

# Mediascape

GAME TO BE DIFFERENT

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09

SUITABLE FOR ALL AGES

**MDA**  
08/09  
ANNUAL REPORT



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## Mission and Vision

The Media Development Authority's role is to champion the development of a vibrant media industry in Singapore. One of our core functions is nurturing homegrown enterprises and the export of quality Singapore content across different media sectors — TV, film, interactive media & games, music and publishing. Another important role is putting in place pro-enterprise policies and enabling infrastructure that support the growth of media enterprises doing their business in Singapore. Already home to some 15 international cable and satellite broadcasters, we hope to see more leading media companies set up their business in Singapore, exploring new business opportunities and leveraging on the growth prospects in booming Asia.

This year, we launched the Singapore Media Fusion Plan (SMFP) to respond to the fresh opportunities in today's new world order. A key plank of our growth plan is enabling the creation of New Asia Media, be it content, services or applications that resonate with the world, whilst providing a vibrant and secure environment for the exchange of ideas and information.

SMFP sets out three strategies to propel the media sector forward. The first strategy is aimed at providing the best environment for media business. The second leverages R&D to help the media sector exploit new opportunities in the digital media value chain. The final strategy calls for Singapore to remain connected to the world to enhance the international appeal of Singapore-made content, applications and services.

Using a whole-of-government approach, MDA will work closely with other government agencies including Economic Development Board and Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore to champion the development of the media sector. Collectively, we will work towards realising the vision to make Singapore a Trusted Global Capital for New Asia Media.







## Conquering the Media Quest!

It was game on for the media industry last year. Characterised by roaring excitement, the past 12 months saw a plethora of new opportunities open up even in the face of a more challenging global environment.

Exemplifying the can-do spirit was the achievement of *CarneyVale: Showtime* in becoming the first Singapore game to be published on the Microsoft XNA Community Channel. The game also beat over 300 international entries to win the top prize in an international contest organised by Microsoft. Behind the pride and joy for this win was the Singapore GAMBIT team, which developed the game. The GAMBIT Game Lab was one of the first initiatives announced in 2006 under the Government's push to stimulate R&D in the Interactive Digital Media (IDM) area, and is being run jointly by the Comparative Media Studies programme at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the multi-agency<sup>1</sup> Interactive Digital Media Research and Development Programme Office hosted by MDA.

*CarneyVale: Showtime* is an example of how Made-with-Singapore content has travelled beyond Singapore shores. It, along with programmes like *The Little Nyonya*, a period drama set against a backdrop of the colourful Peranakan culture, are winning over new audiences, backed by compelling stories and good production values.

Today, more and more Singaporeans are making a good living producing content and working in the media business, underscoring the vibrancy of this sector.

Between 1996 and 2006, the compounded annual growth rate of the media sector was 8.0%, higher than 5.4% for the overall economy. In 2006, the sector's contribution to Gross Domestic Product was almost S\$5 billion, backed by a job base of at least 54,000. Overall, the sector generated S\$19.5 billion revenue in 2006<sup>2</sup>.

## Exciting Gameplay on Multiple Fronts

Singapore continued to be the nexus for the meeting of ideas, people and projects. The two stalwart shows on the media calendar - BroadcastAsia and Asia Media Festival (AMF) — attracted throngs of visitors. AMF, in particular, saw close to a three-fold jump in companies' participation last year to 700. The Asian Television Forum, the trade market of the AMF, alone witnessed US\$73.7 million worth of deals transacted.

<sup>1</sup> Media Development Authority (MDA), Economic Development Board (EDB), Infocomm Development Authority (IDA), the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR), Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA), DesignSingapore Council, Singapore Science Centre, Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) and the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI).

<sup>2</sup> Source: 2006 figures from the Department of Statistics

Beyond these shows, MDA successfully hosted the first-ever 3DX: 3D Film and Entertainment Technology Festival from 19 to 23 November. With a stellar cast comprising the likes of Jeffrey Katzenberg, CEO of DreamWorks Animation and Jim Gianopulous, Co-Chairman of Fox Filmed Entertainment, the festival signaled Singapore's intent to be at the forefront of digital media innovation. More importantly, it has catalysed the industry's development into stereoscopic 3D, and today, the first slate of Singapore 3D films is already in the pipeline.

Other international events that added richness and colour to Singapore's media landscape were the inaugural Siggraph Asia and Games Convention Asia, both of which drew thousands of international delegates to our shores, reinforcing the city-state's status as a vibrant media hub.

Underpinning growth in the media sector is a healthy and burgeoning media financing scene. By end-2008, the value of private funds available for media projects had hit S\$1.3 billion.



> A line-up of 12 3D movies was screened at 3DX: 3D Film & Entertainment Technology Festival.



> *Bollywood director Rakesh Roshan, Australian producer Paul Barron and Hollywood luminary Ashok Amritraj in the I made it in Singapore campaign by MDA.*

Outside of Singapore, our companies made their presence felt at key international trade markets, closing some S\$122 million worth of deals at these shows. Our global communications campaign, Singapore Media Fusion, continued to spotlight Singapore's content and capabilities with Bollywood director Rakesh Roshan, Australian producer Paul Barron and Hollywood luminary Ashok Amritraj joining the growing list of testimonials of renowned industry professionals who have collaborated on Singapore media projects.

Last year also saw more projects developed for cross-platform purposes, aided by MDA's strategic partnerships with its counterparts in Australia, China and Korea, amongst others. The ratification of the Australia-Singapore Co-production Treaty, for instance, has encouraged Singaporean and Australian companies to jointly develop and explore the potential of multi-platform intellectual properties. As a result, ThreeSixZero and Scrawl Studios, two Singapore-based production houses, are now developing Aussie-Singapore co-productions. In the area of film, director Eric Khoo's *My Magic* was nominated for the top prize, the Palme d'Or, at the Cannes Film Festival – continuing a good showing by Singapore films at the prestigious event in recent years.



### Powering Up to the Next Level

Closer to home, our investments in Interactive Digital Media (IDM) research and development are fuelling innovation on the ground. Over the past year, we intensified efforts to match-make promising projects to investors and budding start-ups to mentors and these have reaped dividends. Young IDM companies such as Garena today boast of 15 million registered users across more than 200 countries.

We also continue to encourage the test-bedding and deployment of digital media services and solutions, with a pro-enterprise policy framework supporting the rollout of innovative services and content. Last year witnessed the launch of Singapore Press Holdings' Razor TV, an interactive Web TV service offering live and video-on-demand programmes. By year's end, TV viewers in Singapore had access to over 400 TV channels, across terrestrial, cable and IPTV platforms.

Alongside efforts to grow the industry were initiatives to promote more media choices through classification, consultation and co-regulation. Two new ratings were introduced for video games, enabling the introduction of more games for mature consumers. This was complemented by a public education campaign that raised awareness of the benefits of the new classification system to over three million people in six months.

To create greater understanding and appreciation of media amongst Singaporeans, MDA collaborated with 43 partners to organise the inaugural Media Fiesta in March 2009. The annual month-long event attracted Singaporeans from all walks of life as they experienced the vibrancy of Singapore media, leading up to a media savvy and connected society. The event reached out to close to 80,000 participants.

### Building a Media City

Six years after the formation of MDA and the launch of the Media 21 blueprint, the media sector has witnessed tremendous changes. While our developmental efforts have yielded a growing pool of local and international media players, we cannot rest on our laurels. As with any game, new challenges enter the game-play after the clearance of each stage, making it more difficult for the player to advance to the next level.

It is essential that we continue to reinvent the media industry to be able to retain and groom talents, attract foreign projects and companies to Singapore and nurture enterprises that can create, commercialise and deliver media content and services demanded by today's consumers. Notwithstanding the more challenging economic times, it is critical that we remain invested for the future.

The infrastructure development of Mediapolis@one-north underlines our commitment to long-term growth. In fact, the Mediascape that you see on the cover of this Annual Report



is a visual illustration of Mediapolis@one-north – a self-contained 19-hectare hub that, when ready, will house a complete media ecosystem offering end-to-end services and facilities for a work-live-play environment. It will add significant scale to our media infrastructure and address growing international demand for Singapore capabilities and services. I look forward to seeing this promising development unfold in the years to come.

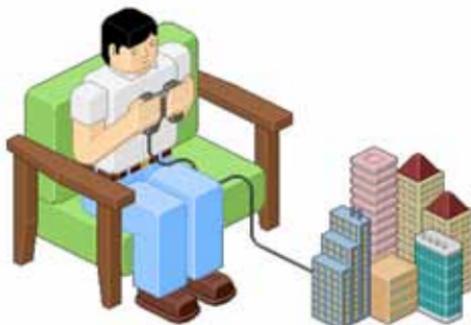
Also charting the industry's directions forward is the extended media blueprint called the Singapore Media Fusion Plan (SMFP). Unveiled this year, the Government has allocated S\$230 million under SMFP to prepare Singapore's media sector to thrive in a media landscape altered by technological changes and the rise of Asia, by investing in talent, stimulating demand for local content, applications and services and attracting international projects to Singapore's shores.

The successful implementation of SMFP will require cooperation across multiple agencies. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to our stakeholders who contributed to and collaborated with us on the Plan. I also thank the MDA Board, both past and present, for their wise counsel as well as the management and staff of MDA for their hard work. Last but not least, my deepest appreciation to former Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts, Dr Lee Boon Yang, who played a strategic role in shaping the media industry and fervently promoting the media scene in Singapore. On behalf of the management and staff of MDA, we thank him for being part of this journey to shape the media industry in Singapore to where it is today.

It has been a fruitful 12 months. Looking ahead, I look forward to realising the SMFP vision through the collective efforts of MDA, our partner agencies, and media players both here and abroad. Join us on this new adventure to create game-changing pathways as we move towards making Singapore a Trusted Global Capital for New Asia Media.

## Dr Tan Chin Nam

**Chairman, Media Development Authority**



## Board of Directors



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**Chairman**  
Media Development Authority  
of Singapore



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**Chief Executive Officer**  
Media Development Authority  
of Singapore



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**Executive Director**  
Science and Engineering Research  
Council, A\*STAR



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ABDUL KADIR**  
**Assistant Professor**  
Lee Kuan Yew School of  
Public Policy, National University  
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**Chief Executive Officer**  
Oak3 Films Pte Ltd



**RADM (NS) RONNIE TAY**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
Infocomm Development Authority  
of Singapore



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Drew & Napier LLC



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**Director**  
Military Intelligence,  
Singapore Armed Forces



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RAMESH**  
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Economics Development Board



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Managing Director**  
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## Board of Directors



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Ocean Butterflies Music Pte Ltd



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MACDONALD**  
**President**  
Hong Leong Finance



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DAVID CHEOK**  
**Deputy Director (Research)**  
Interactive & Digital Media  
Network Institute, National  
University of Singapore



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**Director (Non-Executive)**  
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**MICHAEL YAP**

Deputy Chief Executive Officer

**Executive Director**  
Interactive & Digital Media  
R&D Program Office

**Director**  
Interactive Media & Games

**Director**  
Development Policy



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**Director**  
Communications

**Director**  
Community & International  
Relations



**AMY CHUA**

**Director**  
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**HENG LI LANG**

**Director**  
Media Financing



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**Director**  
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**Director**  
Singapore Film Commission



**LIM CHIN SIANG**

**Director**  
IT & Technology



**LING PEK LING**

**Senior Principal  
Consultant**  
Development Policy

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**Executive Director**  
Infrastructure &  
Program Office



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**Director**  
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**YEO CHUN CHENG**

**Chief Information Officer**

**Director**  
Broadcast & Music

# Singapore - The Media Messenger



## Singapore - The Media Messenger

No media city can be truly global unless global players are magnetised by it. Singapore has come far in its aspirations to be a media capital of the world, with games studio Real U from Germany, Sunwoo Animation from Korea and Italy's most celebrated animation studio Rainbow S.p.A last year joining a growing network of international media companies producing, marketing or distributing their content and services from Singapore for regional markets and beyond. Fuelling the growth of a thriving ecosystem is the presence of S\$1.3 billion worth of private funds for media projects as well as an educated workforce and pro-enterprise policies promoting innovation and experimentation.

These, alongside the staging of world-renowned media events in Singapore, spotlighted Singapore's growing visibility on the global media map.

### New Energy Sources to Power Up

Banks, financial institutions and strategic investors continued to park their media funds in Singapore. A cumulative total of S\$1.3 billion worth of private funds is anchored in Singapore, covering the television, film, games, animation and distribution market sectors. Examples of such funds are the US\$400 million (S\$588 million) Film Fund from RGM Entertainment, the S\$75 million film fund from Hyde Park Asia and the S\$100 million Integrated Media Fund from Salon Media Management. The Integrated Media Fund is the first-of-its-kind in Asia which would provide a structured framework for the production of media projects through the offering of legal, financing, insurance and co-production services from Singapore.



> The unveiling of the Mediapolis@one-north model at the Asia Media Festival in 2008.



The availability of these media funds has in turn drawn world-class media projects and talents to Singapore, stimulating demand for Singapore media production capabilities and services. For example, one of the projects generated from the film fund by RGM Entertainment was *Winged Creatures*, starring Forest Whitaker and Jennifer Hudson, and directed by Rowan Woods.



*> When completed, Mediapolis@one-north will offer a range of media services from soundstages and digital production to digital media schools.*

## Building the Base For the Media City

To power up Singapore's media infrastructure, efforts are underway to build a 19-hectare state-of-the-art media park named Mediapolis@one-north. A joint stewardship between four government agencies – MDA, JTC, the Infocomm Development Authority and the Economic Development Board — Mediapolis@one-north will raise Singapore's game in the global arena with a complete, self-sustaining work-live-play environment. Offering a range of media services from soundstages and digital production and broadcast facilities to digital media schools, the media park will spur innovation research and development and be the home for entrepreneurs, producers and publishers to interact, exchange ideas, work and play. The first tenant at Mediapolis@one-north is Singapore post-production company Infinite Frameworks, which is developing a 1.2 hectare soundstage complex due to be ready by 2011.



### Media Magnet

The two major annual shows hosted by MDA — Broadcast Asia and the Asia Media Festival — drew thousands of participants from across the globe to the lion city. Beyond just adding buzz to the city, the shows underlined Singapore's continued appeal as an East-West gateway and attractiveness as a business destination.

- **BroadcastAsia2008**

A congregation of the latest broadcasting and digital media technologies, BroadcastAsia 2008 returned with a record 50 companies showcasing their cutting-edge digital technologies at the Singapore Pavilion, the largest national pavilion at the show. The show itself attracted more than 12,000 trade visitors from 68 countries and generated about S\$369 million worth of deals.

Held parallel to BCA were events such as CG Overdrive2008, which returned for the third consecutive year. Touted as Asia's premier computer graphics event for CG professionals and enthusiasts, it imparted advanced skill sets to professional artists with a stellar line-up of prominent speakers from international animation companies such as Lucasfilm Animation and Blender Institute.

To support the collective effort of ASEAN countries in the adoption of a common digital TV broadcasting standard, MDA jointly-organised the inaugural Regional Seminar on Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting with the International Telecommunications Union, Canal France International and the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development on the sidelines of BroadcastAsia. The seminar provided technical and



> Former Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts Dr Lee Boon Yang speaking at the opening of Asia Television Forum 2008.



policy training support to ASEAN officials on the common digital TV broadcasting standard. In addition, MDA hosted the 6th ASEAN Digital Broadcasting meeting which discussed the adoption of technical specifications for basic standard-definition and high-definition set-top boxes.

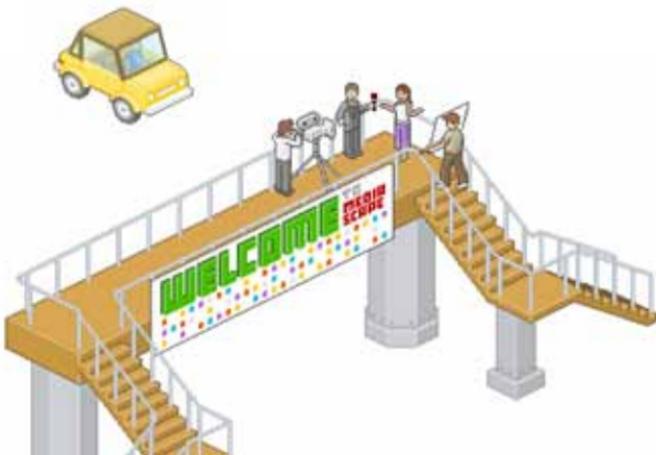
- **Asia Media Festival 2008**

The Asia Media Festival (AMF) from 9 to 12 December chalked up a successful year with the participation of about 5,000 participants from across the entire value chain of media business. On the content side, the Asia Television Forum, the trade market of the AMF, recorded S\$108.3 million of deals. The market, with a change to the exhibition-stand format, saw a nearly three-fold jump in participation, from 271 companies in 2007 to 700 companies last year. Raising the profile of the event was the participation of international players such as Sony Pictures, Endemol, Fremantle and BBC Worldwide.

Catering to various niche sectors of the industry was a line-up of events under the AMF umbrella. They were the Media Financing Forum, Digital Future Symposium, New Media Conference and the AMF Country Showcase. In addition, the AMF programme was enhanced by the presence of ASEAN and China delegations. An ASEAN-China Meeting on Media Collaborations was held to promote regional industry collaborations with China while the China Film Festival 2008, co-organised by China's SARFT Film Bureau and MDA, featured a line-up of six films including *Dream Weavers – Beijing 2008*, a documentary about China's preparation for the Olympic Games.

- **3DX: 3D Film & Entertainment Technology Festival**

Last year, Singapore made its name in the emerging digital 3D space when it hosted and staged the first-ever 3D festival in the world. 3DX: 3D Film & Entertainment Technology Festival ran over five days and focused on stereoscopic 3D – a technology fast gaining momentum aided by the rise in the number of Hollywood movies released in digital 3D.



Comprising a film festival and conference, 3DX drew 22 international speakers and business leaders to Singapore, including Jeffrey Katzenberg (CEO, DreamWorks Animation) and Jim Gianopolous (Fox Co-Chairman) to discuss, debate and advocate the 3D movement. The Festival featured a line-up of a dozen 3D movies, headlined by the world premiere of Disney's *Bolt*, which opened with a presentation by Mark Zoradi, President of Walt Disney Studio Motion Pictures Group. The Festival created unprecedented buzz for Singapore and affirmed the nation's commitment to be at the forefront of digital media. More importantly, 3DX has catalysed the local industry to gear up for 3D, boosted by MDA's establishment of a S\$10 million stereoscopic development fund to seed the production of stereoscopic 3D films in Singapore for international distribution, with a slate of 3D Singapore co-produced films in the pipeline. All the major cinema operators in Singapore are now equipped to offer 3D screenings.

Another key international event hosted in Singapore was the inaugural Siggraph Asia 2008 on 10-13 December - the first time in its 34-year history that Siggraph was held in Asia. The event attracted about 3,200 participants, mainly computer graphics enthusiasts from the Asia-Pacific countries. 2008 also saw the return of Games Convention Asia to Singapore on 26-30 October. The conference was an opportunity for companies and developers to learn and showcase their games to more than 80,000 participants from around the world.



> The 3DX: 3D Film & Entertainment Technology Festival attracted over 6,000 admissions including a near full house for *Bolt* and sold-out screenings of *U23D*.



# Making it to the Global Stage



## Making it to the Global Stage

Whether it is film, animation, games or TV, Singapore content is gaining new fans across the globe.

### Animation Celebration

Within five years, Singapore's animation industry has grown from fewer than 10 companies in 2003 to about 40. Many of these companies are moving from fee-for-service work to owning partial or full rights to the content they produce, and penetrating the global market on the back of international co-productions.

One such exciting development is the collaboration between the renowned The Jim Henson Company and Singapore's Big Communications, to produce a children's animated series *Dinosaur Train*. Slated to begin airing on the PBS Kids channel in the United States in late 2009, *Dinosaur Train* has secured sales in Norway and Canada, with broadcasters from Nickelodeon Australia, Germany's Super RTL and France 5 also expressing interest in purchasing the 40-episode series.

Another significant highlight in the animation space is *LaMB*, touted as the first animated project created by regional cable channel Animax Asia. Animax Asia is part of SPE Networks - Asia, which is owned by Sony Pictures Entertainment. Animax has chosen homegrown companies Peach Blossom Media and Imaginary Friends Studio to helm the cable movie project slated to premiere in 20 countries including Europe and Latin America.

Last year also saw the launch of new titles such as *RPG High* by Scrawl Studios, a fast-paced 2D animated action-comedy series, and *Zzz-Force*, an action-comedy by Tiny Island Productions. Animation companies like Mediafreaks also saw a breakthrough with the release of *Katakune*, a cartoon released on DVD and sold in the US, Thailand, Taiwan and the Middle East. These are just some successes local animation companies scored as they moved up the value chain, creating IP and developing sales and distribution channels.

The familiar literature textbook characters of Dawan and Kai in *Sing to the Dawn* made it onto the big screen last year. Adapted from a book written by award-winning Singaporean author Ho Minfong, *Sing to the Dawn* was jointly produced by Mediaworld Raintree Pictures, MDA, Infinite Frameworks and Scorpio East Pictures.



> *Sing to the Dawn*, adapted from a literature textbook, made it onto the big screen last year.



More Singaporeans got to enjoy homegrown content on the small screens last year when the 3D animated TV series *The Future is Wild* was broadcast on the newly-launched *okto* channel. The TV series, jointly produced by Singapore Technologies Electronics Limited's subsidiary, ST Electronics (Training & Simulation Systems) Pte Ltd, and Nelvana with the support of MDA, was the first-of-its-kind 3D animated children's TV series co-production to have been broadcast on TV in the US and Germany.

## ACCOLADE

- Peach Blossom's TV animation series *I Got A Rocket* won in the New Approaches – Daytime Children's Entertainment category in the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Daytime Emmy Awards 2008.
- *Milly Molly* by Scrawl Studios was shortlisted for Best Programme in the Audiovisual Division and TV Series categories in The Japan Prize 2008.



## Play the Game and be Invigorated

2008 proved to be an invigorating year for the games industry. Singapore became the first country in Asia to launch developer access to the Xbox LIVE Community Games Channel, less than a month after the service was made available in the US and Europe. To support budding game developers, MDA teamed up with software giant Microsoft to offer grants of S\$50,000 for the creation of games on the Xbox LIVE Community Games Channel.

Another coup was scored when *CarneyVale: Showtime*, a game fully developed by a group of Singaporean students under the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab, beat 350 entries from around the world to win the top prize of S\$58,800 in the Microsoft XNA Dream-Build-Play competition. It went on to become the first Made-with-Singapore game on the Xbox LIVE Community Games Channel.

Budding game developers were also given the leg-up in developing game prototypes through the INVIGORATE programme. In its third year, the programme nurtures the development of innovative video games that can be commercialised for the world market. The programme gave eligible developers funding of up to S\$50,000 to develop game prototypes.



> *CarneyVale: Showtime* is the first Made-with-Singapore game on the Xbox Live Community Games Channel.

### ACCOLADE

- Game developer portal *Gamasutra* voted *CarneyVale: Showtime* the No.1 XNA Community Game of 2008, winning praises for its high fun factor.
- *Picopoke* by students in the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab was one of five finalists in the Independent Games Festival.



### World of Filmcraft

It was a fruitful year too for Made-with-Singapore films with about 17 films released in 2008, up from 12 the year before. Several travelled the international film circuit, winning acclaim at Rotterdam, Cannes and Berlin, amongst others. Eric Khoo's *My Magic* was nominated for the highest accolade – the Palme d'Or – at the prestigious Cannes Film festival and was one of only two Asian films in the main competition. Award-winning director Anthony Chen's short film *Haze* was in the running for the celebrated Golden Bear and Silver Bear for Short Film at the Berlin Film Festival. This was the first time a Singapore film had competed in the Festival's main short film competition. At the Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival, Ho Tzu Nyen's *The Bohemian Rhapsody Project* and Boo Jun Feng's *Katong Fugue* got to spar with worthy global competitors as they were in the main competition section against 70 other films from 50 countries.



> *18 Grams of Love* was nominated for the Asia New Talent Award in 2008.



Singapore films also made strides in China at the 11th Shanghai International Film Festival last June, as one of only three countries accorded the honour of having a dedicated country showcase there. Six Singapore feature films were screened under Singapore Film Panorama, which the MDA and Singapore Film Commission (SFC) put together to offer a snapshot of Singapore's dynamic film industry. Two of them, *Gone Shopping* and *18 Grams of Love*, were nominated for the Asia New Talent Award, a special section launched to unveil promising film talents.



Closer to home, the SFC launched the New Feature Film Fund to provide emerging talent with the opportunity to direct their first feature film in collaboration with experienced production houses. Nine budding directors were awarded S\$2.25 million in funding, spawning projects such as *Thunder Boys*, Singapore's first co-production with Japan. To support the growth of 3D industry as part of the media sector, MDA put together a 3D development fund of S\$10 million that will support content projects, 3D infrastructure, production and post-production facilities for 3D film makers.

## ACCOLADE

- Eric Khoo's *My Magic* was nominated for the highest accolade – the Palme d'Or – at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival.
- Anthony Chen's short film *Haze* was in the running for the celebrated Golden Bear and Silver Bear for Short Film at the Berlin Film Festival.



## Conquering the Small Screens

Underscoring the rise of the export of Singapore content is a successful co-production strategy. This has reaped dividends for Singapore television producers, who have entered into winning partnerships with international broadcasters, distributors and studios to develop programmes with international flavour and commercial viability.

In particular, Singapore television producers continue to gain traction with factual programmes produced in high-definition. One such collaboration is the partnership between The Right Angle Media, Beijing TV and BBC Global Channels to produce *Beijing: Biography of a Capital*, a three-part documentary exploring themes that have defined Beijing for over a thousand years. Timed for the Beijing Olympics, this series premiered on BBC Global Channels across Asia and Europe in 2008 and is being distributed worldwide by BBC Worldwide.



> *Mad About English!* was watched by audiences in Canada, Denmark and Israel.

*Mad About English!* by Journey Pictures, a hilarious and heart-warming tale about China's newfound passion for the English language as it prepared to host the world for the 2008 Olympics, won Best Documentary, South East Asian Award, at the Yogyakarta Film Festival Dokumenter 2008. The documentary has been distributed

to CBC (Canada), DR Media (Denmark), Noga (Israel), Discovery Channel, NHK (Japan) and Phoenix TV (China). It also received commercial theatrical success in Singapore when it was released in August last year.

Another example of high quality Made-with-Singapore content going places is *Little Big Dreams* by Threesixzero Productions. The full-length documentary produced in high-definition and supported by the MDA won the Gold Medal Award for Best Direction at the New York Festival's International TV Broadcasting Awards 2008. It has since been broadcast on several international channels such as BBC HD (UK), ZDF (Germany) and HKTVB (Hong Kong).

A groundbreaking co-production was also sealed with *Extinctions*, a global co-production television series by France 5, Frederic Lepage Concepts (France), Coyote Conseil (France), Oak3 Films (Singapore), MDA, Mixer (Brazil) and Greenspace Productions (Canada). The six-part documentary-thriller series in high definition features endangered species and is also Singapore's first co-production spanning four continents.

Mandarin factual content from Singapore made it to regional screens when newly-formed YR Asia Satellite TV began broadcasting on Hong Kong's I-Cable Channel 28 in October, marking the first landing for the brand new entertainment channel.

### The Write Stuff

The First Time Writers and Illustrators Publishing Initiative (FTWIPI) returned for the third consecutive year to nurture talents in the publishing industry. The initiative, jointly developed by MDA and the National Book Development Council of Singapore, aims at helping local creators publish their maiden works. Last year, the initiative received 79 submissions and a total of nine titles including *Curse of the Viking Sword* by Carolyn Goodwin and *The Star that Lost its Light* by Christina Yap was published.

#### ACCOLADE

- Local production house Threesixzero won the CINE Golden Eagle Award 2008 for *My World My Blog*.
- August Pictures' *Soul of the City* won the Silver Award for Best Documentary Campaign in the Promax BDA Asia 2008.





One of the success stories coming out from the FTWIPI is Lee Jin Pyn, the creator for *The Elephant and The Tree*. Jin Pyn is represented by US literary agent Sandra Dijkstra Agency and has sold the book's English-language rights to one of the largest independent US publishers, The Running Press. At the same time, the book has been successfully published in Japan by Media Factory Inc.

Another writer who penned her way to success is Emily Lim. Her self-published book *Prince Bear & Pauper Bear* won a prize as one of last year's best independently published books in the 2008 Independent Publisher Book Award, also known as the IPPY Awards. She is the first Singaporean to have won an IPPY prize, the world's largest international book awards competition, since it started.

## Brave New Worlds

What do animated TV characters *Nanoboy* and *Tao Shu*, by Scrawl Studios and Peach Blossom Media, have in common? Both have gained new leases of life in fresh media platforms. From an animated TV series, *Nanoboy* has found new fans as an online game. Similarly, the tales of *Tao Shu* live on in DVDs, story books and e-cards.

Besides these two companies, 2008 saw more media companies creating properties for multiplatform purposes. Mediacorp's Channel NewsAsia, for example, developed a new travel series *After 12* that was available on broadcast and mobile platforms.

MDA also entered into a pioneering collaboration with broadcasters SingTel and StarHub to support Adrenaline, an initiative by Content Craft that offers youth and community sports programming via its website [www.adrenaline.sg](http://www.adrenaline.sg), SingTel mioTV, and StarHub cable channel 22.

To encourage the development of more multi-platform content for international distribution, MDA worked with its international counterparts to develop multi-media projects. Efforts included the MDA-ScreenWest Cross-Media Development Initiative launched at TV market MIPCOM 2008 to encourage Western Australia and Singapore companies to jointly develop and exploit the potential of multi-platform properties. So far two projects have been awarded support - *Off the Wall* by Singapore's Scrawl Studios and Australia's Zac Toons and *Borders - Life on the Edge* by Singapore's ThreeSixZero and Australia's Artemis.



> TV animation series *Nanoboy* by Scrawl Studios is now an online game.



Another landmark deal was an agreement between MDA and FremantleMedia Enterprises to co-develop media content projects conceived by Singapore companies, based on Asian subjects that have international appeal and can be exploited across multiple platforms. Some of the Singapore production companies have since been working closely with and securing development investment funding from MDA and FremantleMedia Enterprise.

Other key television co-productions include *Lonely Planet: Roads Less Travelled* by Singapore's Beach House Pictures, MDA and Lonely Planet Television. Featuring real-life Lonely Planet authors on the job, this is a unique cross-platform project which will include a website showcasing the itineraries featured in the TV series and complementary Lonely Planet destination content and travel services. Broadcaster National Geographic International and distributor BBC Worldwide are also on board the project.

To further assist local producers to build up their multiplatform content development capabilities, MDA launched the PILOT (TV Content 360) scheme last year for Singapore companies to be able to develop innovative and original concepts that demonstrate commercial opportunities beyond television.

### Building Singapore's Media Talent Base

Growing the media talents in Singapore forms an important backbone in developing the media industry. In 2008, the MDA continued to drive initiatives and courses to raise the business capabilities of Singapore entrepreneurs and help them build successful enterprises. Under the Business Executive Mentorship Programme, local CEOs from five media firms were linked with international experts in fields like media law, merchandising and licensing. The five local media firms were CR Media Pte Ltd, Mediafreaks Pte Ltd, Scrawl Studios, Upside Down Concepts and Verite Productions Pte Ltd. They received mentorship from respectable international media firms such as CBS Consumer Products and O'Melveny & Myers LLP in the United Kingdom.



> *Lonely Planet: Roads Less Travelled* is a co-production between Singapore's Beach House Pictures and Lonely Planet Television.



In an effort to provide business matching and collaboration opportunities between local companies and international players, Animation Activation was organised by MDA. International experts from The Jim Henson Company, Scholastic Media, Porchlight Entertainment, Breakthrough Films & Television, Decode Entertainment and Marathon Media conducted over 50 one-on-one meetings with our local animation studios within two days. The platform also served to showcase the capabilities of our local animation industry to the international studios through site visits to local studios. Leveraging on their presence in Singapore, a multiplatform workshop and industry networking session were also organised for the speakers to share their experiences on creating and delivering content across multi platforms.

Besides this, MDA continued to get top international media talents to anchor their presence in Singapore and work with local companies. In 2008, 24 started work with local media counterparts, sharing their expertise and experience in diverse fields such as animation, scriptwriting and games development.

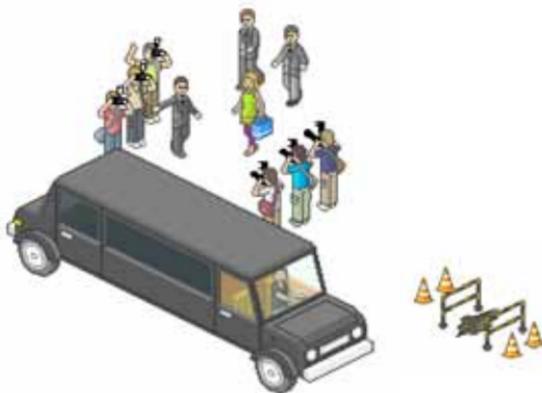
Industry professionals also had a chance to uplift their capabilities through the Capability Development Scheme. Some 77 industry professionals were supported by MDA to attend short advanced courses locally or overseas, or to participate in attachment programmes to gain specialist skills and international experience. A series of masterclasses, seminars and workshops was held and attracted about 6,000 local industry professionals and media students. High-profile representatives from DreamWorks, Pixar, Paramount Studio and Lucasfilm were among the speakers to share their experiences and skillsets.





*> Scholars from MDA's Media Education Scheme at the Creative Industries Award ceremony.*

Young aspiring media students were also given a chance to live their dreams. Last year, 18 promising students were selected under MDA's Media Education Scheme to pursue tertiary education in local and overseas institutions such as Tisch College of New York (Asia) and the Savannah College of Arts & Design in the US. These students pursued a wide range of media-related courses, including producing, directing, writing, animation and games.



# Licensed to Thrive



## Licensed to Thrive

Through the 3Cs of classification, consultation and co-regulation, MDA developed and implemented policies that promoted industry growth and resulted in more choices for all consumers.

### Maximising Options

To promote more media choices, MDA continued to facilitate the creation and distribution of new media content via emerging technologies. New categories of licences such as niche TV licences were issued, supporting the rollout of new innovative services and media content.

Niche TV licences, the result of a pro-business two-tier licensing framework, give operators greater flexibility in providing TV services for different market segments. It enables consumers to enjoy a greater range of scheduled and on-demand IPTV content. The other licence category is the Nationwide Subscription TV Licence, which caters to operators targeting the mass market.

In 2008, Niche TV licences were issued to VeeV Interactive, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Sky Media; ONE IPTV, which offers TV programmes to Japanese and Korean expatriates; and Singapore Press Holdings, which launched Razor TV, an interactive Web TV service with a strong emphasis on local content offering both live and video-on-demand programmes. By the end of 2008, TV viewers in Singapore had access to over 400 TV channels across multiple transmission platforms such as terrestrial, cable and IPTV.





Another milestone was achieved with the arrival of *okto* and the recast of *Vasantham* into a full-fledged channel in October. Supported by MDA, *okto* combines the best of what used to be offered on *Kids Central* and *Arts Central* to provide 105 programming hours each week, with a special focus on the kids and arts communities as well as User Generated Content, while the Indian-dedicated *Vasantham* reinforces Singapore's heritage, customs, family values and lifestyles that audiences can identify with.

### **Classified Action**

Gamers in Singapore have more video games choices to choose from with the introduction of a new two-rating classification system. Launched last year by the MDA and Board of Film Censors, the two new ratings – Mature 18 (M18) and Age Advisory – allow players and parents to make informed decisions when choosing games to play. Developed over a two-year period, the video games classification involved detailed research and consultation with various stakeholders including representatives from video games distribution as well as parents and gamers. Besides benefiting gamers with more games choices, the games distribution and retail industry also gained from this initiative as more games can now be made available targeted at the different groups.

### **Pro-Enterprise Spirit**

To create a pro-business environment, MDA revised its Film Licensing framework last year for the local video and film industries. Under the revisions, video importers and makers who do not distribute locally will be exempted from licensing. Video distributors holding a permanent Film Distribution Licence will not need separate temporary licences to distribute videos at approved temporary locations. Cinema operators will just need one Film Exhibition Licence for all their exhibition points. With these revisions, the video and film industries in Singapore can cut back on the number of licences required, resulting in cost savings of \$2.5 million and a 40% reduction in number of licences for the film/video industry.

### **Ears to the Ground through Public Consultation**

Ongoing public and industry engagement continue to be a key strategy in ensuring that MDA's regulatory policies remain relevant to film and broadcast companies, publishers, cinema goers and the arts audience. Last year, key stakeholders in the local media landscape continued to play a vital role in monitoring media content, giving their input on the local television scene. Reports from the Advisory Committee for Chinese Programmes and Malay Programmes Advisory Committee, for instance, have shown that local TV is on the right track.





> *Little Nyonya* made TV history as the most-watched drama in Singapore in the last 15 years.

### Keeping it on the Air

Even as we embrace new media and digital technologies to offer more choices to the consumers, the regular free-to-air television channels continue to play their part in entertaining and educating the wider public. For the MDA, it means keeping well over 3,000 hours of public service programmes of different genres going, in four languages, across seven free-to-air television channels. Apart from entertaining, these programmes play other valuable roles: They promote racial harmony; foster social cohesion; celebrate Singapore's arts and heritage; and cultivate a sense of community and national identity.

The diverse offerings range from current affairs, children's shows, sports, arts and minority-language programmes to animations, documentaries and sitcoms. Put together, they also reflect the homegrown capabilities and talents of local producers.

Beyond those numbers, these locally-made productions that appeared on local screens have also received international limelight. Docudrama *My World, My Blog*, reality series *The Work Goes On – Hungry Ghost Festival*, documentaries *Culture X* and *Soul of the City*, and children's series *R.E.M.*, for instance, made waves abroad, as did Indian, Malay and Chinese-language productions, proving Singapore's potential to be a hub of Asia media for the region. Malay health series *Klinik Kita*, Tamil drama series *Manam Series 2* and Chinese documentary *Twilight Years* also won accolades in international arenas. Closer to home, *Little Nyonya* (小娘惹), a period drama set against a backdrop of the colourful Peranakan culture and heritage, made TV history as the most-watched drama in Singapore in the last 15 years. It has been sold to countries such as China, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam and Hong Kong.

MDA also supported a range of minority-language radio stations such as Warna 94.2 FM, Ria 89.7 FM, Oli 96.8 FM, keeping communication going in the global media landscape.

# Pathfinders for Media Enterprises



## Pathfinders for Media Enterprises



> I made it in Singapore banner at the Cannes Film Market in 2008.

Singapore media enterprises continued to break new frontiers in the export of their content and creations. From the idyllic port city of Pusan to the prestigious Cannes Film Market, Made-with-Singapore content made its presence felt around the world.

Through a unified Singapore Media Fusion identity, Singapore media companies, as part of MDA-led industry delegations, closed some S\$122 million worth of deals at key international markets such as MIPTV, MIPCOM, Cannes Film Market, Asian Film Market and Frankfurt Book Fair.

### Joint Operations

With Singapore's internationalisation push, cross-border governmental and industry collaborations have reaped co-production opportunities for Singapore enterprises.

### China – Singapore

Last year's Asia Media Festival (AMF) saw the deepening of media collaborations between China and Singapore, with an MOU signed by MDA and China Education Television to co-produce a slate of 20 HD documentaries over the next two years. This partnership will leverage on each other's strengths and resources and promote more co-productions with China. To further strengthen media relations with China, Singapore and China agreed to launch negotiations on a China-Singapore Film Co-production Agreement during the China Film Festival co-organised by MDA and the Film Bureau under the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television of the People's Republic of China in Singapore in December 2008.





## Korea – Singapore

AMF also witnessed the signing of an MOU between the Korea IT International Cooperation Agency (KIICA) and MDA to catalyse media productions between both parties. Besides cementing ties between Singapore and Korea, the MOU will give rise to more opportunities for the co-production of digital broadcasting factual programmes and drive the exchange of information and best practices relating to the broadcasting industry.



> Media relations between Singapore and Korea were given an extra boost with the signing of an MOU between the Korea IT International Cooperation Agency (KIICA) and MDA.

## Australia – Singapore

MDA's relationship with the Western Australia screen funding and development agency ScreenWest has reaped dividends for the media industries of both sides with the launch of the MDA-ScreenWest Cross-Media Development Initiative last year. The initiative encouraged companies from both countries to jointly develop and explore the potential of multiplatform intellectual properties. As a result, Singapore company Scrawl Studios is now developing an Australia-Singapore co-production. The Initiative underscored the positive Government-to-Government exchanges between Singapore and Australia and following the ratification of the Australia-Singapore Co-production Treaty in October 2008.

## ASEAN Developments

Another noteworthy development on the Government-to-Government front was an agreement by ASEAN members on a common set of technical specifications for standard and high definition digital set-top boxes for ASEAN. Discussions on technical, policy and content issues to prepare ASEAN members to transit from analogue to digital broadcasting over the next five to 10 years were undertaken at the ASEAN Digital Broadcasting meetings, co-chaired by Brunei Darussalam and Singapore. ASEAN officials have also agreed to set up a virtual standard and high definition training centre, which will form a self-help resource to equip members with the necessary skills for digital content production. In addition, ASEAN members agreed to take a phased approach towards Analogue Switch-off.



> Singapore co-chaired the ASEAN Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting meeting with Brunei Darussalam in Bali on November 2008.

### France – Singapore

Singapore continued to show leadership in the digital broadcasting sphere by co-organising the Regional Seminar on Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting in June 2008 during BroadcastAsia. The Seminar was the first such collaboration between the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD), Canal France International and MDA. MDA and CFI played a key role to bring established industry and government speakers to the Seminar to share best practices on digital broadcasting implementation. This Seminar is just one of the collaborations between CFI and MDA since signing an MOU in 2007.

### Singapore Media Fusion

In 2008, three new media icons - Bollywood director Rakesh Roshan, Hollywood luminary and CEO of Hyde Park Entertainment Ashok Amritraj, and Australian producer Paul Barron — joined the growing list of testimonials of renowned industry professionals who have collaborated on Singapore media projects under the Singapore Media Fusion campaign. These icons continued to be a vivid reminder to local and foreign media professionals of Singapore's growing capabilities in developing the media industry. For more information on Singapore Media Fusion, log on to [www.smf.sg](http://www.smf.sg).

In all, the positive progress and developments of the media industry were covered in more than 1,800 tracked reports, worth S\$18.4 million in advertising value equivalent. Of this, about 35% were reported in foreign media.



> Singapore Media Fusion

# Plug in!



# Plug In!

With a future that will be mediated by digital information, where physical places will coexist with dynamic virtual spaces, and with geographical boundaries becoming more porous, Singapore is riding on the Interactive Digital Media (IDM) wave to sharpen its competitive advantage.

Leading the drive into the digital future is the multi-agency Interactive Digital Media Research and Development Program Office (IDMPO) hosted by MDA and supported by the National Research Foundation. Two years into execution, a vibrant ecosystem is emerging, and a recent study by Deloitte Consulting reveals healthy signs of growth for the IDM sector. According to the study, revenues for the IDM sector grew to S\$1.3 billion as at end 2008. The study estimates there are around 585 businesses in Singapore conducting an IDM activity, with an estimated 7,400-strong employment.



## Lighting the Spark in Start-ups

A new programme introduced last year, i.MATCH, has helped to bridge promising start-ups and companies with venture capitalists and other private investors to get more investment for their ideas and projects. Some 40 potential investors were brought on board, including major corporations such as SPH, ST Electronics and Mediacorp Technologies and venture capitalists such as IDG Ventures Vietnam, Stream Global and Vickers Financial Group.

Well-known technology names Apple, Hewlett-Packard and Friendster are also supporting the services, applications and tools of local IDM companies on their worldwide distribution platforms.

To spark off innovation in the IDM space, IDMPO teamed up with Singapore infocomm Technology Federation (SiTF) on a mentorship programme. Tapping on the latter's vast network of industry members to provide sound business advice and share invaluable contacts, the collaboration would enable young start-ups to access the right market connections and funding to develop innovative products and services and bring them to market.

## Making the Virtual a Reality

Research projects supported by the IDMPO continue to push the envelope in the creation of next generation media. About S\$12 million in funding was awarded last year to 15 projects involving 15 companies under the theme of Co-Space™, a concept about the infusion of human sensory and intelligence into the virtual space.

As an example, the next time you visit the library, you can simply call up a 3D map of the library and it will give you the precise location of the book you want and how to get



> *CarneyVale: Showtime* by the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab.

there. This project, together with 14 others, were selected from the inaugural Co-Space™ (industry) Call for Proposals which attracted proposals involving some 200 companies from various sectors including broadcasting, real estate and healthcare. These projects will help to jumpstart cutting edge thinking and innovation in IDM and position Singapore at the forefront of next generation Web.

## Breaking New Frontiers

Singapore's position as a preferred location for innovation and R&D in IDM is gaining momentum. In 2008, Keio University launched its first full-scale international research centre outside Japan. Working with the National University of Singapore (NUS), the Keio-NUS Connective Ubiquitous Technology for Embodiments centre (CUTE) will boost R&D in connected lifestyle media and embodied interactive technologies, adding speed and drive to Singapore's aim to establish a network of world-class IDM research centres here.

Separately, MDA and China's Science and Technology Commission of Shanghai Municipality embarked on a joint initiative to develop and link digital media test-beds in Singapore and Shanghai. This was the first project under the MOU in the field of IDM Technology R&D cooperation signed between Singapore's Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA) and the People's Republic of China's Ministry of Science & Technology in March.

The Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab, in its third year, continues to attract promising students from the local tertiary institutions to develop game projects under its attachment programme at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US. A collaboration between MDA and MIT, GAMBIT Game Lab brought 45 local students to MIT for a nine-week

programme, working side by side with MIT mentors on seven game projects last year. Besides these seven games, the Singapore-MIT GAMBIT Game Lab also produced a winning game *CarneyVale: Showtime*, which won the top prize at the Microsoft XNA Dream-Build-Play competition.

Efforts to put in place a strong talent base to support the burgeoning sector are also paying off, with almost all the local universities and polytechnics establishing cross-disciplinary IDM centres.

### Successes in the IDM sector

Most of the IDM-supported companies operating in the social networking and virtual worlds space have made headway in the global marketplace and are today serving some 20 million users in over 200 countries with various forms of IDM applications. Fresbo's Fresbo World is the top game application in Asia's top social networking site, Friendster, and Garena, a gaming platform, is now the most-visited Singapore company website in the world according to Alexa, a web information company in the US. Local companies spearheading the use of IDM have been recognised for their innovation in R&D. For example, both Personal e-Motion and PGK Media won the e-Education and R&D categories of the Asia Pacific ICT Awards in 2008, representing two out of Singapore's three winners.



# Media Generation



# Media Generation

Despite revolutionary changes in today's media landscape, Singaporeans are game enough to embrace media as it becomes part of the way we work, learn and play.

### Media ABCs

Efforts to enhance media literacy have yielded good results. The national media literacy survey showed that the media literacy of Singaporeans had increased to 63.5% in 2008 as compared with 57% in 2007. Other findings revealed that more Singaporeans are aware of new media technologies and have the basic functional and technical competencies and skill sets to use media for work, learning and play. In addition, they are more discerning as they are able to use media responsibly and safely.

### Reaching out

With the introduction of the classification system, a public education campaign was launched by MDA with the support of industry partners to raise public awareness of the video games classification system and its benefits. The theme of the campaign was the bigger message of game wellness and responsible gaming. The campaign was effectively carried out through various channels such as ZoCard and educational brochures, and in six months, reached out to about 3.5 million people. A video games database on the MDA website <http://www.mda.gov.sg/videogames> was developed to allow parents and consumers to search for the ratings of a game.

Singaporeans also made time for play as 240,000 people participated in a two-day gaming extravaganza called EA Play 2008. EA Play, organised by Electronic Arts, was part of MDA's public education initiative intended to inspire Singaporeans to adopt media for work, learning and play.

Another games event that attracted significant participation from Singaporeans was the 2008 World Cyber Games Asian Championship. The event attracted more than 100 professional gamers from 14 countries and over 50,000 spectators at the finals.

Several other activities were also organised throughout the year to promote the different media genres. To encourage interest among youngsters in broadcast and





film, MDA supported the Kids Witness News by Panasonic which saw 120 students submitting 3-5 minute video clips on the theme pertaining to different social issues. Another event iTALENTSTAR, an online talent competition involving participants from four Southeast Asian countries, namely Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, were held. The event was held in collaboration with Friendster, an online social networking portal.

To increase public awareness and adoption of animation, MDA supported NEmation, a nationwide competition for youths to express their notions on Total Defence through 60 sec animations were screened throughout Singapore. The event attracted more than 900 students from almost 100 schools.

Public outreach of MDA's media content classification messages and PSB initiatives kicked off on a high note with the launch of the inaugural Media Fiesta in March this year. The festival is a month-long high-octane festival of fun activities where Singaporeans of all age groups experimented touched, listened to and engaged with media for work, learning and play. The Main Event at Marina Square showcased a wide range of media content and technologies in the areas of animation, games, publishing, film, broadcast and Interactive Digital Media, reflecting the diversity of Singapore's evolving media landscape. In addition, partners such as *Channel U* and *okto* showcased new and behind-the-scenes initiatives to raise public appreciation and experience of PSB content. Other PSB-commissioned programmes on *Suria* and *Vasantham* were showcased at the event too.

Aside from the Main Event, there was a total of 40 other fringe events happening throughout the month that intrigued Singaporeans. Through all these activities and programmes, the Media Fiesta was able to reach out to close to 78,000 Singaporeans from all walks of life, and enabled them to better appreciate the variety of media choices for everyone.



> The inaugural Media Fiesta attracted close to 80,000 Singaporeans as they engaged with media for work, learning and play.

### Game on

The global competition is intense and the battle to be the best media city is far from over. MDA has put in place the building blocks for a thriving media ecosystem to take shape. Guiding its work will be the Singapore Media Fusion Plan, which charts the directions to grow Singapore media companies into global players, making content, applications and services for the world.



> MDA's Mediascape



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Literature  
Division of English  
School of Humanities and  
Social Sciences  
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Asst Professor  
Faculty of Law  
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**DR NG WAI CHONG**

Medical Doctor  
Hua Mei Seniors Clinic  
TSAO Foundation

**MS NG WEI CHIN**

Independent Filmmaker  
TheVeryQuietStudio

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Officer  
Ministry of Education

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HIN LIANG**

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Building & Construction  
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Senior Manager  
Deloitte & Touche

**DR ONG TECK CHIN**

Educationist

**DR ANNE PAKIR**

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Department of English  
Language & Literature  
National University of  
Singapore

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Educationist

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Digital Audio Video Production,  
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Development, Youth and Sports

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School of Human Development  
and Social Services  
SIM University

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Department of English  
Language & Literature  
National University of  
Singapore

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Ngee Ann Polytechnic

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**ASSOC PROF HAO XIAOMING**

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Head of Department  
Electronic & Broadcast Media  
Nanyang Technological  
University

**MS LINA CHONG LIN LIN**

Assistant Manager  
Leadership & Personal  
Development  
Nanyang Polytechnic

**MS LOON SHIAH LIAN**

Manager (Arts & Lifestyle)  
Lifeskills & Lifestyle Division  
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IPAM

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Strategy & Planning  
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Assessment book writer

**MDM YONG SIOW LING**

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Credit Suisse

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SHARIFF**

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Tongue Language  
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Head of Training and  
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at PAVE (Centre for  
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Manager, Infant &  
Children Services  
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I/O Psychologist  
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Theories of Communication  
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Author

**ASSOC PROF SUSHEELA**

**A. VARGHESE**  
Practice Associate Professor  
Corporate Communication  
Lee Kong Chian School of  
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Department of English  
Language and  
Literature  
National University of  
Singapore

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Senior Lecturer  
Centre for English Language  
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National University of  
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Water Supply (Network)  
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National University of  
Singapore

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Correspondent and Head  
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Social Enterprise Network  
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BINTE SELAMAT**

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Asian Women's Welfare  
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**Assistant Professor**  
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public  
Policy

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**Lecturer of Interdisciplinary  
Studies and Course Module  
Leader in Creativity &  
Applied Thinking Skills**  
School of Interdisciplinary  
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Human Resource  
Management Unit  
National University of  
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**Systems Analyst**  
Zenisys Pte Ltd

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**Head, Group Corporate  
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of Communication and  
Information**Nanyang Technological  
University**DR LIM SUN SUN****Assistant Professor  
Communications and New  
Media Programme**National University of  
Singapore**MR DANIEL TAN KIM KHOON****Director  
School of Interactive &  
Digital Media**

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& Norton Business Lead,  
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People's Association

**CHRISTOPHER ONG SIU JIN****Deputy Public Prosecutor /  
State Counsel**

Criminal Justice Division

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Lecturer- School of  
InfoComm Technology**

Ngee Ann Polytechnic

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Southeast Asia**

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Family Development Group  
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**mda**

Media Development Authority  
[www.mda.gov.sg](http://www.mda.gov.sg)

3 Fusionopolis Way #16-22 Symbiosis Singapore 138633  
Tel: (65) 6377 3800 Fax: (65) 6577 3888

[www.mda.gov.sg](http://www.mda.gov.sg)

[www.smf.sg](http://www.smf.sg)

