

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 August 31, 2016, there were 52 daily newspapers and 644 periodicals (including a number of electronic newspapers), three 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 three 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 August 31, 2016 included 25 Chinese-language dailies, 12 English-language dailies (including one in Braille), ten bilingual dailies and five Japanese dailies. Among the Chinese-language dailies, 19 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. Hong Kong is the base for a number of regional publications such as *The Yomiuri Shimbun* and business and trade magazines. *The Financial Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today International*, *International New York Times* and *The NIKKEI* 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 800 local and overseas television channels in various languages through free-to-air terrestrial and satellite reception or pay television services, and 13 analogue radio channels provided by two commercial broadcasters and Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), the public service broadcaster. As for digital audio broadcasting (DAB) services, the Chief Executive in Council decided in March

2017 that DAB services should be discontinued in Hong Kong, and DAB services provided by RTHK should be terminated within six months, or as soon as practicable thereafter.

At the same time, it is a regional broadcasting hub with 17 licensees uplinking over 200 satellite television channels for the regional market. The domestic free television programme service licensees launched digital terrestrial television service on December 31, 2007. Two incumbent licensees are currently providing two television channels in analogue format and six television channels (including simulcasting the two analogue channels) in digital format, all of which are free. In May 2016, the Chief Executive in Council granted a new domestic free television programme service licence to another company to provide free television service in Hong Kong. The new licensee is required to launch its free television service by May 30, 2017. 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.

Communications Authority (CA): The CA is an independent statutory body established under the Communications Authority Ordinance (Cap.616) (CAO) to regulate the broadcasting and telecommunications industries in Hong Kong. It comprises 10 non-official members from various sectors of the community and two public officers. As a unified regulator, the CA's functions are:

- to regulate the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors by performing the functions conferred on it by the Telecommunications Ordinance (Cap.106), Broadcasting Ordinance (Cap.562), Broadcasting (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance (Cap.391) and the Unsolicited Electronic Messages Ordinance (Cap.593);
- to tender advice to the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development on any legislation, legislative proposals and regulatory policies relating to telecommunications, broadcasting, anti-spamming or activities connected with the telecommunications or broadcasting sectors; and
- to enforce the fair trading sections of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (Cap.362) and the Competition Ordinance (Cap.619) in the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors.

Information Policy: The Secretary for Home Affairs oversees the policy on dissemination of government information, 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 government and the media and enhancing 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: The division oversees the work of the Information Grade officers who serve as Press Secretaries to Principal Officials or work in the 35 information and public relations units in 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 and other emergencies, the ISD's Combined Information Centre co-ordinates responses to media enquiries and disseminates 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) gives journalists online access to press releases, photographs and video clips through a single interface. All press releases are available on the internet, while major government press conferences and events, including the Chief Executive's annual Policy Address and the Financial Secretary's Budget Speech, are webcast live. The government's online news platform, news.gov.hk, presents news and information.

Publicity and Promotions Division: It helps bureaux and departments mount publicity campaigns and promotion drives and is responsible for advertising, creative design, photography, videography and the production of a range of government publications. Major local campaigns conducted or supported by the division in 2015 included constitutional development, the 25th Anniversary of the Promulgation of the Basic Law, Keep Clean 2015, Appreciate Hong Kong, voter registration and the 2015 District Council Election, and public consultation on retirement protection.

The division also helps organise major promotional activities such as exhibitions, cultural performances, film

festivals and media partnerships in overseas and in the Mainland.

The division handles about 3 000 titles and produces a wide variety of government publications, including the Hong Kong Annual Report and its internet and tablet versions. Each year, the division distributes a large number of free publications, including fact sheets, brochures and posters. In 2015, the division sold photographs and, through its sales outlet and online bookstore, 74 304 government books and miscellaneous printed items.

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 offices overseas, on the Mainland and in Taiwan. Its Overseas Public Relations Sub-division promotes and monitors Hong Kong's image overseas and liaises closely with some 80 foreign media organizations based in Hong Kong, handling press enquiries, disseminating news and arranging briefings and interviews. It also runs a programme for visiting journalists, produces summaries of overseas reports on Hong Kong. In addition, it co-ordinates and implements overseas publicity projects to tie in with senior officials' visits abroad.

The Brand Hong Kong Management Unit handles the Brand Hong Kong programme which promotes Hong Kong as Asia's world city locally and around the world. To ensure the brand's consistent application, the unit develops advertising campaigns and publicity material in print and electronic formats to support the government's Economic and Trade Offices' activities, senior officials' visits and major promotional programmes outside Hong Kong. The unit also seeks opportunities to highlight the brand and collaborates with organisers of major events of international significance in Hong Kong to bolster the city's image. Hong Kong's strengths and advantages are also promoted through social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

The Visits and International Conferences Sub-division runs ISD's Sponsored Visitors Programme for opinion formers, political leaders and think-tank members to visit Hong Kong to enhance their understanding of the city. The sub-division also helps draw up programmes for influential visitors on private trips to Hong Kong. In addition, it co-ordinates an overseas speakers programme which arranges for senior government officials and prominent members of the community to address targeted audiences abroad, enabling them to better understand Hong Kong's strength and latest development.

Government Home Pages on the Internet: GovHK (www.gov.hk) is the one-stop portal providing citizens with the most sought-after government services and information relevant to their everyday life. Users can also create their own MyGovHK accounts to enjoy a vast array of personalised services, such as accessing multiple government services via one single account, viewing online service messages and receiving updates on their interested topics.

All press releases and selected top stories of the day on GovHK are also made accessible via hyperlinks to news.gov.hk.

The Government's online news platform, *news.gov.hk*, is an online news platform that presents government news and information seven days a week in a dynamic multi-media fashion. With an array of photos, videos and links to relevant websites, updated information and useful resources are just a click away. The website also provides quick links to weather and traffic conditions, job portals and

more. News items and messages are also disseminated more effectively and efficiently through smartphones, mobile devices and social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, WeChat and Sina Weibo. By the end of 2015, news.gov.hk had posted about 8 800 news and feature stories, with more than 1 500 video highlights. Visitors to the site may sign up for daily news summaries.

The e-bulletin attracted more than 25 million visitors and more than 518 million page views during 2015.

