

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 740 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 rate is over 229 per cent.

Hong Kong has one of the most successful telecommunications markets in the world. Fully liberalised and highly competitive, the market provides a wide range of innovative and advanced telecommunications services to consumers and business users at affordable prices. The city also has a long history of film production and a vibrant broadcasting industry offering a great variety of services.

The Mass Media

Hong Kong's mass media at the end of 2015 included 53 daily newspapers (including a number of electronic newspapers), 683 periodicals, three domestic free-television programme service licensees, three domestic pay-television programme service licensees, 18 non-domestic television programme service licensees, one government-funded public service broadcaster and three 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 the year end included 26 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, 20 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.

Hong Kong is the regional base for a number of international titles such as *International New York Times*, *Financial Times*, *THE NIKKEI*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today International*. Global 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 Hong Kong's news media. 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 600 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 improve their skills.

Dissemination of Government Information

The Secretary for Home Affairs oversees the policy on dissemination of government information, 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 enhancing 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 Information Grade officers who serve as Press Secretaries to Principal Officials or work in the 35 information and public relations units in bureaux 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, interviews and special promotional activities.

The News Sub-division operates a 24-hour media 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 press releases, photographs and video clips through a single interface. All press releases are available on the internet, 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 *news.gov.hk* website publishes government news and information daily in a dynamic multimedia fashion. Over 8,800 news and feature stories and some 1,500 video highlights were posted in 2015. News items and messages are also disseminated through smartphones, mobile devices and social media, including Facebook, Instagram, WeChat, Twitter and YouTube. The website attracted more than 25 million visitors and 518 million page views in 2015.

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. Major local campaigns conducted or supported by the division in 2015 included constitutional development, the 25th Anniversary of the Promulgation of the Basic Law, Keep Clean 2015, Appreciate Hong Kong, voter registration and the 2015 District Council Election, and public consultation on retirement protection.

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

The division handles about 3,000 titles and produces a wide variety of government publications, including this yearbook and its internet and tablet versions. Each year, the division distributes a large number of free publications, including fact sheets, brochures and posters. In 2015, the division sold photographs and, through its sales outlet and online bookstore, 74,304 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, on the Mainland and in Taiwan. Its Overseas Public Relations Sub-division promotes and monitors Hong Kong's image overseas and liaises closely with some 80 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 and produces summaries of overseas reports on Hong Kong. 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. Hong Kong's strengths and advantages are also promoted through social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

The Visits and International Conferences Sub-division runs the 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 trips to Hong Kong. In addition, it co-ordinates 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 on 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

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (ETO) in Brussels organised the visits of the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mrs Carrie Lam, to Amsterdam, Brussels, Dublin, Rome and Venice to strengthen bilateral and European Union ties. Other visiting officials were the Financial Secretary, Mr John C Tsang, to Antalya and Bucharest; the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, to Paris, Burgundy, Antwerp and Brussels; the Secretary for Development, Mr Paul Chan, to Barcelona; the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, to Paris, Alès and Milan; and the Secretary for Education, Mr Eddie Ng Hak-kim, to Brussels.

To promote tourism and celebrate Hong Kong's friendship with Belgium, the ETO hosted a gala dinner in Brussels, pairing dishes prepared by the Chinese Culinary Institute with Belgian beers. The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development officiated at the event with Belgium's

Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Jan Jambon, and the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Phil Hogan.

Highlights of the many events showcasing Hong Kong culture were the Spring Glory Cantonese Opera Workshop's tour to Rotterdam, Amsterdam, The Hague, Antwerp and Viterbo, and the Hong Kong Martial Arts Film Programme in Amsterdam, Brussels, Dublin, Florence, Istanbul, Izmir, Milan, Salento, Sofia and Thessaloniki.

The Brussels office was the main sponsor of the 2015 Oxfam Trailwalker Belgium, raising awareness of Hong Kong's green side. It was also the title sponsor of the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival in Antwerp.

In 2015, the London ETO organised five visits by HKSAR Government principal officials to countries under its purview, including a trip by the Chief Executive to the UK.

The London office organised business seminars and receptions to promote Hong Kong's advantages in different areas. It also worked to promote Hong Kong arts and culture by organising or supporting theatre performances in London and Edinburgh; musical performances in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the UK; a comics exhibition in Finland; and a Dragon Boat Festival in the UK. The office took part in the London Lord Mayor's Show. In addition, for the fourth time it held a competition to encourage Britons to study in Hong Kong.

In 2015, the Berlin ETO organised visits of the Financial Secretary to Germany, Hungary and Poland; a trip by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Professor Anthony Cheung Bing-leung, to Austria and Germany; and separate visits of the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development and the Secretary for the Environment to Germany.

Besides regular meetings with government officials, business communities and think tanks, the Berlin office organised and took part in many business events to promote Hong Kong, including luncheons, receptions, conferences, seminars and trade fairs. It also supported arts and cultural events in central and eastern Europe, such as film festivals, dragon boat races, exhibitions, concerts and other performances.

North America

In 2015, the ETO in Washington, DC organised the visits of the Financial Secretary; the Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC; and the Secretary for Education.

The office presented a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the 'Made in Hong Kong' Film Festival, co-sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution. The festival featured guest directors Heiward Mak and Ruby Yang.

The New York ETO promoted Hong Kong's strengths and business opportunities through visits by the office director to 27 US states and talks at 13 universities. It reached out to sectors including information technology, finance and law in arranging trips of the Chief Executive to

Boston and Chicago, of the Financial Secretary and the Secretary for Justice to New York, and of the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development to Chicago.

To promote the creative industries, the New York office sponsored several signature Hong Kong film series in New York and Chicago. Many celebrities attended, including actor Aaron Kwok and directors Ringo Lam, Ruby Yang, Lau Ho-leung and Cheuk Cheung. The office also organised a large-scale arts and cultural exhibition at New York's Time Warner Centre to tie in with the Hong Kong Dance Company's debut performances at the adjacent Lincoln Centre, and promoted Hong Kong fashion designers via the project 'Fashion Guerilla' in New York. An arts fellowship scheme with the Yale-China Association allowed two outstanding Hong Kong artists to embark on a residency programme at Yale University in 2015.

For the first time, the ETO presented the New York Sevens Tournament amid rising interest in rugby sevens ahead of the Rio Olympic Games. It sponsored dragon boat festivals in New York, Atlanta, Boston and, for the first time, Chicago. The office took part in career events to raise awareness of Hong Kong immigration measures that were favourable to overseas talent.

In 2015, staff of the San Francisco ETO visited 16 cities across 10 western US states to update local government officials, entrepreneurs, professionals, academics and the media on developments and opportunities in Hong Kong. They also organised meetings and events in San Francisco for the visiting Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, and for an information and communications technology delegation led by the Hong Kong Information and Technology Joint Council.

During the year, the office sponsored 12 different film events in California, Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Texas and Washington State. It welcomed six Hong Kong film directors and producers who attended receptions and round-table discussions organised around these festivals to promote film production as the flagship of Hong Kong's creative industries.

The Toronto ETO organised the Chief Executive's visit to the Hong Kong Trade Development Council's 'Think Asia, Think Hong Kong' symposium in Toronto. It also organised the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development's trip to Toronto and a trip by the Secretary for Security, Mr Lai Tung-kwok, to Toronto and Vancouver.

During the year, the Toronto office hosted business events in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec, including a networking function in the Parliament of Canada, to promote Hong Kong's unique position as a 'super-connector' between Mainland China and Canada.

Under the support of the office, the Chung Ying Theatre Company, Theatre du Pif and Bravo Theatre performed in Vancouver, with Chung Ying staging shows in Toronto as well. Hong Kong movies were featured at international film festivals in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and Niagara Region.

The office also held the Hong Kong-Canada Chinese Theme Song Competition, and launched a one-month 'Journey to Hong Kong' exhibition at the Toronto Pearson International Airport in

July that highlighted Asia's world city while promoting admission schemes for professionals and entrepreneurs.

North Asia

In 2015, the Tokyo ETO continued to promote closer economic and trade ties as well as cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and Japan and South Korea.

The Tokyo office presented or supported a number of arts and cultural events in Japan and Korea, including a Hong Kong Night reception in the Busan International Film Festival, a Special Focus on Hong Kong in the Osaka Asian Film Festival, the Yokohama Dragon Boat Race, Asian Youth Orchestra concerts in Japan, a performance by the City Contemporary Dance Company in Niigata and the Hong Kong Cup Student Ambassadors English Programme for university students in Japan.

Visits by government officials were also arranged, including the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development's trip to Japan to promote trade and tourism; and visits to Korea by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, to strengthen financial co-operation and learn about the latest developments in financial technology, and by the Secretary for Transport and Housing to promote Hong Kong as a regional logistics hub.

Southeast Asia

In 2015, the Singapore ETO organised and supported 15 visits to member countries of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations by the Chief Executive, former chief executive Mr Tung Chee-hwa and seven principal officials, including the Chief Secretary for Administration, the Financial Secretary and the Secretary for Justice. The Chief Executive met Indonesia's President and Vice-President in September and announced the establishment of a new ETO in Jakarta.

Under a Hong Kong-Singapore Permanent Secretaries Exchange Programme, the Singapore office also supported a December trip to Singapore. The delegation of permanent secretaries, including those for the civil service, security, labour and welfare, commerce and economic development (communications and creative industries), and development (planning and lands), exchanged views with their Singaporean counterparts on issues of common interest.

Business seminars and other events continued to feature on the Singapore office's agenda. To promote arts and cultural exchanges, the ETO supported, among other activities, Hong Kong Movie Night in Bangkok; a Hong Kong section in the Singapore Chinese Film Festival 2015; and cultural performances by Hong Kong Arts Festival artists at the office's Chinese New Year celebrations marking the friendship between Hong Kong and Singapore.

The 2015 round of an Asean internship scheme, launched by the Singapore office to broaden the perspectives of Hong Kong tertiary students, helped about 200 students from the eight government-funded institutions take up internships in eight countries. The scheme is extended in 2016 to The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Hong Kong Shue Yan University and Hang Seng Management College.

Australia and New Zealand

The Sydney ETO organised visits by three senior officials to Australia: the Chief Secretary for Administration, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development and the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury.

To promote Hong Kong's soft strengths, the office held and sponsored cultural events across Australia and New Zealand, including Hong Kong Dance Company's Sydney tour, the 'Hong Kong in Miniature' exhibition, the City of Sydney Chinese New Year Dragon Boat Races, the Auckland Lantern Festival, exhibitions on Hong Kong's art and culture, the OzAsia Festival and various film festivals.

The Sydney ETO also organised and took part in business events. To promote Hong Kong's career opportunities, the office held talks and exhibitions at Australian and New Zealand universities, as well as a roadshow in Auckland, Melbourne and Sydney to publicise a new admission scheme for the second generation of Hong Kong permanent residents alongside other enhanced schemes.

Social media continued to be a tool for the office to share information about Hong Kong with people in Australia and New Zealand, including businesses, professionals and students.

Mainland and Taiwan

In 2015, 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 a roving exhibition and a Creative Hong Kong-Tianjin series organised by the BJO; 'Hong Kong Exhibitions' in Guangdong Province, Hainan Province, Fujian Province, Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region by the Guangdong ETO; a radio serial, *Guangdong-Hong Kong Under the Same Roof*, co-produced by the Guangdong ETO and Radio Guangdong; an exhibition on the theme of family reunion in Shanghai, a radio serial named *Endless Stories on Hong Kong* in Jinan and roving exhibitions in the east of the Mainland by the Shanghai ETO; Xi'an-Hong Kong Festival 2015, film festivals and gifts, toys and miniature exhibitions by the Chengdu ETO; a radio serial named *Hello! Hong Kong* co-produced by the Chengdu ETO and the Radio and Television Group of Chongqing; and a double-page feature spread promoting Hong Kong published by the Wuhan ETO in eight newspapers of five central provinces.

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 that intended to invest in Hong Kong and helped them set up businesses here.

In Taiwan, the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office (HKETCO) continued to establish contacts with various sectors and the cities and counties in 2015 to promote bilateral economic, trade and cultural exchanges, to promote Hong Kong, and to help Taiwan enterprises set up businesses in Hong Kong. The activities it organised included a series of large-scale arts performances and exhibitions during Hong Kong Week – 2015.

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 GovHK, a one-stop portal at www.gov.hk. The public can obtain government information and services through the portal or their personalised MyGovHK accounts anytime, anywhere. To provide a better browsing experience for users, GovHK will adopt a responsive web design that eases the search for government information and access to online services across different devices.

Code on Access to Government Information

As an open and accountable government, all 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 bureau or department does not comply with the provisions of the code.

Communications Authority

The Communications Authority (CA), an independent statutory body established under the Communications Authority Ordinance (CAO) in 2012, is a unified regulatory body taking over 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 accordance with the Broadcasting Ordinance, the Telecommunications Ordinance, the CAO, the Broadcasting (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance, the Trade Descriptions Ordinance and the Competition 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, benefiting 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 enable consumers and business users to enjoy state-of-the-art technologies 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 2015, there were more than 16.73 million subscribers to mobile communications services, representing a population penetration of 229 per cent, one of the highest in the world. With the increasing popularity of smartphones, the number of 3G/4G users reached 14.11 million in December 2015 while mobile data usage reached 20,011 terabytes, representing 1.26 times the usage in December 2014. On average, each mobile data user used 1,304.6 megabytes per month in 2015. Mobile data services are available at downlink speeds of up to 300Mbps using Long Term Evolution technology. The World Economic Forum's Global Information Technology Report 2015 ranked Hong Kong first among 143 economies in mobile network coverage.

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 2015, there were 25 local fixed telephone network licensees, providing 95 phone fixed-lines or internet phone 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, 86.7 per cent and 78.9 per cent of residential households could choose between at least two or three self-built local fixed customer access networks respectively as at March 2015.

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 83.8 per cent. According to internet content delivery provider Akamai's *State of the Internet 3rd Quarter, 2015 Report*, Hong Kong has the world's second fastest broadband, with an average peak connection speed of 101.1Mbps.

The city is ranked third globally in deploying an optical fibre access network, according to information published in February 2015 by the Fibre to the Home Council Europe. As at December 2015, the OFCA's voluntary building registration scheme recorded about 14,500 fibre-to-the-building or fibre-to-the-home residential buildings, covering about 84 per cent of households. The corresponding number of non-residential buildings registered under the scheme was more than 1,400.

Hong Kong's fixed broadband services are competitively priced and very affordable, being offered at a monthly rate as low as around \$173, or US\$22 for broadband internet access service at speeds of up to 1Gbps. Hong Kong is also at the forefront in providing public Wi-Fi service. At the end of the year, there were more than 39,850 Wi-Fi hot spots in about 8,830 areas.

External Telecommunications Facilities and Services

The external telecommunications facilities market is fully liberalised and by December 2015, 42 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 via 19 overland cables. The total equipped capacity of the external telecommunications facilities in December 2015 exceeded 30,740Gbps.

Satellite Communications

The two Hong Kong companies licensed to operate and provide satellite communications services were operating 10 satellites at the end of 2015. 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 regulates the sending of commercial electronic messages (CEMs), including fax, pre-recorded phone messages, short messages and emails. Under this ordinance, 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 phone messages respectively. Senders are prohibited from sending CEMs to DNC-registered numbers without the consent of the registered users. By 31 December 2015, more than 2.8 million numbers were registered in the three DNCs.

Since the introduction of this ordinance in 2007, the CA has received more than 29,000 reports of suspected contraventions, issued 686 warning letters and 26 enforcement notices to senders, and instigated one prosecution for non-compliance with an enforcement notice. The number of reports fell from about 6,100 in 2009 to around 2,100 in 2015, a testimony to the effectiveness of the regulatory regime. The government continues to work with other jurisdictions to combat spam and unsolicited emails. The OFCA is a member of the London Action Plan, which combats spam through international co-operation and sharing of experience and intelligence.

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 two-year trial from November 2012 with funding and administrative support from the OFCA. All major telecommunications service providers took part in the scheme. During the trial, the settlement rate for the 357 cases handled was almost 100 per cent and participants reflected a high level of satisfaction. In view of this, the OFCA supported long-term implementation of the scheme from 1 May 2015.

International Activities

Hong Kong continues to be an active player in international telecommunications forums, participating as part of the Mainland's delegations to conferences and meetings organised by the International Telecommunication Union and 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.

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 innovative broadcasting services and to enhance the city's position as a regional broadcasting hub.

To achieve these objectives, Hong Kong adopts a facilitating and pro-competition approach to promote the use of innovative broadcasting technologies, and provides a liberalised and light-handed regulatory environment for new broadcasting services to flourish. This allows the city to enter into a new era of broadcasting, with widened programme choices and innovative services available to the viewing and listening public.

At the end of 2015, 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 more than one million subscribers. Eighteen licensed satellite television broadcasters provided 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 2015, there were 15 free-to-air television channels, comprising four analogue and 11 digital free-television channels, of which six were high-definition (HD) channels.

Public service broadcaster Radio Television Hong Kong produces programmes of public interest for broadcast on free and pay-television channels. In January 2014, RTHK started a trial run of its three digital terrestrial television (DTT) channels, all in HD format. As to radio, as at the end of 2015, Hong Kong's four radio stations (three commercial operators and RTHK) provided a total of 13 analogue and 15 digital audio broadcasting channels.

Regulatory Approach

The provision of television programme services and the carriage networks 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 modes. 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 Hong Kong's public service broadcaster. 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, mission and relationship with the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the CA and the Board of Advisors.

RTHK operates 12 radio channels, with three of them using FM transmission, four using AM and five using digital audio broadcasting. The station produces around 1,107 hours of programmes of different genres in Cantonese, English and Putonghua every week. A pilot project, the Community Involvement Broadcasting Service, continued in 2015, offering two hours of airtime every day on RTHK digital radio channel DAB 31.

Under a trial run of three DTT channels begun in 2014, RTHK produced about 1,303 hours of television programmes for broadcasting on RTHK DTT channels as well as Hong Kong's two free-television stations and pay-television platforms in 2015. RTHK's DTT network coverage has now reached about 75 per cent of Hong Kong's population. RTHK is establishing 22 fill-in stations by phases to extend the network coverage to about 99 per cent of the population, matching that of commercial DTT broadcasters.

In addition to 20.8 hours of new school educational television shows 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 average daily page views of 4.8 million. RTHK continues to harness the multimedia potential of emerging media platforms, including providing applications for mobile services (RTHK Cube, RTHK Mine, RTHK On the Go and RTHK Screen) to meet the diverse needs of the public.

In 2015, RTHK launched a dedicated news mobile application, RTHK News, as well as multimedia project 12 Music Visions, integrating the collective efforts of its television and radio divisions and new media unit.

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. Close to 85 per cent of households now receive digital television. The two broadcasters achieved digital coverage of at least 99 per cent of the population by the end of 2014, about 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 April 2015, the Chief Executive in Council granted a domestic free-television programme service licence to commercial operator HK Television Entertainment Limited to provide free-television services in Hong Kong. Its integrated Cantonese channel and integrated English channel will begin within 12 months and 24 months respectively after the start of the licensing period.

The CA will continue to process applications for domestic free-television programme service licences in accordance with the law and established practices. It will submit recommendations to the Chief Executive in Council on the applications.

Postal Services

Hongkong Post provides a broad range of reliable postal and related services at affordable prices, in line with the government's obligation to make public services available to everyone. In 2015, it handled 1.2 billion postal items, of which 88.4 per cent was local mail.

To meet delivery needs arising from the growth of local and cross-border e-commerce, Hongkong Post extended its e-Express service to six more countries and further developed its counter collection service for online purchases. In addition, the online posting platforms were consolidated into an integrated facility with more varied functions to cover all bulk posting services for the convenience of senders.

Retail Network

During the year, Hongkong Post operated a network of 127 post offices. It relocated San Po Kong Post Office to nearby Concorde Road and renamed that as Concorde Road Post Office. As well, an Integrated Postal Services System was fully commissioned to automatise counter operations and integrate front-end transactions with back-end processes, while 271 more Octopus card readers were installed, enhancing customer experience as a result.

Stamps and Philately

Hongkong Post released 14 special issues of stamps on a diversity of themes during the year, drawing enthusiastic market responses. It also sponsored Hong Kong 2015 – 31st Asian International Stamp Exhibition at the Convention and Exhibition Centre in November.

International Co-operation

Hongkong Post takes part in the international postal arena to keep abreast of industry developments and to foster co-operation with other mail operators. In July, it hosted the Kahala

Posts Group CEO meeting in Hong Kong to promote closer collaboration among member postal administrations on express mail and parcel businesses.

Information Technology

Digital 21 Strategy

Through its Digital 21 Strategy, the government strives to establish Hong Kong as a leading digital economy. The strategy has produced the right environment, infrastructure, skills and culture for the development of information and communications technology (ICT).

Citywide Wi-Fi

The government is promoting a Wi-Fi.HK brand to help the public and visitors use free public Wi-Fi services. Public and private organisations have set up more than 17,000 hot spots providing at least 30 minutes of free public Wi-Fi under the Wi-Fi.HK brand.

Driving E-business

To support the continuous development of a digital economy, the government adopts a clear legal framework governing 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. More than 41,000 people from different business sectors have taken part in such initiatives, including the Sector-Specific Programme, SME Cloud Promotion Campaign and business matching events. The InfoCloud information portal, launched in 2013, provides useful information on cloud computing for SMEs.

Information Security

In January 2015, the government launched a thematic Cyber Security Information Portal at www.cybersecurity.hk to provide security guidance and testing methods for the public to conduct health checks on their computers and mobile devices. The government also collaborates with the industry and academia in organising seminars and promotional activities for schools and the public, and offers the latest IT security news, guidelines and protection measures through websites, social media, short videos and the radio so as to raise the public's awareness of information security threats and to protect their information systems and data. In April, a Government Computer Emergency Response Team Hong Kong was set up to centrally co-ordinate and manage the government's IT and cybersecurity issues. The Hong Kong Computer Emergency Response Team Co-ordination Centre also provides businesses and the public with response services to handle computer security incidents.

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 (CEPA), Hong Kong service suppliers can set up wholly owned enterprises on the Mainland to provide software implementation and data processing services. They can also form joint-venture

enterprises to operate various types of value-added telecommunications services. From June 2016, the service suppliers will be able to enjoy national treatment on the whole Mainland when providing computer and related services.

The liberalisation measures under CEPA also apply to foreign companies with a business presence in Hong Kong. In addition, Hong Kong residents can take qualification examinations on computing technology and software, and provide computer and software services on the Mainland. There is also a scheme implemented by Hong Kong and Guangdong to mutually recognise electronic signature certificates to facilitate secure cross-boundary e-commerce.

Since 2005, the government has been organising the Hong Kong ICT Awards in collaboration with the local industry to recognise outstanding inventions and applications. In 2015, Hong Kong's ICT products and solutions won two grand awards in two prestigious international awards: the China Adolescents Science and Technology Innovation Contest and the Asia Pacific ICT Alliance Awards.

Hong Kong's achievements as a regional ICT hub were also showcased at the International IT Fest 2015, which attracted more than 132,000 participants to 52 events over two weeks in April.

Since 2012, the government has put in place two incentives to encourage the conversion of industrial buildings into data centres and the development of high-tier data centres on industrial lots. As at the end of 2015, it has approved 15 applications.

Cyberport

The 24-hectare Cyberport is home to some 350 local, Mainland and overseas companies specialising in ICT applications, digital entertainment and multimedia content creation. Cyberport also provides the ICT and digital media industries with infrastructure and technical help, and facilitates the development of local SMEs and ICT start-ups through various support programmes.

Developments in E-government

Hong Kong is progressing in its next stage of e-government as it builds on the foundations laid over the past few years. The key developments include:

- **Mobile applications:** The government is keen to expand mobile e-government services for greater convenience of people on the go. As at December 2015, 122 government mobile apps are available for public use.
- **Public-sector information:** The public-sector information portal Data.Gov.HK provides data sets for free reuse in 18 categories, comprising more than 5,000 data sets. The government will continue to release free online government information in digital format with a view to opening up new business opportunities, bringing convenience to the public and benefiting society as a whole.
- **Electronic health records:** The first stage of the electronic Health Record (eHR) programme aims to set up a sharing platform to connect all public and private hospitals;

connect electronic medical/patient record and health information systems available in the market to the sharing platform; and formulate a legal framework to protect system security and data privacy. These three targets have been completed and the eHR Sharing System is scheduled for launch in the first quarter of 2016.

- **Government cloud platform:** The government continues to develop common e-government services on its cloud platform for shared use by government departments.
- **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.
- **Pay e-Cheque portal:** To tie in with the introduction of e-cheques in December 2015, the government launched a Pay e-Cheque portal enabling the public to pay government bills and fees by e-cheque.

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, people with disabilities and the elderly.

Internet Learning Support Programme

The programme continues to help low-income families acquire affordable computers and internet access services to support their children in internet learning. About 82,000 services were provided to some 9,000 families in the 2014-15 school year.

Promoting ICT Adoption among People with Disabilities and the Elderly

To help people with disabilities access online information and services, the government continued to raise awareness of and encourage accessible web design. About 150 organisations were commended in 2015 for making their websites and mobile apps accessible.

The ICT Outreach Programmes for Elderly has reached out to more than 1,300 elderly to encourage ICT use in their daily lives.

Supporting Underprivileged Groups

Twelve mobile apps that suit the needs of various underprivileged groups were made available for free use. A new round of a funding scheme was launched to develop more mobile apps to empower more needy groups through technology.

Enriched IT Programme in Secondary Schools

The government launched an Enriched IT Programme in 2015 with an aim to cultivate IT talent early in their secondary school years. Eight partner schools began running an Enriched IT Class from Secondary 2 in 2015-16. The programme also provided funding support for local

secondary schools to organise IT activities each year to foster a pro-IT atmosphere and stimulate interest in IT in the school community.

Film Classification System

Hong Kong adopts a three-tier film classification system: Category I (suitable for all ages); Category II, subdivided into Category IIA (not suitable for children) and Category IIB (not suitable for young persons and children); and Category III (only for persons who have attained the age of 18 years). 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 2015, 2,065 films were submitted for classification, compared with 1,996 in 2014. Of these, 682 were classified as Category I, 661 Category IIA, 552 Category IIB, and 170 Category III. Film trailers, instructional films and cultural films intended for public exhibition can be exempted from classification. During the year, 11,429 such films were exempted from classification.

Film classification standards are kept in line with society's expectations by regular public opinion surveys 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, videotapes, discs and electronic publications) are 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 Force, 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 submit articles voluntarily to the tribunal for classification rulings before publication if in doubt.

A review of the ordinance, which included two rounds of public consultation, has ended and the government is drafting legislative amendments to improve the regulatory regime.

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

Cyber Security Information Portal: www.cybersecurity.hk

Digital audio broadcasting: www.digitalradio.gov.hk

Digital television: www.digitaltv.gov.hk

Digital 21 Strategy: www.digital21.gov.hk

Government's e-bulletin: www.news.gov.hk

Home Affairs Bureau: www.hab.gov.hk

Hongkong Post: www.hongkongpost.hk

Information Services Department: www.isd.gov.hk

InfoSec: www.infosec.gov.hk

Office of the Communications Authority: www.ofca.gov.hk

Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration: www.ofnaa.gov.hk

Public-Sector Information Portal: data.gov.hk

Radio Television Hong Kong: www.rthk.org.hk