

Comments on the
Public Consultation on the draft
“2007 Digital 21 Strategy”

Submitted by

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and

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I have read with interest on the draft 2007 Digital 21 Strategy and wish to submit the following comment on the 2007 Digital 21 Strategy:

I am pleased to see that the paper has identified **“Promoting advanced technology and innovation”** as the first key action area in the “2007 Digital 21 Strategy” (hereafter referred to as *the paper*), and that **the Government through the ICT industry will provide focus and support to important technology domains** that included **the Next-Generation Internet**. I feel that advanced network infrastructure is the foundation stone of supporting all developments mentioned in *the paper* and would thus like to present my views in this area.

While claims have been made on Hong Kong being the leading ICT hub in the world, in many ways Hong Kong has actually fallen behind the leaders in the next generation network development in the last few years. There is obviously a lack of development on the advanced network infrastructure in Hong Kong that has been seen developed elsewhere. Many academic networks in the world are running 10G networks, e.g. Internet2, GLORIAD, CERNET, Koreanet2, Japan, and indeed some are starting to build 100G networks. In Hong Kong, the eight universities have just installed in September 2006 a local 10G network for pilot test runs but there are questions on the long term funding issues.

Indeed Hong Kong has not taken advantage of the fact that it is one of the most concentrated hubs of trans-Pacific fibre cables in the Asia-Pacific region. While other countries have taken advantage of low-cost trans-Pacific links in Hong Kong and indeed placed their own network hubs in Hong Kong, Hong Kong is rapidly losing our opportunities to build up our city to serve as a network hub that could be compared to those major hubs in cities like Seattle, Chicago, New York, Amsterdam, etc.

Hong Kong should have a sustainable strategy to build a continuously advancing next-generation network infrastructure in Hong Kong that could serve Hong Kong's own ICT requirements as well as acting as an international network gateway serving the Asia-Pacific countries. As *the paper* has clearly recognized China's rapidly developing economy, this network development should be extended to the linking up of Hong Kong with other cities in China, and in particular in view of the close proximity, with Shenzhen, Guangzhou, and the Pearl River Delta Region.

The paper has put some focus on IPv6 development. It is generally accepted that IPv6 will be the future IP protocol in view of its capacity of providing a sufficiently large number of IP addresses which will be essential for the future enablement of IP-based devices, such as home appliances, HDTV, HD video-conferencing, TV-quality video streaming technologies, remote medical diagnostics etc. However, it must be recognized that what will make the difference for the future Internet is in its capability to deliver much higher bandwidth and support new applications that will have the need of high network bandwidth.

I believe it is essential for the government to take the lead and support the initial cost of building the next-generation high-speed networking infrastructure as well as the international and regional hubs for the support of the next generation network development. The Cyberport and the Hong Kong Science and Technology Park, together with the higher education sector, should be encouraged, through starting funds, to build up this advanced infrastructure and developed the next generation network applications to booster their development and position Hong Kong as the world's next generation network hub. There will be many more applications that could benefit from the setting up of a Next Generation Networking Forum which should be supported by the government with resources for such development.

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