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Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Meeting on 9 December 2010

**Background brief on
Media Asset Management of Radio Television Hong Kong**

Purpose

This paper gives an account of the previous discussions by the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting (the Panel) on issues related to the management of media asset of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK).

Background

2. RTHK started its radio broadcast service in 1928 and its television productions in 1970. Over the years, a wealth of media archives has been accumulated¹. A lot of these materials have very high historical and cultural values (e.g., photos, sound recordings and video footages of important historical events, characters and performances) and form an important part of Hong Kong's precious cultural heritage and people's collective memories. These materials are currently kept in RTHK's libraries and storage areas in their original forms. In recent years, RTHK has been restoring a limited amount of high-risk archives and digitizing them for storage through deployment of internal resources. However, these small-scale efforts cannot cope with the rate of deterioration. In addition, the lack of a modernized and standardized cataloguing and storage system in digital form makes it difficult to retrieve the materials for new production purposes or for use by the public.

¹ Information on media archives has been set out in the Administration's paper LC Paper No. CB(1)657/10-11(04).

3. In February 2009, RTHK conducted a consultancy study to estimate the resources required for digitizing RTHK's archives and to propose recommendations on the establishment of a Media Asset Management (MAM) system to preserve its programme archives. RTHK commissioned a follow-up study in January 2010 to design the MAM system that will support the needs of different RTHK users through a system analysis and design study, and set up a physical prototype of the MAM system. This consultancy is still on-going and is expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2011. When the follow-up consultancy is completed, the foundation for setting up a MAM system for RTHK will have been laid.

Previous discussions

4. At the Panel meetings on 5 October and 19 November 2009, 12 April and 31 May 2010, members discussed the development of public service broadcasting in Hong Kong and related issues on the future of RTHK. Members called on the Government to preserve RTHK's 80-year rich programme archives which had won the hearts and minds of most people for the collective memory of Hong Kong.

5. Panel members were of the view that RTHK's rich archives of sound recording and television productions which were of great historical value should be preserved as a priority task. They urged the Government to provide the necessary manpower and funding to expedite the preservation of RTHK's programme archives currently stored in substandard and inadequate facilities. While some deputations and members of the public attending the meetings held the view that RTHK's resourceful archive materials (including RTHK's own work and works contributed by others) should be provided free to the public, some Panel members suggested that consideration should be given for RTHK to charge a token fee for access to its archives. They also shared the deputations' view that there should be a thorough review of the copyright licensing terms of RTHK in respect of access to the new digital creative works to increase the utilization of the programme archives.

6. The Administration advised that the Government proposed, among other measures, that resources would be provided for RTHK to digitize its programme archives which were not only parts of the public memory but also important assets available for use in content production by both RTHK and the private broadcasters. Once the programme archives were properly restored and digitized, they would be made readily accessible to the general public and the industry. The Administration was working closely with RTHK to examine the digitization and the safekeeping of its audiovisual materials as well as the associated manpower and financial implications.

Latest position

7. The Administration will brief the Panel on 9 December 2010 on the plan for RTHK to establish a MAM system to preserve its programme archives.

Relevant papers

Legislative Council Brief on public service broadcasting and the future of Radio Television Hong Kong issued on 22 September 2009

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/itb/papers/itb1005-ctbcr9179-e.pdf>

Minutes of Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 5 October 2009

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/itb/minutes/itb20091005.pdf>

Minutes of Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 19 November 2009

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/itb/minutes/itb20091119.pdf>

Minutes of Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 12 April 2010

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/itb/minutes/itb20100412.pdf>

Minutes of Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 31 May 2010

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/itb/minutes/itb20100531.pdf>

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