

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer  
Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau  
2/F, Murray Building  
Garden Road  
Hong Kong

Dear Mr. Dickson,

### **2007 Digital 21 Strategy**

Hong Kong Linux Industry Association consists of local and international hardware and software vendors, software developers and system integrators specialized in Linux and Open Source Software (OSS).

The Association agrees and supports the Digital 21 Strategy in principle such as Hong Kong as a world digital city and the Qualification Framework for ICT professionals.

Before we present our view, I wish to draw your attention to the updated development and the reaction regarding Linux and OSS around the region and the world.

*“Linux deployments are taking place at such a rapid pace it can be difficult to keep up, but the increasing adoption, based on multiple motivations depending on region, is compelling evidence for others who are considering Linux. Linux offers flexibility, ownership and security at little cost. With a variety of return on investment scenarios for government, business and education, Linux is not only accelerating technological innovation but also economic and social development around the globe.*

*Linux is taking off in different parts of the world for many different reasons. Some of the reasons are the same everywhere. It's quite different from country to country. The technology issues seem mostly to be behind us now. Linux is ready and every region has different motivations for adoption.*

*India is home to more than 22 languages, many with unique alphabets. The impact this has on the production and distribution of textbooks for school*

*children or the ability for local governments to collaborate on larger initiatives is gigantic. India sees opportunity in utilizing Linux and other open-source technologies to educate its population. With low entry investment, Linux provides a pathway to e-education, enabling access to information for all students -- students who speak different languages and students who live in remote areas of the country. In the same way, Linux can enable e-medicine, e-governance and e-business throughout India.*

*Japan is a global leader in the adoption of open-source software technology for business and industry. The use of embedded Linux in Japan's consumer electronics industry is growing rapidly, as is the adoption of carrier-grade Linux in telephony. In addition, Japan's Open Source Software Promotion Forum has taken an active role in accelerating the use of Linux in the data center. The OSSPF's role is to expand the use of open-source software in Japan in coordination with government and industry. Recently, it has expanded its functions to include cooperation among the governments and industries of China and Korea.*

*China is driving hard to become a world leader on many fronts and sees Linux as the avenue to its leadership position. OSS provides them with an opportunity to immediately and actively engage in advancing IT, and they are showing keen interest in helping accelerate the maturation of Linux on the desktop. Chinese developers are supported by both national and local governments. Qinghua Hu, director of the Beijing Software Industry Productivity Center, outlined China's goals to make OSS a main component of China's infrastructure. The city of Beijing and Guangdong Province, in particular, is adopting OSS to provide e-government services.*

*In North America, where e-commerce is mature, the Linux data center is experiencing significant growth because it can prevent users from being locked into proprietary agreements. Large Linux server farms are being deployed to support increasing storage and sensitive information exchange requirements in vertical markets such as financial services.*

*In South America, Brazil has taken a leading role in promoting the use of OSS both in government and industry. Officials are motivated by the belief that training their own people in open-source technology and creating a skilled workforce will lead to economic development in the country and the region.*

*Initial data from IDC indicates that their plan is working, with the IT growth rate in Brazil rising at four times the rate worldwide.*

*Across the Atlantic, the European Union has launched a million-dollar study on the impact of OSS and standards on software development, skills development and government. This comes at a time when Linux is experiencing greater acceptance by all levels of government throughout Europe. For example, Munich, which has been recognized for its efforts to use Linux on the desktop, recently announced it will convert its systems to Debian Linux through the help of third-party contractors.”*

In addition, some primary driving forces behind OSS/Linux adoption can be summarized as:

- **Open source**
- **Lack of [vendor lock-in](#)**
- **Long term usability (reduction in duplication and/or built in [obsolescence](#))**
- **Low cost**
- **Core packages run across more platforms, and are often more standards compliant and interoperable.**
- **Other factors include the large number of languages Linux's interfaces are available in, the flexibility to customise it to local needs, and high quality remote management.**

In response to the 2007 Digital 21 Strategy, followings are the opinion from us.

1. Linux and Open Source Software (OSS) become is key technology in the ICT world. There was not a single word mentioning this important technology. In China's 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, it was tabulated that Linux and OSS is the foundation of software development. OSS is an excellent tool for innovative software development. It is extremely important for the government to provide not just awareness but the step-by-step adoption of the technology within and beyond the government bureaux and departments.
2. Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) are the foundation of Hong Kong's economy. Adopting Linux and OSS makes ICT affordable to SME. It creates popularity for ICT adoption in SME. It will enhance the competitiveness of SME in Hong Kong. The government should encourage SME to use ICT to enhance the competitiveness by adopting Linux and OSS.

## Hong Kong Linux Industry Association



3. Hong Kong is the leader of ICT in the region at this moment. If others are developing Linux and OSS aggressively while Hong Kong is not doing so. Hong Kong will be lag behind. If the government is taking an active role in using Linux and OSS, Hong Kong will remain in the forefront position in the ICT arena.
4. In the strategy, government positions Hong Kong as a world digital city but the universities intake of ICT students are reducing and the best students did not study ICT. There will be a big gap for manpower resources and degrading of the quality of new ICT workforce. The government should provide a positive image about the future development of ICT to encourage intake to take up ICT courses.
5. The industry and the public anticipate great demand for Linux and OSS software engineer in the coming years. If the school curriculums include Linux and OSS to train up the skill set of students, the shortage of manpower in this area can be minimized. It will be good to the industry as well as the employment opportunity of graduates.
6. The tenders for ICT projects are still being awarded to the lowest bid. Apparently, it is a fair competition. However, we are seeing many incomplete projects or re-tendering. Please kindly provide a statistics of ICT projects being awarded in the last 3 years in terms of the first tender price, any over charge, completion on time, completed over time and project incomplete. The government should review the tender awarding criteria by giving more preference to SME and local developers.

We do hope the government addresses our opinions in the process of finalizing the strategy.

Best regards,

By the order of executive committee

Hong Kong Linux Industry Association