OGCIO statement

    In response to a media report claiming that a facial recognition function has been found in the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app, a spokesman for the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) made a solemn statement today (May 3) to emphasise that the operation of the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app has never used nor requires any facial recognition function since its launch. After following up with the contractor responsible for the development and maintenance of the app, the OGCIO learned that the contractor had adopted a readily available module in the market for the development of app in order to operate the phone's camera to perform the scanning processes required for the operation, including scanning and interpreting the venue QR code, the electronic vaccination QR code and the taxi registration mark. Apart from that, the module does not perform any other operation. After learning the said module is also bundled with a facial recognition function, the OGCIO has requested the contractor to see how that function can be removed without affecting the normal operation of the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app to alleviate public concern.

    The spokesman stressed that the OGCIO understands public concerns over privacy. The Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data has been consulted on every new function added to the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app. The app has also passed privacy impact assessment and security risk assessment and audit conducted by independent third parties to ensure its compliance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. All versions of the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app were also subject to the stringent reviews of different app stores to ensure the apps available on the stores complied with the requirements of personal privacy protection. The OGCIO will continue to adopt an open and transparent approach and proactively explain the information security and privacy protection aspects of the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app to the public.