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Legislative Council

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Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Meeting on 15 June 2021

Updated background brief on digital inclusion

Purpose

This paper provides updated background information on issues relating to digital inclusion ("DI"). It also provides a summary of views and concerns expressed by members of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting ("the Panel") during previous discussions on the subject.

Background

Digital inclusion measures

2. Hong Kong has world-class information and communications technology ("ICT") infrastructure and well-provided Internet service. From education to business, entertainment, health care, government services and social interactions, ICT products and services are available which bring convenience in many aspects of people's daily lives. However, there are sectors in the community, including the elderly and the underprivileged groups which experience barriers in accessing ICT services and are unable to enjoy the full benefits of the digital economy. To bridge this "digital divide" in the community, the Administration has introduced DI measures to achieve the vision of "empowering everyone through technology".

3. The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer ("OGCIO") has been committed to taking measures to promote DI and encourage various sectors to play an active part in helping those in need (especially the elderly and the underprivileged) get to know and use technology products and services, so that they can fully integrate into the digital society. The various DI measures are set out below.

ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly

4.   OGCIO has regularized the Outreach Programme since 2018-2019. Six non-profit-making organizations under the outreach programme visited institutionalized elders, hidden elders, elders receiving day care centre or home care services through their service network and taught them how to use tablets, smartphones and other technology products, such as smart watches and virtual reality products, with a view to encouraging wider adoption of digital technologies by the elderly in their daily living.

Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly

5.   OGCIO launched a two-year Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly in February 2019, which offered over 90 advanced ICT training courses for free, covering topics like digital government services, social media, cyber security, wealth management and health management, to further enhance the elderly's knowledge in adopting digital technology in their daily living.

Web-based learning portal for the elderly

6.   OGCIO launched a web-based learning portal, namely the Elderly IT learning portal, in October 2019 to facilitate the learning of digital technologies by more elderly people. The portal has launched seven learning modules, covering online shopping, protection of mobile devices, cyber security, smart healthcare, etc.

Internet Learning Support Programme

7.   The Internet Learning Support Programme ("ILSP") was introduced to support students with limited means to learn through the Internet. The programme has narrowed the gap in respect of ICT usage between students from low-income families and their mainstream counterparts.

Web/Mobile App accessibility campaign

8.   The Web/Mobile App accessibility campaign was launched with the objective to enable people with disabilities to perceive, understand, navigate and interact with the web. OGCIO regularly conducted accessibility standard audits on the websites and mobile apps of various bureaux and departments ("B/Ds") to ensure that all government websites and mobile applications ("apps") conformed to the relevant accessibility standards. OGCIO would also continue to co-organize the Web Accessibility Recognition Scheme with the Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Limited to encourage wider adoption of web/mobile app accessibility designs by enterprises as well public and private

organizations. Free assessment and advisory services would be provided to all participating organizations to help them understand and meet the technical requirements.

Previous discussions

9. At the Panel meeting held on 11 June 2018, the Administration briefed members on the Government's work on DI. In June 2020, the Administration provided an information paper to the Panel reporting the implementation progress of DI.

Internet Learning Support Programme

10. In response to members' queries on whether the Administration had invited private sponsorship in implementing the various digital inclusion initiatives, the Administration informed the Panel that two implementers of ILSP had and would continue to seek private sponsorship to provide assistance to needy families after completion of ILSP.

11. Members pointed out that connection speed of the Internet services subscribed under ILSP was often too slow, which might be attributed to the use of obsolete computer systems or low-end Internet service. Some members commented that the bandwidth that could be bought with the current rate of subsidy might not be sufficient for larger households. They requested the Administration to negotiate with the relevant service providers to offer more favourable plans to those families.

Use of information and communications technology by elderly people

12. Members enquired about the Administration's plan to increase the Internet adoption rate of the elderly community in 2017 to the anticipated rate of 70%. The Administration advised that it would regularize the 12-month ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly as an on-going programme. The Administration would also offer advanced training to active elders with basic ICT knowledge through the district networks of Elderly Academies to enhance their capability in adopting digital technology in their daily living. Upon completion of training, those more agile elders could serve as trainers to help other elders acquire further technology knowledge. The Administration also planned to launch a web-based learning platform for sharing learning resources.

Accessibility of Government websites and mobile applications

13. Members enquired about the number of Government websites in operation and the number of which had conformed to the relevant accessibility

standards. They also asked about the Administration's target in enhancing the accessibility of Government's mobile apps.

14.   The Administration responded that it had set up 555 websites in total, and they all met the Level AA standards of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2.0 promulgated by the World Wide Web Consortium. While there was no common standards for mobile app on web accessibility, OGCIO had introduced the "Baseline Accessibility Criteria for Government Mobile App" and issued an internal circular to B/Ds in April 2018 asking all Government mobile apps to conform to the relevant accessibility criteria by July 2019.

Question raised at Council meeting

15.   Hon NG Wing-ka raised a question relating to DI at the Council meeting of 11 December 2019. Details of the question and the Administration's reply are given in the hyperlinks in the **Appendix**.

Latest position

16.   The Administration will brief the Panel on 15 June 2021 on the latest work progress of DI.

Relevant papers

17.   A list of relevant papers is set out in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
8 June 2021

List of relevant papers

Meeting	Date of meeting	Papers
Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting	11 June 2018	Administration's paper on progress report on Innovation and Technology Fund for Better Living and Digital Inclusion (LC Paper No. CB(4)1200/17-18(03)) Updated background brief on Innovation and Technology Fund for Better Living and Digital Inclusion (LC Paper No. CB(4)1200/17-18(04)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(4)1607/17-18)
Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting	-	Administration's paper on progress report on Innovation and Technology Fund for Better Living and Digital Inclusion (LC Paper No. CB(1)837/19-20(01))
Council meeting	11 December 2019	Question No. 22 raised by Hon NG Wing-ka Innovation and Technology Fund for Better Living