



Creative Commons to support innovation in Hong Kong's education, creative industries

October 16, 2008, Hong Kong - As Hong Kong seeks to improve education and strengthen the territory's creative industries, the University of Hong Kong's Journalism and Media Studies Centre (JMSC) announced plans to launch Creative Commons copyright licences in Hong Kong next week.

In his October 15 Policy Address, Hong Kong Chief Executive Donald Tsang pledged "to enhance students' ability for self-learning and interactive learning, and to promote the use of e-books rather than printed copies, we will look into the development of electronic learning resources." He acknowledged public concern about the financial burden of costly, frequently-updated textbooks. Mr. Tsang also pledged to enhance Hong Kong's creativity and cultural diversity, to "realise the vision of developing Hong Kong into a world-class arts and culture destination."

Through a new set of flexible copyright licences, Creative Commons (CC) supports these aims by making it easier for Hong Kong people to create and share educational and artistic works. CC licences enable greater flexibility between full copyright (all rights reserved) and the public domain (no rights reserved). In other words, they provide a "some rights reserved" approach to copyright, making it possible for creators to retain control over their copyright while inviting certain uses of their works.

Creative Commons Hong Kong (CCHK), hosted by the University of Hong Kong's Journalism and Media Studies Centre (JMSC), brings the Creative Commons licences to Hong Kong by porting them into compliance with Hong Kong's Copyright Ordinance. These licences represent a new legal alternative for the Hong Kong people, alongside other existing copyright options.

A launch ceremony and festival will be held next week on Saturday, October 25, at the Hong Kong School of Creativity in Kowloon. On Friday October 24 the founder of Creative Commons, Stanford Law Professor Lawrence Lessig, will deliver the Inaugural Lee Shu Pui Leung Wai Hing Distinguished Lecture in Digital Media at the University of Hong Kong, titled: "Free Culture and Free Society: Can the West Love Both?"

CC licences enable educational works such as textbooks, worksheets, supplementary course materials, and presentations to be shared freely and legally by students and educators. Around the world, educators are embracing CC licences so that their course materials can be used as easily and widely as possible via "open courseware." The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the United States was the first major educational institution to launch open courseware in 2001. Since then, world-class universities around the world have joined the open courseware movement - including several universities in Mainland China and Taiwan. Use of open courseware is also expanding to primary and secondary school districts in many parts of the world. Meanwhile, Chinese-speaking educators in Mainland China and Taiwan have launched the Opensource Opencourseware Prototype System, dedicated to translating open courseware from institutions around the world into Chinese.

So far, no Hong Kong educational institutions have joined the global open courseware movement. CCHK hopes to facilitate Hong Kong's participation in this movement, and to help make educational materials accessible to people from all strata of society, regardless of income or geographic location. "CCHK could not have launched at a better time" explained Pindar Wong, Chairman of CCHK's Preparatory Executive Committee. "With the establishment of the Government's Creative Industry Office, I see CCHK helping to provide a firm foundation on which to build our creative capital. For example, in education, where e-books can be developed and shared over the net using our licences."

"It is not too late for Hong Kong to catch up with this global movement to use more innovative forms of copyright so that everybody can get an education... whether they can afford textbooks or not," said Prof. Ying Chan, Director of the University of Hong Kong's Journalism and Media Studies Centre (JMSC), official host of the Creative Commons Hong Kong project.

"Creative Commons licences are already being used by educators, writers, artists, musicians, bloggers, and many other people in Mainland China and Taiwan - where the licences were launched in 2006 and 2004, respectively," said Rebecca MacKinnon, Assistant Professor at the JMSC and Public Lead of Creative Commons Hong Kong. "CC Singapore is also launching its licences this year. We are thrilled to provide this legal platform so that Hong Kong's people can share their creativity with the rest of the Chinese-speaking world."

Since August 2007, the CCHK legal team has worked to draft versions of the Creative Commons licences that are compatible with Hong Kong copyright law. The CCHK legal leads are Dr. Yahong Li and Ms. Alice Lee of the University of Hong Kong's Faculty of Law. The work of CCHK is also supported by a Preparatory Executive Committee comprised of members from different sectors in Hong Kong such as the IT sector, education, media, the arts, and politics. The CCHK launch would not be possible without the work of many enthusiastic community volunteers.

About Creative Commons

Creative Commons is a not-for-profit organization, founded in 2001, that promotes the creative re-use of intellectual and artistic works, whether owned or in the public domain. Through its free copyright licences, Creative Commons offers authors, artists, scientists, and educators the choice of a flexible range of protections and freedoms that build upon the "all rights reserved" concept of traditional copyright to enable a voluntary "some rights reserved" approach. Creative Commons was built with and is sustained by the generous support of organizations including the Center for the Public Domain, Omidyar Network, The Rockefeller Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, as well as members of the public. For more information about Creative Commons, visit <http://creativecommons.org>

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More information:

Prof. Lawrence Lessig's lecture: <http://hk.creativecommons.org/2008/09/11/Lessig/>

CCHK Launch: <http://hk.creativecommons.org/2008/09/11/launch/>

Creative Commons Press Kit: <http://creativecommons.org/presskit>

CCHK "Frequently Asked Questions:" <http://hk.creativecommons.org/faq/>

Open Courseware Consortium: <http://www.ocwconsortium.org>

MyOOPS: <http://www.myoops.org/>