

Heycoins

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From entrepreneurship dream to reality

創業無難事，夢想可成真

Fresh graduate-turned-business innovator launches fintech venture to move Hong Kong into e-future

城大畢業生成功創業，
成立金融科技公司，
推動香港邁向電子時代

The Heycoins machine prototype
「神沙機」原型



Guest interviewer: alumna Karina Fan
特邀記者：范巧茹校友

Adam Lau Kong-sing majored in China Business and recently graduated in February. Unlike many of his classmates, he did not bury himself in job applications because he is already the co-founder of his own exciting venture: Heycoins, located at Cyberport. Its principal business is to transform physical coins into e-value within a digital wallet. Users pour coins into Heycoins machines and, after identifying themselves to the system, the coins will be converted into the equivalent of electronic money, donations, or vouchers for the services or products of their business partners.

Tackling the initial challenges

The Heycoins machine was inspired by Adam's university hostel life. When his exchange-student roommate was about to return to his home country, he gave Adam all the coins that he wouldn't be able to use after leaving Hong Kong. Adam himself then struggled with the problem of what to do with them.

In the end, he spent the money at the hostel vending machines. It dawned on him that other people must have similar problems, so, following some research, Adam learnt that every family in Hong Kong on average possessed some \$200 to \$1,000 in coins. Recycling them could be a viable business!



Heycoins signed a memorandum of understanding with a Macau company at the 22nd Macao International Trade and Investment Fair. Heycoins machines began operating in Macau in December 2017.

Heycoins於第22屆澳門國際貿易投資展覽會中與澳門公司簽訂合作意向，並已於2017年12月在澳門設置多部神沙機測試運行。

After working out his business model, Adam teamed up with a friend to apply for different SME funds. When financial support was forthcoming, he visited Shenzhen to identify manufacturers who could make a prototype coin machine and at the same time promote his idea to other businesses. 13 Heycoins machines are now undergoing pilot testing across the city including Kowloon Tong MTR station and Fashion Walk in Causeway Bay, with plans to scale up to between 30-50 machines in Hong Kong.

While the business is currently progressing smoothly, Adam and his partner faced numerous challenges at the outset. "Neither of us are IT professionals, but the development of the Heycoins concept involved digital wallets, network safety and security, and a myriad of hardware and software issues. Both of us had to learn from scratch, from product design, production, to how to scale up. One huge advantage was we managed to meet other IT talents at Cyberport, which really helped our business development."

Applying what you learn · Pursue your dream

In addition to his many other duties, Adam is also Chief Marketing Officer and has to compile proposals for potential business partners. **“I learnt a huge amount from CityU faculty members. I always presented my proposals to my lecturers and sought their advice and guidance on how to enhance plans to make them easier for clients to understand and become interested in my products and services.”**

Regarding future prospect, Adam hopes that Heycoins machines will cover more locations and provide a greater variety of services as well as contribute to the evolution of the “smart city”. He noted that people in Hong Kong were still not familiar with financial technology (fintech) and about 80% of Heycoins account holders were first-time users of a digital wallet. **He is keen that Heycoins can help speed up fintech development.**

Adam believes young people in Hong Kong should persevere in pursuing their dream. Although the path to entrepreneurship is highly challenging, there are also organisations and institutions, such as CityU, that provide great support. **With a good idea and true commitment, entrepreneurship is not beyond reach.** “There are two parts to innovation and creating a business,” Adam said. “You need bold new concepts that break away from the old ways of doing things. You should also dare to explore what society really needs. Creating a new venture requires hard work and dedication. Without either, failure is all too likely. With them, the sky’s the limit!”



劉港城在城大主修中國企業管理，剛於今年二月畢業。他並沒有像其他畢業生般忙於找工作，因為他已是一家新創企業Heycoins「神沙機」(按：「神沙」是香港人對輔幣的別稱)的創辦人之一。Heycoins的辦公室位於數碼港，主要業務是為用戶提供將輔幣轉換為電子錢包貨幣的服務。用戶只需將輔幣放入神沙機內，通過身份驗證後，便可將指定的金額轉為電子貨幣、捐款或商戶禮券。

十億市場 創業維艱

港城創業的靈感來自大學宿舍的生活，有一次他的交換生室友回國前，將用不完的輔幣送給他。他手上已有大量輔幣，於是他到宿舍的食物及飲品販賣機，花掉近五、六百元的輔幣。這次經歷啟發了他，不少人像他一樣，累積了甚多輔幣，卻缺少使用的途徑。透過市場調查，他發現單在香港，平均每個家庭都擁有200至1,000元的輔幣，輔幣回收絕對是一個回報可觀的市場。

他認定這個想法可行後，便與一位夥伴合作申請各類型的創業資助基金。獲得資金後，他更親自到深圳找廠家製作神沙機的樣品，並積極向其他企業推銷。現時香港市面上已有13部神沙機正在試用中，地點包括九龍塘地鐵站和銅鑼灣Fashion Walk，年內更會增至30到50部。

雖然神沙機現時已開始走上軌道，但在創業初期，港城也遇到不少挑戰。他憶述：「由於我和夥伴都不是資訊科技專才，神沙機的概念卻牽涉到電子錢包、網路保安和其他軟硬件的問題；所以在設計、製作和樣品升級時，我們都需要從頭學起。幸運的是，我們後來在數碼港找到其他資訊科技專才加入團隊，令公司業務發展得更順利。」

Adam (second right) and the Heycoins management team.
劉港城(右二)與Heycoins管理團隊。

學以致用 實踐夢想

另外，港城亦身兼公司的首席營銷官，需要為其他企業撰寫建議書。他說：「在這方面得到城大的學科及知識轉移處多位導師的幫助。我經常將建議書給導師們過目，並諮詢他們的意見。他們則教導我如何將建議書寫得簡明易懂，讓客戶更清楚當中的內容，從而對我的商品產生興趣。」

談到公司的遠景，港城希望神沙機能覆蓋更多地方，為更多行業層面提供服務，亦希望在香港建立智慧城市上出一分力。他指出香港有很多人都不熟悉金融科技，有80%的神沙機用戶是第一次使用電子錢包，他希望能藉此機會，加快推動金融科技的發展。

港城希望香港的年輕人能堅持夢想，開創自己的事業。他表示雖然大部份人覺得創業的道路很艱辛，但其實城大及其他機構一直提供了多方面的資源與助力，只要有好的想法，並且願意付出努力，創業並不困難。他勉勵年輕人：「**創新創業精神是兩部份，創新指我們需要有新穎的想法和懂得破舊立新，同時要了解並切合社會需要，而創業需要奮鬥和堅持，這兩方面缺一不可。**」



About guest interviewer Karina Fan

Graduate of MA Translation and Interpretation, Karina is a well-known financial news anchor. She has hosted numerous finance-related shows on TVB. She currently works for the Hong Kong Economic Journal as anchor of *EJ Markets*. Karina is one of the City AlumNet Advisory Committee members.

特邀記者范巧茹校友簡介：

城大翻譯及傳譯文學碩士畢業生、著名財經新聞主播，曾於無綫主持多個財經電視節目。現擔任《信報》的「EJ Markets 市前直擊」主持。她是城大校友網雜誌的諮委成員。