

# News Release

For immediate release

## MDA and industry partners seek innovation to shape the future of books and virtual worlds

*Key partners include Creative Technology, Singapore Press Holdings and ST Electronics (Training & Simulation Systems)*

27 October 2009 – As part of the Future of Media initiative, the Media Development Authority (MDA) has once again marshalled leading industry players to collaborate, aiming to stake a claim in the high growth sectors of online publishing and virtual worlds through the calling of innovative proposals.

Tapping on the S\$230 million fund under the Singapore Media Fusion plan and S\$500 million interactive digital media research and development (IDM R&D) fund from the National Research Foundation, MDA will support the selected proposals for R&D, content aggregation and commercialisation, in addition to business matching with relevant partners.

Dr Christopher Chia, Chief Executive Officer, MDA said: “The Future of Media initiative has created buzz in the interactive digital media sector. Not only are leading companies like Creative Technology, Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) and ST Electronics (Training & Simulation Systems) joining MDA in shaping the new media landscape, they are actively offering their financial support, development platforms, distribution networks and marketing resources.”

Previous calls for proposals (CFP) on FutureTV, FutureGames and FutureMobile have attracted a total of 73 proposals. This time, the focus will be on FutureBooks and FutureWorlds - two other high-growth areas identified by MDA and the industry.

According to a Deloitte Study (2008), interactive publishing is expected to grow at a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 14% from 2007 to 2015 while the global virtual and immersive media market, estimated at S\$18bn in 2008, is set to grow to S\$44bn in 2012 at a CAGR of 25%.

### FutureBooks partner network

The convergence of media has resulted in many opportunities in the digital market. Today, people want to get information on the go, be it through their mobile phone, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) or in more recent years, e-book readers like Amazon's Kindle. There is opportunity in this emerging sub-sector for Singapore companies to be part of the value chain.

To spur the development, delivery and managing of innovative applications and content on the e-book platform, a FutureBooks partner network championed by major industry players such as Creative Technology and SPH together with other key industry members such as Personal e-Motion (PEM), Singapore Centre for Chinese Language (SCCL), Popular e-Learning Holdings, Times Publishing Group and Pearson Education has been established. Together with MDA, the partner network invites companies with innovative ideas for applications, services and business models, to leverage on the technology, global distribution network as well as educational content offered by the partner network members.

Successful proposals will be able to leverage on the wide reach offered by the combined partner network. This includes more than 12.7 million news readers globally, 500 language teachers from 475 schools in Singapore and across the Southeast Asia region, more than 350,000 Popular members with retail presence in 117 stores in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong, and markets in more than seven countries in Asia, including China.

Mr Willie Png, Vice President, Creative Technology said: "With the advent of the Internet, the global scenario for learning is fast changing. New innovative technologies play key roles in defining the future of learning which calls for new ways to create, deliver and consume content. Always at the forefront of innovation, Creative offers an open platform that enable industry players to provide services and develop applications and devices for the world of future learning.

MDA also hopes that the FutureBooks initiative will draw synergy from the Media in Learning initiative announced recently by generating innovative applications with Learning-related content to reach a wider global audience.

Interested parties are welcome to submit their proposals by 18 December 2009 using the designated application form downloaded from [www.mda.gov.sg](http://www.mda.gov.sg) or <http://www.idm.sg/cfp/futurebooks/>. The guidelines and offerings by the partner network can also be found on the websites.

#### FutureWorlds partner network

Similarly, there is opportunity for Singapore to secure a foothold in the virtual worlds sub-sector to enhance communications and the real-time sharing of data and information. It is already bolstered by the presence of leading virtual reality development companies such as Eon Reality, Crystal Computer Graphics and Metaversum in Singapore, as well as the encouraging results of young local start-ups such as MXR Corporation and First Meta.

To encourage the development of cutting-edge digital technology with virtual realities, 3D multi-sensory simulations and realistic immersive digital environments, MDA has formed a FutureWorlds partner network championed by ST Electronics (Training and Simulation Systems) with key members consisting of Singapore Tourism Board, Street Directory, KPB and Crystal Computer Graphics. Together, the partner network is seeking proposals for applications, services and business models, to leverage on the technology and global distribution network offered by the partner network members.

Mr Eric Chan, Chairman of the FutureWorlds partner network and Senior Vice President and General Manager, ST Electronics (Training & Simulations Systems) said: "I am excited by the possibilities of what this partner network will bring. FutureWorlds is a fast growing multi-billion dollar sector globally and the FutureWorlds partner network will pull together like-minded industry members to inspire innovation, support start-ups, and through a combination of to-market and commercial leverage,

bring to bear a compelling platform for global competition. We are looking for large, small, local and foreign companies so as to build a far-reaching network that will inspire and set the pace for the industry".

One of the members of the partner network, the Singapore Tourism Board is also taking the opportunity of the CFP to explore ideas that would make use of immersive and out-of-home augmented reality implementation for the tourism sector. This may include the creation of immersive experiences for visitors at attractions and incorporating interactive real-time games that allow players to participate through a virtual interface.

"The Singapore Tourism Board is committed to developing a competitive tourism industry that fully leverages on technology to deliver innovative visitor experiences. Through this CFP, we want to invite and select the best and most innovative ideas from technology partners and tourism businesses that can showcase the Singapore experience," said Mr Tony Lai, Assistant Chief Executive, Sector Planning and Development Group, Singapore Tourism Board.

Another member, Crystal Computer Graphics is keen to support interesting applications on its Ncity platform which has been adopted in major events like the Beijing Olympics and the Shanghai World Expo. Crystal Computer Graphics has been appointed the official Multimedia Service Provider for the Shanghai World Expo and will support compelling applications on the Ncity platform for integration into the Shanghai Expo Online platform.

Interested parties are welcome to submit their proposals by 4 January 2010 using the designated application form downloaded from [www.mda.gov.sg](http://www.mda.gov.sg) or <http://www.idm.sg/future-of-media/futureworlds/>. The guidelines and offerings by the partner network can also be found on the websites.

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**Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA)**

*Formed in 2003, the Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA) plays a vital role in transforming Singapore into a Trusted Global Capital for New Asia Media. MDA spearheads initiatives that promote industry growth in film, television, radio, publishing, music, games, animation and Interactive Digital Media. At the same time, in ensuring clear and consistent regulatory policies and guidelines, MDA helps to foster a pro-business environment for industry players and increase media choices for consumers. For more information, visit [www.mda.gov.sg](http://www.mda.gov.sg) and [www.smf.sg](http://www.smf.sg).*

**Interactive & Digital Media (IDM) Sector**

*The development of the IDM sector requires the collaboration of a diverse range of public sector agencies, educational institutions, industry players and other stakeholders. To achieve this, the National Research Foundation has allocated \$500 million over the next five years from 2006 to fund the development of a strategic IDM research programme and the set-up of a multi-agency IDM R&D Programme Office within the Media Development Authority of Singapore to oversee R&D initiatives in the IDM space. This multiagency team coordinates a cross-disciplinary effort to deepen Singapore's research capacity in IDM. More information on IDM can be found on [ww.idm.sg](http://ww.idm.sg)*

**The National Research Foundation (NRF)**

*The National Research Foundation (NRF), a department under the Prime Minister's Office, sets the national direction for research and development (R&D) by developing policies, plans and strategies for research, innovation and enterprise, funds strategic initiatives, builds up R&D capabilities and capacities through nurturing our own and attracting foreign talent, and coordinates the research agenda of different agencies to transform Singapore into a knowledge-intensive, innovative and entrepreneurial economy. It provides secretariat support to the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Council (RIEC), chaired by the Prime Minister. A five-year budget of S\$5 billion has been allocated to the NRF in 2006 to achieve this mission. For more information, please visit [www.nrf.gov.sg](http://www.nrf.gov.sg).*