

## Awareness of protection of intellectual property rights enhanced

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A survey commissioned by the Intellectual Property Department (IPD) shows that Hong Kong people are becoming more aware of the importance of protecting intellectual property (IP) rights. The survey has been conducted annually and is now in its seventh year.

Since the survey started in 1999, public awareness of IP rights has significantly improved. The percentage of respondents who know that IP includes copyright, patents, trademarks and registered designs has been increased to 84.7% in 2005, compared with 50.6% in 1999.

Out of 1206 respondents, only 15% of them said that they would often (0.7%) or sometimes (14.3%) buy pirated or counterfeit goods. That is markedly less than the 24.7% in 1999. Survey data over the previous years show that the situation has been improving gradually.

For the survey in 2005, IPD added questions about respondents' usage of the Internet. 51.3% of respondents regularly use the Internet and more than half of them go online for one to three hours every day.

Concerning file-sharing behavior on the Internet, more than 70% of respondents knew that unauthorised file-sharing was an infringement of IP rights and the percentage has increased in 2005. Asked about the frequency of infringing copyright on the Internet, 1.7% of respondents admitted that they often or sometimes shared the files with their friends. This is significantly lower than the 10% in 2004.

However, the percentage of respondents who admitted to illegal downloading and then uploading files to Internet for the purpose of sharing with others has increased from 3.5% in 2004 to 6.8% in 2005. This may reflect wider adoption of peer-to-peer file-sharing protocols.

"While it is encouraging to see that awareness of intellectual property among Hong Kong people is increasing and they are buying less pirated and counterfeit goods, we need to focus on new trends. This year's survey has provided us a better understanding of Internet file-sharing behavior among the general public. We need to focus on public education, enforcement and legislation in that area. This year, we shall look more closely at legal downloading files on the Internet to see whether that is gaining more public acceptance," Mr Stephen Selby, the Director of Intellectual Property, said at a press conference announcing findings of the survey today (January 19).

The survey shows close to 65% of respondents received information about protection of IP through television, over 10% higher than 51% of 2004.

"IPD put out a TV announcement featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor of the State of California, the United States of America and movie star, Jackie Chan in November last year. It was effective in attracting the attention of the general public. IPD will soon put out another series of publicity messages on TV and other electronic media, highlighting different scenarios in the protection of intellectual property," said

Mr Selby.

Most of the findings of the 2005 survey are consistent with those of previous years. Regarding the public attitudes towards long-term development of IP rights, over 70% of respondents believed that IP protection could help the development of the local creative industries and the overall development of Hong Kong's economy. Over 85% felt that the Government should put more resources in developing creative culture and industries in order to create wealth.

The survey report is available on the website of the Intellectual Property Department at: [www.ipd.gov.hk](http://www.ipd.gov.hk)

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