

LCQ22: CHOICE Magazine published by Consumer Council

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Ngan Man-yu and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, in the Legislative Council today (November 29):

Question:

It is learnt that the CHOICE Magazine published by the Consumer Council (CC) (the monthly magazine) protects the rights and interests of consumers through product testing and market research, a complaint repository and product quality monitoring. The print version and the online version of the monthly magazine are both sold at \$12 per copy and per issue. Individual articles of the online version are available on subscription at \$8 per article, and online articles published for five or more years are all made available free of charge for reading by consumers. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council if it knows:

(1) the sales of the monthly magazine (with a breakdown by a single issue of the print version as well as a single issue and a single article of the online version) and the number of downloads of the online free articles in each of the past three years; and

(2) the measures put in place by the CC to strengthen the promotion of the monthly magazine, including whether it will consider making the online version of the monthly magazine available for free download, so as to enable more people to know about the work of the CC, thereby promoting the protection of consumers' rights and interests; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Consumer Council (Council) has been publishing the CHOICE Magazine since 1976. Each issue of the monthly magazine features a wide range of topics, including product tests as well as surveys, studies and complaint cases on products and services, providing consumers with comprehensive information.

At present, the CHOICE Magazine offers print and online versions, both at \$12 per issue. Consumers may also purchase individual articles online at \$8 per article. In each issue of the online version of the CHOICE Magazine, some articles are available to consumers for free. Articles that have been published for five years or more are all free of charge for consumers' reading. In addition, consumers may also subscribe the print or online version of the CHOICE Magazine on annual terms at a discounted price.

Regarding the two parts of the question, my reply is as follows:

(1) The sales of the CHOICE Magazine and the online page views of its articles in the past three years are set out in the table below on a yearly basis:

	2020	2021	2022
Sales of the print version			
– Single issues	114 772 copies	109 183 copies	101 658 copies
– Annual subscriptions	112 381 copies	99 268 copies	93 688 copies
Sales of the online version			
– Single issues	6 802 copies	4 806 copies	4 883 copies
– Annual subscriptions	45 673 copies	47 803 copies	45 709 copies
– Individual articles	11 531 pieces	10 403 pieces	11 615 pieces
Online page views of the articles (Note 1)	839 740 page views	2 757 749 (Note 2) page views	2 648 801 page views

(2) The Council has all along been promoting the CHOICE Magazine through a multi-pronged approach, so as to disseminate useful consumption information to consumers.

The Council holds a press conference on the CHOICE Magazine every month to fully publicise the test results in the monthly magazine. Infographics and multimedia resources are also provided to facilitate the media to grasp and report the content. This enables consumers to receive information on the test results of the monthly magazine through the reports of the media and enhances their understanding of the monthly magazine.

Furthermore, the Council sets up a booth at the Hong Kong Book Fair every year to promote the CHOICE Magazine and to attract new subscribers. At the same time, the Council strengthens the interaction with consumers through publishing the content of the monthly magazine on its website and social media channels (Facebook, YouTube and WeChat) as well as running prize quizzes. In recent years, the Council has published more free-of-charge articles of the CHOICE Magazine on its website, and has set up a column named "Shopping Guide", which consolidates the information from previous issues of the monthly magazine in a reader-friendly way to provide timely references for consumers.

The measures abovementioned are conducive to raising consumers' awareness of the content of the CHOICE Magazine and enlarging its readership continuously. Meanwhile, they also allow more consumers to learn about the

work of the Council, facilitating the protection of consumers' rights and interests.

Along with the rapid development of technologies, the reading habits of consumers and the way they receive information have been evolving. The Council is considering the views of different stakeholders to review its marketing strategy, with a view to enabling the public to obtain consumption information with greater convenience.

Note 1: The Council does not collate the page view statistics on charged or free-of-charge articles respectively.

Note 2: The Council launched a new website in August 2021, integrating the original website of the Council with the website of the CHOICE Magazine and revamping the mode of reading the CHOICE Magazine online, hence the relevant page views had increased.