



World Intellectual Property Day

Mr Francis Gurry, Director General, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

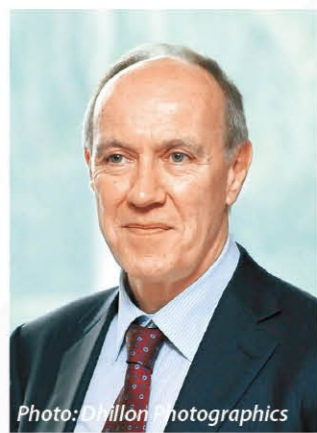


Photo: Millon Photographics

Design touches every aspect of human creativity. It shapes the things we appreciate from traditional crafts to consumer electronics; from buildings and bicycles to fashion and furniture. Design has been called "intelligence made visible".

Design is where form meets function. It determines the look and feel of the products we use each day - from everyday household items to the latest tablet computers. Design marries the practical with the pleasing. It brings style to innovation.

This year's World Intellectual Property Day celebrates the role of design in the market-place, in society and in shaping the innovations of the future.

Originally referred to as "art in industry", industrial design provides the means to differentiate between mass-produced objects, drawing us to one product rather than another, making one brand more successful than another. Behind every new design is a desire to break new ground, to improve and to enhance consumer experience. Good design makes products easier, more comfortable and safer to use.

With today's increasing emphasis on ecologically sound living, "designing out waste" is now an aspiration shared by many creators. Sustainable design processes can help lower production costs and reduce environmental impact. The designs of the future will necessarily be green, and the intellectual property system will encourage designers to produce them, by helping to protect original designs against unauthorized copying and imitation.

In international markets, companies need to be able to protect their designs quickly and cost-effectively in several countries. WIPO's Hague System for the International Registration of Industrial Designs - which simplifies that process - saw a 30 percent increase in international applications last year.

On World Intellectual Property Day 2011 WIPO joins governments, organizations, schools and enterprises around the world in celebrating the designers today, who are designing the future.

Mr Gregory So, Acting Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development



Good design transforms creative and aesthetic ideas into pleasing experience for consumers. It adds value by giving style to fashion, by making electronic products easier to use, and by enhancing the appeal and functionality of everyday household items etc. In brief, intelligent and innovative design helps shape modern day living.

The Hong Kong Government never lose sight of the need to promote creativity and innovation as a crucial investment in our future. To sustain growth and remain competitive, Hong Kong enterprises must excel in the production of well-designed products high up on the value chain.

In recent years, riding on programmes including the \$250 million DesignSmart Initiative launched in 2004, we have worked zealously to facilitate the further development of our design industry. Measures being pursued cover areas ranging from nurturing young talent, incubating start-ups, to promoting integration of quality design with mainstream business and industrial processes.

At the same time, we are mindful of the importance of maintaining a robust system for protecting intellectual property rights (IPR), including adequate safeguards against unauthorized imitation.

We keep our laws on IPR under regular review to ensure that they remain appropriate in present-day circumstances. Our legal framework, which complies fully with the requirements of the World Trade Organization, is backed by rigorous enforcement; on-going public education; and close cooperation with IPR stakeholders.

On the occasion of the 2011 World Intellectual Property Day, let us renew our commitment to uphold a culture of respect for IPR and an environment in which creativity and innovation will thrive.

New driver for Hong Kong commerce and economic development

When it comes to intellectual property rights, we commonly associate them with recognizing creativity and opposing pirating and illegal downloading. However, in today's society, dominated by a creative and innovative economy, according to Peter Cheung, Director of Intellectual Property, intellectual property means far more than that.

"Intellectual property rights can be used as a tool for creating wealth, a driver for the commerce and economic development of Hong Kong, and this is also my vision for intellectual property in the years to come," Cheung said.

To achieve it, education has foremost significance. Over the years, the Intellectual Property Department (IPD) has organized a variety of activities and campaigns to step up the public's awareness of intellectual property and the need to respect it.

To enhance SMEs' understanding of intellectual property's importance to a company, IPD ran an Intellectual Capital Management service for SMEs, teaching them to take their business to further heights by tapping into the intangible knowledge and expertise they possess yet are not fully utilizing. "We want the companies to know their

relational, structural and human capital are also important forms of assets. We hope to help them achieve new success by combining their innovation and intellectual property management," Cheung said.

Hong Kong being an internationally recognized trading hub of goods and services for decades, Cheung believes it is time for a change. "Rather than the traditional commodities, I believe by developing a market for selling intellectual property rights such as copyrights, patents, trademarks and designs, we can generate a demand for high-end professional services, such as intellectual property consultancies, intellectual property related legal services including mediation."

"The prosperity of the intellectual property trading activity can also spur other existing industries such as financing and accounting. I hope in the future intellectual property can be used in place of bricks and mortar as security for mortgage," he said. Amid a dynamic environment, the IPD collaborated with related government departments such as the Innovation and Technology Commission, as well as with private organizations who share the same goals in helping Hong Kong establish an intellectual property market.

Commenting on this year's theme of 'Designing the Future', Cheung interpreted it as having a double-meaning. "In my opinion, Hong Kong and its surrounding areas are already strong in design, so besides emphasizing the design industry in intellectual property protection, we need to focus on 'designing our future' too, namely to adopt new thinking and perspectives in intellectual property leadership and management as our competitive edge, bringing about brilliance never before seen." Still, he added that execution takes step-by-step care and repeated checking, and reviewing, and taking corrective actions are essential.

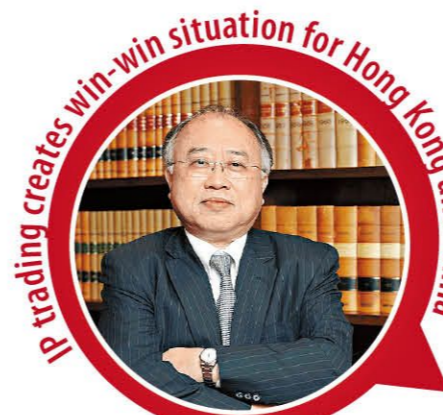


Peter Cheung, Director of Intellectual Property

Designing the Future



Intellectual Property Department The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region



IP trading creates win-win situation for Hong Kong and China

Mr Andrew Liao

Senior Counsel Andrew Liao sees intellectual property as a key driver not only for Hong Kong's economic growth but also that of China with the implementation of the national 12th Five-Year Plan. "One of the plan's highlights is to upgrade the economic development of the country through science and technology, and by promoting modern production techniques and services. Hong Kong can complement China, such as the further economic development of the Pearl River Delta, with its expertise in intellectual property," he said. "Meanwhile, at least two of the six advantageous industries in Hong Kong, namely, innovation and technology, and the creative industries, also require a lot of involvement for intellectual property."

With intellectual property as a major competitive edge, Liao foresees intellectual property trading as the future direction of Hong Kong. "Constituting the future of Hong Kong will be high-end trading, by combining our IP system, laws, knowledge and experience with our professional and specialized service industry. When IP services are available, people will be able to transfer, buy and sell, license and invest in intellectual property rights. Flexible trading of IP can work to facilitate the improvement of the economy. Developing technology and know-how takes time and a large sum of investment. Providing IP trading will benefit the production of products for it can complement the lack of R & D. Over time, Hong Kong will also become an important platform or even a hub for IP trading in the region," he said.

Echoing the theme of the Intellectual Property Day this year, Liao said intellectual property should be employed to design our future. "Today everything we use has a brand, a design which embraces function and eye appeal, and may also involve valuable technologies and inventions which are all IP related."

Witnessing the changes of the Hong Kong design industry from insignificant to increasingly appreciated over the years is Prudence Mak, creator of a local jewelry and design brand that draws inspiration from childhood dreams, offering handcrafted bags and accessories that features mixed medium and artistic elements as well as a unique cartoon character as its only model.

Her brand has held numerous exhibitions locally and overseas, for instance in Premiere Class in Paris and Fashion First in Brussels, and she has also been a recipient of the Hong Kong Young Design Talent Awards.

Yet, Mak's success did not come easy. "Back in 2000, graphic design in Hong Kong lacked creativity and budgets were tight, propelling me to decide to create my own character," Mak recalled. "It was a difficult start and people disapproved of my DIY idea; consumers then were more attracted to overseas brands with real-life models."

Mak survived by reading extensively the biographies of inspiring figures around the world. "From them I learned that great success usually comes from humble beginnings."

A person with vision, she also tried selling her products inside a café. Although her experience was not rewarding in the first six years, it exemplifies the inseparable link between design and the future. DIY and the idea of "shopping-dining experience" has now become a popular trend in Hong Kong.

Mak's years of persistence finally led to the label's collaborations with many international brands and even the British Museum, all eyeing her quirky designs and craftsmanship.



Dream big for future success

Ms Prudence Mak



Hong Kong as an IP leader and a hub of Creativity & Innovation

Dr Edmund Lee, Executive Director of Hong Kong Design Centre

"In the creative economy, the role of designers will gain prominence in the society. Wider use of design thinking and design will help generate business value and advance society progress. Better understanding of IP and how it should be managed, protected and utilised will facilitate creation or co-creation of applications across professions or disciplines," remarked Dr Edmund Lee, Executive Director of Hong Kong Design Centre. "In the world of invention and co-creation, intellectual property ought to be respected, properly managed and protected."

As a society that respects and values intellectual property, Hong Kong is a leader in design mark registrations in Asia, making it an important destination for launching or developing businesses in Asia. "Further commercialisation of design works could be achieved through, for example, licensing," said Lee. "Hong Kong, again, is well poised to capitalise our business expertise and established networks in the region. To reinforce our position as a hub of creativity and innovation in the region, civic awareness and public education on intellectual property are absolutely essential."

This year's World Intellectual Property Day timely reminds us the role of design in the market place, in society and in shaping innovations of the future. Design has utility and functionality, and is more than aesthetics. Environmentally non-conscious designs will be rejected. "There is a close link between designers and the industrial and business sectors, since products need to be manufactured or services delivered. Strengthening the interface between creators of design works and the industries and the public is a shared mission of virtually all design centres or design promotion agencies around the world in facilitating design-led solutions to meet market needs or solve social problems", Lee said.

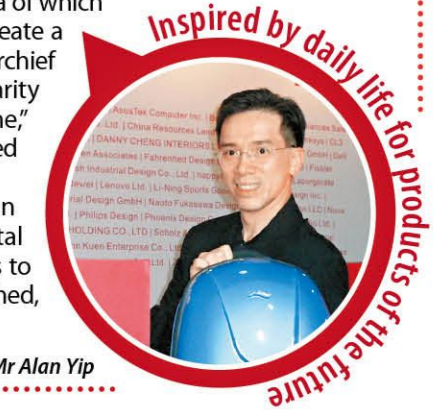
Design is an area faced with many challenges in intellectual property protection. Counterfeiting, for example, has been a major problem for designers.

Alan Yip, Councilor of the Hong Kong Intellectual Property Society, also an industrial designer, believes that there is nothing new under the sun, and people having similar ideas are not unusual. "It is all about who manages to get the intellectual property rights. I suggest designers seek protection of their rights before they consider further business development with their products, and Hong Kong is doing a sufficient job in this area."

To him, design differs from art in the sense that it is human-oriented and contains commercial elements fit for the consumer market. "Inspirations often come from daily life," he said. "It is important for a designer to constantly explore different domains of design, from automobiles to electrical appliances, as the knowledge they gain will create new sparkle."

One of his groundbreaking innovations is a rollable calculator he invented 20 years ago, the interesting yet practical idea of which was derived from a user's perspective. "I wanted to create a calculator that was easy to carry around, like a handkerchief in your jeans pocket." The product still enjoys popularity up to today. "A good design can stand the test of time," he said, adding that cultural differences of the targeted markets is another consideration in a good design.

He deemed there is an important correlation between design and the future. "The developmental period of a product in general spans from six months to as long as 10 years, therefore when a product is launched, it will necessarily be something for the future."



Inspired by daily life for products of the future

Mr Alan Yip

IP in Action

IPD is keen on organizing a variety of activities to encourage creativity among young people and promote IP awareness and respect for originality.



"I Pledge" Campaign
The "I Pledge" Live Band Show was held, with seven hours of non-stop pop music, at the Avenue of Stars, performed by about 30 youth bands on January 16.

The award presentation ceremony of the "I Pledge" Campaign 4-Panel Comic Drawing Competition on Good Character was held on March 13. More than 170 schools participated and over 2,300 entries were received.



Interactive Drama Programme
The drama was performed in 60 primary schools and 35 secondary schools from November 2010 to March 2011.



Intellectual Capital Management (ICM) Consultancy Programme
Enterprises adopting ICM hit a record high - over 600 enterprises participated in the Programme, which concluded in March this year.

"Legends of Creativity" Seminar
The seminar was held in three universities in March. Guests from creative and IP industries discussed and exchanged views with the participating students.

Respecting Copyright - Short Film (MTV) Competition
The award presentation ceremony of the competition was held on April 16.



Continuing to spread the importance of intellectual property, the following activities will be held soon:

Movie Screening
A movie screening will be organized by The U.S. Consulate General Hong Kong and Macau and IPD on April 29. (Note: Due to high demand, all tickets have been distributed.)

Movie Insight Event
The event will be held on May 7 and June 11 and conducted in Cantonese. Registration is on a first-come-first-served basis. Please visit www.ifact-gc.org/tc/reg_movieinsight.php or call 2785 0363.