

University-Industry Partnership for boosting the Construction Industry - Technology Transfer with a “SMILE”

All sub-sectors of the construction industry including small and medium contractors will soon benefit further from the revamped, and still free-of-charge, **SMILE-SMC** web-site. The upgraded one-stop resource website will help construction organisations to improve their business opportunities, competitiveness and performance levels, and also provide more information and wider networks in the Mainland and overseas.

The University of Hong Kong (HKU), which launched the website in 2006, has signed an innovative University-Industry Partnership Agreement with China Trend Building Press Ltd. (China Trend) for a 2nd phase development and operation of this SMILE-SMC web-site. Aiming at spreading and multiplying the SMILE-SMC benefits to a wider community, China Trend will launch the revamped website within four months. It will also be responsible for the continuous up-dating, upgrading, maintenance and further promotion of the website.

Initially funded by the HKSAR Trade and Industry Department to set up the SMILE-SMC website, the HKU team led by the Department of Civil Engineering, first identified critical industry needs in 2004-05 before developing well-received solutions for the website's operation in February 2006. This stage-wise development by HKU benefited from valuable inputs by construction associations and other industry partners.

The web-site is designed to help all sub-sectors in the construction industry. Although initially intended to help Small & Medium Contractors in particular, it has been found to be useful to all **Contractors** in improving their competitiveness and performance levels. SMILE-SMC can also help **Clients** and **Consultants** e.g. in their search for specialist knowledge, as well as special sub-contractors, specialist contractors, supplies etc. All sub-sectors can obtain and process important industry information and 'knowledge' in what is designed as a one-stop resource, divided into convenient zones, for obtaining and exchanging information, accessing valuable business and technical knowledge etc.

The agreement signing on June 20, 2007 signified the boosting of SMILE-SMC into a significant 2nd phase. Signatories are Professor Paul Tam, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, HKU; Mr. Peter Lee, Head of the Department of Civil Engineering, HKU and Mr. Felix Leung, Publisher, China Trend Building Press Ltd.

About “China Trend Building Press Ltd”: It is a Hong Kong-based company specialising in trade publications, particularly in the areas of building design and construction, real estate, interior decoration and related fields. The longest-running China Trend title is the English-language Building Journal, which has been in continuous publication every month since March 1973. The company is a forerunner in online publishing as well, with their own www.building.hk web site having been launched in 1996.

What is next?

China Trend will launch a refreshed and revamped SMILE-SMC web-site within four months. All existing Trial Members will be given the option to continue to receive free services under the new arrangement. But they will receive much more, along with the expected explosion of new users who will include companies and users from Mainland China, as well as overseas.

We will announce the launch of the 2nd phase web-site by October.

If you want to check out the current web-site or are interested in more information about potential benefits, please visit: <http://smile.hku.hk> or email us at smilemc@hku.hk