



新聞稿 PRESS RELEASE
TO NEWS EDITOR
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUGUST 21, 1995

Chinese University to Launch Electronic News Media for Hong Kong

"News will no longer be read from newspapers as the public will receive a great variety of information, news and advertisements simply by switching on their personal computers at home or office," said Dr Cheung Kwok-wai, of the Chinese University of Hong Kong when asked to describe the future scenario of a successful launch of electronic news media.

His project entitled " Electronic News Media and Publishing Consortium" is underway at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Funded by the Industry Department's Additional Funding for Industrial Support Scheme, the project aims to set up a common multimedia hardware and software platform specific to the local media industry for electronic information delivery, retrieval and library services.

The software platform will handle multimedia information, including video, voice, images, graphics and text (Chinese characters as well as English). That means when the network becomes accessible to the general public upon completion, there could be TV news, radio news, and all sorts of audible and pictorial information in addition to Chinese and English text. Besides, a high-speed multimedia network that connects to the Internet will be set up to facilitate electronic information processing for the news media and to enable publishers to offer their information services over the worldwide network.

"Ming Pao, Sing Tao Limited, Commercial Radio, Breakthrough Magazine and the China News Service(HK) have joined the consortium so far. Many other organisations have expressed interest in joining us. The consortium is open to all corporations or organizations based in Hong Kong and we welcome their participation," said Dr Cheung, senior lecturer of the University's Department of Information Engineering and principal investigator of the consortium project, which received HK\$3.26 million from the Industrial Support Scheme.

- 2 -

"We hope to develop the most advanced technology and let the media industry try the service out before making long-term decision and commitment," continued Dr Cheung.

Most Hong Kong media has its own database or library service, but many of them are not well-organized or not in electronic format, which means they could not benefit from the cost efficiency provided by advanced information technology, according to Dr Cheung.

"Paper cost is ever increasing and sources of supply are dwindling. Electronic delivery of information services can remove the cost burden substantially and also help protect the environment," he added.

Time sensitivity of publications are becoming increasingly important too, according to Dr Cheung. Electronic on-line services are essential in enabling traditional printed media to maintain their competitiveness in the publishing industry. Many newspaper and magazine publishers of developed countries have been actively seeking opportunities to develop their electronic distribution channels, and Dr Cheung believes that this will be the trend in the information-sensitive society of Hong Kong.

He noted that information superhighway was already under construction in many countries, including USA, Singapore and Japan. "Chinese language information superhighway requires even more time and resources to build. And we hope that the collaboration of the University, the industry and the government through this project will boost the development of Information Superhighway for Hong Kong," he added.

Note to Editors: Photo distributed via GIS press boxes.

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