

Awareness of intellectual property rights protection remains high

The general public in Hong Kong has a high awareness of intellectual property (IP) rights protection and respect for IP rights, according to the results of the Survey on Public Awareness of Intellectual Property Right Protection 2018 announced by the Intellectual Property Department (IPD) today (February 11).

A total of 1 003 members of the public responded to the survey. An overwhelming majority (96.1 per cent) of the respondents consider it necessary to protect intellectual property (IP) rights in Hong Kong. Most of the respondents shared the view that IP rights protection is instrumental to the development of local creative industries (79.9 per cent) and the overall economic development of Hong Kong (69.1 per cent).

Over 85 per cent of them are aware that legislation is in place in Hong Kong for protecting copyright, trademarks and patents. Moreover, 75.8 per cent of the respondents said that they do not buy any pirated or counterfeit goods (up from 70.9 per cent in 2016 as revealed by the previous survey), and 78.1 per cent shared the view that "it is morally wrong to buy pirated or counterfeit goods even knowing that it is an infringement of IP rights" (up from 74 per cent in 2016).

The Director of Intellectual Property, Ms Ada Leung, said, "The Government attaches great importance to the protection of IP rights and adopts a multi-pronged strategy for IP rights protection with a comprehensive legislative framework, rigorous enforcement action and sustained public education. It is encouraging to see that the awareness of IP rights protection and respect for IP rights remain high among the general public in Hong Kong."

Respondents were also asked about their shopping habits in the survey. On the channels through which pirated or counterfeit goods were purchased, the most frequently cited sources were physical shops (39.7 per cent), followed by street stalls (31.4 per cent) and online shops (21 per cent). When compared with the findings in the 2016 survey, there is a noticeable decrease in respect of physical shops (47.3 per cent in 2016), whereas a significant increase is observed for online shops (9.4 per cent in 2016).

While online shops and channels are gaining increasing popularity, among the respondents who would shop online, 67 per cent said that when they bought, for example, products with cartoon characters or brand logos, they would pay attention to whether the products were genuine.

With regard to the use of copyright content, 44.3 per cent of Internet users indicated that they would "definitely" or "possibly" opt for paid online authorised platforms to listen to songs, watch movies online or download songs/movies/computer software/ games/e-books, representing a

continuing upward trend since 2008 (21 per cent). Meanwhile, 70.2 per cent of respondents agreed that "it is morally wrong to listen to music or watch movies/TV shows online even knowing that they are pirated versions", which is also higher than the past survey result.

"We note that more and more consumers are shopping online and the IPD is committed to further enhancing public awareness on online IP rights protection through different channels, including the social media. We will also keep up our efforts in engaging the public, especially the younger generation, through various educational and promotional programmes," Ms Leung added.

On the "No Fakes Pledge" scheme jointly operated by the IPD and a number of retail and industry associations, 60.3 per cent of respondents indicated that they had heard of the scheme. Under the scheme, shoppers can easily distinguish reliable traders selling genuine goods by the "No Fakes" stickers displayed in their shop windows. Out of these respondents, 87.9 per cent of them also considered the scheme helpful in building the confidence of consumers and tourists for shopping in Hong Kong, and in strengthening Hong Kong's status as a "shoppers' paradise".

Similar surveys have been commissioned by the IPD from time to time since 1999 to gauge public awareness of IP rights protection in Hong Kong. The last survey was conducted in 2016. A report on the latest survey is available on the IPD's webpage (www.ipd.gov.hk/eng/promotion_edu/survey.htm).