

News Release

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Singapore - MIT International Game Lab collaboration to spur growth and development of the game sector

Singapore, 6 October 2006 – The Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA) and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) have announced an agreement to establish the Singapore-MIT International Game Lab (SMIGL). The pioneering collaboration aims to further digital game research globally, develop world-class academic programmes in game technology, and establish Singapore as a vital node in the international game industry.

Mr Michael Yap, Executive Director of the IDM R&D Programme Office, said: “Over the next five years, we expect some 300 of our best talents from the industry and academia to take advantage of this unique opportunity to work closely with the best research minds at MIT.

“We are delighted to collaborate with MIT, one of the world’s leading technology and research institutes. The SMIGL will initiate and produce groundbreaking research in games, which is rapidly emerging as a global research focus. At the same time, the collaboration will further equip our industry-bound students to make a significant impact on the local game industry,” Mr Yap said.

The directors of MIT’s Comparative Media Studies Program (CMS) — Henry Jenkins, DeFlorez Professor of Humanities, and William Uricchio, Professor of Comparative

media studies — will co-direct SMIGL, which will have offices both in Singapore and at MIT. Professor Jenkins and Professor Uricchio will serve as the lead principal investigators in the collaboration.

In announcing the SMIGL collaboration, Professor Uricchio, a specialist in trans-national media distribution and reception, said: “We are excited by this collaboration with colleagues in Singapore and the opportunity to push game research and the industry in new directions, and we very much look forward to initiating an international dialogue among leading scholars, designers, students and gamers.”

Professor Uricchio described SMIGL as a “unique chance to reflect on games and to push them in new and unexpected directions, whether in terms of emerging technologies and interfaces, diverse cultural vocabularies, or important niches that have simply been neglected in the rush to seize the largest market share.”

Professor Jenkins researches media and the way people incorporate it into their lives. “The SMIGL collaboration will provide a strong catalyst for innovation by bringing together students, industry leaders and faculty from very different cultures and backgrounds to work together and to conduct research that could have a great impact on the international game industry,” he said.

The SMIGL initiative will enable students and researchers from Singapore to collaborate with MIT researchers and game industry professionals in international research projects. Beyond technology development, SMIGL will also conduct research on the artistic, creative, business and social aspects of games. The new initiative will also provide Singapore game researchers and professionals with access to cutting-edge technologies, the latest conceptual developments and links to international game development and research communities.

Outcomes planned for SMIGL’s initial period include development of both an academic and a high-impact research program, publication of peer-reviewed research papers and production of publicly distributable digital games.

The research resulting from the SMIGL collaboration will expand the ways in which the Singapore game industry can build and develop future products, and will aim to identify unique genres and aesthetics that are relevant to the Singapore game industry in order to enhance the country's competitive advantage in areas such as education and tourism.

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About the Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA)

The Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA) aims to develop Singapore into a global media city. Its Media 21 strategy seeks to create a vibrant environment for the industry and public via five key thrusts: establish Singapore as a media exchange; export 'Made-by-Singapore' content; internationalise local media companies; nurture local media talent and develop digital media.

About the Interactive & Digital Media (IDM) Sector

Singapore's National Research Foundation has identified the IDM sector as a key focus for R&D, along with Environmental & Water Technologies and Biomedical Sciences. Poised for exponential growth, the IDM sector is fuelled by technological advancements; adoption trends in computing, broadband and mobile telephony; lower entry barriers due to sunk costs of the dotcom era; and democratization of content creation, accompanied by the emergence of Web 2.0, a more powerful, open and collaborative web platform. The scope of the IDM sector with potential for Singapore include: 'Born-Digital' IDM industries, such as the Internet, Mobile Content and Games; 'Going-Digital' Traditional Media Industries, namely TV and Radio, Film and Video, Publishing and Music; and 'Embedded' IDM activities across the economy.