

Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

List of outstanding items for discussion (position as at 4 May 2005)

Proposed timing **for discussion**

IT-related issues

1. Promoting the Development of the Digital Entertainment Industry in Hong Kong – Strategy and Measures

The 2004 Digital 21 Strategy has identified digital entertainment as one of the focus areas of technology development. The Administration has made good progress in implementing the recommendations made by the Working Group on Digital Entertainment set up under the former Information Infrastructure Advisory Committee.

June 2005

Taking into account the discussions with the digital entertainment industry, industry support organizations and the academia, the Administration is refining its strategy and developing a comprehensive programme of measures to foster the development of the local digital entertainment industry. It plans to brief the Panel on its strategy and measures in June 2005.

2. Progress on the Cyberport Project

The Panel received an overall report on the Cyberport Project on 10 January 2005. The Administration has been requested to report further progress to the Panel on an annual basis. The Administration has proposed to brief the Panel in early 2006.

Early 2006

3. New strategy for e-government services delivery

Last discussed on 14 March 2005. The Administration has been requested to brief the Panel on the progress in implementing the new strategy, including the roll-out of priority service clusters in delivering e-government services.

End 2005/Early
2006

**Proposed timing
for discussion**

Telecommunications

4. Consultation exercise on the regulation of Internet Protocol (IP) Telephony

At the meeting on 13 December 2004, the Panel had exchanged views with deputations on issues related to the regulation of IP Telephony. The Administration was requested to balance different interests in formulating regulatory measures that could address the concerns of all stakeholders; and to report further progress to the Panel in due course.

To be confirmed

5. Proposed Anti-spam legislation

Last discussed on 14 March 2005. As a measure under the “STEPS” campaign to tackle the spam problem, the Administration plans to introduce an anti-spam legislation into the Council in 2006. The Administration has started informal discussion with stakeholders on the draft legislative framework, and will seek the views of the Panel on the framework in due course before it proceeds to draft the bill.

To be confirmed

Broadcasting

6. Domestic/private pirated viewing of subscription television programmes

As undertaken at the Bills Committee meeting of the Broadcasting (Amendment) Bill 2003 on 2 April 2004, the Administration would review one year after the commencement of the Bill the effectiveness or otherwise of digitization, the implementation of the new provisions and enforcement actions in containing the problem of domestic/private pirated viewing of subscription television programmes. The Administration was also requested to consider reviewing the level of penalty imposed by courts on decoder-related offences and take any follow-up action as appropriate. The Administration has agreed to report the outcome of its reviews to the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting for its consideration of the way forward in dealing with the problem.

About July 2005

The Broadcasting (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 commenced operation with effect from 7 July 2004. The Administration has launched a series of publicity through different channels to disseminate the message of anti-pirated viewing since then.

7. Proposal for a unified regulatory authority for telecommunications and broadcasting

Following up the initiative of merging the Telecommunications Authority and the Broadcasting Authority into a unified regulator as set out in the 2004 Digital 21 Strategy, the Administration will brief the Panel on the proposal for setting up the unified regulator.

Second quarter of 2005

8. Broadcasting Services of Radio Television Hong Kong

Last discussed at 8 April 2005. Panel members agreed that the Administration should revert to the Panel on the way forward for the proposed Broadcasting House by July 2005 (or on an earlier date, if practicable), as well as provide a comprehensive response to the issues discussed at the meeting, including RTHK's listenership surveys, annual provision and programming policy.

July 2005

At the Special Finance Committee meeting held on 11 April 2005, members have also expressed concerns on policies affecting the development of RTHK, including the reprovisioning plan of RTHK, recurrent and non-recurrent provision, the implementation of digital terrestrial broadcasting, commercialization of RTHK's productions, programming policy, and corporatization of RTHK. Members urged the Administration to further discuss the issues with the Panel in July 2005.

9. Review of the broadcasting regulatory regime

In the light of technological and market convergence in the electronic communications sector, the boundaries between telecommunications, broadcasting and information technology are blurring. Some old concepts adopted for the regulation of broadcasting may become obsolete in the converging environment. Just like other jurisdictions, Hong Kong needs to update the regulatory regime in the light of latest technological and market developments to ensure that its framework remains conducive to the further development of the broadcasting industry in particular and the electronic communications industry in

Second half of 2005

general. The Administration will first consult the public on the new organizational framework for the regulation of the electronic communications sector in the first half of 2005 (see item 7 above) and the remaining regulatory issues later in 2005. The Administration will brief the Panel on the outcome of the review.

10. Revision of Broadcasting Licence Fees

The Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority is conducting a costing exercise for the fees payable under the Broadcasting (Licence Fees) Regulation. The fees may be adjusted according to the cost recovery principle. The Administration will brief the Panel on the revision of broadcasting licence fees in due course.

To be confirmed

11. Opening up radio/TV channels for use of the community

Item proposed by the Deputy Chairman. The subject of public access channels has been considered in the context of the development of Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting in Hong Kong, licence renewal for television and sound broadcasters at the Panel meetings held on 27 June 2003, 5 December 2003, 12 January 2004 and 8 March 2004.

To be confirmed

On 18 February 2004, a motion on broadcasting policy moved by Hon SIN Chung-kai and as amended by Hon Howard YOUNG and Hon Andrew CHENG was passed by the Council urging the Government to, inter alia, establish public access television channels which may be operated by public organizations for the broadcast of programmes produced by community groups and the public. In its progress report, the Administration considered that given the vibrant broadcasting sector providing a variety of services to meet the communications needs of the public, there is no urgent need to set up a public channel.