

VOL.44./ISSUE7//MAY 2012

TYR

ESTABLISHED 1969

THE
YOUNG
REPORTER

BY HKBU JOURNALISM STUDENTS

THE FAST GROWING GAMING INDUSTRY

WITH THE CHANGES OF GAMEPLAY,
MORE PEOPLE ARE ATTRACTED TO JOIN THE HEAT

PUBLISHER

Steve Guo Zhongshi

ADVISORS

Judith Clarke

CK Lau

Dean C.K. Cox

CHIEF EDITOR

Gary Kwok Ka-lok

DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR

Thomas Chan Chun-wai

Goosie Chan Ho-kiu

ART DIRECTOR

Simon Yuen Wing-cheung

MULTIMEDIA EDITORS

Carlos Cheng Lixing

Xavier Ng Nai-hong

DISTRIBUTION DIRECTOR

Claire Chu Ka-yee

PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTORS

Judith Ki Yik-yu

Winnie Yiu Wing-sze

PRINTER

Department of Journalism

School of Communication

10/F, Communication and Visual Arts Building, Hong Kong Baptist

University, Kowloon Tong

Editor's note

With the technological breakthroughs, innovative new elements in games and massive promotions, gaming has become phenomenal over the past few years, overwhelming billions of people all over the world. International competitions are hosted, professional gaming teams are set up and they are actually making handsome money. Hong Kong, as an international hub, have been deeply affected by this trend and more people are devoting themselves to the gaming industry, either as professional gamers, sponsors, competition hosts or sellers of professional gaming gears. The TYR reporting team has taken a close look into the industry, and has spoken to the first ever professional local gaming team, CrossGaming and found out more about them, how they see the current trend of computer gaming and how they think the industry would evolve.

With the school year coming to an end, this issue would be the last of TYR under this editorial team. As the chief editor of TYR, I would like to thank you all for reading TYR. We have always tried to improve in terms of the quality as well as the quantity of our stories, photos and layouts. We appreciated all comments submitted and have taken every one of them into consideration seriously. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow editors and reporters for your effort in making this publication better. I ask for your support in the upcoming issues and I wish you all a very bright future.

Gary Kwok Ka-lok
Chief Editor


COVERSTORY 12-17**THE UP AND RISING GAMING INDUSTRY IN HONG KONG****CYCLING SAFETY 5**

Accident rate of riding bicycles
remains high

HOT YOGA FRENZY 18-19

The heat is on for the
untraditional yoga classes

JOYFUL ENTERTAINERS 26-27

Behind the ever-smiling faces of
clowns, what difficulties are the
performers facing?



HONG KONG STUDENTS STRESSED AS EXAMINATION SYSTEM CHANGES

The new “3-3-4” academic structure change made many Hong Kong students terrified as two cohorts of school-leavers this year take two different examinations to fight for university seats.

As the new public curriculum, the Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) would replace the Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) from 2012 onwards, but this year, the two examinations would take place simultaneously and both student groups are feeling pressured.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Hok Yau Club, an NGO serving teenage students, the pressure level for students taking the last HKALE and the first HKDSE Exam reached 7.7 and 6.9 respectively, with 10 as the maximum level.

Vern To Lap, 19, a local student taking the last HKALE, said: “The school and society focused on the candidates of the first HKDSE Exam. “This makes us think

that we are being ignored.”

Mr To said that as one of the candidates sitting for the last HKALE, he would be much more concerned about the examination result, as this is his very last chance to enter the gate of universities under the old academic structure. Those who fail to get high enough results to enter university will have the chance to take the exam privately in the future, but will have to join the new 4-year system, which is out of kilter with their school education.

Leung Yuk Ki, 18, a student taking the first HKDSE examination, was also as nervous but for a different reason. “Unlike candidates taking HKALE, we don’t have any past examination papers for reference,” he said.

He said he could only complete all the sample papers set by the Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority, but this was still not enough for him.

Additionally, Mr Leung said the results of

all subjects in the HKDSE Exam will be expressed in five levels, and experts will set the standard for each level, so candidates like him would find it difficult to estimate their own result. He said this would affect their strategy for choosing a study programme at local universities.

Mr Leung was also afraid that university spots would be unevenly distributed between students taking HKALE and HKDSE exams.

Study abroad is a possible solution for students who are not satisfied with the academic structure change and those who are stressed of the old HKALE or the new HKDSE Exam.

Apart from the just over 100,000 students who this year have applied to Hong Kong universities, about 4,000 Hong Kong students have applied for universities in Taiwan according to Taipei Economic and Cultural Office. Also, other figure showed that 4,200 Hong Kong students have enrolled in mainland tertiary institutions in 2012. At the same time, figures from the Office of the European Union to Hong Kong and Macau revealed that over 13,000 local students went overseas to study last year – 10 per cent more than previous year.

These figures show there is a trend for more Hong Kong students choosing to study abroad. Some of them went overseas because they did not have much confidence in Hong Kong’s academic structure change.

Kevin Yiu Kai Wing, 19, went to a high school in the United States two years ago, as he could foresee that he did not want to be a victim of the academic change.

Mr Yiu said: “Many Hong Kong students fight for the chance to go on exchange at local university. I don’t understand why they don’t directly study overseas earlier if it is affordable for them.”

Still with a month or two until the result release of both exams, Hok Yau Club and other NGOs are already offering counselling to stressed and concerned students. ■



STORY / JIM WONG
EDITED BY / PETER LARSSON

FOR-PROFIT HOSPITALS PERFORM MORE C-SECTIONS

Hospitals recommend mothers-to-be to opt for more-expensive Caesarean births.

Four out of ten women who give birth in Hong Kong now have Caesarean sections, and 70 to 80 per cent of these elective surgical births take place for *fung shui* reasons, research shows.

About 18,440 women had Caesareans – about 40 percent of all births – in 2009, the latest year with figures available, according to a report from the Hong Kong College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists which reviews the situation every five years. The rate has nearly doubled during the past 15 years.

Mothers choose a specific date or even an exact time for C-section because they want their babies to be born with a fortunate fate, or just to avoid unlucky days, said Dr. Lam Siu-keung, a medical practitioner at Union Hospital. This could best explain why C-section rates are especially high in Chinese communities believing in *fung shui*, where rates are often double the average in developed countries.

Conducting the surgery costs more; taking a four-day and three-night delivery package in Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital as an example, the normal package for a general ward for natural delivery costs only HK\$17,200, while the cost of C-section package is more than \$40,000, including surgery cost of \$16,000, additional ward charges of \$3,000, and anaesthesia of \$5,000. On the other hand, patients only pay the ward fee of a daily \$100 in public hospitals.

Private hospitals recommend C-sections to the pregnant because the service can yield a big money for the hospital and they could handle more patients without coping with the time-consuming and unpredictable vaginal delivery, said Professor Lao Tzu-hsi of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. With the inflow of numerous mainland pregnant women, doctors and nurses even have less patience to wait for days before the expected mothers to deliver naturally, he added.

Six out of 10 babies were born under the knife in private hospitals, according to a report from the South China Morning Post.

“It’s a bad trend. People are turning a

natural and physiological thing into something unnatural and potentially pathological,” said Prof. Lao.

The fear of labour pain can be another reason deterring the pregnant from choosing vaginal childbirth. Mothers’ threshold of pain is greatly lowered after listening to the dramatic stories their friends share or watching those long and painful labour processes on TV series.

Ms Mak Pat-ye, 31, was one of them. She requested her son to be delivered by C-section last year because she was traumatised after witnessing her elder sister’s an eight-hour-long painful labour.

She thought she deserved a choice to give birth to her baby by surgery even though the service charge is a lot more. “I’ve never felt any less of a mother. After all, I still underwent a 9-month long process as other mothers do,” she said.

Another mother, Ms Lam Wai-fong, 34, who gave vaginal birth to her three-year-old daughter naturally, had different opinions. “Perhaps I’m conservative and the idea of surgery scares me more,” she said. Ms Lam also believes in traditional Chinese medicine, which suggests surgery will destroy the “qi” (energy) of the body.

“My friends said I was brave. I also found difficulty in appointing famous doctors because they were too busy handling non-C-section cases,” she said. Four out of six mothers in her ward chose surgery.

“I have to say the pain was great but I don’t regret it. The skin-to-skin contact during the birth was amazing. The joy was shared with my husband who was by my side during that time,” she said.

Many mothers-to-be think that they will not suffer from painful labour if they choose C-section but they do not realise that there could be long lasting pain in their wound after the surgery, and surgical complications can give rise to more pain, Prof. Lao argued.

Dr. Lam, however, said that the trend revealed more participation of expectant mothers in medical decisions, which was not necessarily a bad thing.

“With the advent of medical science, the risk of surgery has lowered a great deal. The medical risk or fatality is similar to that of the vaginal delivery.”

Dr. Lam was not worried if C-section numbers would continue to rise and become overwhelming. Childbirth was a matter of personal choice and it is normal to see different preferences of birth giving, he said.

The World Health Organisation has previously recommended the Caesarean section rate should be no higher than ten to 15 per cent.

“It’s no good for us set a limit to reduce C-sections. The most important thing is that mothers and babies are well, whatever the method adopted,” said Dr. Lam. ■

STORY / ADA YEUNG
EDITED BY / VISQI HE



New-born babes: Some mums choose surgical birth for *fung shui* reasons.

GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGNS FAIL TO CULTIVATE SAFE CYCLING CULTURE

Despite efforts to promote cycling safety, accidents are on the rise.



The track along Shing Mun River in Sha Tin is one of the most popular exercise locations at weekends, but cyclists, joggers and walkers all have to use the same space.

Cycling safety campaigns are launched from time to time, but the increasing number of accidents reveals the inadequacy of cyclists' knowledge of road safety, especially on cycling tracks.

According to the Road Safety and Standards Division, the number of accidents involving bicycles has increased by about 50 per cent since 2007, from 1666 to 2500 cases. The rise implies that bicycles may have become a dangerous form of transport.

The Secretariat of Road Safety Council said the government kept raising public awareness about cycling safety via promotion, education and law enforcement.

For example, they aired a series of promotion videos and tapes, and cooperated with cycling associations to launch cycling lessons.

However, it seems they have failed to impose the expected influence.

The Police Force has given over 20,000 verbal warnings and prosecutions against people who broke the related laws, said Mr Ting Ka-ho, a senior inspector of road safety from the Traffic Branch Headquarters.

The most commonly found are riding on footpaths, cycling without switching on the correct signal and careless cycling, he said.

Mr Lau Yuet-fan, a committee member of the Hong Kong Cycling Tour Association,

said the increasing accident rate reflected that people were not aware of the safety of this increasingly popular sport.

"Cycling culture in Hong Kong is not well-recognized. Hong Kong people do not have a clear understanding of the use of cycling tracks," Mr Lau said.

Besides the small number of people who bother to wear safety equipment like helmets, Mr Lau said the riding on bike lanes with people of different skill levels was problematic. Accidents could easily happen when cyclists ranging from beginners to amateurs were using the path at the same time.

"The kids ride slowly on multi-cycles while the professionals ride speedily on their bicycles. They may collide with each other if the advanced ones try to pass the beginners," said Mr Lau.

The "multiple use of cycling tracks" – with activities like cycling, jogging and walking dogs all happen together – could also lead to accidents if the bikes lost control, he said.

Mr Wilfred Yan, a cyclist who has ridden folding bikes and mountain bikes for two years, was aware of the problems and felt annoyed when he saw people walking on the cycling tracks instead of the footpaths.

"It is dangerous to play or walk the dogs on the cycling tracks because it is hard for

cyclists to give way to pedestrians who appear all of a sudden," he said.

What Mr Yan can do to avoid accidents is to stay away from the pedestrians and ring the bike bell to alert them as soon as possible.

Mr Jackey Law, a committee member of TD Biannual Meeting with Local Cycling Associations and forum supervisor of the Hong Kong Cyclist Information Net (HKCI.net), said the public, both cyclists and pedestrians, were not familiar with the Road Users' Code on cycleways.

He said neither the cyclists knew that it was illegal to walk on the cycleways, nor the pedestrians knew that they should not ride side by side, which may easily block the road.

On the other hand, Mr Law said that many cyclists turned a blind eye to traffic signs or road markings on the cycling tracks. He cited a pitched subway located between Taiwai and Sha Tin as an example, where people usually ignore the "wheel your cycle" sign.

He thinks the promotion of cycling safety is insufficient and proffered a suggestion. "It would be good for the government to start advertising on buses and taxis," he said. ■

STORY / JOHNNY LO
EDITED BY / CECILIA CHAN

PUBLIC'S DOUBT OVER THE DECLINE IN QUALITY OF SERVICES OF DISCIPLINARY FORCES

The lowering of recruitment threshold has raised concern

Procuring a stable job in the disciplinary forces has long been a dream of many, but lots of applicants underperform in the physical tests. Only about 40 per cent of people who applied to be firefighters passed the tests in 2007-2010.

To take in new blood, the Fire Services Department became the first to lower the threshold in recruitment in 2010. Two years later, the public doubt about the quality of their services – did the services decline together with the lowering of the threshold?

“It is a bit worrying,” said Mrs. Ng, a full-time housewife. “If officers of the disciplinary forces are not physically fit, how can they rescue us? How can they sustain social stability?”

The current system of all seven disciplinary forces, namely the Fire Services Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Government Flying Service, Immigration Department, Customs and Excise Department, Independent Commission Against Corruption and Hong Kong Correctional Services, requires all applicants to have passed five subjects or more in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examinations, met the language requirements set for civil servants and passed the basic law test.

In addition, applicants to the Hong Kong Police Force, Fire Services Department and the Immigration Department have to pass the physical test set by respective departments, while applicants of the Fire Services Department and the Customs and Excise Department should pass an eyesight test. A colour perception test is set for applicants of the Customs and Excise Department as well. The Government Flying Service requires applicants possessing the relevant knowledge in the job profession.

Though the public are worried that loosening the physical requirement may affect the quality of services, some firefighters denied that there is a direct influence, because one would surely become fitter upon graduation in the training schools.

“Even if you are not very fit at the very

beginning, after six months of training, I'm sure your physical level will be enhanced,” said Mr. Alex Chong, a fireman who has been working for six years in the Fire Services Department.

“In terms of the best performance grade 1A, normally graduates have to complete the 4,800 meter distance running in 21 minutes,” said Mr Chong. “You can hardly achieve this before getting into the training school.” He added that even though getting grade 1A was not compulsory, almost all current firemen took it. “If you cannot attain grade 1A, colleagues will look down on you.”

However, Mr Chong said that the requirement set by the Fire Services Department was still quite strict even after the loosening of requirement. He said a lot of applicants were filtered in the first round because they were short-sighted, especially in this cyber era.

“It is very difficult to get applicants who are physically fit, obedient and has normal eye sights,” he said.

Mr Ng Chun-wai, a former seven student, is going to apply for the position of police constable, but his mother did not want him

to be a one because she thought many policemen who were patrolling looked weak and were like servants. “My mother said policemen are civil servants, so people will easily take it out on them,” Mr Ng said.

Mr Ng believed that the “servant” image was a misconception and it rendered that policemen are not confident enough when confronting troublemakers. “I don't think the bad image has to do with the entry requirements,” he said.

But some did see the downside of lowering the qualifications. An active police constable, nicknamed Cheong, said that he saw more and more fresh policemen underperform.

“Instead of physical fitness, attitude is the main concern,” Cheong said. “Many fresh policemen often reject others' advice and fail to take the job seriously.”

Cheong attributed the changes to society as a whole. “The young generation tends to stay at home rather than engaging in outdoor activities. That's why many of them are neither physically fit nor tactful.”

STORY / JOYCE CHEUNG
EDITED BY / CHRISTIAN JENSEN
PHOTO CREDIT / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS





The duties of auxiliary police are no different from those of a regular police.

THE PART-TIMERS WHO SUPPORT "ASIA'S FINEST"

The Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force look no different from their full-time colleagues but they are out there when you need them.

You see police when you are on the streets, watching fireworks at the harbor or walking past a group of protesters, yet some of them might be ordinary staff at offices, teachers or undergraduates at schools when they are not in uniforms.

They are the Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force who provide additional manpower to the regular officers on a part-time basis. They perform beat patrols and coordinate crowd control during times of emergencies and big occasions, including festivals, protests and natural disasters.

With different reasons behind their career choice, they are all well-trained to serve the city.

Ms Lam Yan-yan, 23, is an auxiliary whose regular job is a journalist for local newspaper SingPao. She joined the Auxiliary Undergraduates Scheme in 2009 when it was her first year in university.

She said salary has never been her concern. Instead, the chance to experience the life of a voluntary police was why she decided to join the force. She said her brother, part of the regular force, has also influenced her.

Ms Fran Chiu Hoi-yu, 20, is as keen as Ms Lam, but she is still waiting for the result of the scheme this year.

"I want to aid the weak and help maintain law and order. I have a strong sense of justice and I want to serve the city," she said. She also said that the good pay is also a pull factor.

Though the two types of police forces perform the same duties and have the same physical requirements, they have reasons not to become regular officers.

Majoring Physical Education and Recreation Management, 21-year-old Mr Eddie Chan Kai-wing wants to be a sports teacher or a staff at the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. His first step toward his ideal career was to apply for the scheme.

"For those jobs I will have to face and deal with people, that's why I want to learn the skills by becoming a police," Mr Chan said, waiting for the result to be announced.

"The requirements are the same, except applicants must have a regular and full-time employment; or be full-time student of one of the local universities through the scheme," Mr Mak Chi-keung, Senior Inspector of the

Auxiliary Support Bureau said.

Mr Mak said the Auxiliary welcomes people from different walks of life and they aim at recruiting 288 personnel annually.

"The more university graduates join through the scheme, the more their schoolmates know about the Auxiliary Police Force," he said, adding that non-students can share views and experiences with colleagues in their principle works.

Over the past three years of being an auxiliary, Ms Lam has been making full use of her day-offs and leisure time. She has attended the compulsory training camps and is experienced in managing a crowd, for example, on the Birthday of Tin Hau in Yuen Long.

She said time used to be flexible when she was a student. Now she has to spare time from the hectic newsroom schedule to meet the basic requirement of 208 hours of beat patrol.

Ms Lam finds it easier to handle the tasks because as a part-timer, she does not need to devote completely. ■

STORY / ROY CHAN
EDITED BY / JUDITH KI

DAB "NO REGRETS" FOR ITS SUPPORT FOR CY LEUNG

The party brushes aside murmurs that voters didn't like the move and will desert it in the September Legco elections

Even though Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) leaders say they won't lose votes in September's Legislative Election as a reaction to their Election Committee members' votes for Leung Chun-ying in the chief executive race, academics think this might have some influence on their supporters' voting decision.

As the popularity of Mr Leung was still very low, it could have some impact on voting choices of citizens, said Mr Ming Sing, an associate professor of Social Science at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

According to the press release of popularity figures of CE-elect C.Y. Leung conducted by the Public Opinion Programme of the University of Hong Kong, Mr Leung's net popularity changed significantly from negative 13 to positive 1 percentage point. But his support as CE rate is still under 50% of people surveyed.

Mr Sing said that the DAB had to try hard to raise the popularity of the new chief executive so that they would get more votes in the coming election. The party should try to provide Mr Leung with some practical suggestions such as political reforms to satisfy Hong Kong citizens' need, he suggested, saying he saw Mr Leung and DAB as partners.

But Mr Chan Hak-kan, a lawmaker from DAB, the biggest party in Hong Kong which holds 13 seats out of 60 in LegCo,

said he saw no connection between voting for Mr Leung and losing votes from their supporters. "I can't see any connection. That means no worry about that," said Mr Chan, adding that they voted for Mr Leung because they had similar political ideas and programmes.

According to Mr Chan, the DAB organised a New Chief Executive Workshop in which they consulted different sectors and submitted suggestions to the then candidates Mr Leung and Mr Henry Tang Ying-yen before deciding to vote for Mr Leung. "It was a unanimous decision by the senior committee," he said.

How DAB voting for Mr Leung will decide for them to get more votes or less in LegCo Election will mainly depend on their supporters or voters.

"I keep a conservative standpoint that it is hard to change the supporters' mind," said Dr. Wai Kwok-wong, assistant professor of the Government and International Studies Department at Hong Kong Baptist University. He added that whether the supporters of DAB would change side easily and vote for lawmakers from political parties was still unknown.

Dr. Wong said the confidence of the DAB came from its excellent district services. Mr Sing said that DAB could serve the communities better than other parties because of capital support and sponsorship from the Chinese



The DAB's Chan Hak-kan: "No worry about that."

Communist Party.

But they still have disadvantages, according to Dr. Wong. Even though DAB had their advantages which could keep their supporters to vote for them they still lack energy and talent in coming up with good political suggestions during the essential period, he said.

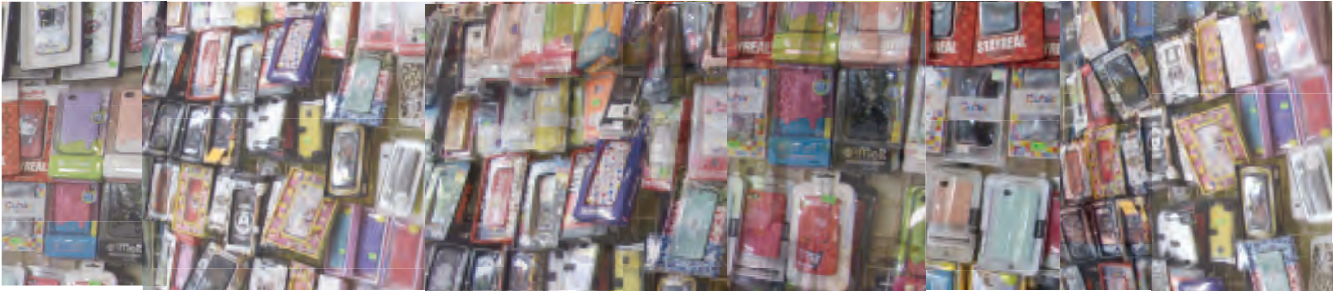
To get more votes in the coming election, the DAB should keep striving with their district services as most of their voters were elderly people, Wenhui Po's readers and lower classes, Dr. Wong said, but cautioning that it was still early to predict. ■

STORY/VIVIAN LI
EDITED BY/SAI AUNG THEIN

Popularity figures for CE-elect CY Leung

	27-30/3/2012	2-10/4/2012	Latest change
Overall support rate	51.5	52.2 (+/-1.5)	+0.7
In favour of CY as CE	38%	46% (+/-3%)	+8%
In oppose to CY as CE	51%	45% (+/-3%)	+6%
Net approval rate	-13%	+1%	+14%

Source: Popularity figures of CE-elect CY Leung from the Public Opinion Programme, The University of Hong Kong



THE SMARTER OPTION IN PHONE SALES

Smart phone sellers are making big money in small add-ons, profiting much more than they do from phone sales.

While the smart phone market is continually growing, many phone sellers now get their hands on the booming market in the sideline range.

Ms Suki Siu, owner of a smart phone shop in Ginza Plaza, Mong Kok, said that in general she earns five times more in add-on sales than in phone sales. When Hong Kong was yet to release 2011's iPhone 4S, Sui brought in iPhones from parallel importers in Japan and earned a good HK\$4,000 on each one sold.

"In less than two months I earned over HK\$300,000, but those situations are extremely rare," Siu says as she lined up the smart phone cases on a display shelf. Each day she sells ten to 20 phone cases and puts protective shields on five to ten handsets.

Siu earns about HK\$20,000 in profit each month after paying the rent, mainly from selling cases and other add-ons such as pocket chargers, headphones and dust plugs. Reselling smart phone only accounts for less than HK\$3,000 of the total profit.

She adds that those making big money in smart phone sales usually have "connections", and explains that the reselling market is too complicated for small business owners.

"The water is too deep and the risk too high," Siu says. "I feel better with making easy money in add-on sales."

Similarly, Mr Yeung, a smart phone shop owner in Sin Tat Plaza, Mongkok, says although phone sales still accounted for 70 per cent of his business, he admits

add-ons had a greater profit margin.

Unlike branded smart phones, which usually come with a standard retail price, add-ons and accessories have less transparent purchase prices. The public tend to be less aware when they pay ten times more than what the product is really worth, especially given that small add-ons are so affordable to most smart phone owners.

"Shops all have direct access to certain manufacturers, from whom they get the products at a low price," says Yeung, who gets his iPhone accessories from a factory in Guangdong, China.

The purchase price of a protective shield, a must-buy for smart phone users, can be as low as HK\$0.5 per piece, which Yeung resells at a minimum of HK\$30, making the profit 60 times of the purchase price. The price usually included him helping the customer to put the shield on the smart phone.

"The mentality is that, after spending thousands on a smart phone, people usually don't care to pay another HK\$30 on a shield," says Yeung. "And I daresay I am not the one making the most profit in such business."

Some sellers had even shifted their business focus from smart phones to add-ons and accessories, for they had seen the endless possibilities for products within the sideline range.

Ms Ceci Poon started selling smart phone cases in 2010. She says the business of phone accessories had boosted since iPhone and Galaxy entered

the market.

Poon has a dozen frequent customers, mostly girls in their twenties. She says the money some customers spent on smart phone cases is almost the price of another smart phone. There is over 2,000 different cases available in Poon's shop, with prices ranging from HK\$10 to HK\$320., with best-sellers usually between HK\$100 to HK\$150.

She says the purchase price of cases is a "commercial secret", but she admitted the profit margin was huge.

One pink iPhone case with silicon bunny ears was so popular when it came out in early 2011, that the purchase price jumped from beginning at HK\$20 purchase price to HK\$50. Poon sold them at high time for HK\$130. She adds that the fast-changing trend of smart phone fashion had brought opportunities as well as problems to business owners.

"Customers' taste changes so fast that I could never follow," says Ms Poon.

Rene Lo, 22, dubs herself an iPhone add-ons fanatic, and admits to having spent more than HK\$5,000 on phone accessories including key chains, cases and dust plugs. She says most of her friends change phone cases like changing clothes.

"Most people use one phone only, but they can have a million add-ons to go with it," says Ms Lo. ■

STORY / COCO ZHENG
EDITED BY / LEIGH FERGUSON



Parents say cloth diapers may be more economical than disposable ones, but they are inconvenient and unhygienic.

GREEN PARENTHOOD IS ON THE RISE

Parents are learning to save both money and the environment by going natural.

The vast amount of money needed to raise a child may be a huge burden to most of the parents, but some realize that being environmentally friendly is a way to save money while saving nature.

A 900g can of milk powder costs about \$200 in local drug stores, which already is slightly cheaper than supermarkets, and a newborn baby finishes a can in one week. In other words, a family has to spend more than \$800 merely on milk powder each month.

Mrs Annie Chan has cut costs by going back to the natural way and breastfeeding her six-month-old daughter instead of using powdered milk.

“Breastfeeding kills two birds with one stone. With a mixture of enzymes and antibodies, breast milk can increase my kid’s resistance against diseases, at the same time it can save at least 10% of my expenditure on food in her first couple of years,” the 35-year-old mother said.

If a mother chooses to breastfeed, about 50 cans of milk powder can be saved from disposal per year. Thus, pressure posed to the local landfills can be mitigated.

However, local mothers may hit obstacles when breastfeeding with several hindering factors: limited time, space and strange looks from the others.

According to the Hong Kong

Breastfeeding Mothers’ Association, only 14 per cent of local mothers breastfed their babies that are four to six months’ old in 2011.

“I have a job and have to work round the clock. I can’t breastfeed my daughter when I am working,” said Mrs. Chan. “Besides, it’s uncomfortable to breastfeed in public with other people staring at me.”

Babies’ clothing is also another way parents can save. Newborn babies grow rapidly and their clothes soon become too small. Instead of disposing clothes that have just been wore for several months, some parents choose to buy second-hand ones, or simply exchange them among friends.

“Two-thirds of my son’s clothes are given to me by my friends, while our unfit clothes will be passed on to others,” Mr. Kenneth Chung, 42, said. “It’s like exchanging gifts among friends. It can save both money and the environment.”

Mr. Chung estimated that more than \$10,000 can be saved per year. “Money can be saved and used in a much better way,” he said.

Besides exchanging clothes among his friends, Mr. Chung has tried to replace disposable diapers with cloth ones. However, he soon gave up due to the unfavourable hygienic condition.

“Using cloth diapers can save a lot of money and is more environmentally friendly, but it is very inconvenient. You have to wash the diaper once it gets dirty, but one is not allowed to do so when he or she is away from home,” Mr. Chung explained.

Many parents realize the importance of environmental conservation to educate the next generation on this issue. Mr. Anthony Yip expressed that green concepts should be nurtured since one is small.

“A dollar will be charged whenever my daughter forgets to turn off the un-used light or water tap when she is not using it. With the punishment, she will soon develop the habit of conserving the environment,” the 48-year-old father said.

It may be more effective if punishment comes along with education. Mr. Yip’s four-year-old daughter can now identify different recycling bins and dispose trash into the respective bins. She will also use both sides of the paper before recycling it.

“Environmental protection is a piece of cake if we are willing to change our mindset. It is useless if we do not educate our next generation on this issue. After all, they are the future of Hong Kong,” Mr. Yip said. ■

STORY / MELODY CHAN
EDITED BY / XAVIER NG

NO MORE TICKET SCALPING, SAY LADY GAGA'S FANS

Do you like Lady Gaga enough to pay \$5,000 for her concert? Tickets for the Lady Gaga Born This Way Ball are going on www.asiaxpat.com for more than three times the original price, with the original ticket price of \$1580 now going for \$5,000.

"It is time that Hong Kong did something to regulate this practice," said Cxboron on online forum <http://hongkong.asiaxpat.com/forums/>. "Rugby 7's every year brings out the worst in touting and Lady Gaga has just been another prime example," added Cxboron.

Ticket scalping is illegal but some people still continue to purchase tickets and resell them as much they can.

"Under the Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance, it was an offence to sell or offer for sale in a public place any ticket for the match or in other places at a price exceeding the amount fixed by the organizer," according to a statement issued by the Police Force.

Despite the police's warning for legal action, this practice is quite common in Hong Kong. Rugby Sevens tickets would always be sold out months before the event, and ticket scalpers would post business up on websites like www.asiaxpat.com where they sometimes double the price.

Lady Gaga initially had her concert scheduled for May 2 at the Asia World Expo Arena in Chek Lap Kok. The tickets were sold out almost instantly and it did not take long for the negotiation for

another concert to take place.

"I was waiting every single night for online booking to open for the concerts, but for some reason it just kept selling out," Ms Valerie Del Rosario said. "I was furious that I couldn't get a ticket but a friend helped me out and I was able to get it for a reasonable price," she said.

Soon after news broke out that Lady Gaga was to have a second night on May 3. Again, tickets were sold out only within hours after online booking was opened.

"There are people out there who would really love to see Lady Gaga live-performance," Ms Rosario continued. "But even I would not pay more than \$4,000 for it. These ticket scalpers are exploiting the system."

After more deliberation, the last deal came out. Lady Gaga is going to do another show on May 5, and her final one on May 7.

In the hopes of eliminating ticket scalping, the limit of the number of tickets per credit card was reduced from eight to four. But again, tickets of all four shows were sold out.

"It's not worth it anymore," aspiring concertgoer Ms Lena Oh said. "It's a little too much when you have to pay an arm and a leg for one night, and it may not even be a good seat." Ms Oh decided to pass on the concert for the excessively expensive ticket prices.

Ms Rosario, on the other hand, was able to succeed in getting her two tickets to the concert. "After so much

hunting, finally!" she exclaimed. "I was really pissed, and I hate the system. God only knows if these people actually want to see the concert!"

Many are furious with ticket scalping, but there is little that they can do.

"It's easy money," said a 23-year-old ticket scalper who wants to stay anonymous. "Believe it or not, some people would really pay just for a second-class seat. Some people would blow their money on anything these days!"

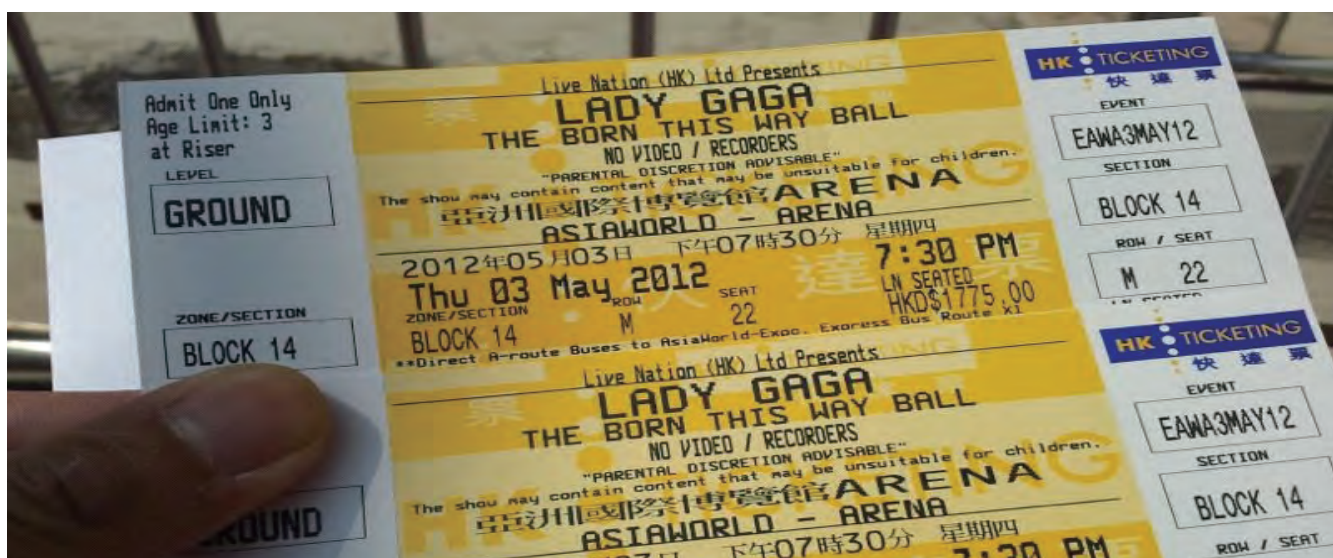
James, who does not want to identify his real name, has been ticket scalping for about two years. With Rugby Sevens, concerts like Taylor Swift's and Maroon 5's, but he insists he "sells at a reasonable price". "I've never seen anything like what's happening with the Lady Gaga concert," he said. "Because I saw on websites that they're selling it for \$4000 and more. And people are buying [them]."

James finds his customers through his excessive circle of connections. "I also depend on the Internet," he said. "A lot of people simply log on to e-bay type websites, Google the tickets and buy the first ones they see."

"I bet these concerts won't even be full," he said. "And there will be a lot of people selling their tickets around the event and on the day of. For a really good and desperate price."

"If I were you, I'd wait," James said. ■

STORY / KRISTINE BASILIO
EDITED BY / JACKAUNG





THE ETERNAL LURE OF ONLINE GAMING

The electronic gaming industry has been constantly changing to cope with global financial difficulties and its future lays as bright as ever.

STORY / DENNIS LEE, FECHON WONG, MANYU, REV HUI
 EDITED BY / ALEX HURD, GINA NG, JENEMY MA, SAIDE LO

In a time when major economies are in recession and industries are desperately trying to curb spending, there exists an outlier, which, despite all the financial difficulties the world is facing, is still going strong. That anomaly is the electronic gaming industry.

In fact, the global electronic gaming industry is going so strong that it is now worth a mind-boggling US\$65 billion and analysts are expecting the numbers to shoot up to a jaw-dropping US\$112 billion by 2015.

But just how well has the local gaming industry been coping with changing environments and time? And where exactly does the future stand for Hong Kong's gaming industry?

According to Mr Marti Wong Kwok-hung, 34, creator of the hugely popular cult game Little Fighter and Little Fighter 2, quite a few local firms began

their lives as game developers.

“Many local companies first started out creating their own games and some were quite successful, such as Doraemon Monopoly,” said Mr Wong. “Nowadays, most local companies prefer to operate or localize foreign games, such as World of Warcraft.”

Mr Wong says that this shift in mode of operations is partly due to the fact that the local market is far too small to sustain companies that develop their own games.

He explains that for a company to create a game from scratch, it takes at least 8 people, a minimum of 2 years and a budget no less than \$3 million. For the game to make a profit, it needs to sell a budget of \$3 million copies at a price of \$100 each.

Making a profit from such an effort, Mr Wong says, is “highly improbable”. That is why he sticks to games that don’t require that kind of investment, and never aims to earn a single cent from the game. To him, it is more of a hobby.

Apart from changes on an industry level, the games themselves have also been undergoing several facelifts over the years.

Mr Kenneth Leung Tin-yau, 23, a gaming enthusiast, has seen the

definition of mainstream games changed many times ever since he was first addicted to them at the age of 6.

“Console games such as those on Sony’s Playstation and Nintendo’s Dreamcast used to be the hit and then it became computer games,” said Mr Leung. “Online games such as Star Wars: The Old Republic are the top dog now.”

The rise of online games, however, is strangely linked to piracy.

Piracy, the long nemesis of the game industry, has plagued the industry for years. Many locals would probably still remember the “pirated game shops” in Mong Kok’s Ho King Commercial Center as well as Sham Shui Po’s Golden Computer Shopping Center.

Even though many of these “shops” have disappeared eventually, piracy has not. The emergence of file sharing portals and technologies such as Megaupload and Bit-Torrent has once again tilted the balance in favor of piracy.

Game developers are increasingly focused to creating online games as the data in the servers of these games are extremely difficult to copy or steal, unlike that of the traditional single-player console and computer games. These traditional single-player games unfortunately, can be easily copied by

anyone as long as they have a DVD burner at home.

However, instead of brooding over this never ending battle against piracy, Marti believes that local game developers should spend more time to cater to the emerging casual gamers market.

“In recent years, we have seen the emergence of casual gamers due to the introduction of Nintendo’s Wii and Apple’s iPhone,” said Marti. “These casual gamers have brought about an entirely new playing field for game developers.”

Unlike traditional “hardcore” gamers who are willing to spend hundreds of hours equipping their in-game characters, solving puzzles and perfecting their game strategies, casual gamers prefer games that are short and simple, such as Angry Birds and Draw Something.

Most importantly, these casual games are usually far less expensive to develop and allow game developers access to the global market easily.

“I truly believe that the emergence of smartphone games can become the saving grace of local game developers,” Marti said. “As long as long we are creative and able to produce high quality games, local game developers can certainly succeed.” ■



Single-player computer games like this one is gradually being replaced by online games which supports multiple players' interactions.

ELECTRONIC SPORTS ENTER THE REALM OF HIGH COMPETITION

With tournament prizes getting bigger, Hong Kong club CrossGaming trains players to succeed.

Video games are more than an exciting pastime for all ages. Through systematic training, players can reach professional level and participate in international competitions to attain cash prizes.

“The online game industry is an emerging entertainment software industry,” said Mr Tong Pui-ming Roy, the founder and manager of CrossGaming Club, which provides professional training to members who have participated in local and international electronic sports (E-Sports) tournaments since 2011.

“It (E-Sports) is not only a self-entertainment, but it’s becoming more professional, that’s why we need skilled coaching to cope with its development,” said Mr Tong.

In contrast with some traditional video games that involve no communication between players, E-Sports emphasizes a lot more interactions among competitors and quicker responses, according to Mr Tong.

In the United States, the sales of PC games reached around US\$20 billion last year. The rapid development of E-sports can also be reflected in the ample tournament prizes. For example, the Cyberathlete Professional League (CPL) finals gave away US\$150,000 for winners.

The 25-year-old club manager formed two teams to compete for two trophies in Hong Kong—League of Legends and Star Craft 2 (both are video games). Team members included students and unemployed teenagers who excel in playing these games.

Defeating 31 teams and winning the first “League of Legends” tournament held in Hong Kong on 25th March, Mr Tong believes experience is indispensable in striving for success. The prize money for winning the tournament was \$50,000.

“There is nothing more important than gaining experience in a game. It doesn’t matter if it’s against the best team in the world when you practice. I encourage them to play more because the more you play, the more you learn,” said Mr Tong.

He said players shouldn’t be afraid of failing. “Losing is also a learning experience instead of a reflection of your personal value or value as a team player,” he added.

Mr Tong offered training according to gamers’ skill level and desired goals. He also delivers lessons to players to improve their technical skills, especially in instant communications between team members.

Confrontation at the scene is crucial



to E-Sports. During the game, players need to run on the map, speak to teammates, think about positioning and listen to information.

“The training is not as interesting as a game itself, but if you want to become a professional, you should train hard,” said Mr Tong. “We need team players who are with endurance, fast reaction and good attitude.”

Mr Tong said players have to spend at least four hours daily in training, either at home or at cybercafés, to build up



Players in action: The first ever League of Legends competition in Hong Kong was held in March and 32 teams were attracted. The prize money was as high as \$50,000.

knowledge of the game and tacit of the team.

Besides basic training, Mr Tong watches demos with game players because learning playing styles from all around can help a lot.

As a club manager, he also advises team members to support one another with encouragement rather than destructive feedback. With encouragement, players tend to be more comfortable with their mistakes and focus on eliminating their errors.

Mr Tong believes quality training is the best way for young gamers to pursue their E-Sports dream. Two of their former members have transferred their membership and become full-time professional gamers for Garena, the local agent of League of Legends in Taiwan, earning about HK\$10,000 a month.

However, there are not many resources to support E-Sports training in Hong Kong, and the teams largely rely on their sponsorships, which was fairly limited.

“Over 20,000 people have viewed the

promotion video “League of Legends” on You Tube in four days and 32 teams have enrolled and competed in the event. You see there is always a market for E-Sports in Hong Kong,” Mr Tong said.

“High-density living in Hong Kong facilitates efficient and timely communication; it is an advantage and time to catch up with this thriving industry- to benefit E-Sports gamers, the business sector and the society,” said Mr Tong. ■

AN INCREASE IN FEMALE GAMING MEANS ONE THING - A BIGGER DEMAND FOR FEMALE GAME CREATORS



Gaming is no longer males' privilege: more females are engaging as professional gamers or working in the field.

The male-dominated computer games industry is looking for more female games creators to enter the ever growing female market of computer games.

The games industry in the past has been dominated by males ranging from crew members to game players across the market. However the games industry has decided to shake things up by injecting female game developers into the industry.

According to Asia Games Show Limited, the number of female games players has increased by 20 per cent in current years-and this has contributed to the rising demand for "feminist" computer games in the market.

Mr Mark Chu Kong-ting, founder and marketing director of a local 3D animation and game company, GameSpace Multimedia Ltd, credited the new wave of information technology down to the expanding pool of female games players.

Seeing this large potential market, Mr Chu Kong-ting said: "Hong Kong has 3,800,000 Facebook users, 55 per cent of which are females." in 2011 Mr Chu

Kong-ting's company launched Hong Kong's first feminist Facebook game, Hungry Pet at the Hong Kong's annual Asia Game Show where computer game vendors exhibit their latest products.

"Hungry Pet" features cute pets making and selling local desserts such as egg tarts and "Ding Ding candies." The idea came from two local female game developers: Ms Nica Lui Yin-lan, 21, and Ms Wendy Chan, 27.

Nica, who became a graphic designer after graduating from IVE digital media, has been working as a game designer for Mr Chu Kong-ting's company for three months now.

Nica said: "Although many of my classmates work in graphics-related field, I don't think that job fitted me at all."

She later quit her job and eventually met her current boss at the Asia Game Show last year.

"At the venue, there was a zone for people seeking for job vacancies. Then, I saw him [she points at her boss]"

"At that time, I was amazed that Hong Kong only had one local 3D animation and game company."

As a new comer, Nica said at the beginning, she found it hard to draw fast and hand in the drafts on time.

"If you fail to do so, there is the possibility that the company might have to pay huge compensation or bear legal responsibility because we didn't commit to our promise to our partners."

Same as Nica, her colleague Wendy Chan, a graduate from IVE-graphic design, loves playing computer games as well.

"I do enjoy my job as a game designer as it is amazing when you see a game come from nothing to drafting, to designing to programming."

Regarding the success of the game, Nica said they had done enough market research to find out what female gamers wanted.

"Female gamers may not focus on content or function first, most of the girls love eye-catching things. So we paid more attention on elements such as colours and decorations and interface."

According to Hong Kong Game Industry Association, its research report revealed that the game industry in Hong Kong earned around 6 billion in 2011; and estimated that the figure may be up to 8 billion in these three to five years.

"Hong Kong has no more than 20 computer game companies. Can you imagine how much money a company can get when the \$6-billion profit is divided by only 20?" Mr Chu Kong-ting'said.

Mr Chu Kong-ting's said that if he continued to explore the growing female market, his company would achieve even more success. So he has begun searching for suitable computer game designers and developers for the female market.

Chief art designer Wendy added that newcomers should always think more about interface and layout, which help contribute to use-friendliness of a game.

Her new colleague Nica added working long hours was the key to success. "You may leave the office at 8pm or even later." ■

NO SHORT CUT TO VICTORY

Local games say superior gaming equipment is just a supplement to win a competition

With professional gaming becoming more popular worldwide, companies are developing professional gaming gear to cater for its rising demand for gamers. But fancy as they may look, local gamers said these are not necessary.

Professional gear are equipment that is specially made or modified for people who regard gaming as their profession. Professional gamers examine every part of a computer that could affect their performance in gaming events, including the headset, mouse pad, display card, cooling kit, monitor, power supply, cords, and even the computer case.

The gear are not only confined to the computer hardware. They can be accessories like gaming gloves, with an online selling price of £25 (about \$313), to help gamers grip the mouse better and keep their hands warm in winter.

Veteran gamer Big Dog (nickname), a 32-year-old moderator of a gaming organization, Hong Kong Enthusiastic Gamers Group, said the effectiveness of professional gaming equipment depended on the game types. First-person shooter games, for example, have a higher requirement on the quality of the computer mouse and the mouse pad, and sometimes even the headset.

Professional gamers mostly lay stress on the control and accuracy, given that all of the games played in international cyber game festivals require a high level of responsiveness. A high-quality set of keyboard and mouse are indispensable for gamers to demonstrate their own genuine superior skills.

“Basically, professional controllers are designed based on two principles: functionalities and level of customization,” said Ms Lau, a 32-year-old shop manager at a computer hardware shop in Golden Computer Arcade in Sham Shui Po, who preferred to remain anonymous.

Ms Lau explained that professional gear must be multi-functional. For instance, a gaming controller should feature a macro function that a press on a button could activate a series of buttons to execute without failure. This function is important to give special moves while playing fighting games. It is also of great importance that gamers are able to customize and save the setting in the gear to meet different gamers' varying needs.

Despite the advantages of the gaming gear, not every gamer players can afford buying them. The price of gaming keyboards ranges from US\$79.9 (\$621) to US\$139.99 (\$1087) at the website of Razer, one of the leading manufacturers of professional gaming hardware and the cheapest gaming mouse mat prices at US\$14.99 (\$117) while people can buy normal mouse mats at \$5 in the Golden Computer Arcade.

For people who play games just for fun but not aiming at the lucrative rewards in

the gaming competitions, the professional peripheral may be too expensive for them.

“I don't need the them because win or loss does not matter to me,” 22-year-old Wong Yan Long, who has been playing computer games such as Counter Strike for 11 years, said. “I play games to kill times.”

Ana2k (nickname), the team leader of a local eSports team CrossGaming of the League of Legends (an action real-time strategy game), had spent around \$3,000 on the headset, keyboard, mouse and display card but he said professional gear were not essential.

“Players' own skills are much more vital. I use the professional hardware because it can catch the eyes of the envy,” he said.

Big Dog also believes gaming gear only play a secondary role in computer gaming competitions.

“Most prominent players used only average gaming gear before fame,” he said. “What really matters is whether the gear can function stably.” ■



Gaming gear can either be massively produced or tailor-made to fit different people.



Participants said hot yoga exercises them both physically and mentally.

THE HEAT IS ON

Traditionally perceived as a women's sport, hot yoga is gaining popularity among Hong Kong men

It was 32 degrees at a Yoga Centre in Jordan. Yoga learners stretched their bodies after several rounds of jumps and squats, arching their bodies to form the perfect bridge shapes. Their minds immersed in the scorching air with sweats dripped on mats.

More and more Hong Kong people are enjoying hot yoga, a "peaceful" exercise in the fast-paced city. Classes are full weeks in advance and are especially popular among people who want to have adequate workouts in sweltering temperatures and a good way of social networking.

Experts say people can accelerate their blood circulations when practicing hot yoga. If they do it properly, the exercise would help their body systems to operate more smoothly, thus achieving physical fitness.

"It is important to satisfy people psychologically," Ms Doris Li King-ying, Manager and senior yoga instructor of

Dickson Yoga, said. She said hot yoga was generally perceived as the same as other types of Yoga, but they are in fact different. "The only difference is temperature," she said. "The high temperature is generated by the central heating system in the yoga room."

Hot yoga originated from Bikram yoga, which was innovated by Bikram Choudhury. It contained a series of 26 poses. Yoga learners can practice the entire series twice in a single 90-minute class. The room is usually maintained at a temperature of 38 to 40 degrees. Hence, if a class is just conducted in a hot environment, and does not follow the Bikram standard, it cannot be called Bikram yoga and probably would just be called hot yoga.

In Hong Kong, hot yoga is a hybrid of Bikram yoga and other types of yoga. They are performed in a heated room with temperature from 30 to 32

degrees; the poses however are from other types of yoga.

"Instructors can teach different yoga styles in a hot yoga class," Ms Li said.

There is no registered yoga centre in Hong Kong now which offers authentic Bikram Yoga. Planet Yoga studio was the only one that offered Bikram Yoga in Hong Kong, and it had closed down in 2010.

There is no standard or patent in Hong Kong to define hot yoga. Usually, when the temperature in the yoga room is higher than body temperature, it will be named as "hot".

Yoga beginners are not recommended to try Hot yoga without two to three months' training. "They jeopardize safety to try hot yoga," Ms Li says. "The intensive pace and poses in hot yoga are challenging for learners, and they would sweat quickly and heavily at the same time."

According to Ms Li, when yoga players



With room temperatures at 30-32 degrees, practitioners can sweat out toxins and may even lose weight.

know the way to control breath and strength, they can master all types of yoga and to excrete toxins in body, enhance metabolism, improve flexibility and release stress.

But Ms Li said hot yoga does not guarantee any of the above. "The amount of workouts that people can have depend on their poses," she said.

In addition, she said people who practice hot yoga do not necessarily mean that they can lose weight or get rid of toxins through the workouts. "The workouts are not promised to be fat-melting or even weight loss for yoga learners," she said. To get the most out of a practise session, Ms Li said players have to listen to the instructor and practice wholeheartedly. "Quantity and quality are two keys for yoga," Ms Li said.

In the eyes of yoga devotees, yoga is different from other types of exercises.

People need to clear their mind, control

their muscles and listen to the messages from heart when practicing yoga.

"Yoga can achieve the effect of sports, but sports cannot function like yoga," Ms. Li said.

She said most of the yoga students are female, accounting for 90 per cent of the number of participants in Dickson Yoga. But she observed an increase in male students over the years as well. "We are having more and more male students," Ms Li said.

On the other hand, yoga sessions mean a good place to know more people from different areas and make friends. Ms Amy Hui Wai-lin, 49, a full-time warehouse manager and part-time hot yoga instructor, said she joined yoga because of its connectedness of people. She said people play other sports such as swimming and jogging alone, but in yoga classes, the group of yoga students becomes a community and they have a

sense of belonging to it.

"I feel happy that the class accompanies me to do yoga," Ms Hui said.

Ms Hui said she would introduce hot yoga to her friends and relatives because it is beneficial to health and would enhance communications between them.

Mr Ringo Poon, 38, started doing hot yoga last year. But he held a different opinion to Ms Hui and said he would not introduce the workout to his friends and relatives because he was concerned that they cannot endure the heat and intensity. Before joining hot yoga, Mr Poon exercised in the gym. He said he has lost 30 pounds since doing hot yoga. "Working out is not as efficient," he said.

Mr Poon thinks Hot yoga does not only work psychologically on yoga learner. "Hot yoga really helps people to sweat quickly with far infrared-ray," he said. ■

STORY / SOPHIA FU
EDITED BY / WINNIE YIU



A TASTE OF DENMARK

It all starts with a small piece of bread, with butter evenly and smoothly spread on it. Add various ingredients like fish, meat and vegetables on the bread, then flavor them with mayonnaise or mustard, you will get Smorrebrod - the most traditional and common cuisine on the Danish dining table.

STORY / PEYTON GUAN
EDITED BY / AMANDA MUNKSGAARD

Smorrebrod, known to English speakers as “open-faced sandwich”, is the first thought that comes to Danes’ minds when asked about Danish food. It consists of a mountain of ingredients on only one piece of bread, just like a sandwich whose cover is removed.

Simple as it may seem, Smorrebrod plays a big role in the Danish life. It is not only the biggest element in most Danes’ daily meals, but also an important tradition on holidays and festivals.

“Smorrebrod is something which Danes are brought up with,” said Mr Peter Monk, Head of Sales and Marketing of Aamanns, one of the most renowned Smorrebrod restaurants in Copenhagen. “Most of the Danish people have it as lunch or dinner every day.”

The plain piece of food eaten by Danish people every day is not all simple; it actually contains great variety and flexibility for the toppings. Typical ingredients include pickled herrings, smoked pork liver-paste, fish such as salmon, sliced cucumber, tomato, boiled eggs and sliced cheese in many varieties. “You can put anything on top of the bread

and call it a Smorrebrod, and as far as I know, there are more than 200 types of Smorrebrod,” Mr Monk said.

“My favorite part is that you can have several small pieces with different toppings. It is kind of like sushi – you can have many different pieces if you like, but you can also just go for the one you really love,” said Mr Stefan Holmager Larsen, a student living in Aarhus, Denmark.

But the most important part of Smorrebrod, according to Mr Monk, would be the small piece of bread underneath. Traditional Danish rye bread - the foundation of smorrebrod.

The Danes have been baking and eating rye bread for a thousand years. It contributes largely to the daily food consumption in Denmark. A report has shown that each Dane eats about 20-25 kg of rye bread per year, which is about 8.5-9.0 million slices every day nationwide.

Rye bread, compared with other breads, is much healthier and can provide more feeling of fullness, making Smorrebrod suitable for a main meal, Mr Monk said.

Smorrebrod made by Danes on a daily basis are usually casual and fast-made without much exaggeration; however, they can be scrumptious and delicate for special occasions.

For Christmas and Easter, delicious Danish food such as meat balls, shrimp, or marinated herring are carefully prepared, and nicely arranged on the rye bread to make Smorrebrod.

“On holidays and special occasions we like to dig into a delicious piece of Smorrebrod. At Easter and Christmas we eat it at my grandparents’ place, then there would be ten to 15 different kinds of smorrebrod to choose from - eggs, shrimp and caviar; different kinds of sausages,” said Mr Kasper Jørgensen, another 23-year old Danish student. “It’s like a Rolls Royce of lunch!”

Conventionally Danes have smorrebrod with a traditional alcohol called snaps, together making a feast. Such a feast is not only fantastic to celebrate holidays, but also a part of the Danish culture that naturally links people together.

“Smorrebrod has always been a special holiday dish. To many people it is



all about getting together with the people you love - friends and family, and having a really delicious and easy meal in homelike surroundings with lots of snaps!" said Mr Larsen.

Smorrebrod can be made in more artistic and fancy ways than you can imagine. Specialized Smorrebrod makers spend a great amount of time on the small piece of food: everything from ingredient picking to nutrition balancing is carefully decided. A pleasing and delicate design is also a must. "That's a lot of hours' work. Sometimes it even takes our chefs a whole day to make a single kind of Smorrebrod," said Mr Monk.

Just like the low-profile and down-to-earth lifestyle of Danish people, the simple and succinct Smorrebrod also plays a modest role in the world of gourmet.

Though people may hear about the word "open-faced sandwich", they actually have no idea what "Smorrebrod" is, said Mr Monk. "As a Dane, I really hope that someday, the word 'Smorrebrod' will be more well acknowledged by the world."





DARE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Heiward Mak sticks to her style to produce films reflecting the reality

STORY / CLARIE LEE
 EDITED BY / SIMON YUEN

She is a script-writer, director and an editor with numerous accolades. Some seniors said she is the new light of film industry and a talent of the new generation. The 27-year-old has achieved much beyond her counterparts but she brushed aside these remarks.

“I am just an ordinary person who loves to tell stories through films,” said Ms Heiward Mak Hei-yan.

However, she never dreamed big when she was a kid, let alone becoming a director.

“My dreams were always changing when I was small. I wanted to be a firefighter when I was growing up but I found that I wanted to be an illustrator for children books.”

Many youths harbour a dream and decide to devote their lives to. Ms Mak was one of them, but suffered a huge blow. When doing a diploma in graphic design at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, she was told by a professor that she was not good at drawing.

“When you are 18 or 19 and somebody tells you that your passion, which you have put in lots of efforts, doesn’t really work for you. Your faith is completely shattered,” she said, recalling the darkest days.

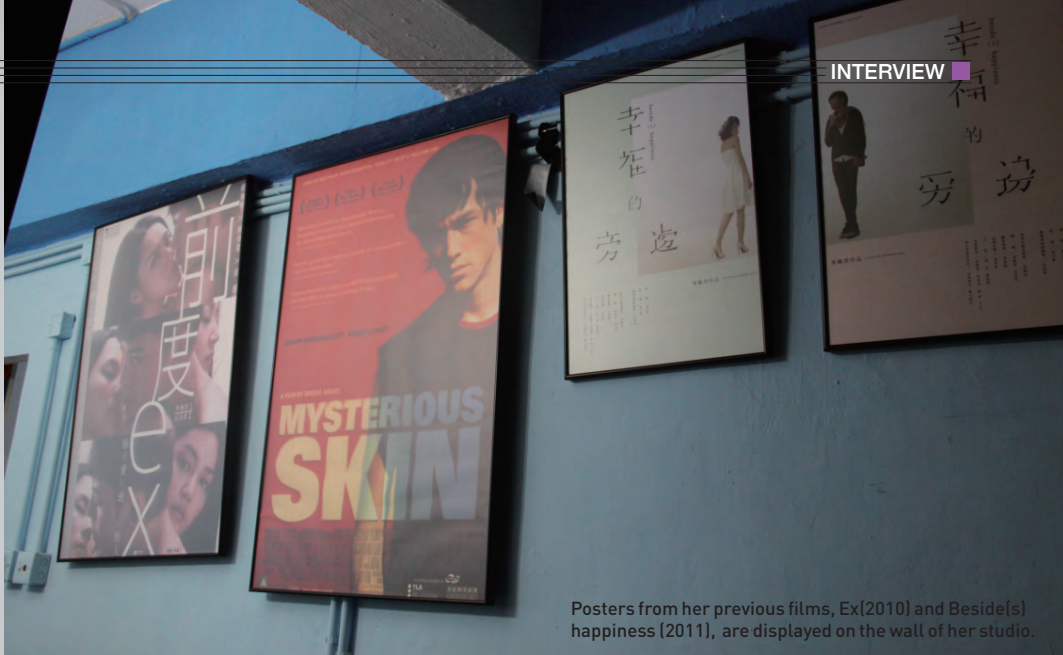
Out of defiance, she decided to transfer to Creative Media of City University of Hong Kong, a place where she embarked on film-making.

That turned out to be an unexpectedly right place to unleash her potential in story-telling.

In 2006, *Lovers’ Lover*, Ms Mak’s first short film and graduation assignment, won the Golden Award in the Open Category of the 12th Hong Kong Independent Short Film & Videos Awards (IFVA). She also got The International Young Film Makers Award of 9th up-and-coming International Film Festival Hanover the next year.

The film talent said her inspiration comes from her never-ending puzzles on the social values and this makes her tend to capture the subtlety of everyday life as well as challenges and questions over long-established social values.

Her first long feature film, *High Noon* (2008), which sets in present Hong Kong, depicts the lives of seven teenagers as they negotiate the



Posters from her previous films, Ex(2010) and Beside(s) happiness (2011), are displayed on the wall of her studio.



Ms Mak's studio, Dumb Youth Production, in Kwai Chung

challenges of school, parents, friendship, affairs and drug abuse. The film attracted great acclaims and recorded a high box office though it was classified as a Category III movie because of the sexual scenes and explicit social irregularities.

"There are so many elusive game rules set by the society and you never understand why we have to obey these rules," she said with a frown, casting doubts over present social norms.

Ms Mak thinks that people blindly follow social rules and succumb to homogenization but dare not to challenge the norms. This phenomenon motivates her to talk about the truth through films to let audience reflect on their values.

"People are too afraid to face the

reality in which so many social problems exist. They choose to turn a blind eye to them," she added.

Some people think that Ms Mak is a post-80 rebel but she did not agree on the stereotypical views over the generation.

"We are indeed working hard to make our society a better place to live in and we have no regrets," she said, adding that what she does can prove to the older generation that young adults are not incompetent and always complain, without doing anything constructive to the community.

Her films may deviate from the mainstream, but this does not prevent people from supporting her ideas.

"Her film speaks for the reality and she doesn't try to create any delusion

like other mainstream Hollywood style films. It makes you think and reflect," said Iris Chow, a 20-year-old university student who has been a fan of Ms Mak since High Noon.

Yet, art films might risk film investor's incentive to pour in resources as they usually fail to interest the mass.

"Sometimes it would be really hard to present your story to film investors and get them interested, because this kind of movie is not as marketable as the mainstream ones," said Ms Mak.

Ms Mak stresses on the impact of films rather than money she can make from her production.

"If there is a message [in the movies], there will be people who can hear and understand it," she said. ■

A MOVING FILM TRIBUTE TO THE TRAGICALLY SHORT CAREER OF FORMULA 1'S Ayrton Senna

STORY / KRIS LUI
EDITED BY / HELEN WU
PHOTO CREDITS / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Asif Kapadia's *SENNA* brings back the power and emotion of the late world champion.

My mother told me that when I was young my uncle was very worried when his son told him he wanted to be a racing driver. My uncle asked him, "Do you know how Senna died?" That was the first time I heard about one of the greatest names in Formula 1.

After I started following Formula 1 at the age of 17, I heard drivers regarding Senna their hero. I watched YouTube videos about him, but they were only a few minutes long. I read about Senna in Wikipedia, but the account was not exciting enough. Finally, the *SENNA* movie was made to cater for my curiosity to this legendary icon in Formula 1.

SENNA is a documentary about the Formula 1 racing career of Ayrton Senna. Born on 21st March in 1960 in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Senna was a three-time Formula 1 world champion.

However, his career lasted only 10 years, as he died at the age of 34 at the wheel of his Formula 1 car.

This documentary won 11 awards, including Outstanding Documentary Editing in International Documentary Association and the Most Popular Documentary in the Melbourne International Film Festival, and had nine other nominations.

One does not have to be a Formula 1 fan to watch this film. It is a film depicting the "real-life drama" of an individual who believed in God, in himself, and in his great passion for the sport.

Director Asif Kapadia described his approach to real-life drama as follows: "I always approached it as a fiction film, a film with real life drama, real people. Documentaries are constructed. They have always used fictional techniques.

Fiction films try all the time to be real." A motorsport fan will definitely be fascinated by the movie because it portrays Senna as himself, telling his own story.

With no high-definition or 3D images, *SENNA* is ordinary yet exciting. The documentary includes images never before shown in public, such as the drivers' meeting and family videos, as well as other footages taken from YouTube.

The archive footages are included to show Senna's career chronologically, beginning from his first year in Formula 1 with the Toleman racing team in 1984 to his years with Lotus, McLaren, and Williams.

The movie not only highlights Senna's victories on the race track but also demonstrates the internal issues in Formula 1. Moreover, it shows how



Senna on the circuit: His fatal accident in 1994 led to safety improvements that have reduced the number of deaths in motor racing

Senna struggled in his career when the sport became more political.

Senna almost gave up racing after his controversial crash with Prost at the 1989 Japanese Grand Prix. He was frustrated by the politics in racing and the way he was treated by the officials.

The movie shows how Senna was such a great person, but he was also stubborn when it pertains to racing. The footages of the races are the best evidence that shows how Senna was a natural-born winner. His persistence in and dedication to motorsport were consistent.

Four car accidents are included in the film, with two involving Senna. Two of the accidents were fatal. Senna is shown talking about the accidents. It is amazing how Senna's passion for the sport did not wane after witnessing the crash that seriously injured Martin

Donnelly that he had to retire from Formula 1. As Senna explains in the movie, "I realised I was not going to give up my passion even [though I was] just seeing what I have seen."

A day before Senna's fatal crash in San Marino, Italy, Rubens Barrichelo and Roland Ratzenberg also figured in a bad crash, respectively, during practice. Barrichelo survived unhurt, but Ratzenberg lost his life in the accident. It was a difficult day for Senna because he lost a colleague and he knew the sport was extremely dangerous. However, Senna did not consider quitting.

Since Senna's death, no race car driver has been killed from accidents in Formula 1 races. Senna's fatal crash raised awareness about the safety issues in Formula 1. The Federation Internationale de l'Automobile appointed experts to

improve safety in Formula 1 races.

Despite the fatal crashes, Senna, obsessed with motorsport, did not consider leaving the sport. The politics of the sport disturbed him more than the fatal crashes did. However, he did consider "walking away from the dark forces."

The movie starts and ends with Senna talking about his good memories of go-karting in 1978 and when he could race without any politics and money involved. As Senna once said, "It was pure drive, it was real racing, and that... that makes me happy."

"Sometimes a documentary will unexpectedly grab you by the throat, not giving you a second to breathe. Such is the power of this man, and this film," Kenneth Turan, a film critic from Los Angeles Times commented. ■

Beaming Smiles

A clown is a happy package of fun, magic, hand tricks and balloon twisting.



But behind the ever-smiling face, the income of a clown is low and unreliable. Over the past few years, the demand for clown performance has increased as people's income has risen and started looking for more quality entertainment. As a result, more and more young people are joining the clown market.

Therefore, most professional clowns work on a part-time basis and have a full-time job to ensure their end meets. Amateur clowns have to receive three to four months' training to learn to play different tricks. They also have to be familiar with performing arts and be ready all the time to make a joke.

PHOTOS/ BETH LIU
EDITED BY / CLAIRE CHU





Mark III

再三震撼曝光

EOS 5D Mark III



Full-frame CMOS sensor

40
Delightful Years
IN HONG KONG

5D Mark III

SEARCH



Canon

Delighting You Always