



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 December 31, 2008, there were 45 daily newspapers and 699 periodicals (including a number of electronic newspapers), two domestic free television programme service licensees, three domestic pay television programme service licensees, 17 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 newspapers registered as at December 31, 2008 included 20 Chinese-language dailies, 13 English-language dailies (including one in Braille), seven bilingual dailies and five in Japanese. Of the Chinese-language dailies, 14 cover mainly local and overseas general news; 4 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. 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* and business and trade magazines. *The Financial Times*, *The Wall Street Journal Asia*, *USA Today International*, *International Herald Tribune* and *The 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 400 local and overseas television channels in various languages through free-to-air terrestrial and satellite reception or pay television services, and 13 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 17 licensees uplinking over 190 satellite television channels for the regional market. On December 31, 2007, the two

domestic free television programme service licensees launched digital terrestrial television. Apart from simulcasting the existing 4 free-to-air analogue terrestrial television channels in digital format, the stations introduced a total of seven new standard definition television channels and two new high definition television channels, all of which are free. 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.

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 comprises 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. They help formulate

and implement public relations and publicity strategies, advise their bureau or department heads on public relations matters, answer media enquiries and questions from the public, prepare press releases, and organise press conferences and special promotional activities.

The News Sub-division operates a 24-hour press enquiry service. During typhoons, major disasters and other emergencies, ISD will activate its Combined Information Centre to disseminate information and public announcements.

The Media Research Sub-division keeps the Government informed of public opinion expressed in the news media. It produces daily reports summarising news and editorial comments in the Chinese and English press as well as radio phone-in programmes. It also produces special reports on subjects of interest to the Government.

The Government News and Media Information System (GNMIS) channels press releases, photographs and video clips through a single system accessible to journalists on the Internet.

Publicity and Promotions Division: It helps bureaux and departments mount publicity campaigns and related activities locally and outside Hong Kong. It is responsible for advertising, creative design, photography, videography and the production of many of the Government's publications. The larger local campaigns conducted or supported by the division during the year covered a wide range of subjects such as the promotion of Olympism and the Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events, the fight against youth drug abuse, voter registration, Legislative Council election, road safety, environmental protection, civic education and fire prevention.

The division also helps organise major promotional activities such as exhibitions, cultural performances and media partnerships in overseas countries and on the Mainland.

The division handles about 4 100 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 2008, the division sold 358 125 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 helps develop and implement the Government's public relations and communications strategy outside Hong Kong, working closely with the Government's Economic and Trade Offices overseas and on the Mainland. Its Overseas Public Relations Sub-division promotes and monitors Hong Kong's image overseas. It is also in close liaison with more than 100 foreign media organizations based in Hong Kong, handling press enquiries, disseminating news and arranging interviews. It runs a programme for visiting journalists,

produces summaries of overseas reports on Hong Kong and distributes promotional material on Hong Kong worldwide.

The Brand Management Unit is responsible for carrying out the Brand Hong Kong programme which promotes Hong Kong as Asia's world city through different channels locally, overseas and in the Mainland. The unit makes sure the Brand is used effectively to promote Hong Kong around the world. Besides organizing activities to highlight the Brand, the unit also helps to publicise major events organised by government departments, non-governmental organisations and the private sectors to strengthen Hong Kong's positioning as Asia's world city.

The Visits and International Conferences Sub-division runs the department's Sponsored Visitors Programme for opinion formers, political leaders and think-tank members to visit Hong Kong at the invitation of the Government to enhance their understanding of the Special Administrative Region. The sub-division also helps to draw up programmes for non-sponsored visitors coming to Hong Kong on private trips. In addition, it runs an Overseas Speakers Programme to enable foreign investors to better understand Hong Kong's development and what makes it competitive. Arrangements are also made for senior government officials and prominent members of the community and local personalities to address targeted audiences abroad.

Government Home Pages on the Internet: GovHK (www.gov.hk) 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.

All press releases are also uploaded onto GovHK. In addition, major government press conferences and events, including the annual Policy Address by the Chief Executive and the Budget Speech by the Financial Secretary, are webcast live on the Internet.

The Government's e-bulletin (www.news.gov.hk) produced by ISD, serves as a communications channel to enhance ties between the Government and the media, business, industry, academia and the community, presenting news and information throughout the day, seven days a week, in a dynamic multimedia format. By year-end of 2008, news.gov.hk had posted 8 265 news and features stories. It had also developed and posted dozens of short videos to its Reel HK page, and added more than 81 new image collections to its Photo Gallery page. Visitors to the site may sign up for free daily e-mails of news summaries, weekly City Life alerts and HK for Kids updates. The e-bulletin now has about 9 600 subscribers.

The e-bulletin attracted about nine million visitors and more than 122 million page views during 2008.