

Media and Communications

Hong Kong's lively media and world-class telecommunications provide ready access to a wealth of information and entertainment, including the publication of almost 600 daily newspapers and periodicals locally. More than 95 per cent of households are broadband service subscribers and the mobile subscriber penetration rate is about 293 per cent.

Hong Kong has one of the most successful telecommunications markets in the world. Fully liberalised and keenly competitive, the market provides a wide range of innovative and advanced telecommunications services to consumers and business users. The city also has a vibrant broadcasting industry, offering a multitude of television and radio channels with diverse programming.

Mass Media

Hong Kong's mass media at the end of 2020 included 94 daily newspapers (including electronic newspapers), 500 periodicals, three domestic free-TV programme service licensees, two domestic pay-TV programme service licensees, 10 non-domestic TV programme service licensees, two sound broadcasting licensees and one public service broadcaster.

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 61 Chinese-language dailies, 15 English-language dailies, 15 bilingual dailies and three 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, 52 cover mainly local and international news, while the others focus on particular subjects such as finance. The larger newspapers include overseas Chinese communities in their distribution networks and some have editions printed outside Hong Kong, such as in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Hong Kong is a regional base for international media including *The Economist*, *The Financial Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Nikkei*, *The Wall Street Journal*, Agence France-Presse, Associated Press, Bloomberg and Thomson Reuters. International broadcasters with operations in Hong Kong include BBC, Channel News Asia, CNBC, CNN International, NHK 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 900 members. It pays special attention to press freedom and ethics concerns, professional training and the well-being of journalists.

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

The Vocational Training Council's Media and Communications Training Board works with trade bodies such as the Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Advertisers Association, Hong Kong News Executives' Association, Journalism Education Foundation and Newspaper Society of Hong Kong to run training programmes for media, advertising and public relations professionals to 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 news and communications agency. It 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 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, 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 coordinates 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 7,560 news and feature stories and some 2,130 video highlights were posted in 2020. News items and messages are also disseminated through smartphones, mobile devices and social media, including Facebook, Instagram, WeChat, Twitter and YouTube. More than 640 million page views were recorded in 2020.

The Media Research Sub-division keeps the government informed of public opinion expressed in the mass news media and social media platforms. It produces daily analyses of public views and editorial comments in the Chinese and English newspapers as well as 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. Among the major local campaigns conducted or supported by the division in 2020 were those for Fight the Virus, Employment Support Scheme, National Security Law, Universal Community Testing Programme and Cash Payout Scheme.

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 2,000 titles and produces a wide variety of government publications, including this yearbook and its internet version. Each year, the division distributes a large number of free publications, including fact sheets, brochures and posters. Photographs from ISD's substantial archive, both historical and topical, are sold at its photo library and via an online photo sales system. Through its sales outlet and online bookstore, over 35,000 government books and miscellaneous printed items were sold in 2020.

Public Relations Outside Hong Kong Division

The division helps develop and implement the government's public relations 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 about 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. To tie in with the outbound visits of senior officials, it coordinates and implements

overseas publicity projects. To enhance Hong Kong's global exposure, the sub-division supports events hosted by the international media in the city, and engages outside media organisations to produce multimedia publicity materials to promote Hong Kong's strengths and advantages.

The Brand Hong Kong Management Unit handles the Brand Hong Kong communications programme, promoting Hong Kong as Asia's world city around the world. The unit develops advertising campaigns and publicity material in print and electronic formats to support the government's Economic and Trade Offices' events, senior officials' visits and major promotional activities outside Hong Kong. The unit also seeks opportunities and collaborates with organisers of major international conferences, tournaments and festivals in Hong Kong. It runs a number of social media platforms and digital campaigns to promote Hong Kong's strengths and advantages.

The Visits Sub-division runs the ISD's Sponsored Visitors Programme for government and political leaders, academics and think-tank members, as well as leading figures in the business and financial sectors, to visit Hong Kong to enhance their understanding of the city. The sub-division also helps line up meetings for influential visitors on trips to Hong Kong. In addition, it provides assistance for visits of senior government officials elsewhere.

Promoting Hong Kong Worldwide

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's offices overseas and in the Mainland, as well as the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office in Taiwan, are important in promoting Hong Kong globally. Hong Kong's image is promoted through regular meetings with counterparts and contacts in territories covered by the offices, visits by senior Hong Kong officials, and cultural and sporting events such as film festivals and dragon boat racing.

Europe

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (ETO) in Brussels hosted Chinese New Year receptions in Brussels, Dublin, The Hague, Istanbul, Milan and Paris. Hong Kong musicians performed at three of these receptions. With COVID-19 shifting activities online, the ETO co-hosted and took part in several webinars to promote to European audiences Hong Kong's competitive strengths as a gateway to Mainland and Asian markets, a purchase centre with excellent logistic services, an international business and financial centre, a major sports and e-sports events destination, and a vibrant city with ample opportunities for overseas talents.

The office supported various events to promote Hong Kong's culture and creativity, including an exhibition in Belgium about the lion dance and Cantonese opera; a festival in France showcasing Hong Kong comics; a fashion week in France presenting Hong Kong fashion designs; and seven international film festivals in Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain to promote Hong Kong films.

The London ETO arranged seminars, both actual and virtual, for the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam; the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung; the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau Tang-wah; and the Chief Executive of

the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Mr Eddie Yue, to update those in the UK on different aspects of Hong Kong. In partnership with Invest Hong Kong and foreign business organisations, the office also promoted investment opportunities in Hong Kong through business events in London, Manchester and Oslo, and webinars for audiences in the UK, Sweden and Russia. Apart from hosting Chinese New Year receptions in London and Moscow, it took part in the London Chinatown Chinese New Year celebration and supported three film festivals, two in London and one in Sweden, showcasing Hong Kong movies.

The Berlin ETO organised the trip of a Hong Kong delegation led by the Chief Executive to attend the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2020 in Davos, Switzerland. The Chief Executive updated those attending on the situation in Hong Kong and highlighted the importance of the 'one country, two systems' principle and the Basic Law. She also spoke at various WEF events to promote Hong Kong's strengths and advantages to an international audience.

North America

In response to the constraints imposed by COVID-19, the three ETOs in the United States jointly created a dedicated arts webpage to showcase Hong Kong arts and cultural programmes to US audiences.

The Washington office co-presented online with the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art the 25th annual Made in Hong Kong Film Festival. The event featured appearances by filmmakers Ray Yeung and Andrew Fung.

The New York ETO promoted business and cultural ties in East Coast cities through physical and online activities. Through webinars, the office promoted Hong Kong's advantages in various sectors, including finance, aviation and air cargo and logistics, and supported the delivery of speeches by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan Mo-po, and the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui Ching-yu, at international virtual events.

The New York office continued its arts fellowship schemes with the Asian Cultural Council and the Yale-China Association, providing residency programmes for outstanding Hong Kong artists and art administrators in New York and at Yale University respectively. It also hosted a reception for New York's arts and cultural community and members of the International Society for the Performing Arts, currently chaired by the Hong Kong Arts Festival's Executive Director. The office also highlighted Hong Kong movies in a virtual film panorama in New York and Chicago.

After four in-person spring receptions in three states, events in 2020 could only be held online due to the pandemic. Virtual events hosted by the San Francisco ETO included a discussion among Bay Area company leaders on building an offshore development team in Hong Kong and webinars featuring the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit Wing-hang, on Hong Kong's latest I&T developments, and the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury on Hong Kong's next chapter as a global financial centre.

The office co-presented conversations with eight film directors and artistes from Hong Kong at film events in California and Hawaii. A special tribute to film director Ann Hui was a highlight at

the Hawaii International Film Festival. The office also sponsored a programme of Hong Kong films at an outdoor, drive-in cinema.

The San Francisco ETO also curated a show by Hong Kong sand artist Hoi Chiu, and a live-streamed conversation with Hong Kong artist Victor Wong to explore the interaction between art and technology.

The Toronto ETO hosted and participated in business events across Canada, mostly virtual ones, to promote the Hong Kong platform for Canadian companies to expand to Asia and beyond. A webinar was hosted for the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury to present the latest financial developments and Hong Kong's strong financial fundamentals.

The office sponsored cultural activities featuring Cantonese opera artists and renowned writers from Hong Kong. It also supported the screening of nine Hong Kong films at Canada's international film festivals to promote cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and Canada.

Northeast Asia

The Tokyo ETO represents Hong Kong to promote closer economic and trade ties as well as cultural exchanges with Japan and Korea.

In 2020, the Tokyo office organised and supported a series of webinars in Japan and Korea to promote Hong Kong's unique advantages and business opportunities. Topics covered in the webinars included Hong Kong's role in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Hong Kong as an international financial hub, Hong Kong's talent admission schemes, as well as its strengths in legal and dispute resolution services, fintech and start-up ecosystems.

Other events presented or supported by the office included receptions in Tokyo and Seoul, and a special feature on Hong Kong movies at the Osaka Asian Film Festival.

Southeast Asia

The Singapore ETO fosters bilateral relations with three Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, namely Laos, Singapore and Vietnam, and also with India in South Asia. In 2020, the office organised and supported a visit by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong Wai-lun, to Singapore.

To promote Hong Kong's arts and culture, the Singapore office sponsored a performance by the Hong Kong String Orchestra in Singapore, and supported a webinar featuring arts administrators and artists from Hong Kong and Singapore discussing challenges faced and new solutions to keep arts and culture alive during the pandemic.

The office maintained close contact with local business associations and also organised two webinars to update the business communities in Singapore and Vietnam on the latest developments and policy initiatives in Hong Kong.

The Jakarta ETO represents Hong Kong in dealing with ASEAN as a whole, and also focuses specifically on promoting bilateral relations with the individual ASEAN countries of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development joined government ministers from Indonesia and Malaysia in two webinars to strengthen bilateral relations and to explore opportunities for closer partnership. The Chief Executive joined the Indonesian webinar. The Jakarta ETO also hosted a series of webinars with local business associations on topics ranging from innovation to health technology. In early 2020, the office sponsored the Hong Kong String Orchestra to perform in Johor Bahru in Malaysia.

The Bangkok ETO promotes bilateral relations with Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand. To support the newly established Myanmar-Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce and Industry and promote trade and economic ties, the office sponsored the chamber's first Chinese New Year reception in 2020.

In its second year in operation, the office visited and established contacts in 12 Thai provinces and rolled out a campaign to promote Hong Kong to the general audience in all 77 Thai provinces. The office supported a webinar jointly organised by the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and the Thailand Board of Investment in June to promote exchanges and foster economic and trade collaboration with Thailand at the government level.

The office continued to host and support business events to promote Hong Kong's unique advantages to the business community, in particular its roles in the Greater Bay Area, the Belt and Road Initiative and the Asian market.

Australia and New Zealand

In February, the Sydney ETO participated in the Sydney Lunar Festival Dragon Boat Races at Darling Harbour to promote Hong Kong in Australia.

The office organised four webinars for audiences in Australia and New Zealand on the latest developments in Hong Kong. Topics covered ranged from the government's anti-pandemic measures to Hong Kong's strengths as an international finance centre in the post-pandemic era and the opportunities of the Greater Bay Area. The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury gave a presentation at one webinar on Hong Kong's monetary and fiscal stability and new opportunities for the financial services industry.

The office provided updates on COVID-19 in Hong Kong to Hong Kong communities and students in Australia and New Zealand through its social media platforms and website, and by emails to those who registered to receive the information.

Mainland and Taiwan

In the Mainland, the Beijing Office and the four ETOs in Chengdu, Guangdong, Shanghai and Wuhan maintained close contact with Mainland ministries and commissions during the pandemic to keep up with the latest prevention and control measures in various places,

disseminate the relevant information promptly to Hong Kong people there and gave appropriate support in response to their requests for assistance.

During the pandemic, the Mainland offices used the internet, social media, newsletters and the radio to publicise Hong Kong's strengths. The offices' investment promotion divisions continued to promote Hong Kong's business advantages and liaised closely with Mainland enterprises, helping them set up businesses in the city. With the epidemic under control in the Mainland in the latter half of 2020, Mainland offices resumed the organisation of trade seminars, cultural activities and youth exchanges. The Mainland offices also provided support to Hong Kong people living in their respective service areas by publishing practical guides on their websites.

The Beijing Office organised roving exhibitions titled 'Hong Kong Connect' in Changchun, Harbin, Shenyang, Shijiazhuang and Tianjin. It also established its designated account 'Arts and Culture 71' on two popular online video platforms in the Mainland, Tencent Video and Bilibili, to bring online performances and productions by Hong Kong artists to Mainland audiences. The Shanghai ETO organised miniature exhibitions in Hangzhou and Shanghai, collaborated with National Geographic to organise two photo exhibitions in Ningbo, and sponsored the production of videos by the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, SENZA A Cappella and other groups to promote Hong Kong's arts and culture online in the East China region. The Shanghai ETO used its official WeChat and Weibo accounts to provide the latest information about Hong Kong and events organised by the office.

As the pandemic situation stabilised in the second half of the year, the Guangdong ETO staged a number of large-scale exhibitions to promote Hong Kong, including the 'Hong Kong – Connect the World' exhibition at the 2020 Guangdong 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Expo, an exhibition of outstanding entries in the Guangxi-Hong Kong Co-operation Photo Competition, a virtual exhibition at the 16th China (Shenzhen) International Cultural Industries Fair (Cloud ICIF) to showcase Hong Kong's creative industry, and two photo exhibitions in Shenzhen and Xiamen to showcase Hong Kong. The Wuhan ETO organised the 'Hong Kong Miniature Exhibition' in Wuhan to present Hong Kong's culture, traditions and lifestyle and held the 'Hong Kong Photo Exhibition' in Huangshi, Sanmenxia, Xiangyang, Yichang, Yongzhou, Zhangjiajie and Zhengzhou. To disseminate Hong Kong-related news and information, the Wuhan ETO collaborated with Hubei Television's Information Channel to produce and broadcast *Next Station, Hong Kong*, and with three local newspapers in the region to set up designated Hong Kong columns. The Chengdu ETO organised two creative design exhibitions in Chengdu and Chongqing to promote cultural exchanges, and invited young Hong Kong musicians to produce a video with a fusion of Chinese and Western music for the online 2020 Chengdu International Sister Cities Youth Music Festival. The Chengdu ETO's 'Taste of Hong Kong – Let's Party!' promoted Hong Kong's food, music and movies. The office used its WeChat channel and WeChat Moment to promote Hong Kong's arts and culture, and held an exhibition in Weinan to showcase Hong Kong as Asia's world city.

In Taiwan, the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office maintains contact with various sectors in different cities and counties to strengthen two-way economic, trade and cultural

exchanges, promote Hong Kong and help Taiwanese enterprises set up businesses in Hong Kong. During the year, it continued to organise the 'Hong Kong Now' roving exhibition, published the *Art & Culture@Hong Kong* booklet to introduce popular cultural and district attractions, and held a Hong Kong-Taiwan Economic Cooperation Forum on digital transformation. It also collaborated with the Taipei offices of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and Hong Kong Tourism Board to organise events promoting Hong Kong's trade and tourism.

Code on Access to Government Information

As an open and accountable government, all bureaus and departments make information available to the public according to the Code on Access to Information. The code stipulates that bureaus and departments should work on the basis that information requested will be released, and sets out 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, regulates Hong Kong's broadcasting and telecommunications industries according to the Broadcasting Ordinance, Telecommunications Ordinance, Communications Authority Ordinance, Broadcasting (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance, Trade Descriptions Ordinance and Competition Ordinance. It also enforces the Unsolicited Electronic Messages Ordinance.

The Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA), the CA's executive arm and secretariat, helps the CA administer and enforce these ordinances.

Telecommunications

The government aims to facilitate the development of the telecommunications industry and enhance Hong Kong's position as the telecommunications hub of the region. Hong Kong's telecommunications services market is fully open to competition and the pro-market approach has encouraged an abundant supply of competitively priced state-of-the-art services for consumers and businesses.

Mobile Communications

Hong Kong entered the fifth generation (5G) era in the second quarter with the launch of commercial 5G mobile services. As at December, there were 23.14 million subscriptions to the four mobile network operators and 24 mobile virtual network operators, representing a population penetration rate of 293 per cent, one of the world's highest. Mobile data usage reached 88,017 terabytes, a 26 per cent rise over December 2019. On average, each resident used 10,380 megabytes per month in the past 12 months.

Fixed Communications

As at December, local fixed telecommunications services were offered by 27 licensed carriers, with two or more networks available to 90.7 per cent of households and three or more available to 79.9 per cent.

Hong Kong has one of the world's most advanced fixed broadband network infrastructures and a fixed broadband penetration rate of 94.9 per cent of households. The Institute for Management Development's *World Competitiveness Yearbook 2020* ranked Hong Kong sixth in the average internet bandwidth speed out of 63 economies.

Charges for fixed broadband are competitive, starting from \$106 per month for services at speeds of up to 1 Gbps. The city is also at the forefront of providing public Wi-Fi, with more than 70,000 Wi-Fi hot spots.

External Telecommunications

Forty-two operators are licensed to provide facility-based external telecommunications services. Hong Kong is connected with the Mainland through 20 overland cables and with the rest of the world through 11 regional and transcontinental submarine cable systems set up at eight submarine cable landing stations. The total equipped capacity of the external telecommunications facilities in December exceeded 122,226 Gbps.

Two Hong Kong companies are licensed to operate and provide satellite communications services, operating 10 satellites in total.

Unsolicited Electronic Messages

The Unsolicited Electronic Messages Ordinance regulates the sending of commercial electronic messages, including faxes, pre-recorded telephone messages, short messages and emails. As at year end, more than 2.6 million numbers were registered in 'Do-not-call' registers established under the ordinance for faxes, short messages and pre-recorded telephone messages.

In 2020, the CA received 556 reports of suspected contraventions and issued 20 warning letters to senders.

Protection of Consumers

The OFCA works closely with the industry to safeguard consumer interests in using telecommunications services and to resolve any systemic problems identified in consumer complaints.

The industry operates a voluntary Customer Complaint Settlement Scheme, with funding and administrative support from the OFCA, that mediates unresolved billing disputes between service providers and their customers. During the year, 29 eligible applications were handled, all of which were settled.

Broadcasting

Commercial Broadcasting

Hong Kong'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. It adopts a facilitating and pro-competition approach to promote the use of innovative technologies and provides a liberalised and light-handed regulatory environment that moves with the times.

TV broadcasters and their transmission networks are regulated separately. A TV broadcaster may choose to engage any transmission network operator to transmit its programmes instead of investing in transmission infrastructure itself. This arrangement facilitates market entry and encourages competition.

The Broadcasting Ordinance regulates the four categories of TV programme services – domestic free, domestic pay, non-domestic (mainly satellite TV services targeting the Asia-Pacific) and other licensable TV programme services (mainly TV services for hotel rooms) – according to their characteristics and pervasiveness. Sound broadcasting services are regulated under the Telecommunications Ordinance and Broadcasting (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance.

At the end of 2020, Hong Kong had about 800 satellite and pay-TV channels available in digital format and over one million subscribers to internet TV. Ten licensed satellite TV broadcasters provided more than 190 channels mainly targeting the Asia-Pacific region. Three domestic free-TV licensees operated nine digital TV channels.

As to radio, two sound broadcasting licensees provided six radio channels as at the year end.

Public Service Broadcasting

Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) is a government department that serves as the city's public service broadcaster. It provides editorially independent, professional and quality radio, TV 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 RTHK Board of Advisors.

RTHK operates three FM and four AM radio channels, offering radio programmes in Cantonese, English, Putonghua and other languages, including 17 hours of radio programmes every week under the Community Involvement Broadcasting Service.

RTHK operates three digital TV channels providing round-the-clock service. Programmes are mainly in Cantonese, with some in English or Putonghua, while some include Nepalese and Urdu subtitles. To cater for the visually or hearing impaired, some programmes incorporate audio descriptions or sign language. As from April, RTHK digital TV channels were transmitted through 29 transmitting stations, covering about 99 per cent of the population.

RTHK harnesses the multimedia potential of new media platforms, providing a number of mobile applications. In 2020, the RTHK website averaged over 635,000 visits per day.

Digital Television

Full digital TV broadcasting was implemented in Hong Kong from 1 December. Two commercial free-TV broadcasters and RTHK provide digital coverage to at least 99 per cent of the population, while one commercial free-TV broadcaster provides digital TV services through a fixed network that covers about 93 per cent of households. As at October, about 95 per cent of households were receiving digital TV services.

Review of Broadcasting Regulatory Framework

In October, the Broadcasting and Telecommunications Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019 was passed by the Legislative Council, intended to remove outdated broadcasting regulatory requirements and facilitate the sustainable development of the television and sound broadcasting industries.

Postal Services

Hongkong Post provides reliable postal and related services at affordable prices. In 2020, it handled 0.98 billion postal items, 78.3 per cent of which was local mail.

To keep pace with the growth of e-commerce, Hongkong Post is actively extending the network of iPostal stations to provide greater convenience for customers in collecting their mail.

Resilience in the face of COVID-19

Hongkong Post strived to maintain normal postal services during the pandemic. It gave top priority to handling mask packages posted from abroad, and delivered more than 6.23 million packages of CuMask+™ and packs of surgical masks. All 121 post offices also helped distribute specimen bottles for testing of COVID-19.

Stamps and Philately

Thirteen issues of special and commemorative stamps were released during the year, including two stamp sheetlets issued in December on the theme of ‘Together, We Fight the Virus’.

Postal Cooperation

In July, as part of the PRC delegation, Hongkong Post took part online in the Executive Council's Plenary Meeting of the Asia Pacific Postal Union to discuss international postal developments. In December, Hongkong Post joined the Third Mainland-Hong Kong-Macao Postal Summit, on promoting the postal industry's development.

Film Classification

To allow adults wide access to films while protecting the interest of young people and children, Hong Kong adopts a three-tier film classification system with four categories: Category I, which is suitable for all ages; Category IIA, not suitable for children; Category IIB, not suitable for young persons and children; and Category III, for persons aged 18 or above only. Categories IIA and IIB are advisory, while the age restriction for Category III films is mandatory. The classification standards are kept in line with society's expectations through public surveys and consultation with a statutory advisory panel of about 300 members drawn from different backgrounds.

During the year, 1,404 films were submitted for classification, of which 496, 472, 349 and 87 films were classified as Category I, Category IIA, Category IIB and Category III respectively.

The Board of Review (Film Censorship) is empowered under the Film Censorship Ordinance to review 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

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 and public display of obscene and indecent articles is regulated under the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance.

The relevant enforcement agencies are the Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration, the police and the Customs and Excise Department.

Under the ordinance, an article may be classified as Class I (neither obscene nor indecent), Class II (indecent) or Class III (obscene). The ordinance prohibits the publication of Class III articles. Publishers, authors, printers, manufacturers, importers, distributors and copyright owners may submit articles voluntarily to the Obscene Articles Tribunal for classification before publication if in doubt.

Websites

Code on Access to Information: www.access.gov.hk
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau: www.cedb.gov.hk
Communications Authority: www.coms-auth.hk
Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau: www.cmab.gov.hk
Digital TV: digitaltv.gov.hk
Government's online news platform: www.news.gov.hk
Home Affairs Bureau: www.hab.gov.hk
Hongkong Post: www.hongkongpost.hk
Information Services Department: www.isd.gov.hk
Office of the Communications Authority: www.ofca.gov.hk
Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration: www.ofnaa.gov.hk
Radio Television Hong Kong: www.rthk.org.hk