

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

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From : Clerk to the Legislative Council

To : All Members of the Legislative Council

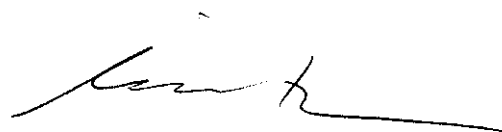
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**Follow-up on motion carried at the  
Legislative Council meeting of 17 December 2003**

**“Digital 21 Strategy”**

Members may recall that the motion on “Digital 21 Strategy” moved by Hon SIN Chung-kai, as amended by Hon Howard YOUNG, was carried at the Legislative Council meeting of 17 December 2003.

2. In response to the views expressed by Members during the debate on the motion, the Administration has provided the attached progress report for Members’ reference. Members who wish to further pursue the matter may contact Miss Polly YEUNG, Clerk to Panel on Commerce and Industry and Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting.



(Ms Miranda HON)  
for Clerk to the Legislative Council

Encl.

c.c. CCS(1)3

**17 December 2003**  
**Motion Debate on Digital 21 Strategy by the Legislative Council**  
**Progress Report**

	<b>Members' Proposals</b>	<b>Administration's Response/Follow-up Actions</b>
<b>IT Industry Policy</b>		
1.	The Government should formulate a clear, forward-looking and proactive IT industry policy and provide adequate support to strengthen the industry, so that it could thrive and expand, and create more jobs for Hong Kong.	<p>The Government will act as a facilitator in promoting a vibrant, competitive IT industry in Hong Kong. While the Government's economic policy is not to subsidize the industry, there are a lot that it can do together with industry support organizations and trade associations to support the industry, including the identification and exploration of business opportunities locally, in the Mainland and other overseas markets.</p> <p>Please see the responses to items 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 17 and 20 for details.</p>
2.	The Government should take a leading role in exploring the competitive advantages of Hong Kong, identifying the scope for further development and setting the long-term goals for the development of the IT industry. It should also devote resources to help the industry achieve these targets.	Please see the response to item 1.
3.	The Government should define its role and set out the relevant policy in promoting the development of the software industry, work out how best to pool the resources of Hong Kong and the Mainland in a more effective manner and map out the direction for	Please see the response to item 1.

	collaboration between the two places as soon as possible.	
<b>Collaboration with the Mainland</b>		
4.	The Government should have a good understanding of the Mainland's scientific research programmes and information industry policy, so that we may formulate our own IT strategy to tie in with that of the Mainland.	The IT industries of Hong Kong and the Mainland have complementary competitive advantages. Mainland and Hong Kong officials responsible for the IT industry and scientific research are in liaison at different levels, working to enhance mutual understanding of each other's IT industry policies. Both sides are taking active steps to foster co-operation between IT enterprises in the two places so as to pool their strengths and achieve a win-win situation.
5.	We must grasp the opportunities afforded by the Mainland so as to expand the scope of development for local enterprises. In this connection, the Government must take the lead in enhancing collaboration between the two places and providing the industry with the necessary assistance and information.	(a) Under the Mainland and Hong Kong Close Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), Hong Kong and the Mainland will strengthen cooperation on e-business, including in the areas of corporate use, promotion, and e-government. On the telecommunications industry, companies in Hong Kong, from 1 October 2003 onwards, are allowed to form joint ventures with their Mainland counterparts to provide a basket of 5 value-added telecommunications services with no geographical restrictions. To facilitate the realization of opportunities arising from CEPA by the telecommunications industry in Hong Kong, we are committed to ensuring the smooth implementation of CEPA. Among other things, we led representatives of the local telecommunications industry to take part in a briefing session on the Mainland's implementation of CEPA arrangements organized by the Ministry of Information Industry in Beijing in October 2003. Moreover, we have posted the regulations on value-added telecommunications services promulgated by the Mainland authorities on the website of the Trade and Industry Department, so as to facilitate the

		<p>local telecommunications industry to enter the Mainland market under CEPA.</p> <p>(b) Apart from CEPA, the Governments of both sides also enhance co-operation between IT industries in the two places through other mechanisms. “An Co-operation Arrangement on Innovation and Technology” was signed by the expert group on co-operation in innovation and technology under the auspices of the Guangdong/Hong Kong Co-operation Joint Conference, to support the development and upgrading of the industries in the two places. The Arrangement covers the software industry. To further strengthen the cooperation among the software industries in the Pearl River Delta, the Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau (CITB) and Guangdong Provincial Information Industry Department have also agreed to take turn in organizing a “PRD Software Industry Forum” regularly.</p> <p>(c) The HKSARG, together with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) and industry bodies, has taken active steps to foster co-operation between IT enterprises in the two places to undertake orders from the international market, promote Mainland products in the international market or jointly develop products. The CITB has provided funding to set up a local IT enterprises database so that Mainland IT enterprises can, through the website of the HKTDC, seek suitable business partners in Hong Kong to jointly explore business opportunities.</p> <p>(d) Moreover, the Torch High Technology Industry Development Center of the Ministry of Science and Technology will be a co-organizer of the</p>
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6.	<p>The Government should seek national treatment for Hong Kong's IT companies under CEPA, including enjoyment of equal status as their Mainland counterparts under the Mainland's industry development policy; relaxation of restrictions on Hong Kong businesses in undertaking outsourced IT projects, participating in scientific research programmes, and providing professional IT training, e-learning and e-commerce services in the Mainland; and allowing local IT enterprises to operate</p>	<p>CEPA is an evolving process and works on an incremental basis. We will continue to work closely with the industry and identify further areas to be included in the Arrangement for the expansion of business opportunities and mutual benefits of Hong Kong and the Mainland.</p>

	<p>wholly owned IT businesses. Alternatively, an area can be designated (such as the Pearl River Delta) to allow Hong Kong enterprises to operate wholly owned IT businesses.</p>	
7.	<p>On the telecommunications industry, the Government should, under CEPA, seek to establish a telecommunications special zone in the Pearl River Delta; allow Hong Kong companies to hold a share of more than 50% when forming a joint venture with their Mainland counterparts; allow Hong Kong companies to operate wholly owned businesses to provide telecommunications services in Guangdong on a pilot basis so that they can compete with their Mainland counterparts on a fair and equal basis; open up more value-added services to Hong Kong businesses, such as online data processing and transaction services as well as virtual private web for enterprises; expand the scope of business and investment of Hong Kong companies to include high value-added and high quality projects; and allow Hong Kong companies to operate Internet content provider business on a wholly owned basis to</p>	<p>We are now studying these suggestions with the industry and relevant parties, with a view to including more items in CEPA for expanding business opportunities for both Hong Kong and the Mainland on a mutually beneficial basis.</p>

	provide Internet games services.	
8.	The Government should, when holding further consultations with the Mainland authorities on CEPA, listen to the views of the industry and reflect their concerns.	Please see the responses to items 6 and 7.
9.	Apart from promoting our industries, the HKTDC and Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) should also promote Hong Kong's service sector, including the software industry and IT services, and help the local IT sector to find business partners and establish themselves in the Mainland.	Please see the responses to items 5(c) and (d).  Besides, the HKPC is establishing its presence in Guangzhou, Dongguan, Shenzhen and Zhuhai. Integrated support and services will be provided through these offices to Hong Kong companies operating in PRD, including IT companies.
10.	Apart from their work to promote Hong Kong, Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) and the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices should also conduct business-matching activities for Hong Kong's service sector. Such activities may, for example, include proactively promoting Hong Kong-Mainland software outsourcing collaboration, collecting the latest information on overseas outsourcing projects, and lobbying the European countries and the United States to consider Hong Kong-Mainland IT joint ventures when outsourcing their IT projects.	Except for the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (HKETO) in Geneva whose main function is to represent Hong Kong on the World Trade Organisation, the main functions of the other HKETOs are to promote Hong Kong's trade and economic interests in the host countries/regions, attract overseas companies to invest in Hong Kong through the representatives of InvestHK stationed in the HKETOs and organise activities to enhance Hong Kong's image. InvestHK actively encourages overseas companies to set up in our city and partner with Hong Kong companies, which have substantial experiences in doing business in the Mainland, to enter the Mainland market. InvestHK also provides the service of getting business partners together. On the other hand, the HKTDC promotes, assists and develops Hong Kong's trade with other places. The HKTDC provides a year-round business matching platform for Hong Kong's information and communication technology (ICT) service providers. The in-depth business matching service is available through

		<p>various channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ online automatic business matching at <a href="http://www.hkenterprise.com">www.hkenterprise.com</a>;</li> <li>◆ tailor-made enquiry service at the HKTDC offices around the world;</li> <li>◆ CEPA Business Service Centres in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou to be launched in March 2004;</li> <li>◆ CEPA Business Service Hotline – a toll-free business matching enquiry service for the entire Mainland to be introduced from March 2004; and</li> <li>◆ sector-to-sector referral mechanism.</li> </ul> <p>Besides, business matching forms an essential element of all HKTDC promotion activities (e.g. trade fairs, seminars and roundtables, incoming missions, outgoing delegation visits, etc) to help participants identify clients and partners across all sectors. There will be a total of 20 promotion activities related to the ICT sector in 2004/05.</p>
11.	<p>The Government can consider setting up a software centre of excellence at the Cyberport to provide support to the industry in adapting overseas software products for use in the Mainland and adapting Mainland software for the international market. The centre could also provide software testing service, hold Mainland or overseas professional IT examinations, and promote software process improvement so that Hong Kong can become a gateway for software import/export to/from the Mainland market.</p>	<p>The CITB is prepared to explore with the local industry and the relevant parties in the Mainland the feasibility of setting up a software centre in Hong Kong. The centre should be run on a commercial and self-financing basis to provide services to the industry, in such areas as adapting Mainland software for the international market, adapting overseas software products for use in the Mainland, as well as assisting enterprises in Hong Kong and the Mainland to form partnership and jointly undertake software outsourcing orders from the international market.</p> <p>The Government also encourages the local industry to promote software process improvement. For example, it has provided financial assistance to the</p>



		industry for the organization of the “Asia Pacific Software Engineering Process Group Conference 2003”, to enhance the quality of the locally-produced IT products and services.
12.	The Government needs to pay attention to the questions of how to attract foreign investment and enhance the role of Hong Kong as a bridge between the Mainland and other economies. This can be done by providing preferential policies, rent concession, residency arrangement and capital financing services, so as to attract local, Mainland and overseas IT professionals to set up businesses or engage in research or training in Hong Kong.	<p>InvestHK promotes Hong Kong as the preferred investment location for its pro-business environment, including low and predictable taxation, rule of law, protection of intellectual property rights, free flow of information and capital. Our role as the gateway to the Mainland has been further enhanced with the implementation of CEPA. Infrastructure projects such as Cyberport and Science Park offer attractive package and support for overseas companies, multinational companies and entrepreneurs alike, for conducting their business and establishing research and development centres in HK.</p> <p>We have made the application procedures more user-friendly for overseas IT professionals who need to come to Hong Kong for IT research or training work. Mainland IT professionals can also work in Hong Kong through Immigration Department’s “Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals”.</p>
13.	Hong Kong can be a springboard for the Mainland IT sector to enter the international market, and a bridge for foreign investors to gain access to the Mainland market. Hong Kong IT enterprises may collaborate with their Mainland counterparts on product development and be responsible for marketing of the products. On the other hand, Hong Kong can also attract foreign IT investors to use Hong Kong as a base for access to the Mainland and Asia Pacific	<p>Hong Kong’s position as the business hub for Asia Pacific is highlighted by the all-time high figure of regional headquarters as of 2 June 2003. Its role as the gateway to the Mainland has been further enhanced with the implementation of CEPA.</p> <p>InvestHK successfully assisted 142 foreign companies to set up or expand operations in Hong Kong in 2003 -- an increase of 21% compared to 2002. IT is one of its nine priority sectors.</p> <p>To foster closer economic partnership between Hong Kong and the rest of Pearl River Delta, InvestHK has been promoting Hong Kong's distinct advantages as</p>

<p>markets and attract promising small companies that are eager to tap the Mainland market to set up operations in Hong Kong. The HKTDC and HKPC are both experienced in organizing such promotion to the Mainland and overseas countries, but they focused mainly on promoting the trade and industrial sectors in the past. The HKSARG has to review its support policy for the IT industry and step up the promotion efforts of the relevant organizations.</p>	<p>a place for multinational firms to access the rest of the Pearl River Delta. It has partnered with Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Dongguan to hold joint investment promotion activities in North America, Japan and Korea in 2003.</p> <p>At the same time, InvestHK has devoted increased resources to encouraging more Mainland companies to invest in our city as the gateway to global markets. Its investment promotion teams promoted the advantages of Hong Kong in key Chinese cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Xiamen and Fuzhou in 2003. An IT investment seminar was held in Guangzhou last September with the participation of the major IT associations in Hong Kong. InvestHK will continue to build on the success of these initiatives in 2004.</p> <p>HKTDC and the HKPC are also involved in promoting Hong Kong as the bridge to the Mainland market. Please see the responses to items 5, 9 and 10 for details.</p>
<p>14. Hong Kong is more sophisticated in the adoption of IT applications in many areas than the Mainland. As such, it is believed that there will be a demand for our IT systems by government agencies and large enterprises in Mainland cities. It is hoped that the Government can promote these systems to these organizations, which will be more effective than promotion by the industry alone.</p>	<p>The Government has been active in helping the local IT industry to promote to the Mainland the IT applications in various areas (particularly e-government) developed by the Hong Kong IT industry. For example, the Government organised an industry delegation and provided sponsorship to the industry to take part in the e-Government China Expo 2002 in Beijing. The Government will also work with the industry to set up an e-government pavilion at the International ICT Expo to be held in Hong Kong in April 2004 to promote locally-developed applications to users from the Mainland and other regions.</p>

### Helping the IT industry to explore business opportunities and obtain quality assurance

15.	The Government should make good use of the IT Professional Services Arrangement (ITPSA) and strengthen the mechanism of outsourcing IT services, such as setting up a service provider registration system open to service providers for reference by Government departments in procuring services, and awarding more Government IT contracts to local small and medium IT companies.	The Government will review the ITPSA and the existing IT supplier registration system and consult the industry in the first half of 2004. The Government will also explore other measures to facilitate SMEs in bidding government projects.
16.	To create business opportunities for the industry, the Government should allow its IT service providers, upon completion of their service contracts, to own the intellectual property in the relevant services or software and sell them in the local or overseas markets.	The Government is looking into opening up for commercial exploitation the intellectual property in the IT systems developed for Government use by private contractors, so as to help create more business opportunities for the local IT industry.
17.	On top of the financial assistance provided through loan schemes and for training, local developers and manufacturers need more guidance from the Government. The CITB should step up its overseas promotion efforts and facilitate the industry to establish direct contacts with overseas buyers. The Government should be	Through such support organizations as the HKTDC and the HKPC, the Government has been providing the IT industry with market information, research information and trade matching services, etc., so as to facilitate the exploration of the Mainland and other markets by local IT enterprises. The Government also works with support organizations to organize large-scale international trade fairs in Hong Kong, mobilize IT enterprises to take part in trade fairs in the Mainland and other places, and organize various activities

	responsible for publicity and promotional work in this area.	under the auspices of the Memoranda of Understanding on Co-operation signed with 11 countries to help the industry explore business opportunities and business partnerships.
18.	If the local universities are recognized globally in terms of digital technologies, the local industry should work with individual universities to showcase our technologies to the international world. By letting others know and understand more about our technologies, we will be able to build up our brand name.	With a view to promoting the research and development results of local tertiary institutions, the Government has sponsored 7 universities and the Vocational Training Council to showcase their technological products in the Home-grown Technology Pavilion at the Information Infrastructure Expo 2002 and 2003 and the International ICT Expo 2004.
19.	The Government should take active and extensive measures to promote to the local IT industry the adoption of internationally-recognized software quality standards such as Capability Maturity Model (CMM), ISO 9000, SIX SIGMA, so as to enhance the competitiveness of the local IT industry.	With a view to improving the competitiveness of the local IT industry, the Government is working with support organisations such as the HKPC to provide support services on quality assurance and promote internationally-recognized standards such as the Capability Maturity Model (CMM). To assist local software vendors to adopt CMM, the Government has provided funding support through the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) to a Capability Maturity Model (CMM) Assessment Grant project to assist software vendors to achieve CMM Level 2 or above.
<b>Encouraging adoption of IT/applications by businesses</b>		
20.	The Government should help the industry to explore the local business market. It should also take more proactive measures and step up its efforts to encourage and assist small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to adopt IT	The Government has been working with industry support organizations to provide technical support, enquiry and advisory services (such as the IT Easy Link services), financial support (such as various SME funding schemes) and training to encourage and assist the business sector, especially SMEs, to adopt e-business.

	<p>and e-commerce. Such measures may include IT expenditure/training, tax concession and plans for individual sectors.</p>	<p>We will collaborate with trade associations to roll out sector-specific programmes. The Information Technology Services Department (ITSD) will initially provide support to the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong to launch a campaign to encourage wider adoption of IT among travel agents. These efforts will be expanded to other sectors.</p> <p>The wider adoption of IT by SMEs will help expand the local e-business market and provide more business opportunities to the IT industry.</p>
21.	<p>The development of computer software requires a better understanding of what the industry needs. It is hoped that the Government can step up its promotional efforts and explain to the business sector in simple terms the advantages of using IT, such as enhancing productivity and management, so as to drive the adoption of IT in the business sector.</p>	<p>Through collaboration with the industry and support organizations, the Government has launched various promotional activities to encourage the business sector to adopt IT, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ organizing free seminars and workshops to raise the awareness of SMEs in e-commerce applications, and to provide relevant information and practical advice;</li> <li>◆ distributing information on e-commerce via relevant websites, publications, and TV programmes;</li> <li>◆ establishing one-stop support centres to provide relevant information, training and consultation services, such as the DigiHall21 of HKPC.</li> </ul>
22.	<p>The Government should, starting from the business sector, focus on informatization of foundation industries, assist our industries in the use of technology to enhance local productivity. It should also step up training efforts so as to accelerate skill transformation of the workforce.</p>	<p>The Government has set up the ITF to provide funding support to projects that contribute to innovation and technology upgrading in industry. As far as the foundation industries are concerned, the ITF has already supported 97 research and development projects to raise the technology level of the foundation industries with a total funding of \$335 million since the establishment of the Fund in November 1999.</p>

		<p>Apart from the various education and training opportunities offered by the tertiary institutions and the Vocational Training Council, the Government has also implemented various initiatives to assist our workers to upgrade their skills to meet the challenges as a result of our transition to the knowledge-based economy. Examples of these initiatives include the Skills Upgrading Scheme which provided focused skills training to workers in respective industries, and the Continuing Education Fund which provides subsidy to our workers in pursuing continuing education.</p>
<b>Technological development</b>		
23.	<p>The Government should strengthen communication with the industry and value the views of frontline scientific researchers so as to formulate a more appropriate strategy for IT development.</p>	<p>As far as the overall innovation and technology development strategy is concerned, the Government reported to the Legislative Council Panel on Commerce and Industry on 14 January 2004 on its future focuses, strategies and framework, which had been drawn up in consultation with the industry, universities and researchers.</p>
24.	<p>The Government should establish links with the universities so as to harness the results of university research.</p>	<p>As reported to the Legislative Council Panel on Commerce and Industry on 14 January 2004, the Government would further improve the funding mechanism of the ITF to ensure the research and development projects would meet the market needs.</p>
25.	<p>Being the biggest single user of IT, the Government should take the lead to use more open source software, creating favourable conditions for a diversified market.</p>	<p>The ITSD will continue to promote and encourage Government departments to consider the adoption of different types of software products and technology, including open source software, through providing demonstration and trial use of products at the Information Technology Solution Centre.</p>

<b>Creative industries/Digital entertainment</b>		
26.	<p>There are lots of business opportunities for creative industries, but the Government and industry fail to exchange their views thoroughly. As a result, manufacturers and developers dare not enter the market and fail to take advantage of our strengths to create economic value and employment opportunities. There are lots of excellent digital animations, 3D advertisements and Internet games in Hong Kong. However, the Government is a bit slow in its promotional work. As the digital entertainment market is changing rapidly, we must act promptly to obtain market share.</p>	<p>The Information Infrastructure Advisory Committee published in September 2003 the report of its Working Group on Digital Entertainment. The report recommends measures on infrastructure, manpower, intellectual property rights, research and development, and marketing and promotion to facilitate the development of the digital entertainment industry in Hong Kong. We will follow up on the implementation of these measures. In fact, we have already implemented some of these measures. For example, we have provided funding to set up a Hong Kong Pavilion at the Tokyo Game Show 2002 in Japan, Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) 2003 in the United States, and the China Digital Entertainment Expo and Conference held in Beijing in January 2004. The Hong Kong Pavilion showcased products and services of Hong Kong companies and helped them to explore new business opportunities.</p> <p>The Digital Media Centre (DMC) at the Cyberport will be opened in March 2004. An advisory committee, which comprises representatives from the digital entertainment industry, academia and the Government, has been set up to give advice on matters relating to the operation and further development of the DMC, co-operation with other organizations, etc. The DMC will provide content creators with state-of-the-art post-production facilities and technical support services.</p>
27.	<p>The creative media departments of several local universities are building up their reputation. The Government should make use of the products and technologies developed by them and establish local production lines, so that we can compete</p>	<p>We issued a solicitation theme under the ITF on “media technologies for digital entertainment” in September 2003 to specifically invite applications from industries and universities for conducting research and development on digital entertainment. We will continue to encourage research and development on digital entertainment so as to improve the capabilities of companies in this industry.</p>

	with other regions in the international market as soon as possible.	
<b>E-government</b>		
28.	The Government should set up a dedicated IT department, with a designated officer to be responsible for coordinating the IT work within the Government. Upon the establishment of this department, all Government departments will be, according to their work nature, categorized into different groups, each of which will be supervised by an IT coordinator. These IT coordinators, equivalent to CIOs in the private sector, should be well-versed in IT, and more importantly, understand the operation of each department and be able to make the best use of IT to improve work processes, so as to achieve the objective of enhancing efficiency.	We agree that one of the biggest challenges of e-government is to better coordinate the IT efforts of a large number of agencies within the Government to improve intra- and inter-departmental operational efficiency. We need to strike a balance between the need for a central role for setting the overall policy and direction and for understanding the business and IT needs for different clusters. As mentioned in our Digital 21 Strategy public consultation paper, we are considering the establishment of a Chief Information Officer (CIO) function within the Government in the context of the institutional review of the Communications and Technology Branch of the CITB and the ITSD, to better take forward e-government.
<b>Manpower development</b>		
29.	The Government should, by means of curriculum reform, enable primary, secondary and university students to learn a certain proportion of the curriculum over	The appropriate use of IT for interactive learning is one of the four Key Tasks of the Curriculum Reform. The Curriculum Development Council and the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) have provided schools with guidelines and exemplars to make use of IT to enhance the effectiveness of learning and



	<p>the Internet. It should also take into account the development in the Mainland and develop online learning materials for different subjects.</p>	<p>teaching. As teachers should have the flexibility to use IT for appropriate circumstances and contexts, there is no fixed proportion of curriculum time earmarked for online or e-learning. However, the development of e-learning will be fostered as a means to enrich the learning experiences of students and to break down the barrier of classroom learning. With regard to e-learning resources, these have been developed by EMB, schools, teachers and the private sector, covering various Key Learning Areas. The Hong Kong Education City, the most popular education portal in Hong Kong, keeps a rich repository of education resources for use by teachers and students. In the coming years, the Government will find ways to encourage the development of more such resources for the furtherance of the use of IT in education.</p>
30.	<p>The Government should review the courses related to IT/computer/telecommunications currently offered in Hong Kong in order to solve such problems as manpower mismatch/manpower shortage, especially the lack of telecommunications professionals in Hong Kong, a problem frequently faced by the industry.</p>	<p>We have been maintaining close liaison with the industry and training institutions and encouraging the educational and vocational training institutions to continue to review and fine-tune the course contents to keep pace with developments in the IT field and meet market demand.</p> <p>The tertiary institutions in Hong Kong have been strengthening the IT component in their programmes and courses. Specialised IT programmes in e-commerce, IT engineering and creative media have been introduced in the past few years.</p> <p>The Vocational Training Council (VTC) will continue to monitor the market demand for manpower in IT, review its programmes regularly and propose new ones in consultation with relevant industry bodies. New programmes and courses have been introduced in the past few years to equip our workforce with the expertise and skills required by the market. These include game design, 3D animation, and video production and multimedia development. The VTC also keeps rolling out new courses in web application development,</p>

		e-commerce, and open source technology and information security.
31.	The Government should work out how best to train the unemployed or workers in the catering industry who are middle-aged or with low education level, so that they can keep pace with IT development.	The Employees Retraining Board provides around 48,000 training places annually on IT and basic computer operations for the unemployed and in-service workers who are aged 30 or above with lower secondary educational level. In addition, training under the Skills Upgrading Scheme for the catering industry also includes basic computer operations for workers in the industry to enhance their IT skills.
32.	The Government should raise the professional status of the local IT manpower, set up a mutual recognition arrangement for professional qualifications with the Mainland as soon as possible, and seek Mainland's recognition of IT courses organized by local tertiary institutions. The purposes are to waive the IT professional tests in the Mainland for Hong Kong people, facilitate the flow of manpower between the two places, and ensure that we have all-round talents with both expertise and business wisdom.	Professional qualifications, as opposed to academic qualifications, are normally set by professional bodies. We understand that some professional bodies are exploring the possibility of establishing a system of mutual recognition of IT professionals between Hong Kong and the Mainland.
<b>Promoting IT adoption by the community</b>		
33.	The Government should step up its efforts in encouraging IT adoption in the community.	The Government will continue to encourage and assist members of our community to embrace and use IT so as to enhance their quality of life. The Government will continue to organize the "IT Hong Kong" Campaign to provide free IT awareness courses to different sectors of the community,

		<p>organise district IT promotion activities, maintain a dedicated website to disseminate information on IT and related activities, and produce 'infotainment' TV and radio programmes to introduce the Government's IT initiatives and latest developments in IT.</p> <p>The Government has set up over 5,300 public computers with Internet connection at convenient locations across the territory for free use by the public. The Government will also continue to provide funding support to non-government organizations to organize computer recycling programmes for the needy. Besides, we have extended the IT Easy Link, a free public enquiry service on the use of basic IT applications, to June 2004.</p> <p>The Government will continue to launch more measures to build a digitally inclusive society, including working together with the social service sector and IT industry to set up a Digital Solidarity Fund to provide funding for non-government organizations to organise activities to bridge the digital divide. We will also launch on a pilot basis in the first half of 2004 a sound version of selected information on the websites of four departments to enhance accessibility for the elderly and the visually impaired. We will continue to produce radio programmes to encourage citizens to adopt IT.</p>
<b>Others</b>		
34.	The Government should encourage the use of IT by health care practitioners. The Government and the relevant organizations should provide courses to better equip health care practitioners with IT knowledge.	The Hospital Authority (HA) is well aware of the benefits of IT, including in improving clinical services, raising efficiency and effectiveness of non-clinical work as well as enhancing internal communications. The HA promotes the use of IT through incorporating IT initiatives and targets in the HA Annual Plan process as well as providing IT training to its staff. As early as in 1993, HA has already started providing Internet service to staff and there are currently

		<p>around 4,000 users that can get access to the Internet at work and at home. The e-Knowledge Gateway (e-KG) enables clinical staff to have access to the latest, authoritative medical knowledge, e-journals and library services both within HA and from internationally selected medical websites. There are around 30,000 HA clinical staff with e-KG access and the e-KG service will be extended by phase to private medical professionals in the next few years. E-mail service has widely been used by staff at all levels to improve communication and there are around 20,000 staff members including doctors and nurses who have access to e-mail service.</p> <p>Training has been provided on an ongoing basis to relevant clinical staff in the use of the HA's advanced clinical information systems such as Clinical Management Systems, Laboratory Information System and Radiology Information System. There are around 30,000 clinical staff members currently using these clinical information systems in their daily work. Besides, HA has also arranged in-house personal computer training to staff in the use of personal computer software, office software and webpage design tools. In 2003, around 600 staff members attended these personal computer training classes.</p>
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