

e- Seniors program in Hong Kong

Following the company philosophy that people can achieve great things if we provide the resources they need, Microsoft Hong Kong initiated the e-Seniors program in 2001 to extend the reach of IT to elderly.

Themed 'Refreshing Seniors with IT', the e-Seniors Program aims to transfer computer skills for communication, entertainment, and information (through surfing) via the Internet.

100 Young volunteers were recruited for a 4-month program through newspaper ads, firstly to join one training session for picking up the basic skills of teaching Windows® Me, Greetings 2001, and email client and Internet knowledge. Subsequently these volunteers instructed more than 1,000 local persons aged above 60 Years. Over 90% of these older persons completed the course. After the course 80% of the elderly could use computers.

Also in 2001, the Cyber Senior Network Development Association was formed by a group of social workers who were committed to serving the senior citizens of Hong Kong. One of the successful key programs was the creation of the Cyber Senior Web site for communication with and among senior citizens (www.cybersenior.org.hk).

Communication

In 2003, hundreds of senior citizen participated in producing electronic greeting cards with subjects ranging from the celebration of Christmas or New Year, to environmental protection and China's first astronaut. These e-Cards were made available for review and free download at the Cyber Senior Web site, and some 600 entered a public exhibition. Here the best designed e-Cards were selected to be printed for public sale (see page

152 of this issue for some examples).

Entertainment

A group of 100 elderly also gathered at a cyber café at Tsim Sha Tsui (Hong Kong) to have a thrilling PC games tournament to enjoy the fun and entertainment of playing traditional games via the digital technologies. There were several rounds of game competitions, including 4-In-A-Line, Reversi, and Chinese Checker.



UP grants

Believing in the philosophy as mentioned, Microsoft Unlimited Potential (UP) grants provide non-profit organizations with funding to support training IT skills. Please visit www.microsoft.com/citizenship/giving/programs/up/grants.asp in case you are planning to initiate such an effort.

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