

商務及經濟發展局
政府資訊科技總監
辦公室



OFFICE OF THE
GOVERNMENT CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER
COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT BUREAU

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10 November 2008

Ms. YUE Tin-po
Clerk to Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road, Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms. Yue

Information Security in the Government

At the recent meeting of the Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel of the Legislative Council on 21 October, Honourable WONG Yuk-man asked about the progress of information security enhancement programmes in the Government in the context of the policy initiatives featuring in the Chief Executive's 2008-2009 Policy Address. I am pleased to enclose at the Annex a brief account of the enhancement programmes and their progress for Members' reference. We shall give Members a comprehensive update at the Panel's meeting scheduled for December.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen H S MAK'.

(Stephen H S MAK)

for Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development

c.c. Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development
(Attn.: Mr. Wallace LAU)

Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development
(Communications & Technology)

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

Information Security

Purpose

The spate of information security incidents in the public sector in 2008 involving loss or leakage of sensitive information including personal data has highlighted the need for a number of desirable improvements to systems to safeguard electronic information. This paper provides a brief account of the progress of the information security enhancement programmes. A more complete update will be provided in the Panel Meeting on Information Technology and Broadcasting (ITB) of the Legislative Council scheduled for December 2008.

Progress of Information Security Enhancement Programmes

2. Since the Government presented a status update at the ITB Panel Meeting on 30 May 2008, we have initiated a number of information security enhancement programmes in the Government. The progress made on the key programmes is set out below:

Risk Assessment by Bureaux and Departments (B/Ds)

3. The Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO) wrote to all Heads of B/D in July 2008 to provide advice on the management of the threat to information security and protection of personal data in respect of processing, storing and viewing data outside the office environment. Guidelines were provided to B/Ds to allow them to carry out the risk assessment and then to work out improvement programmes to avert the identified risks. All B/Ds have carried out the risk assessment. The actions taken have varied according to the nature of the risks identified by B/Ds. Typically, measures taken cover technical, procedural and awareness-raising.

Staff Awareness and Education

4. We have designed a communication programme for Government staff to build and sustain a high level of awareness about information security requirements, provide a working knowledge of the steps necessary to assure compliance with the requirements, drive their commitment to safeguard sensitive and personal data. We continue to organize seminars, trainings and workshops on information security related topics for Government staff. We also publish articles on information security topics in various government publications and newsletters for reaching out to different ranks of staff.

Technical and Procedural Measures

5. Both the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) and the Director of Administration have issued guidelines to all B/Ds reminding them of the importance of the protection of information systems and data, in particular advising on the secure and proper use of portable electronic devices and file sharing technologies. B/Ds also issue their own departmental instructions to their staff based on their own operational needs. The OGCIO has provided technology solutions for B/Ds' reference. These solutions are updated from time to time with due regard to technology developments and new security threats identified.

Strengthening Security Compliance Checking

6. The OGCIO initiated a centrally managed security audit on all B/Ds since May 2007. A total of 40 B/Ds have completed the audits by mid 2008 and the rest are in progress. Drawing on experience gained in the recent incidents, we have placed additional emphasis on the procedures for the handling and protection of personal/classified data and the use of portable electronic devices. We have requested B/Ds that have completed the audits to provide supplementary information to confirm their compliance in all aspects.

Review of Information Security Regulations, Policies and Guidelines

7. Government has established mechanisms for reviewing our information security management framework to facilitate compliance by B/Ds and keep the supporting measures in pace with technological advancement, international/industry best practices and emerging security threats. OGCIO and Security Bureau (SB) play a leading role in this, with participation by other administrative and law enforcement agencies on a need basis. The last review was completed in mid-2006 and a new review has commenced recently. In addition to this comprehensive review exercise, we have established a working group with representatives from OGCIO, SB, Police Force, Director of Administration, Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau to review the existing regulations and policies focusing on protection of personal data with reference to the experiences gained from the recent incidents. Recommendations of the review on personal data are being finalized and will be promulgated to B/Ds shortly.

**Office of the Government Chief Information Officer
November 2008**