

政制及內地事務局
政府總部
香港添馬添美道2號
政府總部東翼



CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS BUREAU
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT
EAST WING
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES
2 TIM MEI AVENUE, TAMAR
HONG KONG

Our Ref.: CMAB GEN 131
Your Ref.:

Tel: 2810 3217
Fax: 2523 3207

30 March 2017

Miss Cindy Ho
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Miss Ho,

I refer to your mail dated 2 March 2017 forwarding an email dated 27 February 2017 from Dr Brian King addressed to the Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs to this Bureau for the Government's consideration and response.

As the use of filtering software at the computer stations of the public libraries in Hong Kong falls under the purview of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("the Department") which is under Home Affairs Bureau's policy area, we have sought the inputs from the Department/ Bureau and provided the Government's response in the ensuing paragraphs.

Public library services are one kind of the public services provided for use and access by members of the public. The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services ("the Director") is the designated Authority under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance for the management and control of every library in Hong Kong. To ensure the proper operation and management of the public library services, the Department, acting under the Director's purview, may from time to time make rules and conditions of use of the library facilities.

The Internet and Digital Service Workstations (“the Workstations”) in the static public libraries are provided for free access by registered users. Irrespective of age, users are subject to certain Conditions of Use. Among which, users are strictly prohibited from, inter alia, “accessing websites containing materials which are obscene, indecent, violent, disgusting, libelous, threatening or discriminating in nature or engaging in online games or gambling”. A web filtering software (Websense) has therefore been installed in the library system to prevent the Workstations users from accessing those restricted websites or engaging in online games or gambling as well as to protect the computer system and library network. It is by no means a measure to restrict the free flow of information. The Conditions of Use are displayed in the relevant libraries and available in the Hong Kong Public Libraries’ website.

Since the websites are automatically categorised by proprietary classification system with human inspection techniques, and are stored in a common database for real-time protection, some unintended websites may be blocked due to the limitation of automatic categorisation or classification mechanism. Whenever the Department is alerted of any issue of blocking, immediate actions on unblocking the websites would be made manually after human inspection.

For the case of Dr King, upon receipt of his email of 27 February 2017, the Department has promptly identified and resolved the blockage of Internet access to “<http://hanyu.com>” which was unblocked on 28 February 2017. The Department will continue to work with the service contractor in rectifying any issue of blocking identified.

Yours sincerely,



(Phyllis Chan)

for Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs