

# THE YOUNG REP•RTER magazine

April 2016

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Are you getting  
what you pay for?*

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## Letter from the Editor

# THE YOUNG REPORTER magazine

April has arrived and so have your essays and projects. Dear fellow university students, I wish you all the best. It may be a lot of pressure but once it is over, all that is left are a few exams and a long break to look forward to.

Compared to students taking the HKDSE, it's fair to say that our April is much less stressful. A week ago a student taking the public examination for the fourth time killed himself just before the exams were to begin the next morning.

Students sitting for the HKDSE are under overwhelming amounts of pressure because as optimistic as I was when I sat for it, I had my fair share of sleepless nights. The HKDSE is the battle students had been preparing for years, and for many of them obtaining the results to get an undergraduate degree means everything to them, and their parents.

There is this preconception among many secondary students' minds that a university degree is a prerequisite of success which is why the examination puts tremendous

pressure on its candidates. Indeed, a degree helps but it is not the only way out.

Over the past few months there have been over 20 cases of student suicides and little has been done by the education bureau other than giving schools \$5,000 as an attempt to lower the alarming suicide rate.

Long has the government advocated the idea of "learning is more important than scoring", but the studying environment they molded with their policies has been the polar opposite. Under such circumstances, pressure to outperform peers and expectations can easily get the best of a student.

Until the government decides to tackle this problem, you may want to seek help as soon as you feel like something is not right because nothing is going to change for you unless you change yourself, in some way.

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Organic truth:  
Are you getting what you  
pay for?







The Organic Standard and Certification System was introduced in Hong Kong 14 years ago. It is supposed to guarantee that organic products meet local standards. Vegetables labelled “organic”, for example, cost \$20 to \$30 more per catty (604.8 gram) than regular produce. But many consumers remain sceptical.

“I heard in the news that not all organic shops are honest. They mix regular veggies with organic ones,” said Mr Chan Sze-chi.

Professor Wong Wun-chung, ex-

ecutive of Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre (HKORC), admitted that monitoring on the sale of organic vegetables in Hong Kong is inadequate.

According to a 2015 report by the HKORC, wet markets in North, South, Eastern and Tsuen Wan Districts are the black spots for fake organic vegetables. More than 20% of the vendors in each market sell vegetables labelled “organic” without certification.

HKORC recommends that consum-

ers buy organic produce with their logo to ensure quality.

Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre is the only organization that certifies local organic vegetables. They adopt international standards. Farmers and suppliers who reach the standard are given certificates so that they can use the HKORC logo on their produce.

“Our procedure is to certify farm operation. When the organic veggies get into the retail stores ready





**“There is no clear definition of ‘organic’ by law. Therefore the Customs and Excise Department cannot prosecute dishonest vendors,”**  
**Wong Wun-chung**  
**Executive of Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre**

to be sold, that is another issue,” said Professor Wong.

“For now, we can check if sellers abuse the certificate through their sales records. If farmers sell 10kg organic vegetables to retail A but our investigator is able to buy 20 kg, then we know that the owner of the retail misuses our certificate.”

Under present procedures, certified organic vegetables can be sold either through the Vegetable Marketing Organisation (VMO), or by local farmers themselves.

“Before distributing the organic vegetables to chain stores such as PARKn-



Most vegetables in supermarkets are packaged with labels and bar coded for consumers to trace the origin.

SHOP and Aeon, they have to undergo pesticide residue testing since the produce are not supposed to contain any pesticide,” said Mr Law Ka-ho, market manager of VMO.

“We have labels for organic vegetables in supermarket as well as home deliveries. Consumers purchasing loose organic produce at wet market need to be extra cautious,” said Mr Law.

“There is no clear definition of “organic” by law. Therefore the Customs and Excise Department cannot prosecute dishonest vendors,” said Professor Wong.

“We can report those sellers who misuse our certificate to the Customs and Excise Department for (allegedly) violating





It is hard for consumers to tell whether vegetables sold at wet markets are genuinely organic.

of Trade Description,” he said. “Yet, it is hard to tell whether vegetables are organic or not simply by looking.”

Only two cases of breaches of the Trade Description Act have been fined \$2000 and \$10,000 respectively in 2013 and 2015. But in 2015 alone, the HKORC found 51 cases of misuse of their certificates at wet markets.

“Laws should be introduced to regulate organic production, certification and labeling to boost consumers’ confidence,” said Legislator Ho Chun-yin, representative of local agriculture and fisheries.

To raise awareness of organic fraud, Mr Ho suggested that the government set up a complaint system on suspicious claims of “organic vegetables”.

“The government should set up specific markets for local organic

vegetables in order to boost local brands,” he added.

“Buying organic veggies from regular markets may be handy,” said Mr

Chan. “But I would prefer authentic labels. For instance, farmers can sign on their own labels. I would find that more reassuring.”



*By Celia Lai  
Edited by Anna Tang*

## SOCIETY &amp; POLITICS

# License to thrill

## No licensing rules for trampoline parks



A boy sustained a head injury when playing on an indoor trampoline recently, according to the Consumer Council's latest report.

Unlike in the U.K., no license is required in Hong Kong for the operation of amusement park facilities. Trampolines are not a regulated "entertainment" activity under the Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance, according to the The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD).

According to the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) that regulates amusement park rides, trampolines are not amusement rides since they are not power-driven.

Amusement rides are devices that are power-driven for driving or riding by the public primarily for amusement purposes, such as roller coasters, Ferris

wheels and pirate ships, according to the EMSD.

The FEHD told the Consumer Council that relevant international sports associations, such as federations for trampolines, have already set standards on the proper use of sports facilities.

Lack of licensing requirement is not the only regulatory loophole revealed from the 178 complaints received by the Consumer Council during the past three years. According to the Council, most complaints are about service quality and safety concerns of both indoor and outdoor activities.

Some operators may use a "disclaimer" to evade liabilities, misleading consumers to give up their right to redress, said the consumer watchdog.

In the case of the trampoline injury, the accompanying domestic helper was

asked to sign a Term of Use agreement when she bought the admission ticket for the child. She recalled those terms as purported to exempt the operator from all legal liabilities, according to the council.

"The Control of Exemption Clauses Ordinance clearly stated that the court will only enforce the operator's exemption clauses when they are deemed fair and reasonable," said Dr Chan Wai-hon Felix, a law professor from the University of Hong Kong.

"Under the legislation, the operators cannot escape liabilities arising from death or personal injuries resulting from negligence," he said.

Dr. Chan suggested consumers making civil claims against the operator within three years of personal injury or death, whether resulting from mechanical problems or employees' negligence.





Apart from safety issue of the amusement rides, the strong intensity of lighting effects can be a potential threat to visitor's optical health.

Amusement rides have been very popular in Hong Kong over the years. About 30 rides at the 2015-2016 AIA Great European Carnival have attracted more than 900,000 visitor, both grownups and children.

The Tung Wah Charity Fair, another seasonal amusement fair held from December to March across the year, offered more than 20 rides for visitors.

"This is my second time coming to the carnival. The amusement games are really exciting," said Mr To, a 32-year-old visitor, "But I am a bit worried about the safety issues, as accidents have happened in some amusement parks in Mainland China before."

Mrs Lam, who visited the carnival with her one-year-old child, said she did not worry about her safety.

"This is an international carnival organised by a famous company. I have not heard of any safety issues or complaints about the carnival yet," she said.

"Amusement parks may be using the thrill of the rides to lure people into doing things they would not normally do", said Dr Ng Kin-shing Henry, a social psychology professor from the University of Hong Kong.

"They are not just promoting how fun it is to join the game, but also how dangerous the roller-coaster is or how tall the ride is," Dr Ng said,

"This encourages visitors to be even more eager to try."

"Consumers should contact the organizers of carnivals for any safety concerns and arrangements as these events are operated independently in a private manner by big corporations," said Ms Francesca Lam, a representative of Leisure and Culture Services Department.

The Consumer Council suggests that event organizers should provide timely updates regarding amusement facilities arrangements, put in place contingency measures and comply with all regulations regarding fire safety, electro-mechanical and land use requirements.



## ART &amp; CULTURE

# Busking in a concrete jungle

## Street Music Series introduces diversity to local music industry

Kung Chi-shing is a musician and an activist. He has been trying to enrich the musical scene by organising the Street Music Series. It is a platform for young musicians and singer-songwriters to introduce themselves to the community.

Mr Kung started working with the Hong Kong Arts Centre in 2009 to promote music diversity. Last year, the Street Music Series featured local street musician in 28 concerts. Hong Kong's music scene, Mr Kung believes,

is dominated by commercial productions.

"A healthy society should be very diverse. When different aspects of Hong Kong embrace diversity, local art does not reflect that. Why can't we do more to encourage diversity in art?" Mr Kung said.

He believed music should connect with the audience through emotions and the spiritual needs of a community at a given time. The artistic value of music, Mr Kung thinks, is undermined in

commercially produced music.

One of the performers Bao Kwun-ying said street music allows him to have more freedom in his performance than in a traditional concert, partly because unlike commercial music, street music does not need to cater for the audience.

"A lot of factors, like marketing, are key to a concert's success, and those have restricted creativity in music," Bao said.







Street music performers are searching for platforms to perform in Hong Kong, where public space cannot be freely used.

“They can touch your soul with lyrics and melody that truly reflect reality,” Cho said.

The Street Music Series is not only praised by the audience, but also the performers. It provides everything they need: the equipment and a proper platform for their music. That makes their performance technically easier compared with busking on the streets.

“We are lucky to have all the technical support and fine equipment, and this place is a good venue for us to share our music,” said Lawrence Lau Hiu-kong, a keytar busker.

“It is not really the case if we want to perform on the street. Take me as an

example, I will need to have an amplifier, speakers, a microphone, cables, and of course my own keytar,” Mr Lau said. “I can’t possibly manage all the equipment on my own.”

“Power supply is another issue. It is very difficult to find locations with power supply that’s suitable for busking. It is definitely better for performers to have a platform like the Street Music Series,” Mr Lau added.

“Music brings pure happiness to us, and it can reduce the stressful environment that we are all facing,” Bao said.

“We all need a platform to express our music, and I do think the street is a great one. It has fewer limits and constraints

for the performers and the audience, and we can have more interaction with them,” Mr Lau said.

Mr Kung wants to make use of public space in order to bring out the Street Music Series.

“It has been long discussed and debated regarding the so called proper use of public space. I think the Green Hub will be a perfect example of utilizing public space since we are sharing beautiful performance in this space,” Mr Kung said.





## ART &amp; CULTURE

## Kung Fu in 3D

Motion capture technology helps preserve traditional martial arts

He's dressed in a skintight black bodysuit dotted with 99 position markers. A martial arts master demonstrates his Kung Fu styles in a 3D motion capture studio, equipped with cameras and sensors.

Certain Hollywood sci fi films, such as *Avatar*, are shot in a similar way. But here, the purpose is to document hundreds of different martial art styles in Hong Kong. The clips will be used to compile a new "Kung Fu Bible" called "The Hong Kong Martial Arts Living Archive".

High technology such as 3D modeling, is used nowadays to revive traditional martial arts. Motion capture al-

lows swift movements to be recorded in an accurate, lively and precise way.

"3D technology brings us closer to reality," said Hing Chao, Chief Executive of the International Joshua Association who launched the archive in 2013.

He said 3D imaging approximates live instruction to a greater degree, in comparison with manuals, photographs or videos as references for learning complicated martial arts.

"The technology will be used at exhibitions, installations, mobile apps and other digital learning applications, in order to preserve the art of

Kung Fu as well as promote it to the public public," according to Chao.

The novelty of motion capture is fascinating to some traditional martial arts master.

"In the old days, we followed the movements demonstrated by our instructors. It depends on whether the instructor can explain well," said Tsang Ho-pan, a veteran master of Wing Tsun, a form of concept-driven martial art rooted in Southeast of China and Hong Kong.

The 36-year-old Kung Fu master is now a high rank instructor of the International Wing Tsun Association.



“With the help of 3D technology, we can check if the movements are similar to those of our instructors.”

But four years since the introduction of 3D technology, there is still room for improvement.

“If you record the movements with this technology, the movements are really shaky. It’s not exact, even with expensive optical motion capture equipment,” said Professor Tamás Waliczky from the School of Creative Media at City University of Hong Kong.

“Some details of the original movements may be lost,” he said, “when the computer tries to stabilise the shots during swift Kung Fu actions.”

Mr Chao, who started the trend, admitted that the technology is still developing. “We make small, gradual changes, such as tweaking the details of how we capture, cleanup and annotate the data.”

He said it is a budding technology, and it will take some time before it can be available to the public at an affordable price.

“We have to wait for the market to catch up and then we can expect this immersive learning revolution, or virtual reality to transform the way we learn and interact,” he said.

However, some students of Kung Fu believe the real challenge lies in convincing people of the need to preserve martial arts.



“Martial arts in Hong Kong nowadays, is not what it used to be,” said Hing Chao at TEDxHKBU in 2015, “because society has changed.”

Mr Tsang, the Kung Fu coach, shared the opinion. “In the past, there were not so many entertainments. People spent a lot of time practicing martial arts, but now we have too many ways to have fun. People find it too tiring to practise martial arts.”

Even so, Mr Chao remains hopeful. “I have a dream...a dream to make martial arts trendy again.”

Ms Woo practises moves she learned last week. An assistant instructor watches her performance and corrects her movement.

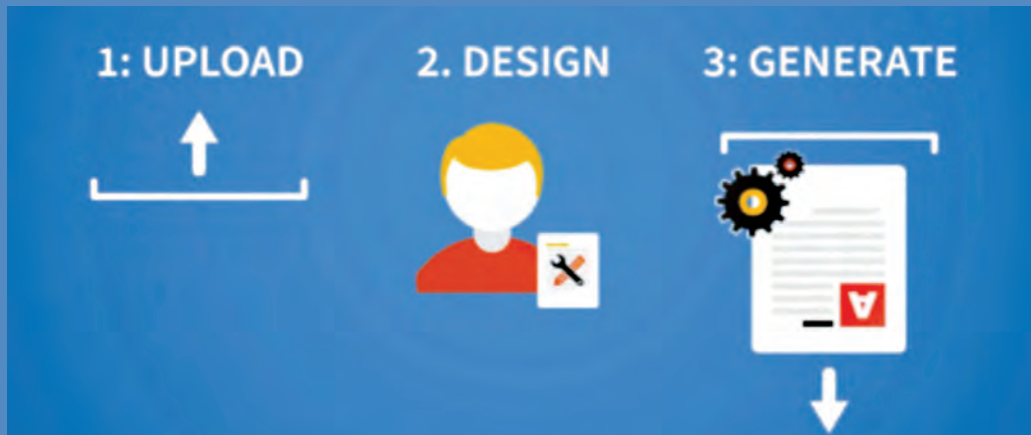
*By Susan Gao & Tracy Zhang  
Edited by Fred Lai*



## BUSINESS

# Are robot journalists real?

## How would they fare against humans?



News is not necessarily written by humans nowadays. Computers can do the job too.

Computer programs such as Automated Insights and Narrative Science have been helping news agencies like the Associated Press (AP), Forbes and Yahoo to automatically generate articles based on financial data and sport competition results.

AP now produces nearly 4,300 earnings stories per quarter – a 14-fold increase over its human efforts, according to Automated Insights.

Ryan Thornburg, associate professor in Journalism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, said there is an initial capital cost in using such software, but then the cost of generating the articles gradually falls.

The snag is that the articles may not be of high quality.

Mr Thornburg added that with technology, journalists who only have basic skills such as describing traffic accidents and recording videos will have difficulties finding jobs.

“Students who want to be journalists need to learn how to make good use of these tools,” Mr Thornburg added. “They need to go more in-depth than the algorithms can.”

He said only a few companies can compete in the area of automated article generation since most news organizations do not have a big enough budget to justify the use of such a technology.

But Tom Grundy, editor-in-chief of Hong Kong Free Press, said the

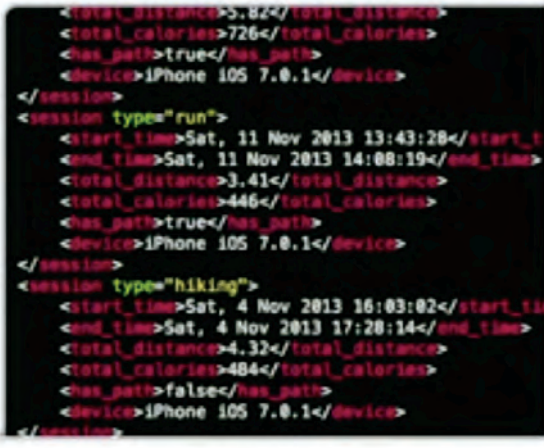

technology is immature. “You still need human beings for the analysis and context.”

Mr Grundy said machine journalism needs many more years to move beyond writing dumb stories and start to produce quality journalism or important investigations.

The chief editor said he did not know any news organizations in Hong Kong that adopt this technology.

“Basic stories like financial results and sports – let’s do them with machines. But there will always be jobs for journalists.” He mentioned the Oscar-winning movie “Spotlight”. “It takes loads of labour and time to look into records and evidence from different sources. It can only be done by humans.”



BEFORE	AFTER
<p>The Wordsmith platform takes in your raw data, in any format.</p>	<p>Wordsmith creates personalized, insightful narratives at massive scale.</p>
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Computers can now generate stories automatically with data.

Mr Grundy said he would not be surprised if technology gets more prevalent in the future in Hong Kong when the cost is reduced, the quality improves and there is greater accessibility.

He added that these technologies are very tempting because of the funding crisis in journalism. Nobody knows how to monetize news when everybody expects it for free.

Mr Grundy was sure that technology can reduce costs and journalists' burden in doing basic stories that involve numbers, but he was skeptical if it can do more than that.

Nicolas Giraudon, deputy sales and marketing director of Agence France-Presse (AFP) said that CNN once made the mistake of reporting that the former Prime Minister of Singapore

Lee Kuan-yew was dead because they made wrong conclusions from social media by analyzing trends online.

James Kotecki, head of communications at Automated Insights, said technology aims to extract stories from data. "The technology is not a competitor to reporters. Having the program to do investigations is not our aim," he said.

Mr Kotecki quoted researcher Christer Clerwall's study "Enter the Robot Journalist: Users' perceptions of automated content" to point out software-generated content is considered objective.

He said Automated Insights's program Wordsmith, which uses synonyms to make each article unique, produces over a billion stories every year.

"Using programs to research for stories is a direction that companies can work on," said Mr Kotecki..

"Concierge news service is big business too. If the technology has readers' personal information, it can personalize articles for them."

Mr Thornburg said concierge news service can help news content meet the right readers at the right time, unlike a tangible newspaper with fixed content.

"I think the technology will become more prevalent in the future, but I am not sure what form it will take," said the assistant professor.



## PEOPLE

# An Aussie turned Hong Konger

Ho Kwok-wing tells you why



Gregory Rivers is Australian. He moved to Hong Kong nearly 20 years ago, and has since acted in a number of Hong Kong drama productions and TV shows.

He shot to fame again recently with his performance in the 100Most Magazine award ceremony.

Rock and heavy metal music was popular when he was in college, but Mr Rivers was not fond of those. Several of his Hong Kong friends introduced him to Cantopop and that was exactly what he liked.

His stage name, Ho Kwok-wing, came from the famous deceased Cantopop singer Leslie Cheung Kwok-wing.

His love of Cantonese music drove him to learn the language. He got his hands on a cassette tape when he was in university, but the program only taught six of the nine intonations of Cantonese.

He eventually came to Hong Kong in 1987 with a friend. Later on he auditioned for a role at TVB, and has never looked back.

"I did not have confidence that I could do what TVB wanted. I think I got in because TVB didn't have another choice," he said.

Mr Rivers feels that the Hong Kong entertainment scene has done little to welcome foreign actors.

"Scriptwriters seem to forget that foreign actors could add flavour to a story, and I don't understand why," he said.

He acted in a number of TV shows, and also sang on the side. But his big break came when 100Most invited him to rap on stage.

He was crowned the "real Hong Konger", and he feels that a true Hong Konger needs to really care about his home town and those who live around him.

The song Mr Rivers performed was written by Hong Kong rapper MC Yan, which talked about societal issues in Hong Kong; issues that Mr Rivers cares about.

On the Mong Kok confrontation on New Year's Day, Mr Rivers thought that protesters clashed with police over the authority's attempt to clear the streets of hawkers.

There were injuries on both sides.

Soon after the chaos, Mr Rivers urged protesters not to vent their frustration on the police on FaceBook. That infuriated some netizens.

Some told him to get out of Hong Kong.

The veteran entertainer said young people who protested that night could not see their future, which pushed them to intensify their actions. "If we start fighting, we will be doomed," he said.

He said that he is a pessimist, and that Hong Kong doesn't have the technology to fight China, when China eventually brings on the "big guns".



“If a ‘guai lo’ could win ‘the most popular male singer award’ in Hong Kong, then nothing is impossible. People should not give up.”



He thinks that Hong Kongers should try to find ways to improve our living conditions.

“I consider real estate dominance as the cancer of Hong Kong,” he said.

He is currently trying to help smaller companies. One of his ongoing projects is called “Real Coffee”, which is an app that helps identify small coffee shops that brew quality coffee.

The app would help people identify the location of these shops, and provide information about the coffee. This way,

people would have better alternatives, other than big corporate coffee shops.

“If a ‘guai lo’ (Cantonese saying, meaning a foreigner) could win ‘the most popular male singer award’ in Hong Kong, then nothing is impossible. People should not give up.” He urged Hong Kongers not to lose hope, and to continue in their progress.

*By Paulus Choy & James Ho  
Edited by Herbert Cheung*

## PEOPLE

# Changing the meaning of blindness

## Technology is redefining the lives of blind people

Chong Chan-yau lost his sight when he was six years old. As a result, his childhood was one of tragedy, dependency, hopelessness and even superstition.

But technology has redefined the way the world sees Mr Chong, or more appropriately, how Mr Chong sees the world. He can surf the internet and use a cell phone just as well as any sighted person, with the help of a Braille note taker.

Mr Chong is the director of EL Education, president of the Hong Kong Blind Union, chairman of Carbon Care Asia, founder and chairman of Dialogue in the Dark Hong Kong.

“I can go anywhere, play football and chess, study, and do all sorts of things that a sighted person can,” said the 60-year-old.

He is eager to improve society for people who are marginalized in order to maximise their potential.

“The loss of sight became my characteristic, not a limitation,” Mr Chong said. He believes his optimistic personality saves him from feeling tragic.

“Hong Kong has a lot of facilities for the disabled, for example, audible traffic light signals,” said Mr Chong. But he doesn’t want to take it granted when it comes to travelling alone.

“Accessibility is a matter of interaction between people and their en-

vironment,” he said. Mr Chong has tried to prove that blind people can navigate the city without special facilities.

Back in the 80s, Mr Chong asked the traffic department to install audible signals road crossing, but the department said it was “too dangerous” for blind people to cross the road on their own.

But we weren’t victims. We were actually the problem solvers,” said Mr Chong. He believes visually impaired people should be treated just like everyone else.

He approaches the problem from the point of view of a citizen, not a blind person. He believes that they have equal rights to ask for facilities to be improved.

“Not because we are dependent on it [the facilities], but because we want the city to be safer for everybody else,” he explained.

Mr Chong lived in London for two years and has travelled to more than 20 countries and cities around the world. Although he has a good impression of most of the places he visited, he finds Hong Kong is the most convenient city to live in.

“Hong Kong is much more accessible than other countries for newcomers,” he said. “In other countries, I have to use more time to do research on transportation and roads, but nowadays technology helps a lot.”

Mr Chong strives to raise awareness on climate change through his support



Mr Chong could use iPhone by its assistive features for vision that with voice-over. He was touching the dialogue box of Whatsapp.



**“The loss of sight became my characteristic, not a limitation,”**

**Chong Chan-yau**

**Director, EL Education**

of education for the visually impaired and youth.

He was a director of student development at the University of Hong Kong and an executive director of Oxfam. He took part in the United Nations Summit on climate change in Bali, Copenhagen and Paris.

Although he is contented with his life, Mr Chong does not plan to retire any time soon.

“I won’t retire when it comes to pursuing and achieving new goals,” he added. “My next target is to develop global citizenship in Hong Kong.”

He thinks much of the Hong Kong press is about local news, especially

celebrities. But the world, he believes, has a much broader agenda.

He hopes that more Hong Kong people will care about international issues and young people can have a broader perspective towards society.

To achieve this, Mr Chong wants greater public involvement in developing young leadership. He brought a group of University of Hong Kong students to the United Nations Summit on climate change.

“I get a lot of satisfaction when we achieve something, knowing that someone has benefited from our work,” he said.

He believes in exploring and trying new things, not to be afraid of mistakes and start all over again.

“Go, try, check and ask,” he concluded. “My life goal is to change what it means to be blind.”

*By Nicki Wong  
Edited by Joanna Wong*



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