

Hong Kong Customs detects largest case of selling infringing electronic question banks on record (with photo)

â€‹Hong Kong Customs conducted an operation on April 8 to combat the online sale of infringing electronic question banks for primary schools. During the operation, five persons were arrested and a batch of items suspected to be involved in the cases was seized, including over 59 000 electronic files of suspected infringing question banks for primary schools. This is the largest on record among similar cases detected by Customs in terms of the quantity of files being seized.

Customs earlier received complaints from copyright owners alleging that suspected infringing question banks for primary schools were put on sale through online platforms. Through a big data analytics system, Customs officers conducted detection and analysis, and targeted a number of online pages on social media for investigation.

After an in-depth investigation, and with the assistance of copyright owners, Customs officers took enforcement action on April 8 and raided four residential premises in Sai Ying Pun, Shatin, Fanling and Tseung Kwan O as well as a tutorial centre in Sai Ying Pun. A batch of electronic files of suspected infringing question banks was seized with the subjects involved being Chinese, English, Mathematics and General Studies. Customs also seized a batch of items suspected to be connected with the cases, including five sets of computers, four tablet computers, a batch of USB flash drives, seven mobile phones and a batch of suspected infringing teaching materials.

During the operation, one man and four women, aged between 39 and 55, were arrested.

An investigation is ongoing.

The Group Head (Intellectual Property Investigation (Operations)) of Customs, Ms Wong Wai-chuen, today (April 13) appealed to members of the public at a press conference to respect intellectual property rights and to refuse purchasing infringing electronic question banks.

Customs also reminds the public not to sell or distribute infringing articles publicly. Under the Copyright Ordinance, without the licence of the copyright owner, any person who sells or possesses for sale any infringing article, or distributes an infringing article, otherwise than for the purpose of or in the course of any trade or business for profit or reward, to such an extent as to affect prejudicially the copyright owner, commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a term of imprisonment for four years and a fine of \$50,000 per infringing copy.

Members of the public may report any suspected infringing activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

