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Editorial

Are you sure that your alliances are fail-safe? Recent research reveals that over 65% of alliances fail. Why are so many alliances doomed? In this issue of Asian Channels, we look at how to structure joint ventures and alliances in order to ensure success. According to the channel experts, companies that refer to their joint ventures and alliances with the analogy of parents giving birth to a child are very likely to fail. This is mainly due to the fact that it translates into limited autonomy for the new joint venture, and one that at every turn, finds that there is a roadblock where the parents are limiting action. So, ensure that you avoid the fall into the cesspool of broken alliances and read our feature on 'Is your alliance doomed?'

We want to serve you better and provide you with stories and information that you both want and need. If you have any suggestions or comments, please do email me at shanti@mediabuzz.com.sg.



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News

Ingram Micro now sole Distributor of Macromedia in Singapore

Macromedia has appointed Ingram Micro, the world's largest wholesale provider of technology products and services, as the sole distributor of its range of software in Singapore.

This appointment as sole distributor is a strategic decision to streamline distribution channels in Singapore. Ingram Micro will distribute Macromedia's suite of technologies that enable the

development of a wide range of Internet solutions, including websites, rich media content, and Internet applications across multiple platforms and devices.

Ng Yew Hwee, director, Macromedia South Asia says, "Macromedia is confident that Ingram Micro's experience and expertise in software distribution will provide us with a unified strategy for a wider coverage that will strengthen our presence in the Business, Government, and Education markets."

According to Francis Choo, senior director, Ingram Micro Asia Ltd,

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"Ingram Micro has in place a strong customer base and programs to further Macromedia's reach with new customers and support its current loyal customer base that is already established."

Ingram Micro is noted for creating sales and profitability opportunities for vendors and resellers through marketing programs, outsourced logistics services, technical support, financial services, and product aggregation and distribution. The company serves 100 countries and is the only global IT distributor with operations in Asia

Brand new SiTF Council maps out its plans

At the 23rd Singapore infocomm Technology Federation (SiTF) Annual General Meeting held recently, a new council was elected, including its first chairman from the local enterprise sector, Stephen Lim, CEO of SQLView Pte Ltd.



Photo: Steven Lim

Lim was the previous SiTF first vice chairman and past chairman of the SiTF Singapore Enterprise Chapter (SEC). He was also the principal architect behind the establishment of the S\$3 million Singapore Solutions Center in Shanghai.

The new SiTF Council for the year 2004/2005 comprises senior executives from both multinational corporations (MNCs) and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Charting its plan of activities, the new Council will use the findings of a recent Member Satisfaction Survey that the SiTF conducted in June to guide them. Among other things, the survey revealed that SME members found the SiTF Members' Only Seminars/Forums/Talks to be the most useful and relevant activity to their sector, while MNC members found the SiTF Members' networking events most useful.

However, while Lim noted that the needs of SME and MNC companies might be different, he also points out that there is also convergence in many instances such as when both sectors want SiTF to represent their interests and be the "Voice of the Industry".

Outgoing chairman Saw Ken Wye lauds the achievements of the

organization in the past year, including several breakthroughs:

- The opening of the S\$3 million Singapore Solutions Center in Shanghai, China, to give local IT companies a foothold into the China market
- The Government's decision to allow IT vendors to retain their Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for software developed in Government IT projects
- The merger of the Broadband Media Association (BMA) and the Association of IT Consultants (AITC) with SiTF
- The very first cross-border collaboration with Thailand to develop a paperless tourism section

"With the general recovery of the economy and the infocomm industry, I am confident the new Council led by Stephen Lim will take SiTF to new and greater heights, and fulfill our mission of being the champion of the Singapore infocomm industry," Saw adds.

By Shanti Anne Morais

EMC Singapore celebrates its 10th anniversary

EMC Singapore, the South Asia headquarters of EMC Corporation celebrated its 10th anniversary last

month, commemorating a decade of growth, innovation and customer excellence in Singapore. 2004 also happens to be EMC Corporation's 25th anniversary.

Highlighting the main reason for EMC Singapore's success, Ravi Rajendran, country manager, explains,

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"EMC Singapore has always been a customer-centric company, even during the nascent days when the pioneering team was selling EMC from an apartment in River Valley Road 10 years ago.



Photo: Rajendran

We have always made it a point to make sure that everything revolves around the customer." According to Rajendran, EMC Singapore continues to experience strong growth in key verticals such as FSI, telcos, government, manufacturing, and healthcare, and

has added more than 50 SMEs to its pool of customers since the beginning of 2004.

He also notes, "We realize that there is a lot more that we can accomplish. Through our strong alliances with our partners via our Velocity Partner Program, we have been able to work with our partners better across all levels, allowing us to penetrate the SME market more effectively."

On EMC Singapore's future plans, Rajendran reveals that the company plans to continue to sustain and grow its market share in the enterprise space, and work with our partners even closer to break new ground in the SME market. "We will also seek to replicate the hard-earned success we have attained in Singapore with emerging markets such as Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia, which we are responsible for," he says.



Photo: Steve Fitz

According to Steve Fitz, president, EMC Asia Pacific & Japan, Singapore continues to be a strategic hub for EMC's business in the region. Elaborating he says, "Relative to what I see in many Asian countries, I am always amazed at how progressive and discerning our customers are here. They certainly do challenge us, which makes it a great environment to ensure that we are doing a world-class job."

CA views FY2005 as the year to pull ahead

At Computer Associates' (CA) annual meeting of stockholders in late August, the organization's chairman, Lewis S. Ranieri announced that the company is poised to seize the tremendous opportunities in the software industry.

Commenting that CA has the strategy for growth, the leadership to guide the company forward and the technology, products and people to move ahead, he proclaimed, "This is a company poised for the future. CA is leading the field in one of the hottest and fastest growing market segments today, management software," said Ranieri.

"Outperforming applications in new license revenue, management software is growing at 19% a year, and could well be a US\$45 billion market by 2007. With our number one position in enterprise security, operations management and asset management, CA is clearly setting the pace."



Photo: Kenneth Cron

Kenneth Cron, CEO, CA, outlined the company's four key growth strategies: internal product development, geographic expansion, new ways to market CA software, and acquisitions. He said, "CA offers our customers something no other software company can: The ability to leverage the investments they have already made in IT and cut through the complexity that makes IT inefficient. We enable our customers to optimize their IT investments, thereby lowering the cost of IT ownership while at the same time minimizing their risk."

The company is currently undergoing changes to help the company better execute towards

these customer needs over the long term. This includes: enhancing and strengthening CA's financial controls and accounting practices; seeking out efficiencies and cost savings and investing in key growth drivers.

With regards to the ongoing government investigation, Ranieri said, "This has been a challenging time for CA's Board, as it has been for everyone at the company. I want to make it clear that the actions that occurred during the period under investigation were wrong. The individuals responsible are no longer with the company."

He added, "While I cannot say exactly when this chapter in CA's history will be over, I can assure you that the members of CA's Board of Directors and Management Team are working with the government and doing everything we can to reach closure. We are taking aggressive steps to ensure that these unacceptable practices will never again occur at CA. In the meantime, CA is moving ahead."

HP opens new software lab in China

HP and China's Ministry of Information Industry (MII) have recently set up the MII-HP Linux Software Lab for the China National Software and Integrated Circuit Public Service Platform (CSIP). The main aim of the CSIP is to build a conducive business environment and act as a catalyst for the software industry.

Led by the MII, the MII-HP Linux Lab is one of the most important initiatives of the CSIP, as it is a strategic milestone in advancing China's domestic software industry. The MII-HP Lab provides support for R&D testing, and the authorization of Linux products to boost the development of Chinese Linux solutions.

HP is one the first major Linux sponsors in China and according to Sun Cheng-Yaw, vice president of HP and president of HP China, the company is committed to working closely with local partners to build the national Linux Lab and drive product development and software innovation in the country.

Besides providing a powerful hardware platform for the Linux Lab, HP will facilitate learning from the Linux kernel and help the Chinese IT industry join the global Linux community. HP will also provide the necessary support to set up the standards on the Linux operating system and application interface, coordinate development environment, and implement testing and authorization of Linux compatibility. On top of all this, HP will bring its technical expertise, including experts from the Linux Lab at HP US-

headquarters, as well as local engineers to support the Lab.

HP has more than 10 years experience in open-source platform and software development, and a commitment based on industry standard computing in the global market. As an important component of HP's Adaptive Enterprise strategy, the full range of technologies and systems on Linux will provide Chinese enterprises with IT solutions based on industry standards.

These solutions should bring the best Linux experience to Chinese customers. The MII-HP Linux Lab also aims to bolster the development of China's Linux market, improve the authorization standard, and strengthen the quality and competitive capabilities of China's homegrown software.

CISCO launches Certified Testing Professional (CTPP) Program in Singapore

Teaming up with Mile2, the world's largest IT security training organization, CISCO introduced a security training and certification program for IT professionals at PACE 2004.

The CTPP program is an intensive hands-on course delivered over 5 training days, and was developed to address the training needs of IT professionals

who are required to carry out responsibilities of penetrating, analyzing and verifying network security.

Candidates are armed with the latest tools used by today's hacker, and demonstrate the psychological techniques and methodologies employed by the "bad guys". The course details the process of testing "from the outside", experiencing the security as an attacker would.

"Unlike other courses that focus on the common hacking techniques and script kiddies tool, in CTPP, you will learn the differences between a Hacker and

a Professional Penetration Tester, and the type of procedures followed by the latter. The training emphasis is on the development of practical knowledge and competency required to perform this job practice area," says Aman Bhar, regional director for Asia Pacific and the Middle East, Mile2.

Course applicants must work for legitimate companies. According to Lim Yong Gang, CISCO assistant director of marketing, the industry's interest in the CTPP course has been very encouraging so far. CTPP is CITREP endorsed and NICC accredited.

Trends and Statistics

Enterprises taking ad-hoc approach to mobility, compromising network security

Market research firm IDC finds that CIOs and IT Directors are still taking an ad-hoc approach to enterprise mobility, despite the deep penetration of personal mobile devices within their organizations. Issues of security and service consolidation are therefore compromised, which

does not align with any CIO's strategic vision.

Mobile devices such as laptops, handheld devices, and an assortment of computing devices have a huge impact on the way enterprises conduct their daily operations. With the expansion in wireless connectivity capabilities like Bluetooth, WiFi, and 2.5/3G, enterprises can now embrace the new technology as it pursues growth opportunities.

According to IDC research, mobile and wireless technologies that are implemented properly

create a consistently positive impact on the organizations' bottom line, as these are areas where business needs are greatest, such as for sales and customer facing roles. "CIOs are faced with a massive challenge. Mobility is happening whether they like it or not, so now they have to assess how they can manage it," says Sandra Ng, vice president, Asia-Pacific communications and peripherals, IDC Asia-Pacific.

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According to Ng, the key issues CIOs must consider include:

- How to manage complex multiple-device environments?
- How these can be integrated into a variety of existing enterprise systems?
- What standards must be applied?
- How to handle security issues?
- How to integrate the infrastructure?
- How to manage mobile devices?

Key business issues to bear in mind before adopting enterprise mobility:

- Controlling costs
- Demonstrating ROI or Justifying the lack of ROI
- Training staff

- Providing support to yet another technology element

Bob Brace, vice president, mobile solutions, enterprise solutions, Nokia, adds, "The key enabling technologies required to allow the widespread uptake of mobility in business are now in place and enterprises should look at mobility as part of their current and future business strategy."

He notes that although around 30% of the workforce is currently mobile, only a small number of executives have access. "There is much to be gained from mobility, not only tangible results such as ROI and increased productivity, but also happier employees who have

the freedom to work from anywhere, anytime, on devices they choose. Enterprises should approach mobility as an IT investment and apply IT business practices to mobility, much as they view investments into other enterprise systems."

According to Brace, for mobility to succeed vendors must offer one important proposition – to make it as simple as possible for the organization, be it the management, the IT manager or the user. "After all, the less complex the solution is, the less problems organizations will face, and the more successful the implementation will be."

Best Practices

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Is your alliance doomed?

A recent survey found that 80% of top executives consider strategic alliances will be a prime vehicle for growth over the next five years. Yet, in spite of this over 65% of alliances fail. Why the paradox?

The most obvious answer is a faulty strategy. According to David Campbell, vice president of BT Channel Partners, goals have to be crystal clear to all parties and the implications have to be clearly understood." A primary reason for failure is not answering the right questions, early in the process. Companies should have a clear view and understanding of why it is entering an alliance in the first place, and always remember these reasons. Furthermore, it is also crucial to bear in mind what you are trying to achieve through the alliance. Very often, alliances are not well-thought out and end up being "still-born" or achieve no-thing more than disillusion.

Companies also have to ensure that they really have selected the right partners. This often makes or breaks alliances. It is important to ensure that your partners understand your business fully. A good strategy to follow is to work out where you are in the value chain or channel. In other words, whom do you need ahead of you to interface between what you do and the ultimate customer? It is also vital to always have the same objective as your alliance partners. Some questions to always ask include – Are we really targeting the same clients? Is there synergy? Are we looking for the same opportunities? It is always crucial to know and understand the degree of impact and the strategic importance both sides assign to the relationship.

Most relationships begin in the field with sales people identifying common shared objectives and working together on a deal-by-deal basis. However, if not careful, some may turn to unrequited love, where one sees the relationship as crucial while the other supplier begins to view it as unimportant. Still others may become un-productive. Some suppliers try their best to drive relationships from unrequited love into real joint ventures.

However, this is only possible when the partner is convinced that the relationship will yield important results. In a situation such as this, a good dose of realism is needed.

Another good point to bear in mind is knowing where your com-pany stands in the technology life cycle. For example, if your product is a new concept that calls for early adopters and a lot of education, then close links are needed with experts who can educate and recommend. It is a little easier if your product is more mature because then you can come up with a clearer blue print for alliance results measured by sales and the number of people who have trained to a particular technical com-petence.

Companies must also ensure that they understand their environment. For example, BT assumed that European markets would open up quickly to competition the same way the UK market had done. However, in reality, it soon found that regulators and governments did all they could to protect incumbent national telcos.

Understanding customers is another vital point. Too often the focus on the customer is lost. Ultimately, unless an alliance cre-ates a better customer experience, it has no rationale. Customers can often spot such things by asking questions. Always remember that if the customer is puzzled as to why you are doing something and you cannot explain it to them in a few minutes, then you can forget the sale.

How joint ventures and alliances are structured also has a huge impact on success. Trouble brews if there is limited autonomy for the new joint venture. An alliance or joint venture where senior management is examining the fine print from day one is bound to fail. A key point to always remember is that it is essential to always be able to trust.

Making sure an alliance is not doomed requires hard work, trust, commitment, and understanding. However, behind all this, one needs to build an armory of account management and agree on how to measure and reward the relationship. Only then can an alliance truly succeed.

By Shanti Anne Morais

Strategy

Canon India reworks its business strategy

Canon India is going all out to capture a larger chunk of the market for their products in all categories such as scanners, inkjet printers, laser printers and so on.

The company has reviewed its channel business strategy and revamped it in order to make it edgier. Rajeev Singh, senior marketing manager (printer group), remarks, "We want channels to sell a range of Canon products. Thus, we are empowering the channel community and ensuring quicker dissemination of information to them."

Bearing this in mind, Canon is increasing its premier partners from 110 to 150 in the next four months and its Canon Empowered partners from 2,300 to 3,000 in the same time frame. The company also aims to acquire a market share of 30% in all its products by the year 2007.



Photo: Alok Bharadwaj

"This new strategy will ensure that our partners are well-equipped to operate in a dynamic market and also further leverages on our leading technology. Now, we will be able to address specific needs of the market segments we operate in and further emphasize to the consumers, the benefits and values of the Canon brand," says Alok Bharadwaj, director, Canon India.

There were 3 driving forces for the new channels strategy:

- First of all, because Canon has added a variety of new product categories, the company has

found it necessary to expand its channel reach in order to address specialized customer selling.

- Secondly, as a result of the retail revolution and changing demographic profile of Indian middle class homes, the purchase and selling environment of the country is currently undergoing transformation. Therefore, in order to reach consumers, it has become necessary to "catch" them in all touch points.
- Finally, the convergence of technologies has created convergence in functionalities and this in turn has led to convergence in channels.

Thus, the Canon sales groups will not focus on products across channels but instead, on channels across products. Moreover, its IT channels have been identified as the key focus area with an active market of 18,000 system integrators. Its IT channel group will be headed by a national sales manager with a team of 7 Regional business managers and supported by a total of 33 sales personnel. The Headquarters for the regional business managers will be Delhi (comprising of Delhi and NCR), Mumbai (comprising Mumbai and Maharashtra), Ahmedabad (made up of Gujarat, MP and Chattisgarh), Chennai (comprising Tamil Nadu and Kerala), Bangalore (made up of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh) and Kolkata (East).

Another subset of this group will be the corporate channel for selling Laser Printers to the corporate segment. This group will have 4 dedicated sales people in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata.

With this realignment, the total strength of the new team will grow to 52 sales people from the current base of 36. Canon thus expects to have wider relations with more partners and will offer more business to existing partners. This will lead to the expansion of the company's penetration in all

channels and Canon will therefore now be looking at growth opportunities not from their products but from its channels.

In another move, Canon has announced the launch of its new generation multimedia imaging system, the IRC3100 and at the same time, unveiled its strategy for meeting the growing business demand for color laser Multi-Function Devices (MFDs) in enterprises. This is in line with its plan to take a leadership position in the business color communication market in India, and it aims to achieve this by educating enterprises on the optimum usage of color in business communication.

"Canon's color strategy is based on an evolving market trend that color MFDs are decidedly influencing document creation and workflow processes in enterprises," says assistant director of marketing for Canon, Lakshmi Narayan Rao. Narayan reveals that the market share of Canon in India in the color laser printer segment was 35% in 2003.

According to IDC, Canon currently holds a 34% share in the ink-jet printer market. The company has also recently launched 20 new products and is conducting road shows across the country as well as opening retail outlets to focus on a wider market space.

Canon India aims to secure a 30% market share by 2005 in all major product categories of the Indian Digital Imaging market. The company is already on the right path. In 2003, Canon registered a growth of 13% in turnover. Its inkjet business grew by 93% capturing 30.5% market share by volume and 34% by value; Laser printers by 218%; All-in-ones by 152%; consumables by over 50% and Digital Laser Multifunctionals' by 200%.

By Priya Darshini

Sun shines with new growth models

Sun Microsystems has recently launched a subscription model, giving a further boost to its business.

With expenditure on IT infrastructure standing out as one of the biggest sore points for enterprises, the task of identifying the nature of infrastructure required and ultimately accounting for future growth can be a daunting task for many enterprises. To address this issue, Sun Microsystems has introduced a new pricing model for its Java Enterprise System – pay per use.

Starting at 33 cents per citizen, per year, this new pricing model relieves one from the burden of expensive licenses. It also enables enterprises to replace costly, unpredictable middleware components with a high-performance software system available on a predictable release schedule and on a subscription basis. This thus converts the IT needs of companies and from Sun's point of view, it means a whole new kind of business model and a different growth strategy. According to senior officials at Sun, the new subscription model will bring the company more annuity business as well as generate 15% incremental growth.

In another significant move, Sun Microsystems, Net iTech Asia Pacific and Accel ICIM have announced a joint initiative to offer low-cost computing solutions targeted at the burgeoning small and medium enterprises (SME) sector in India. The Sun/NITIX offering marketed by Accel ICIM provides short and long term return on IT investments for SMEs.

Working on the principle of simplifying IT infrastructure and management, customers will be able to save by eradicating the need of buying components from different vendors. Furthermore, customers will also save on major systems integration costs and the solution will eliminate the need of buying and coordinating upgrades and updates of different software. The Web-based management interface of NITIX acts to ensure cost savings by reducing the need of highly-trained IT staff to manage the IT infrastructure. Moreover, users will be able to completely remote manage their IT infrastructure solution if they so desire.

Accel ICIM has been working closely with Sun in helping customers reduce the total cost of ownership and the two companies firmly believe that the strong mind share among their clients will help this new initiative gain rapid acceptance in the market place.

Rajesh Rege, director of sales, Sun Microsystems, notes, "Sun is delivering on its low-cost computing strategy, providing the best of enterprise value, while ensuring that its customers have access to worldwide services and support, as well as the reliability, availability and serviceability of sophisticated enterprise-class solutions, plus the security and peace of mind of mission-critical technologies."

Adds S.V. Sriram, president and COO, Accel ICIM, "This partnership between Accel, Sun Microsystems and Net iTech Asia Pacific to take the Sun/NITIX solution to market in India is significant, especially considering the current trends in the marketplace.

We will work towards providing all the required support to ensure that customers truly get unbeatable value."

"Sun's commitment to low-cost computing, and its decision to support both Solaris and Linux on x86 demonstrates its unquestionable commitment to providing high-quality, affordable solutions. Our software on Solaris x86 offers customers' real performance advantages for a lower cost and at the same time, the same Solaris reliability and peace of mind," says Mohan Menon, CEO, Net iTech Asia Pacific.

With over 10,000 installations in the North American region, the NITIX operating system has unique capabilities in auto installation, auto recovery and self-maintenance. These features are said to make it easier for companies with little or no IT infrastructure or IT support to manage. Other features include auto backup, an auto configuring router, integrated firewall and Virtual Private Network (VPN), Internet connectivity and a unique disaster recovery system. The NITIX Server Operating System works on multiple platforms including Windows, Mac and other Linux-based desktops.

Sun aims to stand out as one of the industry leaders in providing technology that assists customers in reducing cost and complexity. This technology includes the Java Enterprise System and N1 Grid (formerly referred to as just N1). The Java Enterprise System and N1 Grid, along with a number of other capabilities such as binary compatibility, scalability and strong ISV support for Sun platforms, aim to provide investment protection for customers.

By Priya Darshini

Profile

Singapore Computer Society all fired up and set to charge

The Singapore Computer Society (SCS) has been keeping itself very busy recently and is keen to create a voice for itself and take a more pivotal role in the local IT and ICT industries. As the leading IT professional organization in the

country with over 18,000 members, SCS plays an instrumental role in championing the cause of IT practitioners and users to advance their IT/ICT careers, enhance their professional recognition, and help them stay competitive in today's dynamic environment.

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Set up 37 years ago, and already one of the largest professional organizations in the region, the SCS is now seeking a more active role in the industry, holding on an average 1 activity per week. The Society plans to increase the industry's awareness of the organization, thereby raising its profile, and hopefully its membership. An important key to its membership drive is quantity as well as quality. In particular, the SCS is targeting telco professionals over the next few years. This makes sense and is about time too because according to national statistics, Singapore has around 108,000 ICT professionals at the moment, with the number growing steadily. In order to support this, the SCS plans to establish a Telco Special Interest Group soon. Also being targeted – young professionals, which according to the society refers to anyone from fresh graduates to those under 40. The SCS is planning to hold more activities specifically to entice this group. The final segment to come under the Society's radar is the academia. With the setting up of the Academic Chapter, the Society wants to foster a better relationship between the academics involved in IT and IT professionals. The SCS admits that it has been suffering from a lack of visibility, and aims to remedy this situation by ensuring that their "voice" is heard and emphasized at the events they organize and plan to hold in the future. Their on-going recruitment drive will also help. Admitting that at the moment, their membership is made up of 12,000 students, the Society is quick to point out that more than 10% of its members are practicing IT professionals, which is a good statistic for an organization such as theirs. Moreover, Andrew Samson, vice president, professional development, SCS, notes, "It is important to get members while they are still in school."

Under the new leadership of Lee Kwok Cheong, who has been at the helm since March 2004, SCS plans to integrate various initiatives that have been spearheaded by the Society over the years and to provide a more unified voice for the industry in the areas of public policies, workforce development, IT standards and certification.

Through its Special Interest Groups (SIGs), Chapters and committees, SCS offers a spectrum of activities for its different segments of members. According to Lee, "There is something for everybody, from the CEO and CIO to the junior IT professional and the IT high school student. An activity hub, SCS activities include:

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SCS' SIGs remain the grassroots of the Society and act as a forum for the exchange of knowledge and also allows networking among members. Currently, 10 SIGs are in place in key and current technology areas. The two newest SIGs, which were set up early this year, are Computer Entertainment and Application Architecture. In fact, the Society is keen to keep in touch with the growing trend in digital gaming and entertainment, and would love to see Singapore become a hub for digital gaming, which will in turn, open up vast opportunities for Singapore's future growth.

In the pipeline is a Telco SIG, through which the SCS aims to facilitate gatherings and information exchange among IT, telco and media professionals, and provide a valuable platform for partnership opportunities. With this new SIG, the SCS hopes to boost Singapore's position as a vibrant media hub and a dynamic global infocomm capital.

Technology/Industry Chapters (TIC)

The TICs are committed to promoting professional development and knowledge sharing. These include training specialized professionals to use state-of-the-art technology. There are 3 TICs:

- Business Continuity Group
- Certified IT Project Management
- Quality Assurance

Student Chapters

While the SITF focuses on the professional development its members and IT professionals, it also sees the great need to continually improve the quantity and quality of Singapore's future IT workforce. Bearing this in mind, the Society started its Student Chapters two years ago. These chapters provide a channel for students to network with IT professionals and help them to relate theory to business practice in the transition from study to employment.

The Student Chapters are in place at all the tertiary institutions in Singapore. Showing its commitment to this cause, the SCS will be launching another student chapter at the NTU Business School on the 22 of September.

Splash Awards – Wireless Jam 2005

Now into its second year, next year's Splash Awards will be themed Wireless Jam 2005. It aims to promote wireless adoption for both enterprises and consumers. Jointly organized by the SCS SIG-Wireless and Student Chapters, with support from IDA and the Singapore Infocomm Technology Federation (SiTF), this national wireless competition spans a period of 9 months and will culminate in March 2005 with the announcement of the winners.

Seeking to enhance capability building and stimulate growth of wireless content in Singapore, the Splash Awards aims to invigorate students from institutes of higher learning, junior colleges and secondary schools, as well as professionals, companies and other individuals to develop useful and creative mobile applications for consumers and businesses. Through the Awards, the SCS hopes to drive wireless awareness and adoption, and push the commercialization of creative wireless solutions.

Young Professionals' Chapter (YP)

This new group was set up this year to provide services and a support network to members under the age of 40. The target membership body of the YP is diverse, with a wide breadth of skills and specializations. It represents graduates and young IT professionals at the early stages of their IT careers. Activities and services are tailored to meet the needs of the younger IT community. The YP aims to create a lively environment where the younger members can establish contacts and seek advice from the experienced professionals. It also seeks to galvanize its younger members to contribute and create a buzz of vibrancy and enthusiasm in IT.

Academic Chapter

Acknowledging the increasing importance for the academia to stay relevant in the face of change, the Academic Chapter has been established to provide critical bridging between the Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL) and the industry.

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Industry-based activities will be organized to keep the academia updated on the latest business trends and technology developments.

Another aim of the chapter is to bring about closer and tighter cooperation among the IHLs. A framework will be established for IHLs to take turns to organize forums and other activities, facilitate information sharing and build a support network among the academia. SCS will also play an instrumental role in promoting research collaboration among IHLs, research institutes and the industry, and facilitating funding support from government bodies.

Certification for IT Project Managers (CITPM)

Launched in 1998, the CITPM is probably the world's first certification on IT project management. According to Lee, the number of registrations for the program has increased significantly. When the SCS first started the program, they only had 122 Certified IT Project Managers. Presently, over 1000 have applied for the CITPM and at the moment, 902 have attained the CITPM title.

The SCS has formed alliances with IT government bodies in other countries such as Japan, India, Philippines and Brunei on cross-recognition or implementing CITPM in some of these countries. In a few weeks, there will be an announcement on the Singapore-Korea cross recognition for CIPTM.

National PC Driving Test (PCDT)

The Society has partnered with the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA) to bring IT to the masses by offering the PC Driving Test (PCDT). This is a national certificate that offers a measure of competence of PC users. Since its launch in 1999, over 32,000 candidates have sat for the test. Currently, the PCDT is offered at 45 test centers in Singapore, in community centers, computer training schools, ITE and even to inmates at rehabilitation centers.

IT Leader Awards 2005

Now into its 9th year, the IT Leader Awards has been bestowed upon 37 individuals who have distinguished themselves as well as contributed outstanding achievements to the advancement of IT in Singapore.

Nominations for the IT Leader Awards 2005 are now open. Members of the public are invited to nominate candidates during the nomination period, which closes on 31 October 2004.

AGAMES in Singapore

The Society has been chosen by the Asia ICT Confederation to host the AIC AGAMES 2004 in Singapore this year. The AGAMES allows member countries to send their student teams to compete in the Software Competition and the Micromouse Competition.

SCS is working closely with government agencies and industry bodies to assist in building the much-needed, well-trained IT workforce for Singapore's future growth in the IT/ICT industries. The Society was the main architect in setting up the National Infocomm Competency Center (NICC) and will continue to provide direction on the development, certification and recognition measures for an ICT-competent workforce. It is also partnering with the IDA to jointly develop the ICT skills framework and roadmap for infocomm professionals. The SCS plays a crucial role in moving forward the nation's strategic advantage as the global infocomm hub and stimulating IT activities and programs beyond the national boundary. The organization has close affiliations with international professional bodies and regional confederations, and is extending its reach to the region through overseas collaborations.

The SCS definitely has a lot on its plate and a lot cut out for itself with its mission of being the main IT voice for the IT community, but it is certainly working very industriously to redefine its role and address its previous weaknesses such as the omission of the telcos from its ranks and its lack of interaction with the media in the last few years. Thankfully, the Society is all geared up to stay relevant on all fronts, so there is very little chance of it fading away.

By Shanti Anne Morais

Microsoft empowers Indian women

Microsoft Corporation India has announced the launch of its Unlimited Potential program, which aims at empowering women in rural India through the use of technology. The program is geared to create sustainable socio-economic opportunities for women by delivering focused Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) skills training and tools through Microsoft Community Technology and Learning Centers (CTLs). At the same time, Microsoft has also developed an

Unlimited Potential curriculum that emphasizes real-world technology applications.

Worldwide, Microsoft is making a long-term investment of more than US\$1 billion in cash and software for this new program over the next five years, the overall aim being aiding technical skills training and lifelong learning for communities globally.

In the first phase of the rollout of Unlimited Potential in India, Microsoft will partner with two non-profit organizations, World Links

and Development Alternatives. Microsoft is making a cash grant of US\$200,000 to World Links India for the program implementation and US\$61,500 to Development Alternatives for the continual development of and work on the TARahaat program.

Elaborating on the Unlimited Potential program, Ravi Venkatesan, chairman, Microsoft India says, "Today, almost 90% of India's population is living on the edge of the information and technology divide.

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This gap becomes more disconcerting when we specifically consider statistics on ICT reach for women in rural India who continue to be deprived and isolated from the mainstream, with little or no access to both information and technology. In the context of this need, I feel enabling greater access to ICT for women in particular, holds huge potential as a catalyst for ushering in social and economic change and IT-led sustainable development for the long-term."

He adds, "A significant step towards achieving this objective is our Unlimited Potential program wherein we are committed to partner with governments and NGOs for empowering women in rural areas through a dedicated outreach program aimed at delivering ICT training and requisite resources which will ultimately help create sustainable livelihood options."

Ashish Garg, regional coordinator, World Links, notes, "The focus of our initiative with Microsoft will be on delivering ICT learning skills to women drawn from the Anganwadi and the Self

Help Group (SHG) networks and community members surrounding the CTLC. This will be provided through 32 Master Trainers (2 per center) in 16 CTLCs (8 each) in selected districts in the states of Madhya Pradesh and slum clusters in Delhi."

World Links will facilitate the setting up of the CTLCs through co-locating them in selected Community Centers in Delhi and hub schools in Madhya Pradesh, using its school-based Telecenter model. The organization will also provide hardware, software, Internet connectivity, structural modifications and trained human resources including CTLC managers and Unlimited Potential curriculum Master Trainers from the community.

Dr. Ashok Khosla, president, Development Alternatives, says, "Corporations are increasingly addressing issues of the social and environmental responsibility while there is growing talk of social entrepreneurship and the need to be more business-like in civil society. Microsoft and Development Alternatives have come together in a unique collaboration to empower

women by helping them cross the digital divide. Through this program, women in rural communities will be enabled to participate more fully in the modern economy."

Microsoft and Development Alternatives will collaborate on the TARAAhaat program, which focuses on creating sustainable livelihood options for women in rural and underserved communities. The TARAAhaat program has created a network of connected infrastructure comprising of CTLCs in rural districts in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab.

On top of this, Microsoft will also collaborate with Development Alternatives to impart ICT skills training to women coming to these centers, empowering them with access to information and training in critical areas like health, nutrition and legal rights, providing them with livelihood opportunities as well as with a platform for community support. The program will reach out to women across 30 centers and for a start, will develop a total of 45 Master Trainers.

By Priya Darshini

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