

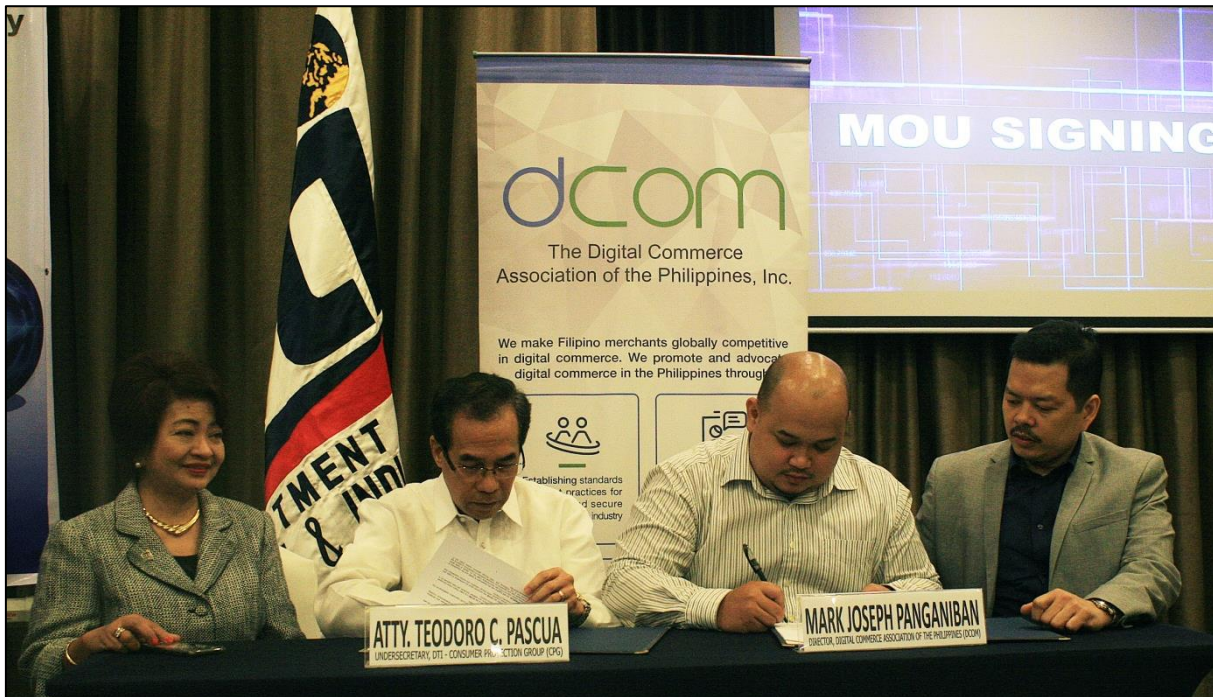
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DTI, DCOM tie up to intensify promotion of consumer rights in the digital age



DTI-CPG Undersecretary Teodoro C. Pascua (second from left) and DCOM Executive Director Mark Joseph P. Panganiban (second from right), with CPAB OIC Lilian G. Salonga (leftmost) and DCOM Treasurer Robert B. Gantuangco as witnesses, sign a memorandum of understanding to further promote consumer rights in the context of digital commerce on 20 October 2017 at Ascott Hotel, Makati City.

To further increase consumer awareness, particularly in the area of digital commerce, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Digital Commerce Association of the Philippines (DCOM) on 20 October 2017 during the Forum on Consumer Rights in the Digital Age held at Ascott Hotel, Makati City.

DTI Consumer Protection Group (CPG) Undersecretary Teodoro C. Pascua and DCOM Executive Director Mark Joseph P. Panganiban signed the understanding, together with DTI Consumer Protection and Advocacy Bureau (CPAB) Officer-in-Charge and Assistant Director Lilian G. Salonga and DCOM Treasurer Robert B. Gantuangco as witnesses.

The partnership aims to address the increasing number of complaints on unfair business practices online that come with the proliferation of digital selling platforms in the country.

Under the MOU, a joint DTI-DCOM information campaign will be implemented to protect consumers from deceptive online transactions through education on digital commerce and determining legitimate online selling entities.

DCOM will also serve as a resource organization to DTI in monitoring and investigating alleged fraudulent selling companies. The Department is set to develop guidelines in conducting investigations on online selling. A complaints handling procedure on online selling will also be institutionalized.

“While e-commerce provides us ease, we must never forget to remain wise and vigilant. Let us remember that the digital world is a bit treacherous in some ways,” said Pascua.

“We should know and exercise our rights and responsibilities, as well as be guided by the pertinent government initiatives, policies, and laws in online transactions before we click that 'Add to Cart,' 'Buy Now,' or 'Proceed to Checkout' option,” he added.

The signing of the MOU was among the highlights of the recently concluded forum. Organized by CPAB in collaboration with the DTI E-Commerce Office, it aimed to promote a more inclusive digital economy by helping consumers maximize the opportunities offered by existing and emerging digital technologies.

Over a hundred representatives from national government agencies, local government units, and consumer groups attended the said event. The forum covered several discussions on e-commerce and digital economy:

- **DTI Competitiveness Bureau (CB) Assistant Director Mary Lou A. Gesilva** presented the current status of the country in terms of its readiness to adopt and explore digital technologies to develop government practices, business models, and the society in general based on the 2016 Global Competitiveness Report of the World Bank;
- **DTI E-Commerce Office OIC Ma. Crispina S. Reodica** provided updates and future plans on the Philippine E-Commerce Roadmap from policy to infrastructure development;
- **National Privacy Commission (NPC) Policy Development Section Head Ivy Grace T. Villasoto** tackled the salient features of the Republic Act 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012;
- **National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Digital Forensics Laboratory Chief Victor V. Lorenzo** underscored the trends on cybercrime and tips to ensure cybersecurity; and
- Panganiban discussed business ethics and tips in online buying and selling.

The event is part of the celebration of the Consumer Welfare Month this October, as mandated by Presidential Proclamation No. 1098, s. 1997.