

Case Study: Wi-Fi Connected City Programme, Hong Kong



Background

As part of Hong Kong's information and communications infrastructure development and with an aim to improve the digital connectivity of the city, the Government launched the Government Wi-Fi ("GovWiFi") service in 2008 to provide free Wi-Fi service to the public at certain government venues. Apart from serving members of the public to provide convenience and promote digital inclusion, the "GovWiFi" service has set an example for the community as a whole. Over the years, public and private organisations have followed suit to provide various forms of free Wi-Fi services at their respective venues. The total number of Wi-Fi hotspots in Hong Kong also increased from 7 900 in end-2008 to 30 000 in end-2014. To enhance the accessibility of free Wi-Fi service to members of the public, the Government launched the "Wi-Fi.HK" common brand in August 2014 for public and private organizations to join. Under this common brand, participating organizations are required to provide at least 30-minute free Wi-Fi service to users on a day. Building upon the momentum of this initiative and the latest digital technology development, the Government undertook in 2016 to expand the coverage of free Wi-Fi services and double the number of hotspots to 34 000 within three years under the subsequently introduced consolidated Wi-Fi Connected City Programme, which comprises the "GovWiFi" service, the "Wi-Fi.HK" common brand and a new Public-Private Collaboration initiative.



The “Wi-Fi.HK” Brand

“As at end-May 2017, over 19 000 hotspots are serving the community and the number of hotspots is increasing.”

Since its launch, the “Wi-Fi.HK” common brand has received positive support from public and private organisations. As at end-May 2017, apart from government departments, 36 public and private organisations have joined the common brand, including telecommunications operators, tourism related organisations, universities and academic institutions, with over 19 000 hotspots. We have developed a mobile app which will be

helpful to tourists and visitors in locating the nearby free public Wi-Fi.HK hotspots during their stay in Hong Kong.

Public-Private Collaboration

In line with our pro-business policy and to boost the Wi-Fi.HK common brand, we have introduced a public-private collaboration (PPC) initiative under which government venues are made available to private Wi-Fi service providers for providing free public Wi-Fi services without any financial support from Government. Apart from providing Wi-Fi service with free usage time in accordance with the requirements under the common brand, the service providers are allowed to provide value-added services, which include mobile service by using small cell mobile radio stations where practicable, and possibly 5G services in the future.

We launched a pilot project for this PPC initiative in early 2017 and plan to rollout the initiative in a more comprehensive manner in 2018 after evaluation of the pilot outcome and experiences

“Public-Private Collaboration Model for bringing in best commercial practices and sustainable Wi-Fi service to the public”



Security of “Wi-Fi.HK”

To ensure the security of Wi-Fi.HK service, we mandate the use of digital server certificates progressively for free public Wi-Fi.HK services to facilitate users to verify the identity of the service providers, thereby minimising the chance of accessing fake “Wi-Fi.HK” service. Currently, more than 10 000 hotspots are making use of digital server certificates.

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Service quality

To monitor the quality of Wi-Fi service under the “Wi-Fi Connected City” programme, we have drawn up the technical standard and service requirements for the Wi-Fi.HK brand with inputs from the telecommunications industry and relevant sector. We have also engaged a professional organisation to monitor Wi-Fi service provided by the service providers.

For more information on “Wi-Fi.HK” , please visit <http://wi-fi.hk/en>.