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e-Government in Hong Kong

Since the promulgation of the first Digital 21 Information Technology Strategy in 1998 and its subsequent regular updates, the Hong Kong SAR Government has made good progress in exploiting information technology to better serve the community. By bringing e-government into the agenda of all Government bureaus and departments, they have improved the accessibility of government information and services and built up a solid foundation for citizens, businesses and the Government to further benefit from e-opportunities. These efforts have brought them international recognition, reinforcing Hong Kong's position as a leading digital city.

In the past years, Hong Kong has made significant achievements in terms of building up the e-government infrastructure, providing easily accessible and user-friendly e-government services and joining the hands of a large number of Government bureaus and departments to deliver one-stop services. In the 2008 Digital 21 Strategy, the focus of the next wave of e-government is a citizen-centric mode of public service delivery, emphasizing on customer engagement, information management and the development of simple yet secure means of authentication. The availability of convenient and secure electronic services will enhance citizens' quality of life and strengthen confidence in governance.

ICT Indicators

(Source: <http://www.info.gov.hk/digital21/eng/statistics/stat.html>)

Mobile phone penetration rate (January 2009)	163.1%	
Household broadband penetration rates (January 2009)	77.8%	
Personal computer penetration rate for businesses of all sizes (May - September 2008)	63.1%	
Internet usage rate for businesses of all sizes (May - September 2008)	58.8%	
Number of wireless hotspots installed by the Government and the private sector (18 Dec 2008)	7,905	
Government ICT spending (2008 - 09 Estimate)	5.5 billion	
R&D expenditure (2006)	11.9 billion (0.81% of GDP)	
Level of satisfaction of citizens who have used online government services (2007)	Very Good:	4.2%
	Good:	61.2%
	Average:	32.7%
	Poor:	1.7%
	Very Poor:	0.2%
Number of visitors to GovHK (Dec 2008)	Around 21,000 daily visits	
Number of online e-government transactions (April - December 2007)	About 3.6 million per month on average	

To enhance value to users, increased efforts are being made to integrate services across Government bureaus and departments. Through transformed and customer-centric service delivery, value-added services will be delivered to business and individual.

The Hong Kong Government has merged the former Information Technology Services Department with the IT-related divisions of the Communications and Technology Branch (CTB) to form a new **Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO)** within the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB), the then Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau, with effect from 1 July 2004. The establishment of this single, dynamic entity drives the right mandate and visibility and results in a flatter and more efficient organization to drive forward e-government and other IT-related policies and strategies. It benefits from the availability within the consolidated organisation of the necessary core competencies encompassing both public policy and professional contribution. The OGCIO, as part of the CEDB under the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, with an appropriately expanded role with enhanced responsibilities, is better positioned to provide a more visible and proactive leadership role for the Government and enhanced accountabilities for the Government's investment, strategies and performance in IT.

Furthermore, to provide sponsorship for the E-government programme at the most senior level, which is essential to drive the related policy and business changes across the Government, a high-level E-government Steering Committee chaired by the Financial Secretary was set up. The Committee, among other things, approves the strategic direction of the E-government programme, sets targets for outcomes, benefits and utilisation for such projects and, if necessary, resolves differences between bureaus/departments or between the OGCIO and bureaus/departments. With the Committee's empowerment, the GCIO will be able to drive changes in bureaus and

departments' business processes through IT and take a cross-agency leadership role in driving the E-government programme.

To encourage Government bureaus and departments to assume greater ownership of IT and to blend IT with their core services, IT Management Units (ITMUs) have been set up in individual bureaus and departments to plan and executive e-government applications. Each bureau and department has also appointed an E-business Coordinator, at the deputy level, to take overall responsibility for the e-government development in the respective bureau/department.

Major e-Government Initiatives

GovHK, a one-stop portal delivering a comprehensive range of government information and services, was launched in September 2006. It offers citizens and businesses quicker and more convenient access to government information and public services. GovHK adopts a service clustering approach and brings together related information and services from across the Government to serve the public by user groups with needs and interests in particular subjects (such as culture & leisure, education, employment, health and transport). It also consolidates relevant information and services from different bureaus/departments and presents them in the form of feature articles to help the public address issues of common concerns e.g. issues to note in hiring a domestic helper.

Public-Private Sector Partnership

Government has been encouraging the adoption of innovative public-private sector partnership model in developing e-government. This has not only fostered the growth of the IT industry, but also allowed Government to tap into the technical expertise, creativity and experience in customer relationship management from the private sector to deliver seamless services to the community in a more innovative manner.

Customer Relationship Management

E-government creates value for customers. To allow customers to gain the full benefits from the deployment of IT, the Govt. has injected the concept of customer relationship management (CRM) into e-government. This allows Government better serve the needs of citizens and businesses efficiently and effectively.

m-Government

With one of the world's highest mobile phone penetration rates and the impending rollout of 3G mobile network services, Hong Kong stands to benefit from the rapid development of wireless technology and services, particularly through deployment in business process to enhance productivity and efficiency.

Joined-up Government Projects

Joined-up government is a priority of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. In joined-up projects, the Govt. consolidates the efforts of multiple government agencies, re-engineer their business processes legitimately, pull together the related data held by different parties and establish a single access point to the relevant services and information. As a result, Government can gain greater efficiency in Government operations and more readily identify customer needs to provide one-stop and tailor-made services to citizens and businesses.

e-Logistics

The Government is fully committed to providing a conducive environment and the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the development and promotion of Hong Kong as the preferred international and regional transportation and logistics hub.

e-Procurement

Electronic procurement is an important initiative in driving the adoption of e-business in the private sector and increasing the efficiency of government procurement process. The Govt. has achieved its e-procurement target of carrying out 80% of Government tenders through electronic means.

e-Communication with Citizens and Businesses

The use of IT is changing the way the Government interacts with the public. The Govt. can now provide one-stop access to interactive Government information and services. All its bureaus and departments are online with bilingual websites.

G2G and G2E Applications

The Government is committed to leading by example in adopting IT, not only externally to serve the citizens and businesses, but also internally in the communication and transactions among bureaus and departments, and between the Government (as an employer) and civil servants (as its employees).

Pilot Scheme on District Cyber Centres launched

The "Pilot Scheme on District Cyber Centres (DCC)" was officially launched on February 22, 2009. Through providing computing facilities, Internet connectivity, training and technical support, it aims to help young people from low-income families and other needy members of the community to access and use information and communications technology (ICT) and online services, thereby integrating them into the information society.

The Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and the Internet Professional Association has formed the DCC Alliance to jointly implement the pilot scheme. They will jointly enhance the capacity of district-based cyber centres, both existing and new ones, that join the scheme. Through strengthening the branding, co-ordination and support network of the participating centres, it is expected that more effective and quality services will be provided.

At the initial stage, the scheme will support 14 centres equipped with a total of about 250 computers and related facilities, and training programmes to serve different needy communities including youth, the elderly and women. A Laptop Library will be established, with about 250 laptop computers at the initial stage, for loan to the public.

For the implementation of the initial phase of the DCC pilot scheme, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer has sponsored \$4.7 million while the alliance has secured commercial sponsorship of a similar amount of some \$4.7 million in cash and in kind including technical support, hardware and software, and volunteer service. Districts covered under the initial phase of the pilot scheme will include Sha Tin, Tai Po, Yuen Long, Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po, North, Islands, Eastern, Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin and Wan Chai.

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