combating spam.

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 programme choices and innovative services available to the viewing and listening public. At the end of 2014, Hong Kong had some 800 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 2014, there were 15 free-to-air television channels (four analogue and 11 digital free TV channels, of which six are high-definition (HD) 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. In January 2014, RTHK commenced a trial run of digital terrestrial television (DTT) channels. As to radio, as at the end of 2014, Hong Kong's five radio stations (four commercial operators and RTHK) provide a total of 13 analogue and 17 digital audio broadcasting channels.

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 1,097 hours of radio programmes of different genres in Cantonese, English and Putonghua every week. The pilot project of Community Involvement Broadcasting Service continued in 2014, with two hours of airtime provided on RTHK digital radio channel DAB 31.

RTHK started a trial run of three DTT channels in January 2014. RTHK produced about 1,303 hours of television programmes for broadcasting on RTHK DTT channels as well as Hong Kong's two local free television stations and pay-TV platforms in 2014. RTHK's DTT network coverage has now reached about 75 per cent of Hong Kong's population. RTHK will establish 22 fill-in stations in the coming years to extend the network coverage to about 99 per cent of the population, matching that of the commercial DTT broadcasters.

In addition to 20.8 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 filming and technical support as well as audio and video signals to local and overseas broadcasters for events of public interest, such as the annual National Day celebration and flag raising ceremony, the delivery of the Chief Executive's Policy Address and the ceremonial opening of the Legal Year.

The RTHK website has an average daily page view of 4.8 million. RTHK continues to harness the multi-media potential of the different emerging media platforms, including providing applications for mobile services ('RTHK Cube', 'RTHK Node', 'RTHK On the Go', 'RTHK Prime' and 'RTHK Thumb') to meet the diverse needs of the public.

In 2014, RTHK launched four new mobile applications: 'RTHK Memory', 'RTHK mine', 'RTHK Screen' and 'RTHK Vox'.

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 HD television programmes and channels in 2007. Currently, over 80 per cent of Hong Kong households receive digital television. The two broadcasters achieved digital coverage of at least 99 per cent of the population by the end of 2014, approximately the same as that of analogue television broadcasting. Having regard to the latest development of DTT in Hong Kong and technical considerations, the government decided in 2014 to revise the working target for switching off analogue television broadcasting from end-2015 to end-2020, with a review of the target date in 2017-18.

In October 2013 the Chief Executive in Council 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

With its extensive postal infrastructure, Hongkong Post provides an efficient, reliable and affordable postal service to the public. In 2014, it handled 1.22 billion postal items, of which 84.7 per cent were local items.

Enhancements to Hongkong Post's services in 2014 included: extending the e-Express service to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom providing counter collection service at all post offices for online purchases made on Taobao; and offering Speedpost as a shipping solution on Small Order Zone, Hong Kong Trade Development Council's new online B2B e-commerce platform.

Central Mail Centre

The new Central Mail Centre, fully commissioned in December, amalgamates the International Mail Centre and the sorting office at the General Post Office into an integrated facility with a green building design. The centre's upgraded mail sorting automation systems help enhance operational efficiency.

Retail Network

In September, Hongkong Post embarked on the installation of a new Integrated Postal Services System in all post offices and backend mail processing units to automate counter operation and to facilitate resource planning and mail processing. The installation programme will be completed in 2015.

Stamps and Philately

Hongkong Post issued 13 sets of special stamps and sheetlets in 2014. A new set of definitive stamps, on the theme of the Hong Kong Global Geopark of China, was issued in July. A teaching kit on philately for kindergartens and schools was also launched in December to promote philately among students.

Customer Relations

A new Business Customers Liaison Group was set up in January chaired by the Postmaster General and comprising representatives from local chambers of commerce and SME associations.

Exhibition

An exhibition, 'A Journey through Hong Kong's Postal History', was held at the Heritage Discovery Centre from April to August, illustrating the development of Hong Kong's postal services through the Old General Post Office.

International Participation

Hongkong Post participates actively in international postal events, including those organised by the Asian-Pacific Postal Union, the Kahala Posts Group and the Universal Postal Union to forge closer cooperation with other postal administrations.

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 239 per cent and household broadband penetration rate of 83.2 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, SME Cloud Promotion Campaign, business matching events and an information portal, InfoCloud, which provides useful information for SMEs on cloud computing.

Information Security

The government's information security portal 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. A new cyber security information portal will be launched in January 2015 to provide guidance and tools for the public to conduct health checks on their computers and mobile devices. 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 2014, Hong Kong's ICT products and solutions won four grand awards in two prestigious international awards: the World Summit Youth Award and the Asia Pacific ICT Awards.

Since 2010, the government has allocated over 12 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 2014, 13 applications had been received, of which 10 had been approved. Since July 2011, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer's Data Centre Facilitation Unit has been providing one-stop support services to parties interested in setting up data centres in Hong Kong.

Held over two weeks in April, the International IT Fest 2014 attracted 60,000 participants to 38 ICT events showcasing Hong Kong's achievements as a regional ICT hub.

Facilitating Development of Cloud Industry and Standards

In 2014, the Hong Kong and Guangdong governments jointly produced the '*Guangdong/Hong Kong Practice Guide for Procuring Cloud Services*' to promote cloud computing adoption among organisations and companies, especially SMEs. The two governments also jointly organised regular meetings and forums to promote the development of cloud industry and standards in both places.

Cyberport

The 24-hectare Cyberport is home to some 300 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 2014, a total of 96 government mobile apps are available for public use.

(b) Public Sector Information

The government's Public Sector Information (PSI) portal provides for free re-use information in 17 categories, comprising some 3,000 datasets. Hong Kong won the Outstanding e-Government Prize (Open City) at the World e-Governments Organisation of Cities and Local Governments (WeGO) Awards in 2014 for providing PSI in digital format for public use.

(c) Electronic Health Records

The first stage of the electronic Health Record (eHR) programme is targeted to: (1) set up the 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 connection to the sharing platform; and (3) formulate a legal framework to protect system security and data privacy. The eHR Sharing System is targeted for launch in 2015 after completion of the legislative process.

(d) City-wide Wi-Fi

To facilitate the public and visitors in accessing free Wi-Fi service, the government launched the '*Wi-Fi.HK*' brand in August 2014 to promote public Wi-Fi services which are offered by public and private organisations completely free (or free for a certain period of time) in Hong Kong. There are currently over 10,000 hotspots under the *Wi-Fi.HK* brand.

(e) Government Cloud Platform

Riding on the new government cloud platform, the government continues to develop common e-government services for shared use by government departments

(f) Electronic Procurement

Government departments use cloud-enabled electronic procurement to enhance efficiency by automating and integrating processes. Suppliers also reap the benefits of shorter transaction turnaround times and greater business opportunities.

Digital Inclusion

The government implements a digital inclusion programme to help needy groups adopt technologies to enhance their quality of life and integrate with society, with targeted measures for students from low-income families, persons with disabilities and the elderly.

Internet Learning Support Programme

Some 95,000 low-income families have enrolled in the government's Internet Learning Support Programme, which provided about 67,000 services in 2014 to help the families acquire affordable computers and internet access services, and supports their children in using the internet effectively for learning.

Promoting ICT Adoption among Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly

To facilitate access to online information and services by persons with disabilities, the government organised activities to raise awareness and encourage accessible web design. Over 100 organisations from different sectors, were commended in 2014 for making their web content accessible.

Twelve seniors were commended in the Smart Elderly IT Star Awards for their exemplary use of ICT.

Supporting Underprivileged Groups

Seven mobile apps were made available for various needy groups for free download and use. One of them won the Hong Kong ICT Awards 2014. New mobile apps will be launched in 2015 for visually impaired students, hearing impaired persons, persons with dementia and children with dyslexia.

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 2014, 1,996 films were submitted for classification, compared with 1,945 in 2013. Of these, 666 were classified Category I, 585 Category IIA, 590 Category IIB, and 155 Category III. Film trailers, instructional films and cultural films intended for public exhibition can be exempted from classification. During the year, 11,305 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 'indecency' 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 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
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