

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**CSTB222**

**(Question Serial No. 2410)**

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Recreation and Sports

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Vincent LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism

Question:

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department is developing the new intelligent sports and recreation services booking and information system (SmartPLAY) to replace the Leisure Link computerised booking system (Leisure Link). In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the expenditure for the update and maintenance of the Leisure Link since its launch, number of concurrent users it can accommodate for booking of sports and recreation facilities, any measures to guard against access of Leisure Link by bot programs, and details about its expenditure and effectiveness evaluation;
2. a detailed breakdown of the expenditure involved in developing SmartPLAY;
3. the progress and timetable of the development of SmartPLAY, estimated number of concurrent users it can accommodate for booking of sports and recreation facilities, and any new measures to guard against access of the system by bot programs more effectively;
4. the total and monthly average of the number of patrons making payment through the Leisure Link and the booking counters in the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon LI Sai-wing, Stanley (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

1. To ensure proper functioning of the system and enhance its operational efficiency and booking effectiveness, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) carries out annual routine maintenance of the Leisure Link computerised booking system (Leisure Link) and enhances its booking and other functions when necessary. The expenditure on the routine maintenance and enhancement of Leisure Link was about \$15.7 million in 2021-22 and \$12.6 million in 2022-23.

At present, the Leisure Link online booking service can accommodate about 1 000 concurrent users. To combat access of the Leisure Link online system by bot programs effectively, the LCSD has formulated system security requirements according to relevant guidelines, including installing multiple layers of safeguards against bots and periodically updating the complexity of CAPTCHA, to target system access by specific bot programs. In recent years, the LCSD has even engaged specialised anti-bot services with data analysis and instant updates of strategies by professional teams to counter the ever-evolving computer programs and operations. Moreover, the LCSD regularly monitors the system usage to keep an eye out for access by unusual networks such as websites of overseas data centres or cloud services, and blocks suspicious websites immediately as necessary. The specialised anti-bot services can block access of the Leisure Link by bot programs effectively and the annual expenditure is about \$1.3 million.

2. The implementation of the new intelligent sports and recreation services booking and information system (SmartPLAY) involves a capital expenditure of about \$500 million, covering, among others, the purchase of computer hardware, system software, network communication equipment and network security protection equipment; engagement of service providers for implementation services of the new system; cabling services; and engagement of contract staff in the information technology profession. The Department also requires a dedicated team and the total staff cost is about \$90 million.
3. The LCSD is pressing ahead with the development of SmartPLAY. It is anticipated that the core functions of Phase 1 and the enhanced functions of Phase 2 will be rolled out in the second half of 2023 and in 2024 respectively. The new system can accommodate 10 000 concurrent users. SmartPLAY will adopt a new generation of Web Application Firewall and anti-bot solution. Once an unusual booking is detected, the anti-bot solution will instantly analyse and intercept bot access.
4. The LCSD does not compile statistics on the payments made through the Leisure Link and the booking counters based on the number of patrons. Please refer to the [Annex](#) for details about the numbers of facility session bookings and sports and recreation programme enrolments made through different booking methods such as booking counters, self-service kiosks and online booking service in the past 3 years.

**Annex to Reply Serial No. CSTB222**

Year	Booking method and the respective number of facility session bookings/ programme enrolments					
	Booking counters		Self-service kiosks		Online booking service	
	Annual total number of bookings/ enrolments	Monthly average number of bookings/ enrolments	Annual total number of bookings/ enrolments	Monthly average number of bookings/ enrolments	Annual total number of bookings/ enrolments	Monthly average number of bookings/ enrolments
2020	1 096 226	91 352	162 240	13 520	2 363 228	196 936
2021	1 638 717	136 560	304 514	25 376	3 356 216	279 685
2022	1 020 749	85 062	70 575	5 881	3 341 351	278 446

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