

For discussion on
11 March 2002

**Legislative Council Panel
on Information Technology and Broadcasting**

Community IT User Support Service

INTRODUCTION

This paper briefs Members on the community IT user support service to be launched in June 2002.

BACKGROUND

2. To encourage all sectors of the community to benefit from the development of IT in enhancing quality of life, the Government has launched a wide range of initiatives to foster the community to embrace and use IT. We have launched the “IT Hong Kong Campaign” to raise IT awareness and promote the wider adoption of IT in the community. To cater for those who lack IT skills or access to IT facilities, we have been providing IT awareness courses for elders, housewives, people with disabilities and the general community, and computers with Internet connection at convenient locations for free use by the public. We have also developed in collaboration with the industry and disabled groups a set of universal web accessibility guidelines which are in line with international standards. All Government websites will comply with these guidelines within 2002.

3. To encourage and provide further assistance to the community in the use of IT, we intend to provide an IT user support service to the general community in the form of a help desk service. The public may obtain from this service responses to questions or advice on general problems that they may encounter in using basic IT applications. The aim is to give guidance to members

of the community in a user-friendly manner so as to encourage them to adopt IT and raise their confidence in using IT. This will help build a digitally inclusive society.

COMMUNITY USER SUPPORT SERVICE

4. The Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau (ITBB) and the Information Technology Services Department (ITSD) have partnered with the Hong Kong Computer Society (HKCS) to provide this Community IT User Support Service. Members of the community may obtain information and advice on questions or general problems encountered in the use of computer or IT in the following areas -

- file management, e.g. file search, how to restore corrupted files;
- word processing, e.g. how to format documents;
- spreadsheets, e.g. how to set the formula for spreadsheets;
- presentation, e.g. how to create presentation templates; and
- general Internet and e-mail operation, e.g. how to use search engine for Internet browsing, virus protection.

The support service will be vendor/product neutral and will not deal with product specific questions.

5. Questions or request for information/advice can be submitted by phone, fax or e-mail. If all telephone lines of the service are engaged, calls will be transferred to a voicemail system. A website will also be maintained with frequently asked questions and answers posted on it for reference by the general community. The support service will operate from 9:00 am to midnight daily, 7 days a week, including public holidays.

6. The HKCS is responsible for site preparation, staff recruitment and training, and operation of the service. A total of 11 staff, operating on two shifts, will be recruited. The HKCS will have special interest groups comprising members with expertise in specific areas who will tender advice on specific issues related to the use of computers and IT. A Steering Committee will be established to monitor the operation and effectiveness of the service and review the scope of the service provided and the operating procedures. The Steering Committee will comprise representatives from ITBB, ITSD and HKCS and call centre specialists.

7. ITBB will provide a sum of about \$2.5 million to HKCS to operate the service initially for one year. The funding will be met by ITBB within its allocation. We will review the effectiveness of the scheme and decide whether it should be continued after the one-year operation.

**Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau
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