

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 ("GovWiFi"), 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-April 2018, over 100 public and private organisations have joined the common brand, including telecommunications operators, tourism related organisations, universities and academic institutions, with over 21 800 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-April 2018, over 21 800 "Wi-Fi.HK" hotspots are serving the community and the number of hotspots is increasing."

The Government Funded Service

The Government has installed over 3000 hotspots at more than 600 government venues that are open to the public. The service is being upgraded for performance improvement. The Wi-Fi standard (IEEE 802.11.ac) will be fully adopted to reduce signal interference. Regarding outdoor government venues, with the advancement of mobile network technology in recent years, we will

"The Wi-Fi standard, IEEE 802.11.ac, will be fully adopted."



provide Wi-Fi service using mobile network at more outdoor government venues as an alternative means for faster and simpler deployment, covering areas like small parks and sitting-out areas in various districts and public housing estates. Besides, to enable the public and visitors to enjoy faster Internet connection at tourist attractions, we will set up high-speed Internet access points at some tourist sites. It is expected that high-speed Wi-Fi service will be ready at a few pilot sites in early 2019.

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 good quality public Wi-Fi service at more than 25 government venues have been provided by the appointed service providers since July 2017. In the light of the good results in the pilot project, we decided to conduct a wider roll out of the PPC arrangement. We issued an invitation in April 2018 and made available thousands of government venues for the potential service providers to select under PPC arrangement. We aim to commence the provision of public Wi-Fi service in some of the venues progressively from early 2019.

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>.