The British Computer Society
(Hong Kong Section)

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Dear Sir/Madam

Suggestions on 2007 Digital 21 Strategy

The Digital 21 Strategy Consulting Paper appears to be a very comprehensive and thorough document. However, there are a few areas that we see worthwhile for the HKSAR Government to consider as part of the Digital 21 Strategy.

1. **Support for Individual ICT Innovators**

    In North America, many innovations started off from labs inside the garage of the innovators. In Hong Kong, not many people with great ideas would have a garage as well. The government may have built facilities like Cyberport and Science Parks that attract established foreign technology companies and local companies which have already found some funding support.

    The support for individual ICT innovators and startup companies with innovative ICT projects (either technology innovation or innovative application of technology) appears to be limited. These people normally cannot afford to pay market rental and would have very limited capital to conduct the research and development.

    If the government sees the role of ICT innovation is important to the success of the Digital 21 Strategy, the government may wish to offer greater help and facilitation to the individual innovators and the startup companies.

2. Software Made in Hong Kong and Export

A lot of the software packages used in Hong Kong are imported from overseas software companies. It is reluctant to see that the development and promotion of software packages for local and global market is still in its infancy.

The government may wish to consider providing stronger support in facilitating software package development. For example, the government should provide incentive to the "users/SME" who purchase software made in HK. Software company will be able to export, only if they already have a significant number of existing clients. In addition, loans under different Government funding schemes are all in "banker terms". A software company at its startup stage would have great difficulties in getting approval. 50/50 funding arrangement should be a way to be considered. In fact, similar funding model has been used in Singapore. Other possible supports may be low rental facilities, no interest bearing loan, more flexible requirements for loan applications and the setup of certification scheme etc. All of these can help software companies to promote their software solutions in the global market. The 'Made in Hong Kong' label should be considered as a part of the certification.

The next big thing after Microsoft, Oracle, SAP may be something being Made in Hong Kong.

3. Knowledge Based Society

One of the strategic areas to help developing knowledge based society is to introduce knowledge management, knowledge building and sharing environment and culture at schools so that our next generation can start to build up their own knowledge base and adopt knowledge building and sharing culture.

However, many schools do not find this as a priority and may have focused on other initiatives and the day-to-day teaching.

The government may wish to consider knowledge management at schools as a mandatory initiative and facilitate some assistance to schools to do the implementation.

4. Professionalism

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Roads and bridges were built and being used by many users. These projects were normally led by well qualified professional engineers to ensure that the structure, reliability, safety, and functionality of these infrastructures were properly done.

By the same token, as we move towards a digital city, it is anticipated that many people in the society will start to rely more and more in ICT infrastructure and solutions. The government may need to ensure that the practitioners who design, build, test, deliver and support these facilities are well qualified professionals.

Professionalizing the ICT practitioners and emphasizing on professionalism should be a critical foundation of the Digital 21 Strategy.

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