

## **MEDIA FACTSHEET (29 FEB 08)**

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### **PROMOTING INFOCOMM MANPOWER AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

IDA launched its infocomm masterplan, Intelligent Nation 2015 (“iN2015”), in June 2006. The aim of the iN2015 masterplan is to innovatively harness infocomm technologies to enhance our national competitiveness. Infocomm will continue to be a key enabler of businesses across all sectors, from healthcare, manufacturing, logistics to finance, retail and tourism.

With iN2015, Singapore is transforming into an intelligent nation, powered by infocomm. By 2015, an ultra high-speed, pervasive, intelligent and trusted infocomm infrastructure will be established and key economic sectors, government and society will also be transformed through more sophisticated and innovative use of infocomm.

Singapore’s success in this environment will be determined by its ability to develop, attract and retain infocomm talent at the student and professional levels who can exploit infocomm innovatively. To this end, IDA’s vision for Singapore is to have infocomm-savvy and globally competitive infocomm professionals to drive national economic competitiveness.

To achieve this vision, IDA targets to boost the number of infocomm jobs by 55,000 to about 170,000 by 2015. This is expected to generate another 25,000 non-infocomm jobs in the infocomm industry, bringing the number of such jobs to about 70,000. In total, the number of new jobs created would be about 80,000 by 2015.

Further to this, IDA is looking at developing and grooming our next generation of infocomm professionals through a variety of programmes and funding support to achieve the following:

- a. Widen and deepen skills and capabilities of infocomm professionals;
- b. Develop and nurture infocomm undergraduates to better meet the changing needs of the infocomm industry, i.e., to train and groom undergraduates to be relevant and “industry-ready”; and
- c. Attract infocomm talent so as to build a sustainable pipeline of future infocomm leaders.

#### **A. Widen & Deepen Skills & Capabilities of Infocomm Professionals**

IDA aims to encourage infocomm professionals to constantly build up their infocomm skills and capabilities so that they are prepared to harness the growth opportunities of the infocomm industry. In our plans ahead, we hope to reach out to these professionals through the following key initiatives.

## I. Techno-Strategist Programme

The Techno-strategist Programme is a professional development programme which targets to groom approximately 1,000 or 10% of middle-tier infocomm professionals with domain knowledge in key economic sectors such as *Healthcare, Finance and Banking* over the next two years as a start. The aim here is to grow the pool of infocomm professionals who have good infocomm knowledge and can integrate specific domain knowledge to develop innovative solutions for businesses. This programme will subsequently be extended to the other domain sectors such as retail and hospitality.

From 1 April 2008, experienced, mid-level infocomm professionals will be able to acquire a deeper understanding of the business issues and operating environment of key economic sectors through the Techno-strategist Programme. This will enable them to better tailor infocomm solutions to meet sophisticated needs of these sectors.

In rolling out this programme, IDA intends to collaborate with other government agencies, including the Monetary Authority of Singapore (“MAS”), the Institute of Banking and Finance (“IBF”) and the Ministry of Health (“MOH”), universities, polytechnics and industry associations to target infocomm areas in their respective industries. It is envisaged that infocomm professionals in these sectors would be able to acquire domain knowledge through training courses, industry-recognised certifications and workshops which would focus hands-on, practical learning opportunities.

## II. National Infocomm Competency Framework

The National Infocomm Competency Framework (“NICF”) aims to widen and deepen the Infocomm capabilities of infocomm professionals and guide their career development against standards agreed by the industry and companies. The content in the NICF is developed by industry experts, and co-owned by IDA and the Workforce Development Agency (“WDA”).

The NICF is a manpower career development and planning tool which defines the certifications and competency requirements in an infocomm professional’s career. In addition, it is also a comprehensive guide for infocomm occupations, training and certifications available.

The NICF benefits employers by enhancing staff training and development programmes based on industry standards. The NICF also benefits infocomm professionals as it allows them to plan their personal skills upgrading and career development. Quality training providers will also stand to benefit as they now will be able to develop and deliver high-quality courses and certification programmes which are aligned to the competencies articulated in the NICF. This will ensure that these courses and programmes better meet the needs of the industry.

IDA is currently working with 21 companies to be early adopters of the NICF. This would entail these companies aligning their HR practices, such as recruitment, talent development, training, etc, to the requirements outlined in the NICF.

The *NICF Portal* ([www.nicf.sg](http://www.nicf.sg)) offers a self-assessment checklist where professional skill gaps can be identified for skills renewal and upgrade. This encourages professionals / students to take charge of their own career development to further their careers. The portal will be launched on 29 February 2008.

## **B. Develop & Nurture Infocomm Undergraduates to be More “Industry Ready”**

Moving forward, it is critical to develop a core group of future infocomm leaders. IDA aims to encourage infocomm students to seek out opportunities to enhance their industry-readiness by gaining exposure to industry needs and honing their professional skills. IDA plans to continue reaching out to good students in the universities, junior colleges and polytechnics to drive participation in our programmes.

### III. Enhanced Learning In Information Technology

Enhanced Learning in Information Technology (“ELITe”) is a talent development programme that aims to develop “industry-ready” infocomm graduates. Starting from the Academic Year (“AY”) 2008, IDA intends to target the top 20% of our infocomm students at the 3 local universities, i.e., NUS, NTU and SMU and equip them with ‘industry-ready’ skills over 4 years from their 2<sup>nd</sup> year onwards.

Infocomm undergraduates in this programme will be given opportunities to acquire practical skills and exposure to the industry and will have the opportunity to benefit from the following areas:

- a. Exposure to infocomm policy thinking through workshops / seminars organised by IDA;
- b. Mentorship from key industry leaders / companies;
- c. Local and/ or overseas industry internships;
- d. Participation in training and development courses in technical skills/ soft skills/ domain knowledge which are in demand by the industry; and
- e. Industry awareness and exposure when working on industry-relevant projects.

IDA will work with local universities who are keen to participate in this programme, to weave in these various aspects into their overall curriculum.

The industry will also benefit from this programme in that mentoring companies will be able to tap into this pool of students even before they graduate, by

extending opportunities for them to work on industry attachments and industry-relevant projects. Mentors are also able to offer their advice on career

development, as well as skills and capabilities development through certifications and courses.

#### IV. National Infocomm Scholarship & Flagship Programmes

The National Infocomm Scholarship (“NIS”) was launched by IDA in 2004 to develop infocomm leaders and ensure a future pipeline of talent for the infocomm industry. Specifically, it aims to:

- Make infocomm a top career choice among top students;
- Create ‘industry-ready’ scholars to be injected into Singapore’s infocomm industry; and
- Ensure that the industry has a fair share of top talent to sustain its future growth.

NIS offers the unique opportunity for scholars to be nurtured by leading MNCs, local companies and government agencies during their course of study. This would be done in many ways, including mentorship with companies and through overseas work attachments of up to 6 months. The scholarship also allows top performing undergraduate scholars to move on to 1-year sponsored postgraduate studies. At the end of their studies, all NIS students would go on to serve their bond with the sponsored organisation.

To date, a total of 107 scholarships have been awarded. The annual application period is open from mid-January to mid-March.

NIS is open to foreign students and students who have completed their junior college or polytechnic studies and are keen to pursue a fulltime infocomm-related degree in either a local or foreign university. “Partial Scholarships” are also awarded to deserving students in their final year of their infocomm degree programme at both the local and overseas universities.

NIS covers tuition and exam fees, hostel fees, annual allowance, the cost of the scholar’s 6 month overseas attachment as well as an optional 1 year postgraduate study at the 3 local universities.

The 23 participating organisations for NIS include Accenture Pte Ltd, Avaya Singapore Pte Ltd, Aztech Systems Ltd, Barclays Capital, Centre for Strategic Infocomm Technologies, DBS Bank Ltd, Frontline Technologies Corporation Ltd, Fujitsu Asia Pte Ltd, IBM Singapore Pte Ltd, Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore, ILOG (S) Pte Ltd, Intel Technology Asia Pte Ltd, MediaCorp Technologies, Microsoft Singapore Pte Ltd, NCS Pte Ltd, Novell Singapore Pte Ltd, Oracle Corporation Singapore Pte Ltd, Singapore Computer Systems Ltd, Singapore Power Ltd, Singapore Telecommunications Ltd, StarHub Ltd, ST

Electronics and United Overseas Bank. Moving forward, IDA will continue to engage top companies and invite them to come on board as our NIS partners.

## Flagship Infocomm Programmes – Fostering Greater Capabilities in our Infocomm Talent Pipeline

In 2006, IDA launched three Flagship Infocomm Programmes, in collaboration with the three local universities (i.e., NUS, NTU and SMU) and top overseas universities. The aim of the Flagship Infocomm Programme is to provide top quality courses for talents interested to pursue infocomm education and career. Graduates of the Flagship Infocomm Programmes will be awarded with both Bachelor and Masters degrees from the respective universities.

The three Flagship Infocomm Masters Programmes are:

- *SMU-Carnegie Mellon University Fast Track Programme* awarding a Bachelor of Science (Information Systems Management) degree and a Master's of Information Technology degree;
- *NUS-Carnegie Mellon University Entertainment Technology Centre Programme in Interactive Digital Media* awarding a Bachelor of Computing (Media & Communication) degree and Master of Entertainment (Entertainment Technology); and
- *NTU-Georgia Institute of Technology Integrated Programmes* awarding either a BEng (Computer Science) degree and a MS (Computer Science) degree, or a BEng (Electrical and Electronic Engineering) and MS (Electrical and Computer Engineering) degree.

Students selected for these Flagship Infocomm Masters Programmes are eligible to apply for NIS.

### **C. Attract Infocomm Talent so as to Build a Sustainable Pipeline of Future Infocomm Leaders**

There is a need to ensure that infocomm attracts a fair share of talent who will become the leaders and workforce of the future to drive the growth of the industry. IDA aims to excite students and motivate them to make technology innovation a part of their everyday life. In our plans ahead, we need to reach out to bright local and foreign students driving greater awareness and adoption of the programmes we have executed.

### V. Infocomm Clubs Programme

The Infocomm Clubs Programme is one of the key programmes to realise the strategic thrust to “develop, attract and retain infocomm talent” under IN2015’s manpower chapter.

The Infocomm Clubs is one of the fastest growing Co-Curricular Activity (“CCA”) for primary, secondary and junior college students. The Infocomm Clubs Programme aims to excite students about infocomm in a fun and meaningful way

by helping you to learn new skills and to cultivate leadership and entrepreneurship capabilities at an early age.

Into its third year, Infocomm Clubs have grown from 50 to 150 participating Ministry of Education (“MOE”) schools, impacting the lives of more than 7,000 students whom we seek to nurture into infocomm-savvy youths, with an interest in infocomm as a career. To grow this network further, IDA will be expanding the Infocomm Clubs programme to include another 100 schools by 2009, which means two out of every three schools in Singapore will eventually offer the Infocomm Clubs programme.

The programme was first introduced in 2005, with the aim of exciting students about the possibilities of infocomm and deepening their infocomm skills. A joint effort by IDA and industry partners, with support from MOE, the Infocomm Clubs serve as a platform for students of primary and secondary schools, and junior colleges to come together and collaborate to express their creativity, entrepreneurship and community spirit.

Running in partnership with industry and other institutions, the Infocomm Club activities include training, project work, mentorship, competitions and collaboration with other schools, locally and internationally. Schools under the Infocomm Clubs Programme may also collaborate to share facilities, extend training and undertake joint activities. The appointed Infocomm Club technology partners include Adobe, Apple, Cisco Systems, Hewlett Packard, Microsoft, Nanyang Polytechnic, Nanyang Technological University, National Grid Office, Novell, Singapore Polytechnic, Singapore Telecommunications Ltd and Temasek Polytechnic.

The Infocomm Clubs programme has lined up activities such as:

- *Infocomm Club Ambassadors Programme* fostering leadership quality, self-confidence, interpersonal skills and creativity among students
- *Students Industrial Attachments* offering students work attachment opportunities in real infocomm companies to explore their interest and career options. At the same time, the clubs seek to expand the students’ creativity and entrepreneurial spirit through application of infocomm skills learnt in an actual working environment.
- *National Infocomm Club Awards* honouring the best Infocomm Clubs in infocomm innovation and thus extending their creation to benefit the school, society community or nation.

To-date, the Infocomm Clubs have allowed their student members to be exposed to infocomm and its exciting potential. For example, club members developed a portal to enable teachers to analyse the academic performance of students. Students can also access this portal to generate a comprehensive portfolio of their own achievements. Infocomm Club members also contributed to helping the less fortunate of our society; for instance, they developed e-learning

packages to help Singapore youths with Down Syndrome learn and review life skills in time and money management, and customer service.

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