

CASE STUDY:

WI-FI CONNECTED CITY PROGRAMME, HONG KONG



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. 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 organisations to join. Under this common brand, participating organisations 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 introduced in 2016 the Wi-Fi Connected City Programme, which comprises the government funded service, the "Wi-Fi.HK" common brand and the new Public-Private Collaboration initiative and undertook to further expand the coverage of free Wi-Fi services and double the number of hotspots to 34 000 in 2019.

The "Wi-Fi.HK" Brand

Since its launch, the "Wi-Fi.HK" common brand has received positive support from public and private organisations. As at end-May 2019, over 120 public and private organisations have joined the common brand, including telecommunications operators, tourism related organisations, universities and academic institutions, with over 25 000 hotspots. We have developed a mobile app which helps the public and tourists in locating free public "Wi-Fi.HK" hotspots nearby.

"As at end-May 2019, over 25 000 "Wi-Fi.HK" hotspots are serving the community and the number of hotspots is increasing."

The Government Funded Service

The Government has installed over 3 000 hotspots at more than 600 government venues that are open to the public. The service has been upgraded recently for performance improvement, including the adoption of the

"The Wi-Fi standard, IEEE 802.11ac, has been fully adopted."

Wi-Fi standard IEEE 802.11ac as well as using fibre network to provide faster and more stable Wi-Fi service. Regarding outdoor government venues, with the advancement of mobile



network technology in recent years, we have provided Wi-Fi service using mobile network at some outdoor government venues as an alternative means for faster and simpler deployment, covering areas like small parks and sitting-out areas in various districts. Besides, to enable the public and visitors to enjoy faster Internet connections, we have set up high-speed Internet access points at more popular tourist attractions.

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

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

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 2016 and conducted two rounds of PPC exercise in 2018 and 2019 respectively. By early 2019, good Wi-Fi service has been provided in more than 31 government venues by the appointed service providers. We will conduct PPC exercise on a regular basis so that Wi-Fi service under PPC arrangement will be available at more and more government venues.

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 80% of participating organisations have installed 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 all along engaged third party organisations to conduct regular sample checks on the Wi-Fi service. Starting from 2018, we conduct more extensive surveys on service performance and user experience to ensure that the “Wi-Fi.HK” service quality meets service requirements and public expectation.

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