

CALENDAR OF EVENTS February/March 2006

01 March 2006

IBM Public Forum – "Unlocking the Business Value of SOA"

Featuring Mr. Steve Mills,
Senior Vice President and Group Executive,
IBM Software Group, an Infocomm Development
Authority of Singapore's (IDA) Distinguished
Infocomm Speaker,

Venue: Suntec Singapore International Convention
Centre & Exhibition Centre,
Ballroom 2, Level 2

Time: 1:00 pm – 5:15 pm

Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) has been a hot
topic of discussion in recent years.

SOA can help increase the flexibility of business
processes, strengthen underlying IT infrastructure and
retain and reuse existing assets. Regardless of the
size of the organisation, SOA can transform businesses.

Speaking as an IDA's Distinguished Infocomm Speaker

is Mr. Steve Mills, Senior Vice President and Group
Executive of IBM Software Group. He is responsible
for shaping IBM's overall software strategy and
directing IBM's \$13 billion software business.

Come learn from Mr. Steve Mills and his team of
experts on:

- Global trends which drive the adoption of SOA
- How SOA is implemented in various industries with
real case studies
- How to manage the complete life-cycle of SOA
implementation: from modelling to deployment
and finally, management.

For online registration and event information,
please visit: ibm.com/sg/soa.

iDA
SINGAPORE

The Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA) is committed to growing Singapore into a dynamic global infocomm hub. IDA uses an integrated approach to developing info-communications in Singapore. This involves nurturing a competitive telecoms market as well as a conducive business environment with programmes and schemes for both local and international companies.

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Singapore's infocomm sector looks set for
continued growth in 2006

Singapore's Initiatives To Push Development of a BPO Hub : Pg 5

IDA's two-pronged strategy aimed at increasing
demand and developing capabilities for BPO





Singapore
wave

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ICT BUSINESS OUTLOOK 2006

IDA IS CONFIDENT that the infocomm sector will continue to enjoy positive growth over its 2005 results.

This was announced by Mr Chan Yeng Kit, Chief Executive Officer of the IDA at the SITF 2006 ICT Business Outlook Forum held in January. The forum is an annual review of the ICT sector, and provides companies with a guide to the business outlook for the ICT industry in 2006.

For 2006, both Government and independent surveys agree that the infocomm industry will continue to grow. According to research firm Gartner, IT spending in Asia Pacific is expected to grow at a compounded annual rate of 7.5 percent up to 2009.

According to Mr Chan, IDA's focus for 2006 is to help Singapore's Infocomm companies grow by helping them tap into international markets, and by developing their own capabilities to facilitate this growth.

Going global

IDA will continue to build on initiatives to help local companies expand globally. For example, IDA currently has offices in China, India and the United States and partnership programmes like the Overseas Development Programme, to bring together MNCs and local companies in partnership to tap into overseas markets. They are also looking to new markets for growth. For example, according to a 2005 IDC report, the Middle East and North Africa's technology market is expected to grow to US\$13.4 billion by 2008. In the coming year, IDA will explore setting up an office in the Middle East.

Local companies such as NCS and Crimson Logic also did well in their own overseas ventures, winning deals worth S\$10 million and S\$40 million respectively.

Helping companies develop

To help companies strengthen their capabilities IDA has several programmes in place such as the Infocomm Local Industry Upgrading Programme (ILIUP), where MNCs are partnered with local enterprises and help them develop through technology transfer. Since the start of this programme, local companies have generated more than 300 products, amounting to S\$100 million worth of commercial projects over the last ten years.

In 2006, IDA will continue with this effort and others to help local companies strengthen their capabilities, develop innovative new products or to enhance their intellectual property.

Developing potential

IDA will also help key economic sectors such as education, healthcare and logistics to embrace infocomm and use IT strategically, such as the deployment of digital inking technologies and the innovative use of tablet PCs in the education sector.

IDA will continue to launch initiatives that will help to promote Singapore and its ICT companies. With the expected positive outlook, Singapore's Infocomm sector looks set for rosier times in 2006.

IDC UNVEILS TOP 10 TELECOMMUNICATIONS PREDICTIONS FOR 2006

2006 WILL BE A YEAR when the rules of the telecommunications game are rewritten by new technologies and services, according to IDC's latest research findings for the Asia/Pacific Telecommunications Industry.

"Shifting business models and strategies are the key themes in the region for 2006. Changing regulatory environments, coupled with disruptive technologies in the guise of Skype, will cause many industry players to go back to the drawing board," says Sandra Ng, Vice President, Asia/Pacific Communications, Peripherals and Services Research.

The Asia Pacific (excluding Japan) telecom services market was worth just over US\$160 billion in 2005 and is projected to exceed US\$170 billion in 2006, a growth rate of 7 percent. Growth will continue to come from VoIP, Broadband, IP Services, 3G Services, managed services and equipment.

IDC's Top 10 Predictions for the Telecommunications Market in Asia Pacific Excluding Japan for 2006 are:

- 1. Carriers to Re-evaluate their Strategies in Consumer VoIP Market**
Entry of non-traditional players (eBay's Skype, Microsoft's Teleo) in the voice market and the re-sale of Skype services by operators and service providers in the region will force carriers to respond.
- 2. Regulatory Issues Pose Key Challenge for Triple Play**
Telcos will continue to eye Pay TV over broadband, a key pillar of triple play (voice, data and video). Network architectures will have to be tweaked to deliver quality video. A regulatory tussle will likely ensue over whether telcos or the broadcast agencies should oversee the IPTV service.
- 3. VPLS as a Strong Alternative to Frame Relay and IP-VPN**
Virtual Private LAN Services, especially among mid-sized enterprises, will be a strong alternative to both frame relay and IP-VPN services. The downside for operators is a loss of revenue: VPLS offers customers the opportunity to easily setup and manage their own WANs.
- 4. Common Licensing Frameworks Appear in More Mature Markets**
Some countries seek to abolish the present fixed and mobile licenses in favor of class licenses that contain similar obligations

and rights for both types of services. In more mature markets, issues such as interconnection regimes, number pools and rules concerning number portability will be revisited.

- 5. Multiplayer Mobile Online Gaming Taking Off in 2006**
This market will continue to be dominated by either simple embedded or downloadable games. In addition, both the developer community and the service providers will be eager to explore multiplayer mobile online gaming models in 2006.
- 6. Demand for Antivirus Technologies for Mobile Devices**
IDC estimates that 7 percent of all mobile phone shipped by end 2006 will be smart phones that are prone to viruses. As organisations continue to deploy enterprise mobility solutions, antivirus clients will soon become a must-have for these converged mobile devices.
- 7. Telcos Dancing to the Beat of Managed Services**
Telcos across the region will move up the value chain and offer managed services, building up alliances, rebranding themselves as ICT service companies, and providing more integrated solutions. Increasingly, some telcos are bundling value-added managed services into connectivity contracts with enterprise customers.
- 8. IP Telephony Second Wave with Enhanced Mobility**
IP Telephony will continue to gain ground this year, representing the start of the second wave: the emergence of converged, presence-based business communication applications that will further drive the growth of the enterprise telephony market.
- 9. Over-the-Air Music Downloads Faces Obstacles**
Mobile operators are tapping music as content to be provided as part of their portfolio of mobile data services. However, high data usage charges and the lack of innovative music content packages such as subscription models will prove a dampener on over-the-air music distribution.
- 10. mCommerce Re-start**
The mobile phone is being transformed into a replacement for petty cash, debit and credit cards, with payments charged either through the mobile phone bill or even directly to the bank account. With a growing pool of applications and a rising acceptance, IDC expects the market to begin to take root, at least in the micro-payment segment.

SINGAPORE'S PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT CLIMATE FOR H1 2006 LOOKS PROMISING

PROFESSIONAL STAFFING SOLUTION provider Hudson has released the Hudson Report for Quarter 1 (Q1) 2006, detailing the results of a survey of over 2,400 key employment decision makers from multinational organisations of all sizes in all major industry sectors in China, Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore. The seven industry sectors surveyed are Banking and Professional Services, Consumer, IT & Telecommunications, Manufacturing and Media/PR/Advertising, Logistics and Transportation and Healthcare and Life Sciences.

For Singapore, the companies forecasting headcount growth have increased from 41 percent in Q1 2005 to 49 percent this quarter, and slightly up from 47 percent in Q4 2005. A further 49 percent of professionals surveyed anticipate that employment will remain steady in Q1 2006, and only a nominal two percent forecast a decline in headcount. Apart from Q3 2005, this is the highest figure for hiring expectations since Q2 2001.

"Over the past three years, hiring expectations have steadily increased in Q1 year on year – from 40 percent in Q1 2004 to 41 percent in Q1 last year to 49 percent this quarter," said Caleb Baker, country manager, Hudson Singapore. "In order to attract and retain the talent they need, employers know they have to increase both salaries and bonuses. They are responding to the candidate-short market by increasing salaries for new managerial hires. Furthermore, bonuses are generally higher, following the strong emphasis on talent retention."

Particularly upbeat is the media/PR/advertising sector, with 56 percent of executives predicting headcount growth – the highest proportion of any industry and a substantial increase from 44 percent in Q4 2005. Manufacturing companies also have high hiring expectations, with 52 percent anticipating a headcount increase.

In line with quarterly trends so far, the highest demand is for sales staff across all industry sectors, which accounts for 23 percent of all anticipated new hiring. Engineering/operations/technical positions are next in line with a significant 18 percent of new hires.

There is also continued strong demand for IT professionals, which account for 12 percent of anticipated new hires.

Cross-industry confidence is high regarding company performance in the next six months. 84 percent anticipate their company performance will be excellent or good. Logistics and transportation, banking and professional services and media/advertising/PR sectors head the optimism list, with 92 percent, 91 percent and 91 percent respectively expecting their company performance to be excellent or good.

92 percent of respondents expect to pay more for new managerial hires, more than in any other market surveyed in Asia. 75 percent of companies across all sectors expect to pay more than five percent to attract new managers, while 37 percent say they will have to pay more than 10 percent.

Furthermore, 71 percent of respondents are planning to pay bonuses of more than five percent, compared with 54 percent in Q1 2005. 42 percent say they will pay more than 10 percent, up from 26 percent a year earlier. The banking and professional services sectors expect to pay the highest bonuses, with 93 percent saying they will pay more than five percent and 71 percent saying they will pay more than 10 percent.



SINGAPORE'S INITIATIVES TO PUSH DEVELOPMENT OF A BPO HUB

IN ITS ENDEAVOUR TO develop Singapore as a Business Process Outsourcing hub, the IDA has come up with a two-pronged approach aimed at increasing local demand in both public and private sectors, and developing Singapore's capabilities to meet the increased demand.

Business Process Outsourcing or BPO refers to a situation when a company delegates one or more IT-enabled business processes to an external service provider. Acceptance of BPO has risen over the past few years and it has become an essential part of the business strategies of both private and public sector organisations.

Beyond just cost savings, BPO redirects resources and management attention to more valuable activities. It allows an organization to tap on the specialised skills and competencies of the external provider leaving them free to concentrate on their own business. Even governments are pushing for more BPO services.

In the private sector, local firm Zapper has taken over the HR functions of DHL Singapore and DHL Malaysia. For them, the main driver was not so much cost savings but rather they did not want to divert their own resources to build a HR department. They felt that Zapper could better meet their HR needs and offered regional coverage as a bonus.

To enable local companies to plug into the growing BPO market, IDA has set aside S\$12 million to help local infocomm companies develop capabilities in the development and provision of high value-added BPO services.

It also hopes that its two-pronged approach to increase local demand in both public and private sectors, and developing Singapore's capabilities to meet the increased demand will facilitate and spur collaborations

between end-users and service providers as well as develop manpower capabilities and competencies in BPO.

IDA is also working with the Singapore Infocomm Technology Federation (SiTF) to establish a BPO chapter within SiTF, for companies to network and collectively address issues pertaining to BPO industry development. The Best Sourcing Chapter aims to increase awareness of the benefits of best sourcing, explore and deliver best sourcing strategies, as well as organise networking events for knowledge sharing.

Going global may also provide Singapore companies with growth opportunities. According to research firm Gartner Dataquest, the global BPO market is estimated to reach US\$173 billion by 2008 and Singapore is well set to tap into this.

In fact, in a 2004 report, the US Department of Commerce ranked Singapore as the second fastest-growing hub for outsourcing among US businesses. Recent reports by AT Kearney, PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Economist Intelligence Unit, have found Singapore to be amongst the top destinations for offshoring. Many MNCs have chosen to locate their offshoring operations in Singapore as it offers a highly secure and stable business environment. Some MNCs who are using Singapore as their BPO hub include Citigroup, BASF and SAP.

According to Mr Chan Yeng Kit, Chief Executive Officer of the IDA, "Singapore's strengths lie in its strong intellectual property protection, pro-business attitude, talent pool, and a worry-free stable environment. We are free from natural disasters, politically stable, and equipped with a robust infocomm infrastructure and excellent connectivity. We have a ready pool of global BPO companies like EDS, HP, IBM, and Scandent, and local BPO companies like NCS, SCS, Frontline, Melioris, Boardroom and many more."

BROADBAND USERS GET MORE CHOICE

QALA SINGAPORE HAS BECOME the third telecom operator to announce online wireless high-speed Internet services for broadband users in a move that challenges the dominance of SingNet and StarHub.

This service is due to be launched in March and promises more mobility for users, who will be able to surf the Internet at home or outdoors without plugging a wire into a phone jack or cable point.

Qala is targeting their new wireless broadband service at the half of homes here that do not have broadband, a change from their regular client base of corporate users. Although the new service will only be available to users in the Bukit Timah area when it launches in March, Qala expects the service to be accessible island wide in two years.

Download speeds will range from 256 kilobits per second (Kbps) to 2 megabits per second (Mbps), comparable to broadband speeds offered by SingNet and StarHub. Additionally, according to company executives, they hope that an attractive price point will help reach out to this new market. As such, Qala is expected to price it lower than current "surf-all-you-can" broadband services, which start from \$47.25 a month. Qala executives said that the key to growth for this new service was competitiveness.

Working together with one of its investors, Creative Technology, Qala may also bundle music downloads or even portable music devices with its new service to attract users, especially the youth market.

However, Qala won't be the only one to offer the entirely wireless service. Pacific Internet is preparing to launch a similar service by March, while Mobile One (M1) plans to do the same some time this year.

STOP SPYWARE

WHILE THE DANGERS OF VIRUSES, Trojans and spam are generally well-understood, spyware remains a confusing concept for many computer users. Spyware is designed to monitor computer usage and browsing habits, by monitoring keystrokes, tracking Internet history and uploading confidential information.

These applications are potentially unwanted programs (PUPs), which install on your system without your consent or your knowledge when you visit Web sites or use free software. Many get there legally because you "agree" to install them, but some end-user licence agreements (EULAs) are so subtle that you might agree unknowingly.

Whether PUPs are legal or not, however, you should know what they are and what they're doing – and may also want to remove them.

Why You Need To Worry

The threats of PUPs include identity theft and compromised privacy, loss of confidential information and intellectual property, loss of productivity and network bandwidth – at home or at work.

For example, by tracking people's movements online and monitoring keystrokes, identity thieves can steal passwords to commit online fraud.

IDC analysts estimate that 67 percent of all computers have some form of spyware. In many cases, there are multiple PUPs (even hundreds) on a single computer, and for corporate networks, this means a waste of resources – and a major security threat.

One of the best ways to stop PUPs is to educate users about IT security policy and safe practices. [See Tips for Avoiding Spyware.] However, for full protection, also use technology.

Stopping PUPs at Home

Home PCs are primary targets for identity thieves because they contain so much personal data. Install anti-virus and anti-spyware software from a reputable vendor to stop PUPs such as spyware, adware, dialers and other unwelcome marketing programs before they do damage to your system.

Stopping PUPs on Corporate Networks

Businesses need multiple layers of protection. No threat can be totally contained at a single point in the network. Therefore the anti-spyware technology should be integrated across different solutions at different points of the network. McAfee's layered defense strategy includes three steps:

- **Install an anti-spyware Web security appliance**
A single appliance at the edge of the network is easy to administer and blocks spyware from all systems connected to the network – including systems not controlled by your security department.
- **Choose an appliance with specialized anti-spyware signatures.**
PUPs replicate quickly, so stop the original PUP before it can multiply,

using On-Access scanning that scans before PUPs can install. Another critical technology is true real-time scanning, rather than on-demand scans at pre-determined times which leaves a window of vulnerability allowing dozens of PUPs to rush in.

- **Install anti-spyware software on every system**
Blocking spyware at the edge of the network is not good enough. Anti-spyware programs should be installed on every desktop and server, while employee laptops also need 24/7 onboard protection because they travel away from the protected network environment.
- **Install a network IPS appliance**
Traditionally, network security devices such as intrusion prevention systems (IPS) block hackers and application-level exploits. Advanced IPS systems now also block spyware, and stop spyware spreading through the network.

Tips for Avoiding Spyware

- Keep your operating system and browser patched.
- Use a hardware or software firewall.
- Use and regularly update a quality anti-virus program.
- Use and regularly update a quality anti-spyware program.
- Read all EULAs and privacy policies carefully. If in doubt, don't install the software.
- Beware of "free" software, often offered in exchange for accepting adware.
- Don't normally run as administrator; set up a regular user account for day-to-day work, and log on as administrator only to install patches, etc.
- Think about what software you actually need – do you really need screensavers and smileys (emoticons)?
- Never click on links in email unless you know/can verify who sent it.
- Beware of pornography, online gaming, get-rich-quick and other high-risk Web sites.

Article is contributed by Viren Mantri, Principal, Strategic Security Services McAfee

NEW SENIOR APPOINTMENTS FOR TWO COMPANIES

Both Pacific Internet (PacNet) and Oracle Singapore have appointed new leaders to drive growth for this year and beyond.

Mr Phey Teck Moh has been named President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at PacNet, bringing with him 20 years of leadership and management experience in the information technology (IT) and telecommunications industries. Prior to this appointment, Mr Phey served in a variety of positions at Motorola, Compaq and IBM. His last appointment at Motorola was as its Asia Pacific Vice President and General Manager for its Government and Enterprise Mobility Solutions business.

Mr Phey's experience as a proven business builder in technology-based and rapidly evolving industries would be of great benefit to PacNet as it moved to grow its region-wide business in Asia Pacific and strengthen its core competencies.

Mr Phey said on his appointment, "I am delighted to join Pacific Internet. It has a significant presence in Asia Pacific and many accomplishments to date. Now is the time to start the company on its next phase of growth. We have a strong board, an experienced management team and long-serving employees committed to the company, to make Pacific Internet a top regional brand and a forerunner in the communications business."

Oracle has also announced the appointment of Mr Michael Yap in the dual roles of Managing Director for Oracle Singapore and Vice President of Business Development for Oracle Asia Pacific. Mr Yap has some 18 years of IT and management experience in key roles at companies like Commerce Exchange, Singapore's National Computer Board and as a venture partner at one of Singapore's most established VC firms.

It was Mr Yap's blend of info-communications, management and entrepreneurial experience that Oracle saw as being invaluable for Oracle's business in the region, especially for more mature and sophisticated markets such as Singapore's. He also has a proven track record and influence with the business, public and private sector communities that would help extend Oracle's influence as a strategic advisor for both public and private sector organisations across the region.

"I'm very excited at this opportunity to lead, drive and guide business development in the region for the world's largest business software company," said Mr Yap. "Oracle is also the largest software company in Singapore and I aim to maintain and extend this presence. A key focus for Oracle continues to be working with industry and government partners on initiatives that will contribute towards building Singapore's position as an info-communications icon and hub for the region."



Mr Phey Teck Moh, President and Chief Executive Officer, Pacific Internet



Mr Michael Yap, Managing Director of Oracle Singapore & Vice-President of Business Development, Oracle Asia Pacific.

SINGAPORE FIRMS MORE AWARE OF IP PROTECTION



TO COMBAT CORPORATE PIRACY, the Business Software Alliance (BSA) has put in place a series of initiatives to educate companies and their management on the perils of copyright infringement. Seminars, roadshows and advertisements were used to communicate the risks involved.

"What we wanted was to educate management on the harm piracy can bring to their business," said Jeffrey J. Hardee, VP and regional director Asia Pacific, BSA. "We need them to know the potential for loss in reputation, business and financial reparations that they could receive by attempting to save a few dollars."

It was hoped that through this education outreach, management would realize that the cost of becoming software license compliant was not as prohibitive as they might have previously thought. "Purchasing multiple licenses for software can actually be cheaper for businesses when you compare it to things like possible fines or purchasing software when a new computer is bought for an employee. Having a proper process in place means that they could actually save money in the long run," Mr Hardee added.

According to Mr Hardee, education is of key importance. "In order to effect long-term change, we have to continuously educate businesses that they have to respect IP by using only legal software within their organisation. It is by changing mind-sets that the most lasting change is achieved. People have to understand that morally and ethically it is wrong to use pirated software," he says.

To educate and help businesses, the BSA runs its own programmes and works with government agencies such as the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS). It runs seminars on software asset management (SAM), and places print advertisements in key local newspapers and radio "infomercials" to educate businesses on Singapore's Amended Copyright Law and the importance of a SAM process in complying with the new legislation. The BSA has also distributed free SAM Toolkits to help companies better understand licensing agreements and embark on a SAM process.

Vendors also took action against corporate piracy by releasing "light" versions of their software. These releases lacked the full features available in the more expensive "full" versions. Users who were interested in purchasing the full version after a while could go online to purchase the upgrade at a lower cost than buying a whole new copy.

Mr Walter Lee, Vice President, Asia/Pacific Consulting & Partnering Research, IDC, says that although there have been no figures released from vendors as to their uptake, we can expect this trend to continue in the region.

One year on, these policies seem to have borne fruit.

According to the Second Annual BSA and IDC Global Software Piracy Study which was launched in May last year, it showed that in 2004 Singapore has a piracy rate of 42 percent, with losses amounting to US\$96 million dollars. This is a decrease from the previous year's figure of 43 percent. Singapore's software piracy figure of 42 percent is at its lowest ever level, and is fourth lowest in the Asia Pacific, after Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.

Mr Hardee believes that with the firm commitment by the Singapore government to protect Intellectual Property as evidenced by the strong IP chapter stipulated in the US-Singapore FTA, backed by education, a strong legal framework, and enforcement by the authorities, there will be better respect for IP among businesses, which will in turn result in steady progress against software piracy.

HI SPEED WIRELESS BROADBAND GOES ON TRIAL

PARCO BUGIS JUNCTION is hosting trials of a new wireless broadband access (WBA) solution to evaluate its cost, capability and performance by local telco operator Mobile One (M1).

This follows a Wireless Broadband Spectrum Rights Auction conducted by the IDA in May last year. As a result of the auction, six companies were awarded the rights to 25 different frequency lots within the WBA bandwidth in the 2.3 GHz and 2.5 GHz frequency bands, with M1 winning four lots.

M1 is putting two different technologies on trial – Mesh Wi-Fi and pre-WiMAX – comparing it to the other WBA technologies for more than a month.

A WBA network typically operates at frequency bands under 6 GHz, providing access at speeds of 256 kbps and above, to both mobile users and fixed locations. Each base station generally serves an area of up to several square kilometres. As part of this trial, a 2.5 GHz WBA spectrum pre-WiMAX Base Station situated at Millenia Tower is part of the wireless backhaul broadband connection.

At Parco Bugis Junction, M1 is testing a mixed configuration of the pervasive Wi-Fi technology (based on IEEE 802.11) in the front end that

is supported by pre-WiMAX (Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access) operating at the 2.5 GHz WBA spectrum in the backhaul. However, it is not the normal Wi-Fi solution that is typically deployed for hot spots and WLANs (Wireless Local Area Network) but a more sophisticated wide-area version called Mesh Wi-Fi.

Mesh Wi-Fi network offers a cost-effective and elegant solution to provide broadband access over a wide area by using a series of Wi-Fi Access Points (AP) that are interconnected with one another using radio links. Several Wi-Fi networks can then be connected to a centralised location using pre-WiMAX wireless backhaul. Given the increasing ubiquity of low-cost Wi-Fi chipsets in laptops and handheld devices, this solution has the potential of improving the economics of deploying a WBA network.

M1's Chief Technical Officer Patrick Scodeller is looking forward to the results of the trial saying, "This technical trial, together with the other ones that we have done, will provide valuable inputs to enable us to come to a decision on the choice of technology for WBA. There is a lot of room for broadband penetration to grow in Singapore and WBA certainly has the potential to be a cost-effective means to stimulate this growth."

INFO BYTES

EMC APPOINTS NEW VP FOR SOFTWARE GROUP IN ASIA PACIFIC AND JAPAN

EMC Corporation, a leading information management and storage vendor has announced the appointment of Steve Redman as the Vice President of EMC Software Group for Asia Pacific and Japan. With more than 15 years of expertise and industry experience gained in companies like Rockwell Electronic Commerce, Lucent Technologies and Fuji Xerox, Mr Redman joined EMC in 2000 where he rose to be the Managing Director for EMC in Australia and New Zealand before this current appointment.

NEW SIM CARD STORES UP TO 1000 CONTACTS

SingTel has launched a new 3G Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) card that allows customers to store up to 1,000 phone contacts. Unlike most common SIM cards these days that store 250 or 500 names, this new

128kb card can store up to 1,000 first-number contacts, 1,000 second-number contacts and 250 email entries.

STARHUB LAUNCHES VOICE-OVER-IP SERVICES FOR HOMES AND BUSINESSES

StarHub has launched a new VoIP service targeted at frequent travellers, students abroad who make frequent calls home from overseas, or local businesses with high usage of international calls. This new Session Initiation Protocol (SIP)-based range of Voice-over-IP (VoIP) services offer portability and mobility to the user, as he or she is able to stay in touch with contacts anytime, anywhere locally and abroad through a broadband Internet connection and an Internet/Integrated Access Device (IAD) adapter.

FROM DISTRIBUTING SOLUTIONS TO CREATING THEM



Mr Patrick Chua, Chief Executive Officer, Autoscan

AUTOSCAN WAS FOUNDED in 1992 as an Automatic Information Data Collection (AIDC) solutions company. Since then they have evolved into a regional provider of Enterprise-wide Data Collection (EDC) solutions. From here it was a short move to becoming one of Singapore's leading Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) solutions developers.

"We've enjoyed 13 years of uninterrupted growth and profitability so this year we are looking forward to what's ahead," says Autoscan's CEO Patrick Chua. They were recently awarded the Top 500 SME Certification of Achievement 2003/2004 and are amongst the Enterprise 50 rankings according to IE Singapore.

Initial challenges came in maintaining profitability in the company when the economic recession hit the region. "The Asian Economic Crisis helped us realise the need to have our own products," Mr Chua said. They realised that Autoscan could not be dependent on distributing products to an uncertain market; which was one of the drivers that led them into developing their proprietary RFID solutions.

Autoscan has seen their solutions deployed by companies such as SAP, SIA and DHL. They are also HP Preferred Technology partner. This means that when HP Services Asia Pacific has a client that requires a solution that Autoscan can provide, Autoscan will be given the right of first refusal. These partnerships are important to them and Mr Chua feels that they best illustrate how companies and markets are interconnected. By developing good business relationships, a winning partnership can be created where both parties can benefit by leveraging on each other's strengths.

Being successful brought about its own share of challenges. According to Mr Chua, when Autoscan began to look to overseas expansion, a change in mindset was needed. They began to look to overseas markets to help fuel growth and needed to develop an understanding of how to operate in a global market. "We needed to manage our growth," Mr Chua added, explaining that with the expansion, care had to be taken that resources were not wasted or duplicated.

"Like many other companies, our people have definitely been one of our important assets over the years," Mr Chua said. But he added, "They only form one component. The others are our solutions, our Intellectual Property and our customers."

Autoscan sees the applications that they have developed over the years as being key to the continued growth of the company. These applications were originally developed to make it easier for their customers to better use the products that Autoscan distributed. However, Autoscan realised the benefit that they could bring to other customers and began a policy to develop them into proprietary IP.

According to Mr. Chua, customers are important as he feels their existing customers have brought more value to Autoscan than their new ones. "For example, when we went into China, our existing clients Seagate and Maxtor were also there. While they were under no obligation to work with us again, they chose to do so. So instead of losing business in Singapore when they both moved their manufacturing to China, we ended up winning new business because of our good working relationship," he explained.



VIRTUAL COLLABORATION MADE REAL

VIRTUAL COLLABORATION IS an industry term that's been around for quite a while, but the tools for it have only recently been made popular due to the increasing demand for telecommuting, staff segregation and communication efficiency. This was particularly significant when the world in general – and Southeast Asian countries in particular – faced the threats of recent epidemics such as bird flu and SARS.

To avoid hindering growth and ensure business continuity across borders, multinational companies started looking for virtual collaboration tools as an alternative communication tool to reduce the cost, time and hazards associated with travelling, and as a countermeasure against epidemics or other similar threats.

But what are Virtual Collaboration Tools? They can be summed up as a software environment that provides a "virtual building" wherein teams can communicate, collaborate, and share information, regardless of their geographic location. What this means is that no matter where anyone may be, he or she can still work together and communicate effectively with colleagues, customers and partners through the use of software tools and virtual venues.

Such tools have already proven their worth in medical institutions, hospitals, academia and research institutes. For instance, virtual collaboration tools have helped Taiwan fight SARS when the medical staff of several key hospitals were quarantined, threatening to make a critical situation even worse.

The difference between Virtual Collaboration Tools and current videoconferencing systems or free instant messaging software such as MSN or Yahoo messenger is that they leverage on multicast network capabilities for multiple group-to-group collaborations. Typically, such tools can accommodate larger numbers of participating groups (upwards of 50, for example). Besides the usual video and audio modes of interaction, these tools also support data collaboration, file transfers and shared applications such as shared Adobe PDF files, browsers, movie viewers, as well as integrated record & playback of simultaneous multiple video, data and audio.

A few tools have further advanced their development to support IPv6 protocols and some are already interoperable with PSTN and/or H.323 videoconferencing systems.

Currently, there are many readily available tools for virtual group collaboration, such as AccessGrid Toolkit (AGTk) developed by Argonne National Labs and the University of Chicago, as well as ConferenceXP (CXP) by Microsoft Research. These two open source tools are free and widely used today – mainly by academic and research institutes. The AccessGrid has issued over 3,400 certificates to users across 47 countries.

Other commonly adopted commercial tools include IG2 by in SORS and Click to Meet by Radvision. InSORS has a large pool and wide range of users from the enterprise, government and education sectors – such as Ford, Motorola, British Petroleum, National Centre for High Performance Computing Taiwan (NCHC, Taiwan), National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST, Japan) and many UK universities. In Taiwan, the SARS Grid has adopted both AGTk and InSORS tools to maintain operational and communication efficiency. In Singapore, institutes and agencies like IDA, National University of Singapore (NUS), Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology (IMCB), Institute of High Performance Computing (IHPC), Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and various NGOs have adopted such tools.



Photo Courtesy of National Grid Office