

## THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

## IMPACT CASE HISTORY

**Title of case study: The Community Legal Information Centre (CLIC) Series****1. Summary**

Professor Anne Cheung of the Department of Law and Dr Kevin Pun of the Department of Computer Science, together with their project team members, Dr Felix Chan and Mr Eric Cheung, set up the Community Legal Information Centre (CLIC) website series ([www.clic.org.hk/](http://www.clic.org.hk/)) to provide free bilingual legal information to the local community. The series includes YouthCLIC, SeniorCLIC and FamilyCLIC, which were specifically developed for teenagers, the seniors and families in Hong Kong respectively. The websites cover legal issues that have direct bearing on the daily lives of people in Hong Kong. The CLIC website was started in 2007 following debate in the community about the high cost of legal services and the need to provide an affordable legal information service for the public. The impact of the project can be seen in the number of visitors – more than 3,700 each day to the main CLIC site alone. The team has also been invited through CLIC to give public talks to share legal knowledge with the community.

**2. Underpinning research**

The Law and Technology Centre (LawTech Centre), established in 2001, is a joint Centre of the Faculty of Law and the Department of Computer Science at The University of Hong Kong. With a view to promoting and supporting the rule of law in Hong Kong, the Centre has long been committed to serving the community by making legal information available on the Internet for free access by the public. In 2002, it launched the “Hong Kong Legal Information Institute” (HKLII) at [www.hklii.hk](http://www.hklii.hk), which is a legal research facility on Hong Kong law offering primary legal information relating to Hong Kong, including legislation, regulations, case law, practice directions and law reform reports. HKLII is the first of its kind in Hong Kong and Asia that provides free access of information not limited to the legal profession but the general community. Currently, HKLII attracts over 3,200 visitors per day.

There has been debate in the community about the high cost of legal services and the need to provide an affordable legal information service for the public. In view of the success of the HKLII, the LawTech Centre was commissioned by the Government in 2005 to develop, host and maintain a website known as the Community Legal Information Centre (CLIC) as an adjunct to the HKLII. The aim is to enable members of the public to have a preliminary understanding of the legal position of a certain matter before going to a lawyer for legal advice. Apart from the project team members, research students were also involved to contribute to the contents of the website.

**3. References to the research****Key publications:**

Greenleaf, G; Chung, P; Mowbray, A; Chow, KP; Pun, KH. *The Hong Kong Legal Information Institute (HKLII): its role in free access to global law via the Internet*, Hong Kong Law Journal, 2002, v. 32 n. 2, p. 401-428.

Kevin KH Pun, HW Chan, CF Chong, KP Chow, Lucas Hui, WW Tsang. *An unexplored legal issue for the provision of free legal information in Hong Kong*, Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Law via the Internet, October 2008, Florence, Italy, 151-160.

Cheung, ASY. *The Hong Kong Legal Information Institute Experience*, World Legal Information Institute Conference, Sydney, Australia, 2009.

Alex Y H Fung, Kevin K H Pun, Philip Chung and Andrew Mowbray. *Searching in Chinese: the experience of HKLII*, Law via the Internet Conference 2011, June 2011, Hong Kong.

Alex Y H Fung and Kevin K H Pun. *Hypertext Markup in Bilingual Environment: The Challenge for HKLII*, Law via the Internet Conference 2012, October 2012, Ithaca, USA.

**Selected external grant funding:**

Community Legal Information Project

Funding Source: Department of Justice, HKSAR Government - General Award

Principal Investigator: Dr Kevin Pun

Period: 2004 – 2007

Amount Awarded: HK\$3.18M

Free Legal Information for Families, Youth and the Elderly in Hong Kong

Funding Source: Home Affairs Bureau of the HKSAR Government of the HKSAR

Principal Investigator: Professor Anne Cheung and Dr Kevin Pun

Period: 2012 – 2014

Amount Awarded: HK\$3.12M

**4. Details of the impact or benefit**

Launched in 2007, the CLIC website at [www.clic.org.hk](http://www.clic.org.hk) provides free bilingual legal information, written for the lay person. It provides basic information on more than 20 legal topics that have most interest and direct bearing on the daily lives of ordinary citizens in Hong Kong. The topics include employment disputes, landlord and tenant, personal injuries, protection for investors and structured products, police and crime, etc. Mobile apps for iOS and Android platforms have also been developed for free download.

The average number of visitors for CLIC is over 3,700 per day.

The success of CLIC has led to the launch of 3 websites for specific groups of people in Hong Kong, which were sponsored by the Home Affairs Bureau of the HKSAR Government:

(a) YouthCLIC: <http://youthclic.hk/>

Launched in 2012, the YouthCLIC website provides free legal information on about 70 offences and legal issues concerning young people. Topics covered by YouthCLIC include sexual offences, Internet crimes, school bullying, triad-related offences, theft and drug offences. More than 20 videos are shown to illustrate different crime scenarios based on true cases. Answers to the questions posed in the videos were written by legal experts. Viewers can click on specific legal terms which interlink with brief explanations of relevant crimes or Hong Kong ordinances.

Besides the website, YouthCLIC also set up a channel in Youtube and a page in Facebook to enhance interaction with young people. Selected news clippings with recommended YouthCLIC website content in YouthCLIC Facebook Page (Chinese only) help young people better understand the legal issues they may encounter in daily life.

The CLIC team, in collaboration with the HKU Faculty of Education, has successfully obtained Knowledge Exchange (KE) funding in 2013/14 to develop teaching materials for secondary school students. Six specific topics have been chosen from the YouthCLIC website to enrich the syllabus of the high school curriculum on liberal studies. The topics include: (i) use of illegal drugs, (ii) school bullying, (iii) intellectual property offences, (iv) online shopping, (v) sexual offences, and (vi) compensated dating.

The project aims to enhance students' legal knowledge by providing credible and accurate legal information for teaching materials in Liberal Studies. Data and suggested answers in the teaching packages were extracted from the YouthCLIC website. The project will benefit not only secondary school students but also Liberal Studies teachers, social workers, NGOs and youth counseling organizations. 90 sets of teaching packages were produced, including booklets and USBs, and were

distributed to teachers during two dissemination seminars held in September and October 2014. The soft copy of the teaching material can be downloaded for free at [http://youth.clic.org.hk/LS\\_teaching.pdf](http://youth.clic.org.hk/LS_teaching.pdf).

(b) SeniorCLIC: <http://www.s100.hk/>

The SeniorCLIC website followed in 2013. It provides free legal information on 27 legal topics of concern to seniors. The topics are divided into five groups: (1) housing and accommodation, (2) smart elderly, (3) work and retirement, (4) farewell to life, and (5) health and care. SeniorCLIC was designed as a legal guide for the elderly, tailor-made in every respect to suit the needs of seniors. The contents were written by legal experts, with the relevant laws and legal concepts being explained in plain language.

Much of the legal information provided on SeniorCLIC is also available in audio form. The website has an audio page (in Cantonese only) that summarizes the 27 topics in audio clips of three to four minutes each. The audio clips are also available in CD form for seniors who do not use computers. So far, about 2,000 booklets containing the transcript of the audio clips and 1,500 CDs have been sent out on request.

(c) FamilyCLIC: <http://familyclic.hk/>

The FamilyCLIC was launched in 2014 and provides free legal information on 19 topics involving legal issues commonly encountered by families in Hong Kong, including disputes with neighbours, domestic violence and assistance, foster care and child adoption, purchasing property together and divorce. The contents were again written by legal experts in plain language. FamilyCLIC serves as a quick and handy Internet guide for family members in Hong Kong to find relevant legal information. The contents of the website were summarized into 100 questions and answers as an introductory guide for viewers. These 100 Q&As were printed into booklets available to the public for free, and about 3,500 booklets (3,000 Chinese version and 500 English version) have been sent out on request.

In 2014, the average number of visitors for YouthCLIC and SeniorCLIC websites was about 150 to 250 per day. FamilyCLIC, being the most recent addition, has about 170 visitors per day last year after the official launch in April 2014.

The reach and popularity of the websites could be illustrated by the visitor numbers from July 2014 to June 2015 as follows:

	CLIC	YouthCLIC	SeniorCLIC	FamilyCLIC (note: launched on March 31, 2014)
Unique visitors	758,170	68,284	87,299	78,145
Number of visitors	1,257,945	86,826	125,110	117,617

The YouthCLIC website joined two website competitions, namely, “Top 10 .hk Website Competition 2012” organized by the Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation (HKIRC) and “Meritorious Websites Contest 2012” organized by the Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration (OFNAA) in 2013. It was shortlisted as the final contestants in both competitions.

The YouthCLIC and SeniorCLIC websites were shortlisted as the final contestants in "Top 10. hk Website Competition 2013" organized by the HKIRC in 2014.

Since the launch of CLIC in 2012, the project team has been interviewed by newspapers and on radio programmes to introduce the topics of the websites. Team members were also invited to give talks by NGOs, such as the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and the Family Council, to share about how to promote legal knowledge to the public by making use of the Internet. Promotional items of HKLII, CLIC and YouthCLIC were distributed in the UNESCO Peacemakers' Celebration on February 24, 2013 at the booth for FIDA (International Federation of Women Lawyers).

The CLIC series provide an important resource to our society – access to legal information, which could help people navigate their everyday lives. The project team has demonstrated what knowledge exchange initiatives could do to improve people’s lives where access to knowledge is of the essence of such improvement.

#### **5. References to the corroboration of impact or benefit**

- Analytics of the websites are available for corroboration purpose.
- A list of news reports and radio interviews is available for corroboration purpose.
- Crosslinking or listing of CLIC/YouthCLIC/SeniorCLIC/FamilyCLIC websites can be found on the following websites:

The Home Affairs Bureau of the Government of HKSAR

The Department of Justice

Hong Kong Law Reform Commission

The Family Council

The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Library Internet Sources