



The Media

Hong Kong people are kept well informed by a vigorous media. They have a vast appetite for news and this demand has given rise to a healthy and outward-looking press, radio and television industry that enjoys complete freedom of expression.

As at September 30, 2006, there were 48 daily newspapers and 691 periodicals (including a number of electronic newspapers), two domestic free television programme service licensees, three domestic pay television programme service licensees, 14 non-domestic television programme service licensees, one government-funded public service broadcaster, and two sound broadcasting licensees.

The availability of the latest telecommunications technology and keen interest in Hong Kong's affairs have attracted many international news agencies, newspapers with international readership and overseas broadcasting corporations to establish regional headquarters or representative offices in Hong Kong. The successful regional publications produced underline its important position as a financial, industrial, trading and communications centre.

Press: The Hong Kong press registered as at September 30, 2006 included 21 Chinese-language dailies, 14 English-language dailies (including one of them in Braille), eight bilingual dailies and five in Japanese. Of the Chinese-language dailies, 15 cover mainly local and overseas general news; four specialise in finance; and the rest cover horse racing. The larger papers include overseas Chinese communities in their distribution networks, and some have editions printed outside Hong Kong, in particular in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia.

One of the English dailies publishes a daily Braille edition, in conjunction with the Hong Kong Society for the Blind. Two Chinese dailies, one English daily and four bilingual dailies are published on the Internet. Hong Kong is the base for a number of regional publications such as *Far Eastern Economic Review* (which changed from a weekly to a monthly publication) and business and trade magazines. *The Financial Times*, *The Wall Street Journal Asia*, *USA Today International*, *International Herald Tribune* and *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* are printed here.

Broadcasting: Hong Kong has a vibrant broadcasting sector offering a wide range of services to local viewers and listeners. Hong Kong viewers and listeners have access to over 200 local and overseas television channels in various languages through free-to-air terrestrial and satellite reception or pay television services, and 14 radio channels provided by two commercial broadcasters and Radio Television Hong Kong, the public service broadcaster. At the same time, it is a regional broadcasting hub with 13 licensees uplinking over 100 satellite television channels for

the regional market. Terrestrial television broadcasters are migrating to digital broadcasting and the Government is updating the regulatory regime in the light of technological and market convergence.

The broadcasting policy objectives are to promote programme choice and diversity through competition to facilitate introduction of new, innovative broadcasting services, and to enhance Hong Kong's position as a regional broadcasting hub.

Broadcasting Authority (BA): The BA is the statutory regulator of the broadcasting sector. It comprises nine non-official members from various sectors of the community and three public officers. The BA's main function is to safeguard proper standards of television and sound broadcasting with regard to both programme and advertising content and technical performance. This is done through regular consultation with the public through a television and radio consultative scheme and focus group discussion to collect audience feedback. The BA publishes codes of practice on programme, advertising and technical performance which licensees have to observe. The BA is also responsible for enforcing the competition provisions under the Broadcasting Ordinance. It makes recommendations to the Chief Executive in Council on applications for and renewal of sound broadcasting, domestic free television and domestic pay television licences.

Information Policy: The Secretary for Home Affairs has overall responsibility for policy formulation on information and related matters, while the Director of Information Services advises the Government on the presentation of its policies, and on public relations matters generally, in Hong Kong and overseas. The main aims are to ensure an open exchange of information in the community, to keep the media fully informed of the Government's plans, policies and activities, and to promote Hong Kong's image abroad.

Information Services Department: The Information Services Department (ISD) serves as the Government's public relations consultant, news agency, publisher and advertising agent. It provides the link between the Administration and the media and, through the latter, enhances public understanding of government policies, decisions and activities.

The department is organised into four divisions: Local Public Relations, Publicity and Promotions, Public Relations Outside Hong Kong, and Administration.

Local Public Relations Division: It oversees the work of Information Grade officers seconded to various government bureaux and departments. It identifies and monitors controversies and advises these officers in helping their client bureaux and departments to formulate and implement public relations and publicity policy.

The News Sub-division operates a 24-hour press enquiry service. During typhoons, major disasters or any other emergency, ISD will activate its Combined Information Centre to disseminate the latest information on the situation and government responses to the media round the clock.

The Media Research Sub-division produces daily reports summarising news and editorial comments in the Chinese and English press as well as on radio and television. It also produces special reports on subjects of interest to the Government.

Publicity and Promotions Division: It helps bureaux and departments mount publicity campaigns and activities locally and outside Hong Kong by giving strategic advice on planning and technical support. It is also responsible for advertising, creative design, photography and many of the Government's publications.

The division handles about 4 500 titles and produces a wide variety of government publications, including the Hong Kong Annual Report and its Internet version. A large number of free publications, such as booklets, leaflets, fact sheets, brochures, posters and government forms, are distributed by the division each year. In 2005, the division sold 440 250 government books and miscellaneous printed items through its sales outlet and online bookstore. Photographs are also sold by the division.

Public Relations Outside Hong Kong Division: It advises on and helps develop and implement the Government's overseas public relations and communications strategy. The Overseas Public Relations Sub-division works closely with the Government's Economic and Trade Offices to monitor and promote Hong Kong's image overseas. The sub-division also handles requests and enquiries from foreign media organisations and correspondents based in Hong Kong, runs a programme for visiting journalists and distributes promotional material on Hong Kong worldwide.

The Brand Management Unit is responsible for Brand Hong Kong, the visual identity of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR). The brand is used to promote Hong Kong as Asia's world city through a variety of channels locally and overseas. The unit, in conjunction with government departments and the private sector, organises

activities for international audiences overseas and in Hong Kong showcases the city's attractions for visitors and the business community.

The Visits and International Conferences Sub-division runs the department's Sponsored Visitors Programme through which opinion-formers and decision makers are invited to visit Hong Kong as guests of the Government to enhance their understanding of the SAR. The sub-division also arranges programmes for other non-sponsored visitors coming to Hong Kong on private visits. In addition, it operates an Overseas Speakers Programme to reinforce foreign investors' confidence in Hong Kong. Arrangements are made for senior government officials and prominent local personalities to address targeted audiences abroad.

Government Home Pages on the Internet: All bureaux and departments produce their home pages in Chinese and English. There are also thematic home pages for special events and topics. These home pages can be accessed through the government's new one-stop portal, GovHK, at <http://www.gov.hk>.

GovHK adopts a citizen-centric approach to provide the most popular online government information and services, focusing on the needs and interests of the public. It organises information and services by user groups and subject areas, and brings together related contents provided by different bureaux and departments for convenient public access via a simple, user-friendly interface.

The Government's e-bulletin (www.news.gov.hk) produced by ISD is another effective means of presenting to the public a comprehensive spread of government news, views and information.

By the end of 2005, the Government's e-bulletin, had posted 8 888 news stories and features. It also developed and posted dozens of short videos to its Reel HK page, and more than 80 new image collections to its Photo Gallery page. Visitors to the site can sign up to receive free daily e-mails of news summaries, weekly City Life alerts and HK for Kids updates. It attracted about 2.8 million visitors during 2005 and nearly 200 million hits.

In mid-November 2006, the e-bulletin has about 7 320 subscribers.