

Dear Sir,

My Views on Digital 21 Strategy - Hong Kong's Digital Divide

I am a resident of the New Territories. I live in a village on South Lantau. I currently have a 8Mb/sec ADSL connection from PCCW priced at HKD 298 per month. PCCW has informed me that they have no plans to provide any upgrade to this service at any stage in the future. My fellow residents and I are stuck, PCCW has a monopoly on service and charge almost 30% higher per month than customers in urban areas for a service 10 times slower.

Under POTS legislation, operators of fixed line services were obligated to provide universal service to all end points. New IP based services no longer have this obligation built into licenses. This allows operators to ignore large parts of the population as service provision is uneconomic according to them.

The government should not ignore this rural communities and allow operators to pick and choose only profitable businesses. They should be obligated to provide a consistent level of service across the territory. if in locations such as villages, it is uneconomic to provide this service operators should be required to cooperate to share infrastructure and deliver competitive service or to seek better technical solutions for outlying communities.

The Communications Authority proudly state that the average access speed in Hong Kong is approx 56 Mb/sec, PCCW also state in their recent Service Level statistics that they are on target to offer fibre connections to 65% of Hong Kong residents. The OGCIO should be focused on how to push these numbers to 90Mb/sec average and 90% of homes within 5 years. One of the key strategies should be to extend fibre (or other forms of High Speed Access) to rural locations.

Ignoring rural communities broadband service needs further isolates Hong Kong's rural residents from technical advances and broadening the divide between these communities.

I am happy to provide further input and support on this issue should it be required and would appreciate being included in any updates as the strategy is formulated.

With regards,

Alex Key