

SCIT reinforces Government's firm commitment to promoting Intellectual Property Compliance in Business Community

The Government will commission an independent Software Asset Management ('SAM') contractor to provide free consultancy services to the business community for better management of their software assets, the Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology, Mr Joseph W P Wong, announced today (October 23).

Speaking at a ceremony to launch the Business Software Certification Programme and the Reward Scheme to Combat Illegal Use of Software in Business today, Mr Wong said that these programmes aimed to raise awareness of and respect for intellectual property rights (IPR) among the business community.

Introducing the certification programme, Mr Wong said, "We will approach about 30,000 organisations to promote that proper management of software asset would help save operational cost and strengthen computer security."

"The SAM contractor will provide free on-site software audit and professional SAM consultancy services to those participating organisations. It will also assist the participating organisations in checking if there is any inadvertent use of unlicensed software within the organisations, and formulating appropriate procedure and guidelines on the use of genuine software," Mr Wong said.

The certification programme is a pilot scheme and the Government would review its efficacy to decide on the way forward.

Mr Wong also reiterated that the Government would continue to strictly enforce the law to clamp down on companies knowingly using pirated software in business, and urged these companies to stop using pirated software.

"I appeal to the business community to join hands with us in promoting the protection of IPR to create a more favourable business and investment environment."

The certification programme was jointly organised by the Intellectual Property Department and the Business Software Alliance. Organisations that are found in full

compliance of the program will be commended with a certificate issued by the organisers.

Acting Director of Intellectual Property, Mr Peter Cheung said, "We hope that participation in the certification programme will bring not only a sense of pride in using genuine software, but also boost organisations' efficiency and thus, enhancing their competitive edge in the long run. "

In addition, the 'Reward Scheme to Combat the Use of Pirated Software in Business' will increase the maximum reward from HK\$5,000 to HK\$30,000 to encourage the community to report incidents of software piracy in the business workplace. The Scheme is financed by the Business Software Alliance and administered by the Customs and Excise Department.

Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise (Intelligence and Investigation), Mr Y K Tam said, "We hope the revised Scheme would further help heighten the awareness of the business sector on the legitimate use of software and encourage community participation in protecting intellectual property rights in Hong Kong by providing information to assist Customs investigation."

The two schemes were part of the activities under the "Genuine Business Software Campaign" jointly launched by the Intellectual Property Department, the Customs and Excise Department and the Business Software Alliance in September this year to foster and enhance awareness on the use of copyrighted software in workplace.

The campaign aimed to promote information technology governance among companies, and to empower them with the know-how to better manage those assets through effective software asset management.

A series of Business Software Asset Management Seminars would also be organised for the business community free of charge until the end of the year.

Ends/Monday, October 23, 2006