

SCED: E-services for IP registration well-received

The Intellectual Property Department (IPD) has been actively promoting the migration to e-services for registration of trademarks, patents and designs to facilitate the protection of various intellectual property (IP) rights, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mrs Rita Lau, said at the IPD's annual Top e-Filers' award presentation ceremony today (March 2).

Mrs Lau said she was pleased to note that since the e-services were introduced in 2003, rights-owners and IP practitioners had put them to very good use, with the number of e-applications filed exceeding 210,000.

In recent years, the department has also been reaching out to the business community to promote the concept of intellectual capital management (ICM), Mrs Lau said.

The IPD was about to start a pilot ICM programme targeting local small and medium enterprises, with free consultancy services to be provided to these companies to help them build up, manage and harness their intellectual capital. "In the process, we would also like to promote better appreciation of the importance of a culture of respect in the business community for IP rights," Mrs Lau said.

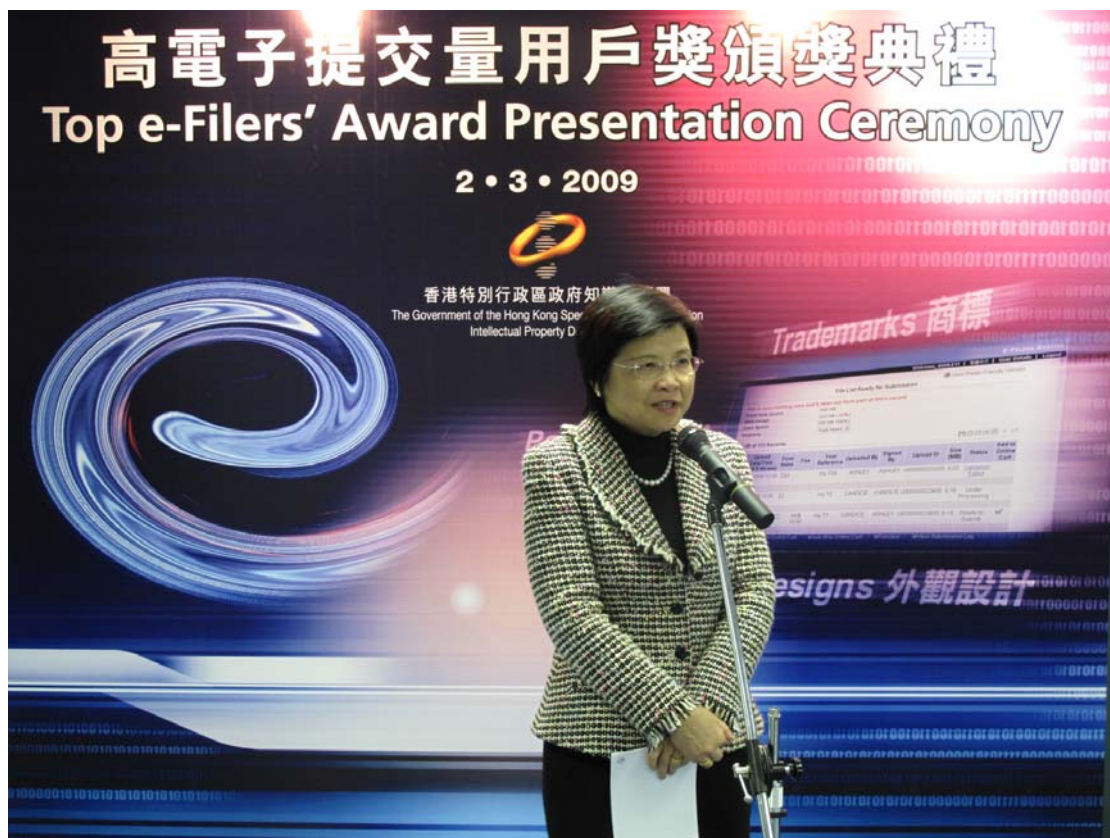
Mrs Lau noted that a number of major IP events would be held this year, including an international convention of the Asian Patent Attorneys Association and a Regional Symposium of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). She hoped that the local IP community could make use of these opportunities to share with IP professionals and experts from other parts of the world their experience and best practices in protecting IP rights.

In line with the government's Digital 21 strategy, the IPD has put a lot of effort into promoting its e-services. The computer systems for the registration of trademarks, patents and designs are now fully automated, and web-based search, filing, publication and payment are now available around the clock.

In 2008, 59.5% of applications for registration of trademarks were filed online. In addition, 47.4% of standard patents and 44.9% of designs were filed electronically. The figures show that the e-Filing system has been well supported by the legal community and IP rights-owners.

In recognition of the e-Filers' active support for IPD's electronic services, 15 awards were presented to e-Filers with the highest volume of e-transactions between January 1, 2008, and December 31, 2008. Another five awards were presented to those who had the highest volume of e-applications in 2008.

About 160 guests participated in today's ceremony. They included major stakeholders in the IP industry, such as the legal community, agents and related IP associations, as well as representatives from the government.



Ends

Monday, March 2, 2009