

ISOC HK, IT Voice and The Professional Commons Advocate Ten Information Infrastructure Projects for Hong Kong to Government for the Relief of ICT Sector Under the Financial Tsunami

For Immediate Release

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Internet Society Hong Kong (ISOC HK), IT Voice and The Professional Commons today jointly announces the proposal for the Ten Information Infrastructure Projects for Hong Kong, and will work with the information and communications technology (ICT) industry to urge the Hong Kong SAR Government to adopt these projects in the upcoming budget for 2009-2010.

The information and communications technology sector is one of the hardest hit under the current financial tsunami, especially in terms of employment. Many large organizations, including banks, multinationals and large local companies, have announced large layoffs in their ICT related job functions.

“The initiatives included in our proposals are intended to bring immediate effects for relief to the ICT sector – at the levels of the industry as a whole and also for individual professionals. The number one priority will be on job preservation and creation,” comments Charles Mok, Chairman of Internet Society Hong Kong and Vice Chairman of The Professional Commons. “Government spending on much needed ICT-related projects that are beneficial for all of Hong Kong should be expanded and expedited under the current situation, so that both the ICT sector and the economy will benefit, and governance and services to citizens will also be improved.”

“Our goal is also for sustainability, so that by investing in our information infrastructure, Hong Kong will emerge from the crisis stronger and more competitive in the global market,” says Wo-Sang Young, a member of IT Voice. “In addition to these infrastructure projects, we urge the Government to focus on launching small to medium scale ICT projects to benefit local small and medium ICT companies, and also implement pro-employment measures in all Government branches, including increasing direct hiring.”

The Ten Information Infrastructure Projects for Hong Kong are:

Information Services

1. **E-Citizen Accounts** – Expedite the development and introduction of the e-Citizen account, to provide unified, personalized services from all Government departments to all citizens, including payment, renewals, bookings and other Government-related transactions.
2. **Healthcare** – Expand and expedite the development of Electronic Health Records and Health IT in general, and involving the private sector with more transparency as to the model of future development.
3. **Transport** – Expand and expedite the development of Real-Time Traffic Information and Dynamic Vehicle Navigation systems and services in Hong Kong.
4. **Education** – Expand and expedite the development of electronic books and content for primary and secondary school education, and more actively involving the ICT sector in its development; Improving support for teachers in IT education by providing ear-marked funds to hire IT assistants.
5. **Tourism** – Implement a platform for location-based tourist information service with private sector collaboration to enhance tourists' experience while traveling in Hong Kong.
6. **Food Safety** – Establish a framework and pilot project for food product labeling and database search services, using a variety of technologies such as bar-codes, RFID and near-

field communications (NFC) in phases, to establish Hong Kong as a center of excellence for such applications, with potentials to expand to other products such as drugs, etc.

Infrastructure

7. **Wireless City** – Realize the promise of Hong Kong as a Wireless City, by facilitating the access of public facilities for wireless network service providers, and further investing in promoting the development of mobile and wireless applications and content services.
8. **Information Security** – Increase and sustain funding for Hong Kong's computer emergency response center, and enlarge its scope of responsibilities to conduct proactive cyber threat monitoring against malicious activities.
9. **Digital inclusion** – Include broadband Internet access charges as one of the basic living expenses under the Comprehensive Social Security Assurance (CSSA) scheme for needy families with students.
10. **Research & Development** – Facilitate and expedite the application process so that more ICT companies may apply for Innovation and Technology Fund for conducting R&D.

“Many of these proposals were among proposals made by The Professional Commons in our previous research reports – *'e-Government and Better Governance in Hong Kong'* and *'Hong Kong: Asia's World City with a Vibrant Digital Life,'*” adds Simon Kwong, Chief Operating Officer of The Professional Commons. “We believe that technology, innovation and knowledge will be critical in helping Hong Kong overcome our present challenges and reach a higher ground of success.”

Internet Society Hong Kong, IT Voice and The Professional Commons will work with organizations and stakeholders in the ICT sector to refine the proposals, and arrange meetings with HKSAR Government officials to lobby for the inclusion of these Ten Information Infrastructure Projects for Hong Kong to be included in the upcoming government budget, and to increase direct ICT spending in the coming year.

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