

Intellectual Property Matters : How do youngsters promote creativity with Hong Kong Customs?

Intellectual property rights (IPR) protection is essential to a thriving creative society. The human creativity and knowledge embodied by IPR, such as in blockbuster movies/novels, original songs, life-saving vaccines, render us a much-enriched live as well as an interconnected knowledge-centric society. To foster creativity and innovation on which IPR is based, the Hong Kong Customs being the sole enforcement agency in combating all facets of IPR offences in Hong Kong (both inland and across the boundary) attaches great importance to raising public awareness on IPR protection in tandem with its vigorous enforcement. Ongoing publicity and educational programs are put in place to shed light on the economic loss and safety risk caused by IPR infringement and to inculcate strong sense of respect for IPR.

Yet, in this day and age, how can a society become most creative? It is a question with which we, in Hong Kong, have long searched for the answer to further consolidate a knowledge-based economy. But during the “I Pledge • Youth Ambassador of the Year 2014 Award Presentation Ceremony”, a group of over 250 youngsters from local uniform organizations has tried to prove that the peaking of creativity sometimes requires the freshness, exuberance and energy of youth (https://www.iprpa.org/eng/anti_campaign.php). They won prizes of a “Photo Contest” and a “Short Video Shooting Competition” based on the originality of the works they created. The ceremony also awarded 13 “Ambassadors of the Year” for their outstanding work in raising awareness on IPR protection.

After participating in an originally created magic show, Hon Charles Peter Mok, JP, a local law maker, encouraged the youngsters to keep on creating and stressed that to put an end to intellectual property rights infringement, joint and continuous efforts of the public, government and right holders were of paramount importance.

At the ceremony, Mr Clement Cheung, the Commissioner of Hong Kong Customs underscored that all social engineering projects were founded with public support. Putting an end to IPR infringement relied on both law enforcement and public support. Since launching of the “Youth Ambassador Against Internet Piracy Scheme (YAS)” in 2006, the Hong Kong Customs had recruited 13 local youth uniform organizations with over 250,000 young people participating in it in the past nine years. Commissioner Cheung expressed his gratefulness for the unfailing support from the intellectual property industry and the 13 youth uniform organizations in making the Scheme a success. In view of the challenges of Internet infringement, the Hong Kong Customs was prepared to launch a new Lineament System in 2015 to further tackle infringing activities on the social platform.

The YAS was initiated by the Hong Kong Customs in collaboration with the IPR industry in 2006 to engage youth in the fight against Internet piracy, as well as to cultivate their sense of respect for IPR. In 2014, the Scheme organised a series of training and educational activities including a photography workshop, a photo contest and a visit to the Customs and Excise Training School. The Scheme also joined hands with the “I Pledge” Campaign of the Hong Kong Intellectual Property Department in organising a film show, a short video shooting workshop, a filming tour to Foshan and a “2014 Piracy and Malware Liberal Studies Independent Enquiry Study Competition”.

Through instilling a value that they own copyright in what they have created, the youth is able to truly appreciate the harm done by infringing act, and hence comes the peak of creativity.

Ends

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