

Press Release

For Immediate Release

**Hong Kong Computer Society announce
the “Development of a Certification Roadmap for IT Professional Certification” Project**

Aligned with OF, the First Framework for IT Professionals’ Further Development

December 16, 2011 • Hong Kong—Hong Kong Computer Society (HKCS) announce the “Development of a Certification Roadmap for IT Professional Certification” Project, which defines the Information Technology (IT) related job titles in different competency levels for reference, and is the first developed integrated professional qualification framework based on government qualification framework. The project aims to enable Hong Kong IT professionals to fully understand their personal need and career development directions when comparing their experience, academic qualification and ranks with the 7 levels of Generic Level Descriptors in “Information and Communications Technology” category of HKQF and the Roadmap. The Certification Roadmap will also provide references and benchmarks for IT employers, professional bodies, academic and training institutions for training and development planning, as well as a framework for the cross recognition of certifications with professional bodies overseas. The announcement of Certification Roadmap is a remarkable milestone for career, education and training development of IT industry in Hong Kong.

A 3 x 7 generic job titles matrix was first developed to identify the generic job responsibilities for 7 job categories at 3 competency levels by the project team of HKCS. This is to define the reference job titles for different job categories in the IT industry.

The 3 competency levels are (1) Master; (2) Specialist; and (3) Practitioner, corresponding to the sixth, fifth and fourth level in the 7 levels of Generic Level Descriptors in “Information and Communications Technology” category of HKQF

The 7 job categories are (1) Software Engineering/Software Development; (2) Quality Assurance; (3) Project Management (ICT); (4) IT Architecture; (5) Service Management and Operation; (6) Information Security; and (7) Multimedia.

Based on the 3 by 7 generic job titles matrix, HKCS reviewed approximately 1,000 existing local and international IT-related certifications and developed the Certification Roadmap, to analyze whether there are enough certifications among the 21 generic job titles to satisfy Hong Kong IT professional in pursuing further education and career development. It is observed that most of the job categories appear to have at least one available certification which is largely equivalent to acknowledge and the

competency required. Exceptions are Quality Assurance at Practitioner level and Multimedia at Master level, which still have room for develop new professional certifications, and are corresponding to the fourth and sixth level in the Generic Level Descriptors in “Information and Communications Technology” category of HKQF, respectively.

Mr. Stephen Lau, JP, President, HKCS, noted, when conducting in-depth research on creating Hong Kong IT professional certifications, HKCS discover that the IT industry is lacking of industry-wide recognized professional qualification frameworks and standards, for the reference of employers in promoting and hiring staff and IT Professionals in planning advanced education, though there are Hong Kong Qualification Framework (HKQF). In view of this, HKCS, sponsored by OGCIO, specifically created the IT Professional Certification Roadmap based on the Qualification Framework.

Mr. Lau explained, the roadmap aims to benefit IT practitioners, employers, professional bodies, academic and training institutions as well as the Government by providing clear guidelines and benchmarks. In other words, Hong Kong citizens are able to follow the benchmark of the Certification Roadmap to apply for different level of IT professional positions as well as participate in different professional certification courses eligible for Continuing Education Fund according to their personal need. Employers can define precisely the skills and experience required for their recruitments. Schools, professional bodies and training providers can identify gaps in professional qualifications and therefore develop the most meaningful certifications. The Roadmap also provides a framework for the cross recognition of certifications with professional bodies overseas and help our government to rationalize what and when to support development projects of further qualifications.

Mrs. Theresa Lui, Project Director of “Development of a Certification Roadmap for IT Professional Certification” project, said, to create a professional certification framework and relevant standards, we must firstly define the job categories, competency levels and job titles. For this reason, the project team created a 3 by 7 generic job titles matrix to identify the generic job responsibilities, as well as competency and qualifications required by each job, then compare with the current certifications available in the market, to analyze whether any “gaps” exist between the competencies required by each job and the knowledge requirements of corresponding certification, and to explore any possible room for improvement.

Mrs. Lui stated, the project team was formed by local IT professionals and academics, and supported by local education body. The project team reviewed approximately 1,000 existing local and international IT-related certifications. The review is based on the complexity, the scale and the unprecedented challenges inherited in a job in addition to the needed industry-specific knowledge, professional skills and soft skills, and whether the certification could satisfy the requirement of the

job. Outcome can be (1) largely equivalent (2) somewhat relevant (3) significantly different.

Mrs. Lui furthered, the project is not about validating, evaluating or endorsing any existing certifications, but should be a continual process. As such, a periodic review of available certifications is required, so that findings stay relevant and sustainable to the IT industry over time. To do this, HKCS will set up a Review Committee for continual review, refinement and expansion of the Matrix and Roadmap.

Mr. Lau said: “Based on the research, HKCS suggested that no heavy effort is required to develop new certification for most of the job categories. Exceptions are Quality Assurance at Practitioner level and Multimedia at Master level, where new professional certification is required. There is no available Unit of Competencies (UoC) of QF for the category of Multimedia for the time being. As this is a fast emerging job category, HKCS suggested that relevant competency standards can be defined by HKQF as soon as possible so that relevant certification can be created and appropriate resources can be allocated to develop more professionals in this area.

Mr. Lau added, New certification titles being conceived in the future must (1) satisfy the immediate and/or most important needs of the IT industry of Hong Kong and (2) not duplicate those already offered locally or internationally to ensure maximum benefits and to avoid duplication of resources. The Certification Roadmap for IT Professional Certification can help IT professionals in developing professional skills, which is critical to Hong Kong’s long term development. HKCS will fully support the project as Talent Cultivation and Professional Development is one of the priorities for HKCS.

About Certification Roadmap for IT Professional Certification

Sponsored by the OGCIO and supported by many highly respected individuals from major IT professional bodies and Hong Kong’s IT industry, HKCS initiated The “Development of a Certification Roadmap for IT Professional Certification” Project

The main objective of the project is to develop a Certification Roadmap that can guide the advancement of an IT professional from one level of proficiency to the next with available certification information. A generally recognized Professional Proficiency Matrix will be devised for each IT discipline, which will form the basis of the Roadmap. With the Roadmap, and the Matrix, our IT professionals can plan their career development; our employers can define precisely the skills and experience required for their recruitments; our professional bodies can identify gaps in professional qualifications and therefore develop the most meaningful certifications; and our schools and professional course providers can have a good yardstick for the design of program curricula and

continuing professional development materials. The Roadmap and the Matrix can also provide a framework for the cross recognition of certifications with professional bodies overseas and help our government to rationalize what and when to support development projects of further qualifications.

The project is led by our Project Director Mrs. Theresa Lui in conjunction with the Project Steering Committee. An industry panel with representatives from major IT professional bodies along with Expert Groups with members from key IT disciplines, are working with HKU SPACE (the Research Team) to develop the Matrix and Roadmap. The project is completed by 2011.

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About Hong Kong Computer Society (HKCS)

The Hong Kong Computer Society is a non-profit professional organisation established in 1970, which strives to improve and develop Hong Kong's Information Technology (IT) industry. Being the most well-established and the largest professional association in Hong Kong, the HKCS is dedicated to promote the highest professional standards for the industry. The HKCS members are from a broad spectrum of Hong Kong's IT industry, from corporate users to individual talents, all working together for the benefit of the industry.

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