Submission by Dr. Francis Lau

To Whom It May Concern,

I hereby submit my brief comments/suggestions on the Public Consultation Paper on 2004 Digital 21 Strategy.

For the area of "Sustainable e-government programme":

I suggest there should be an initiative on the part of the Government to bring the ordinary citizens closer to the Government through electronic means. One possibility would be to create an online "profile" for every HK citizen which will contain all essential information (that can be disclosed) belonging to the person and that is in the Government's database. The idea is like that of a personalized portal. With single sign-on, the owner will be able to see all the information about himself/herself and can click on various links to interact with the Government.

For the area of "Infrastructure and business development":

I consider transportation an important part of the infrastructure. Hong Kong as a busy metropolitan city can turn itself into a showcase of a highly efficient transportation system. Unfortunately, our transportation system has failed to make use of many of the ready technologies that can help improve the traffic situation. Congestion is still pretty serious (esp. during rush hours) at many spots. Poor scheduling leads to under-utilization of some of the road bandwidth. Much of this can be solved to a great extent using IT and other technologies. For example, at busy junctions, intelligent traffic light scheduling can be easily implemented using the latest sensors, RFID or electronic tagging, and real-time computing technologies to smooth out some of the traffic flows. With automatic sensing of traffic load at various/all points in the overall road system, optimal routes can be computed in real-time using clusters of computers (grid) in the background; such information can be made available to motorists to divert and spread out the traffic load. Congestion leads to a lot of problems, including air pollution.

For the area of "A vibrant IT industry":

Much of the coding work is now outsourced to the Mainland because of the much cheaper costs and huge supply of programmers over there. But as far as higher-level

work (design, project management, quality control, etc.) is concerned, Hong Kong is still some distance ahead of the Mainland. We should position Hong Kong as a regional leader in good "software engineering" practices (eg. those following the CMM model) so that in the future, software development projects will come to/stay in Hong Kong to take advantage of the high-quality design and management talents and experts here, whereas the low-level implementation and coding work could be outsourced to the Mainland. The Government should recognize such a lead the Hong Kong IT talent pool is still holding on to and provide as much support as possible to make sure that such a lead will be maintained.

The Government should provide support to create a "grid" that provide services to SMEs who need to use IT to operate their business but cannot afford to provide for their own IT needs. Such a grid can draw upon the multiplicity of computing resources that exist within the SAR to provide for a wide range of services that best fit the SMEs and possibly also the larger enterprises.

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