Government's Initiatives in Promoting Electronic Commerce in Hong Kong
The Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau announced the "Digital 21" IT Strategy in November 1998. The objective of the Strategy is to enhance and promote Hong Kong's information infrastructure and services so as to make Hong Kong a leading digital city in the globally connected world of the 21st century. Further information about the Strategy can be found in the following web site: http://www.digital21.gov.hk/eng/index.html.

Electronic Commerce

- Electronic commerce, broadly defined, is the use of electronic methods, means and procedures to conduct various forms of business activity in cyberspace. It has transformed world trade and the way business is operated.

- Based on industry forecast, the total value of global electronic transactions (both business-to-business and retail) will rise to over US$400 billion annually by 2002. The projected growth is 40 times that of the global Gross Domestic Product. The potential market that electronic commerce can tap in cyberspace is enormous.

- Electronic commerce enables businesses of all sizes to carry out transactions
across geographical and time barriers. In Hong Kong, the vast majority of our businesses are small and medium sized enterprises. This new mode of business operation will bring enormous opportunities to them, particularly in terms of -

- development of new markets;
- reduction in operating costs;
- improvement in management of business processes; and
- provision of better quality customer service.

To maintain our competitiveness in the Information Age, we must make full use of electronic commerce to enhance our efficiency, productivity as well as the quality of our services and products.

The promotion of electronic commerce in Hong Kong is an integral part of the "Digital 21" IT Strategy. Government is committed to establishing a common and open infrastructure in Hong Kong for the conduct of safe and secure electronic transactions and creating a favourable environment for electronic commerce to take hold and flourish in Hong Kong.

**Major Government Initiatives**

**Electronic Service Delivery (ESD)**

- Government will be a leading participant in electronic commerce by launching the Electronic Service Delivery (ESD) Scheme to provide public services to the community round-the-clock in a seamless manner through the Internet and other electronic means.

- We will launch the first phase of the ESD Scheme in the latter half of 2000. This initial phase will encompass a wide range of public services provided by 10 Government departments and public agencies such as:
  - submission of simple tax return and tax payment;
  - renewal of driving and vehicle licences;
  - application for business registration certificates;
• provision of investment and business licensing advice;
• payment of rates, Government rent and water charges;
• job search and matching service.

• The ESD Scheme will act as a catalyst to pump-prime the development of electronic commerce in Hong Kong. The information infrastructure to be developed for the Scheme will also be available for use by the private sector for the conduct of electronic commerce.

Public Key Infrastructure

• To enhance trust and security in the conduct of electronic transactions, Government will build up a public key infrastructure (PKI) supported by certification authorities in Hong Kong. With this PKI, local participants of electronic transactions will be able to:
  ➔ authenticate the identity of other parties to the transactions;
  ➔ ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the information exchanged in the transactions; and
  ➔ guard against repudiation of the transactions made.

• The Hongkong Post aims to start providing a public certification service by the end of 1999.

Clear Legal Framework

• Government aims to enact legislation in 1999 to establish a clear legal framework which will ensure certainty and security in the conduct of electronic transactions. The legislation aims to:
  ➔ give electronic records and digital signatures used in electronic transactions the same legal status as that of their paper-based counterparts; and
  ➔ establish a framework to promote and facilitate the operation of certification authorities.

Chinese Language Interface

• Government will actively participate in the development of a common Chinese language interface so as to facilitate electronic transactions and information exchange in Chinese.
Other initiatives undertaken by Government to promote electronic commerce include:

- **Launching of the Interactive Government Services Directory (IGSD) website** (http://www.igsd.gov.hk) to provide public information and services electronically over the Internet in an interactive manner. The website offers a directory of telephone numbers and website addresses for public services in a citizen-centric manner and provides access to selected interactive services of the Industry Department, Labour Department and Transport Department. We are working closely with a number of Government departments to enhance the range of interactive services provided under IGSD.

- **Launching of the Free Electronic Mail Service Scheme** whereby Internet Service Providers and other IT-related companies participating in the scheme sponsor free electronic mail accounts for use by all Hong Kong citizens so as to promote electronic communication in all walks of life.

- **Installation of Public Computer Facilities** at selected District Offices, community halls/centres, public libraries and post offices which allow members of the public to access Government services and information on the Internet at convenient locations.

- **Assistance to Local Businesses** in the adoption of electronic commerce through co-operation with industrial support bodies and trade/industry organisations. We will promote the wider adoption of electronic commerce through organising seminars, distributing publicity materials, providing technical advice and practical solutions.

- **Participation in International Fora** such as the World Trade Organisation, the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. We take an active part in the deliberations in various international fora on electronic commerce and contribute to the development of international consensus on cross-border issues concerning electronic commerce.
After account registration, subscribers can make use of their own computer facilities or public computer facilities (such as computers installed in District Offices and community centres/halls) to access the web sites of the selected electronic mail account providers for the issue and receipt of electronic mail.

Subscribers under the scheme are required to comply with the terms and conditions of service of the selected electronic mail account providers.

Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) offers free electronic mail accounts to businesses which place advertisements in any of its publications. Through the IGSD web site, businesses can gain access to the Enterprise Internet web site of the HKTDC for information about this service.

Participating Organisations

- Asia Internet Limited
- Cable & Wireless HKT
- Chevalier (Internet) Limited
- City Telecom (HK) Limited
- GlobalNet Information Limited
- HKNet Co Ltd
- Hong Kong Trade Development Council
- Hutchison Telecommunications (Hong Kong) Limited
- Internet Access HK Limited
- Kannet Limited
- Network Computing Services Limited
- SmarTone Mobile Communications Limited
- Technoworks Limited
- VTech Computers Systems Limited
- Xyberia.com
- Yahoo! Hong Kong

September 1999
免費電郵服務計劃

「數碼21新紀元」資訊科技策略


免費電郵服務計劃

「數碼21新紀元」資訊科技策略下的其中一項主要措施，是促使社會各界認識、熟習和有信心在生活上各個環節應用資訊科技。而擴闊資訊科技應用範圍的重要一環，是利用電子郵件透過互聯網通訊。

為鼓勵社會各界利用電子郵件通訊，政府現與業界攜手合作推出「免費電郵服務計劃」，由本地互聯網服務供應商及其他與資訊科技有關的公司免費贊助電子郵件帳戶供市民使用。

市民可透過政府互動服務指南網站 (http://www.igsd.gov.hk) 接達參與上述計劃機構的網站，申請免費電子郵件帳戶。市民可自由選擇由哪一間參與機構為他們提供電子郵件服務。

在登記成為用戶後，市民可利用本身的電腦設施或公用電腦設施 (例如設於各區民政事務處和社區中心 / 會堂的公用電腦) 接達其選選的電子郵件服務供應商的網站，發送及接收電子郵件。
市民經登記成為免費使用電子郵件服務的用戶，須遵守所揀選的電子郵件服務供應商所訂定的服務條款和細則。

香港貿易發展局為其出版刊物的廣告客戶免費提供電子郵件服務。商號可透過政府互動服務指南網站，接達香港貿易發展局的香港企業互聯網網站，取得該項服務的資料。

參與計劃的機構

- 中建電訊HKNet
- 其士(國際資訊網絡)有限公司
- 亞洲網絡有限公司
- 和記電訊有限公司
- 城市電訊(香港)有限公司
- 誉訊威有限公司
- 看通網絡有限公司
- 香港貿易發展局
- 香港電訊
- 信網通
- 偉易達系統有限公司
- 國際信息網絡有限公司
- 數碼通電訊有限公司
- Internet Access HK Ltd
- Xyberia.com
- Yahoo! 香港

一九九九年九月
Universal Free Electronic Mail Service Scheme

"Digital 21" Information Technology Strategy

- The Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau announced the "Digital 21" Information Technology Strategy in late 1998 (http://www.digital21.gov.hk/eng/index.html). The objective of the strategy is to enhance and promote Hong Kong's information infrastructure and services so as to make Hong Kong a leading digital city in the globally connected world of the 21st century.

Universal Free Electronic Mail Service Scheme

- One of the key initiatives under the "Digital 21" Information Technology (IT) Strategy is to raise the awareness, confidence and familiarity of the community in the use of IT in all spheres of their lives. An important element in the wider use of IT is communication by electronic mail over the Internet.

- To encourage the use of electronic mail in the community, Government has joined hands with the industry and launched the "Universal Free Electronic Mail Service Scheme". Under this scheme, Internet Service Providers and other IT-related companies in Hong Kong sponsor free electronic mail accounts for use by members of the public.

- Through the Interactive Government Services Directory (IGSD) web site (http://www.igsd.gov.hk), members of the public are able to access the web sites of the participating organisations under the scheme to apply for free electronic mail accounts. The public are free to choose from the participating organisations and subscribe to their services.