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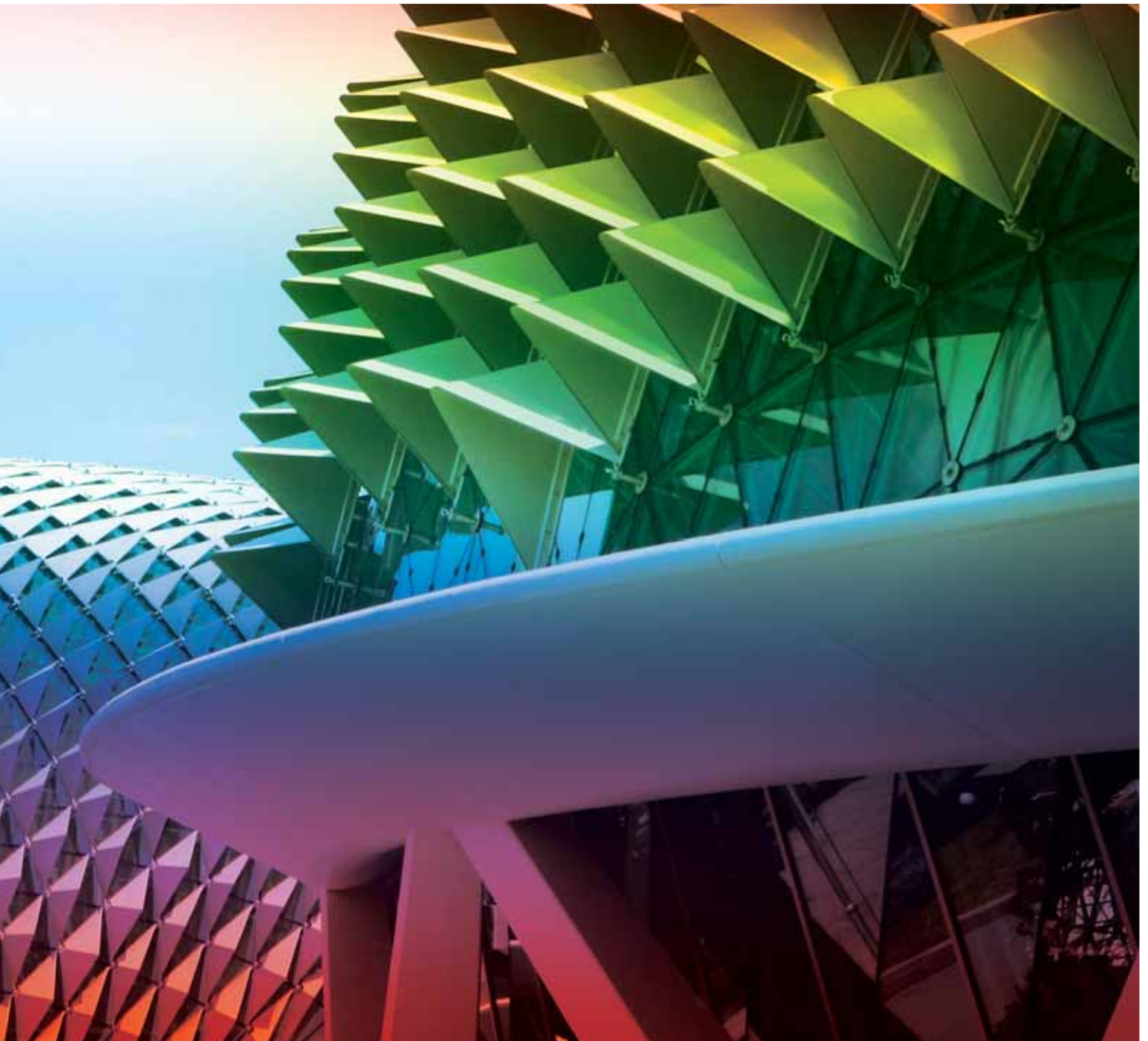
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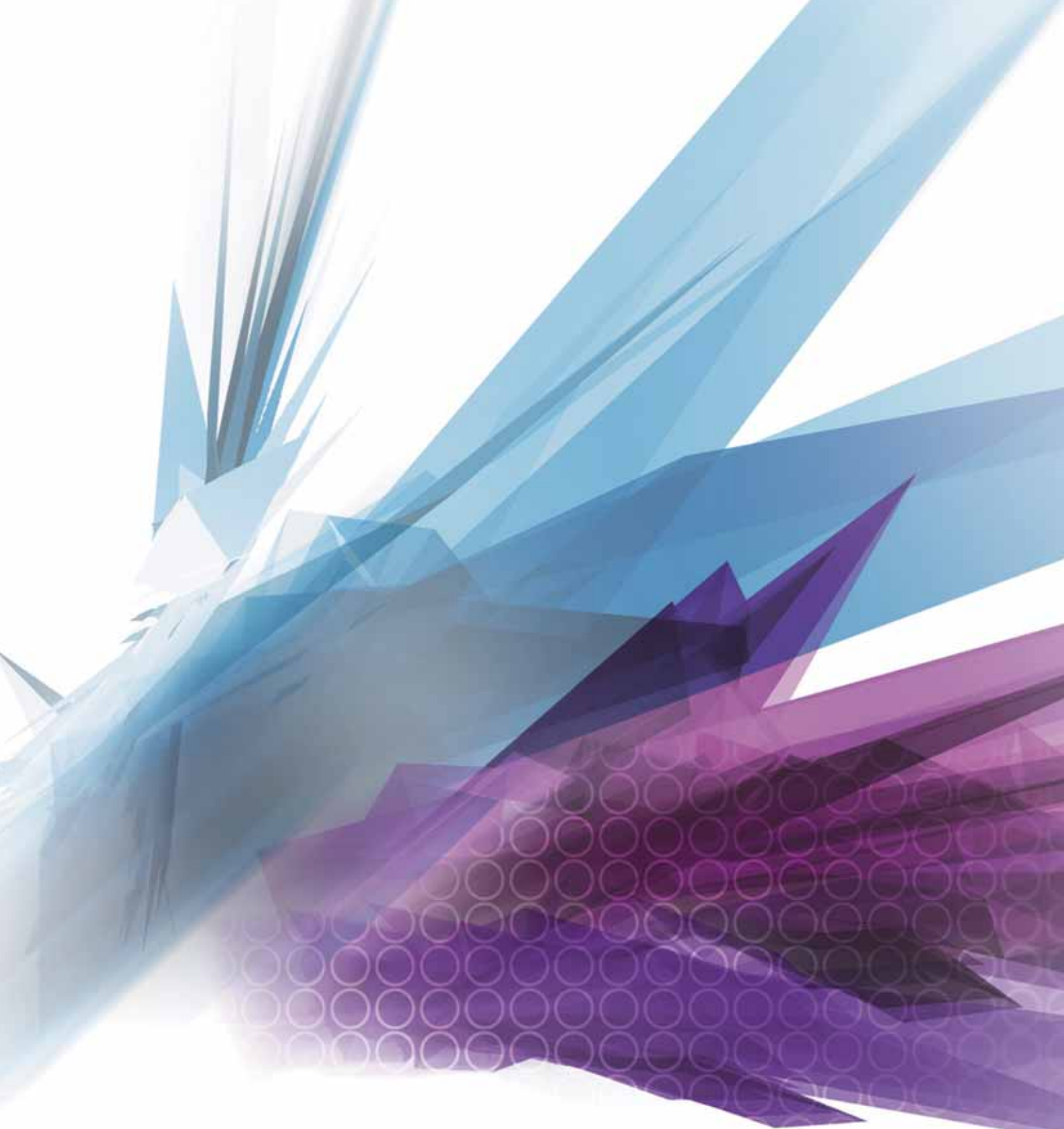
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SYNERGY

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About Contact Singapore

Contact Singapore is an alliance of the Singapore Economic Development Board and Ministry of Manpower. It aims to attract global talent to work, invest and live in Singapore.

With offices in Asia, Europe and North America, Contact Singapore is the one-stop centre for those who wish to pursue a rewarding career in Singapore, as well as individuals and entrepreneurs who are keen to invest in or initiate new business activities here. Contact Singapore actively links Singapore-based employers with global talent and provides updates on career opportunities and industry developments in Singapore. We work with private sector partners to facilitate the interests of potential individual investors in Singapore.

For more information on working, investing and living in Singapore, please visit www.contactsingapore.sg

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Sell-Out Crowd At Singapore Careers Fair



Only those who had registered for the Careers@Singapore fair held in Singapore were allowed in – such was the response to the first fair to be jointly organised by Contact Singapore (CS) and CPA Australia, an association of finance, accounting and business professionals.

Held this January, the interest in the job market drew a crowd of 2,000 students, fresh graduates and mid-career professionals from Singapore and overseas.

This included a group of 40 top students from Malaysian universities, who were also at Experience@Singapore.

For Cheang Wai Leong, an Accounting student at the Malaysian campus of Monash University, the fair gave him the opportunity to meet a lot of new people and talk to potential employers.

Also present was Lithuanian national Domantas Skardziukas who had just completed a three-month internship at an Italian bank in Singapore. “Working in Singapore must be great if I want to come back to work here,” he said.

Fresh graduates like Domantus, who had an Italian degree, formed the majority.

Mr Ang Hock Kheng, Human Resource Director of Ernst & Young, said that he was meeting more fresh graduates this year than last year at the fair organised by CPA Australia. There were more job seekers with Masters degrees then. “I am seeing a lot of

fresh graduates looking for opportunities in audit and tax,” he commented.

The exception proved the rule. I Ming, a computer engineering graduate from the University of New South Wales in Sydney and a Masters graduate from the Singapore Management University, preferred a finance position. “There are not many openings for finance. But I will try my luck first – follow your passion, as they say.

“If things look very bleak, then I will consider accounting,” he said of his personal aspirations.

Of the fair, he commented, “It’s good to see the Government doing its part. There seems to be more openings in the public sector.”

The fact that opportunities exist was the hopeful message from Mr Leo Yip, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Manpower and Deputy Chairman, Economic Development Board, who opened the fair.

This was confirmed by Irene Yap, Director, Group Marketing & Communications, RSM Chio Lim, the public accounting arm of the accounting and business advisory group Chio Lim Stone Forest. “We are recruiting and have collected a lot of resumes,” she said.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Contact Singapore will be holding a number of events as well as participating in career fairs around the world in the coming two months. Do log on to our website to find out more if you’re interested to attend the events or if you want to chat with us about working and living in Singapore.

Dates	Event	Location
5 to 6 Mar	Career fair at De La Salle University - College of Saint Benilde	Philippines: Manila
6 to 7 Mar	National Graduate Recruitment Fair	UK: London
6-19 Mar	Careers Fair	Australia: Adelaide, Tasmania, Perth
19 Mar	Imperial College Technology Fair	UK: London
20 to 22 Mar	Experience@Singapore	Malaysia
25 to 27 Mar	Game Developer Conference	US: San Francisco



Between Intern And Placement

Specialising in the niche of internships, Asia-Interns.com has progressed from guide to matchmaker. For Contact Singapore (CS), this makes it an ideal partner while for its founder, it has been the springboard to the bigger canvas of job placements.

German entrepreneur Patrick Linden had experienced the information requirements students have when they seek an overseas internship when he came to Singapore as an intern with Daimler/Mercedes-Benz in 2004. He also got to know India when he spent six months in Bangalore as part of his MBA course.

With that experience, he set out to fill the info gap he had noticed by registering Asia-Interns.com as a company in Germany in 2005. Aimed initially at European and American students looking for a placement in Asia, he started selling country-based guides to internships through the Internet.

Essentially, in return for a fee, he would send a PDF (portable document format) file through email to the purchaser. The document contained information useful to an intern such as sample application letters and resumes, visa requirements, an accommodation directory and most importantly, a listing of companies in that country that accept interns. Today, this service continues unchanged, except its range has expanded to include non-Asian countries from the United States to Dubai.

At the same time, competition for internships is so intense that many applicants are not successful. "So, we came up with an internship placement service for Singapore, India and China to assist those who need extra help," said Mr Linden.

Insofar as these services apply to Singapore, they dovetail neatly with CS's objective to draw global talent to these shores. In a win-win partnership, an indirect link from the CD website brings would-be interns to the Asia-Interns.com website while the Asia-Interns.com website features the CS logo on every web page.

"We are promoting the Work Holiday Programme jointly with Contact Singapore in order to facilitate the visa process for students and graduates that seek internships here," explained Mr Linden. The WHP, as its name indicates, allows qualified students and young graduates to work and live in Singapore for up to six months.



Patrick Linden, founder of Asia-Interns.com

Mr Linden does not take the further step of accompanying CS on its overseas recruitment tours because he already has more applicants than internships for them. Instead, Asia-Interns.com is helping to enlarge the pool of internships, again a positive step for CS.

"Our primary focus with Asia-Interns.com now is to do a lot of groundwork with employers here in Singapore to get across the benefits and cost-effectiveness of employing overseas interns. Not only do senior and postgrad students add to the international mix within the team, they can deliver real benefit to their companies, for example in the business area, by exploring market opportunities in their home countries for the companies they're working for," said Mr Linden.

Meanwhile, the experience and skills Mr Linden has acquired in Asia-Interns.com has spawned additional related business. "In 2007, I and two other partners started iHipo, which is essentially a job portal that targets a bigger audience. Tackling the same business from the other side, we, with the help of an additional partner who has experience in executive search processes, started Yess International – a boutique executive search firm which is specialised in sourcing foreign fulltime talent to local companies in Singapore," he said.

Renaissance City

A new National Art Gallery and better facilities such as a refurbished theatre and concert hall are some of the initiatives the public can look forward to, according to Singapore's arts and cultural masterplan up to 2015.

Commanding a budget of S\$115 million over the next five years, the masterplan, dubbed the Renaissance City Plan III, also intends to foster more art with a local flavour.

The most immediate and visible effect will be the upgrading of facilities and equipment at the Victoria Theatre and Concert Hall at the historic heart of the city.

Plans are afoot to close the 148-year-old building in 2010 for a S\$180 million refurbishment. Besides revamping the backstage to enhance the rehearsal rooms, the renovations will accommodate more commercial activities.

In addition, the nearby iconic neo-classical buildings formerly housing the Supreme Court and the City Hall are to be turned into a National Art Gallery. Expected to be ready in 2013, the new arts complex is being developed as a centre of creation, research and exchange in Asian arts and heritage, with a focus on Southeast Asian art.

To further develop and promote the area, which is culturally rich and historically significant, street-level entertainment and enhancements to the "walk-ability" of the district are in the pipeline.

More things to look forward to are more museums and events regarding Singapore's heritage. The fledgling industry



is set to receive a \$8 million boost from an incentive programme that will provide seed funding support for businesses, private museums and other private players in the heritage industry.

Hand in hand with heritage, arts businesses from galleries and auction houses to specialised services such as conservation will be encouraged to take root, giving depth to the arts scene and making Singapore a more interesting place to live in.

Together with the focus on infrastructure, the masterplan aims to foster art with a distinctive Singaporean content. While this will ultimately benefit the man in the street as the consumer of the arts, the immediate beneficiaries are the artists, local and foreign.



The Asian Civilisations Museum, the first museum in the region to present a broad yet integrated perspective of Pan-Asian cultures and civilisations.

Firstly, funding for their work is already available. The National Arts Council (NAC) already has in place an Arts Creation Fund to support the creation and incubation of new works over the next five years. The masterplan will introduce new Content Creation Funds to encourage greater Asian content creation.

Secondly, funding for their support is on its way. The NAC will be launching this year an Artist Residency Scheme to support foreign artists' residencies in Singapore. Through this, it hopes Singapore will become a cultural centre and gateway for Asian arts, bringing arts professionals from Singapore, Asia and beyond together to exchange ideas and create collaborative works.

But, aware of the need for Singaporean artists to be exposed to other cultures, the Artist Residency Scheme also supports their residencies abroad.

Last but not least, more space and more diverse facilities will be made available under the Arts Housing Scheme. The current total Gross Floor Area of Arts Housing properties worth 33,000 square metres will be increased to 48,000 square metres in 2010. The scheme will also be extended to more players in the arts ecosystem such as private arts businesses and specialised arts services.

With this support, the hope is that artistic creativity will blossom into a cultural experience that all can enjoy.



Esplanade's 2,000-seat Theatre is an adaptation of the traditional horseshoe form of European opera houses, which provides an intimate setting between the audience and the artists on stage. Spread over four levels, it houses Singapore's largest stage, and is designed for the presentation of Asian and Western performing arts as well as advanced multi-media performances.

Clean Energy To The Rescue



The rustic island of Pulau Ubin does not draw electricity supply from Singapore's main power grid as its modest energy demand does not justify laying power transmission cables to connect it to mainland Singapore. There is also no centralised electricity supply system on the island. So its 100 or so inhabitants, including small businesses, currently run their own diesel-powered generators for electricity.

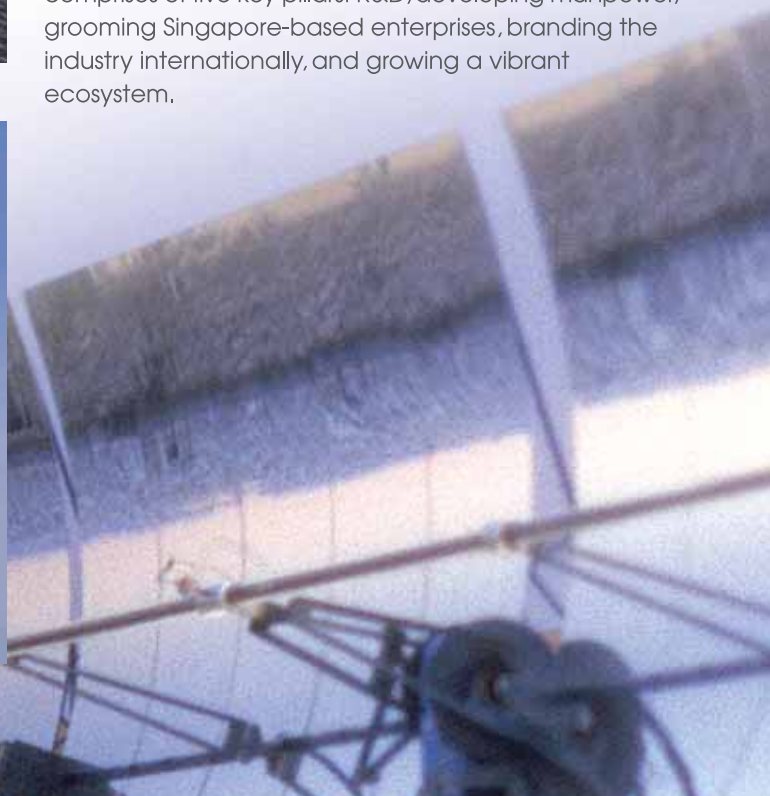
But a pioneering project by the Energy Market Authority (EMA) aims to transform the island into a model "green" island powered entirely by clean and renewable energy.



A consultancy study is under way and could eventually lead to the use of energy sources like solar, wind, biofuel and biomass to supply electricity to the whole island through a microgrid.

Besides benefiting the villagers of Pulau Ubin, the project would help launch Singapore's bid to be a test-bedding site for new energy technologies within a global hub where clean energy products are developed, made, and exported overseas.

It has begun to implement a comprehensive blueprint to grow the industry, starting with an initial funding support of S\$350 million from the government. This blueprint comprises of five key pillars: R&D, developing manpower, grooming Singapore-based enterprises, branding the industry internationally, and growing a vibrant ecosystem.



To synergise efforts to grow the industry, the Clean Energy Programme Office (CEPO) comprising different governmental agencies has been formed. The inter-agency workgroup is responsible for planning and executing strategies to develop Singapore into a global clean energy hub.

Besides a S\$17 million Clean Energy Research & Testbedding Programme, CEPO has put in place a S\$50 million Clean Energy Research Programme which supports R&D efforts in our education initiatives and the industry.

There is also a new S\$25 million fund to help deliver clean energy research from lab to store shelf over the next five years and a S\$20 million Solar Capability Scheme to offset part of the capital costs of installing solar technologies in new building projects.

Singapore's clean energy push centres on solar energy, given its strategic location in the tropical sunbelt. To date, the city-state has attracted leading industry players such as Renewable Energy Corporation and NorSun of Norway.

Besides solar, resources are also being channelled towards wind energy and biofuels.

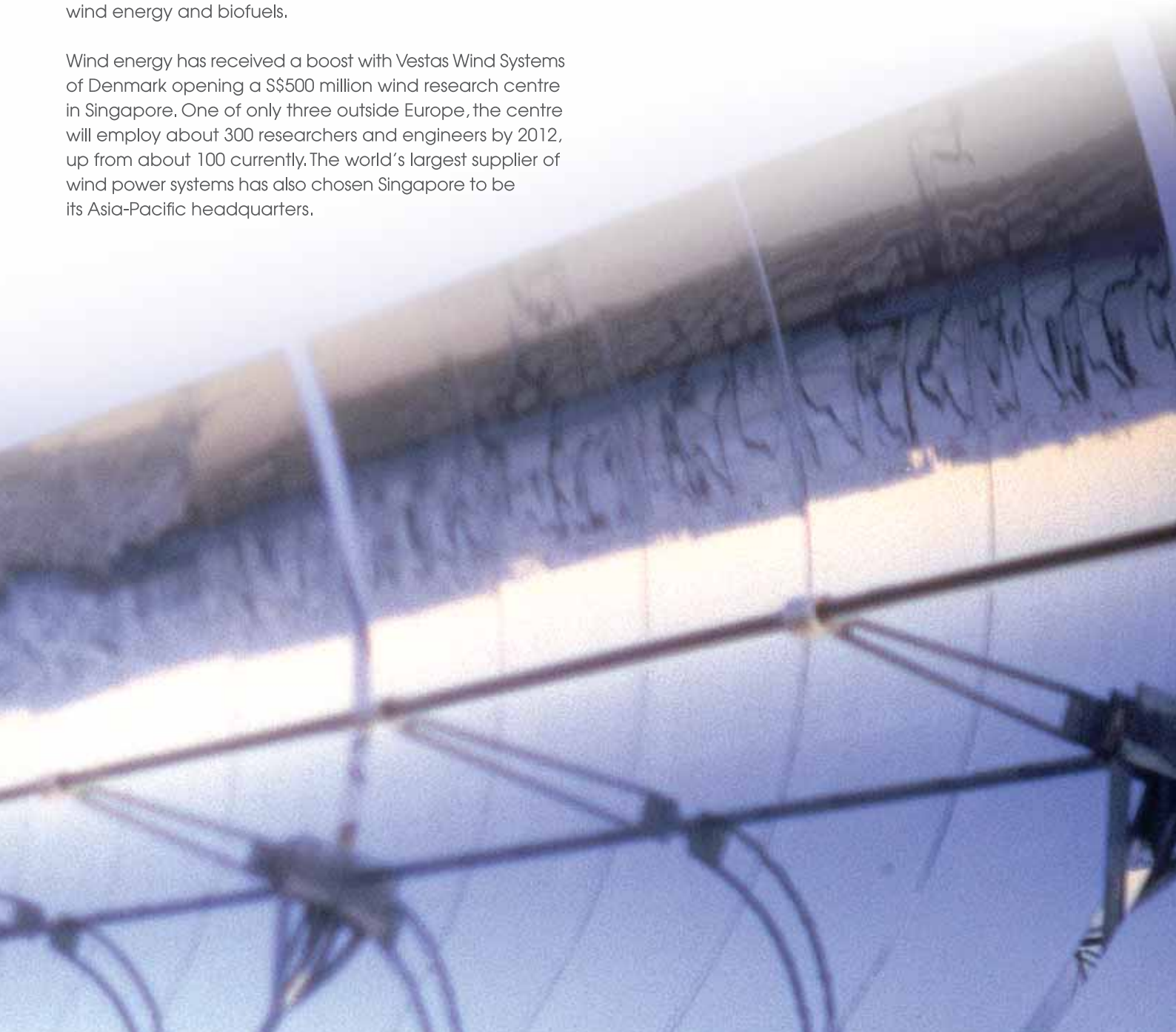
Wind energy has received a boost with Vestas Wind Systems of Denmark opening a S\$500 million wind research centre in Singapore. One of only three outside Europe, the centre will employ about 300 researchers and engineers by 2012, up from about 100 currently. The world's largest supplier of wind power systems has also chosen Singapore to be its Asia-Pacific headquarters.

Biofuels is a natural extension of Singapore's strong foundation in oil and oil trading. The capacity of its three existing biodiesel plants will be augmented by the world's most advanced and largest commercial-scale biodiesel facility producing diesel fuel from renewable feedstocks.

Finnish fuel company Neste Oil is investing approximately S\$1.2 billion in a 1.5 generation biofuel plant capable of using any vegetable oil or animal fat as its input. The plant, targeted to be ready by end 2010, will produce 800,000 tonnes per annum of premium-quality renewable fuel.

Singapore is also one of the first locations in Asia for biodiesel pricing after Platts launched daily assessments for biodiesel loading in Southeast Asia in January 2008. In addition, the Republic actively backs industry R&D to develop and deploy biofuel technologies of the second generation and beyond.

Between the different clean energy sources, the industry is expected to contribute S\$1.7 billion to Singapore's gross domestic product and create 7,000 jobs by 2015.



The IDM Star Arises



Singapore's interactive and digital media (IDM) industry is taking off as a growing eco-system draws leading players and global talent to set up shop.

The industry, loosely defined to include interactive applications beyond games and animation and related services, is projected to generate 10,000 new jobs and over S\$10 billion worth of value added by 2015.

The line-up of games and animation studios with branches here is led by top IDM companies such as Lucasfilm and Electronic Arts from the United States, Ubisoft and Rainbow from Europe, Southern Star from Australia and Koei from Japan.

Rainbow, an independent production house from Italy, announced last December that it will set up its global gaming division global headquarters in Singapore at a cost of S\$25 million. It will create a new massively multiplayer online (MMO) game here and employ some 300 staff from animators and artists to merchandising experts.

Electronic Arts (EA), a leading developer and publisher of interactive entertainment, picked Singapore to be its Asia Pacific headquarters and home to a growing and vibrant EA Development Studio with two studio locations on the island. It uses its Singapore base to localise EA games into different Asian languages for distribution throughout the region. It is also rapidly growing the development of new online games for the region.

Australia's largest independent TV production and distribution group, Southern Star, set up its animation studio in Singapore. The Singapore production of a children's series, Bottle Top Bill, won an award at Digicon, an Asian animation competition.

Koei, acknowledged as a leader in strategy and simulation games and as the innovator of the tactical action genre, has also leveraged on its Singapore operations to develop its MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-playing Game) version of its flagship Romance of the Three Kingdoms.

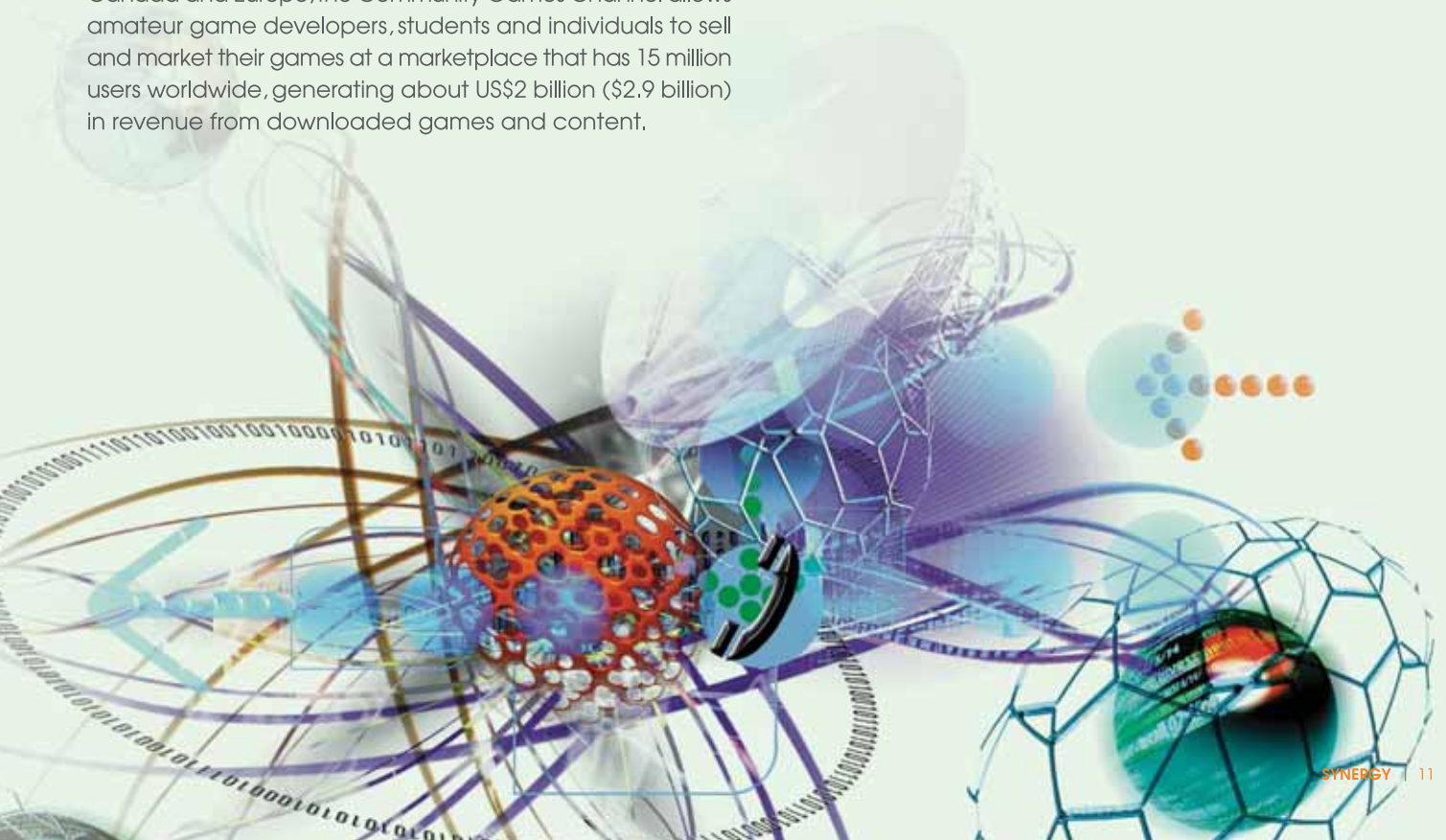
Behind the big names in IDM are more than 400 start-ups being nurtured by 10 specialised incubators.

A Government fund worth S\$500 million is also available. Administered by the multi-agency Interactive Digital Media Research and Development Programme Office (IDMPO) hosted by the Media Development Authority of Singapore, it supports projects to exploit 3D virtual and digital media technologies for commercial use among others. One such project is a 3D library map which can give the viewer the precise location of a book and show him how to get there. To date, some 400 technopreneurs, both local and foreign, are already taking their ideas to market.

They are supported by some 60 venture capitalists angels and incubators on one hand and by global infocomm players such as Apple, Microsoft and HP which extend technological and to-market outreach on the other.

Microsoft, for example, has allowed Singapore game developers to publish games online on its Community Games Channel ahead of mature Asian markets like Japan and Korea. Microsoft will also provide its gaming development software, XNA Game Studio, for free.

Currently open only to developers in the United States, Canada and Europe, the Community Games Channel allows amateur game developers, students and individuals to sell and market their games at a marketplace that has 15 million users worldwide, generating about US\$2 billion (\$2.9 billion) in revenue from downloaded games and content.





Ancillary services have also sprung up. Among them, EON Reality, a leading 3D visual content management and visual reality software provider has set up its Asia-Pacific headquarters and R&D functions in Singapore.

The Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA) is also taking steps to enhance Singapore's capability as a global digital marketplace by developing a trusted and conducive environment with capabilities and services for digital media businesses to hub, manage, trade and distribute digital media content through and from Singapore, into the rest of the world. Its Digital Marketplace programme is expected to create 1,000 new jobs by 2015.

The IDM industry can also leverage on a growing network of IDM research and innovation centres. Among them is the GAMBIT Game Lab, a collaboration between the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the government of Singapore.

The five-year research initiative focuses on building collaborations between Singapore institutions of higher learning and MIT departments to identify and solve research problems faced by the digital game industry. Seven students from the lab beat 7,800 participants from 100 countries to win the first prize in the 2008 Microsoft XNA Dream-Build-Play game development competition.

Other notable joint R&D centres in Singapore include the China-Singapore Institute of Digital Media by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which focuses on language mediation technologies and the Keio-NUS Connective Ubiquitous Technology for Embodiments (CUTE) Centre by Keio University, Japan.

Local institutes of higher learning are also jumping on the bandwagon. One of the latest is the Nanyang Technological University. Last April, it launched its Institute for Media Innovation (IMI) to bring together 100 researchers from a range of disciplines, including art and design and engineering and education. IMI will focus on mega-trends in IDM research today such as next-generation multimedia search, advanced "intelligence" in media, as well as innovative digital cinema and television.

Among the recent projects to groom talent in IDM, the National University of Singapore will set up an \$11 million Interactive and Digital Media Institute. The US-based DigiPen Institute of Technology, an acknowledged leader in video game technologies, has already opened its doors in Singapore.

Besides media communications, other sectors such as education, healthcare, sports, transport, design and leisure are involved in leveraging on IDM to bring about innovative and exciting services.

Backing the bright future of the IDM industry is a robust physical IT infrastructure. More than one million square feet of data centre space is available to host its operations. With a total submarine cable capacity of 28 Tbps and direct international Internet connectivity of 25 Gbps, Singapore is well positioned as a hub for international capacity. Within Singapore, the Next Generation National Broadband Network will offer pervasive ultra-high speed connectivity by delivering speeds of 1Gbps and beyond by 2015.

IDM in Singapore is ready to bring fame and fortune to those able to ride the star.

IDM Industry



LUCASFILM
ANIMATION
S I N G A P O R E

The Force Is In Singapore





George Lucas and Teo Ming Kian, then-Chairman, Singapore Economic Development Board signing the agreement for the formation of Lucasfilm Animation Singapore in 2004.

Classes from swordsmanship to presentation skills to sculpting – in addition to professional training – are available to staff at the Singapore studio of Lucasfilm, the ground-breaking studio founded by George Lucas, the American director and producer of Star Wars and Indiana Jones fame.

Staffing Manager of Lucasfilm Animation Singapore, Christine Danzo, elaborates, “We have a dedicated department that looks after training and talent development for staff: the industry is people-intensive and you can only produce high quality productions if you have the right talented team. “Since tools and techniques are ever changing, we have on-going production training for all artistic staff. The training is conducted by leading supervisors and mentors from Lucasfilm divisions such as award-winning Industrial Light and Magic and LucasArts.

“In addition, to help practice and develop skill sets, we run art workshops from life drawing and sculpting to photography and enrichment courses. Some of the classes we have conducted include acting, swordsmanship and master classes from visiting icons within the industry.

“To balance the practical, we also invest in our employees’ inter-personal skills. We run workshops and courses on leadership, presentation skills and professional coaching.”

However, the experience since 2005 when it opened its doors has shown that raw talent, coupled with a passion for new media, is plentiful but industry experience is hard to come by. In response, Lucasfilm developed the Jedi Masters Program (JuMP), a six-month paid apprenticeship programme to fast-track potential recruits to work in a production environment.

The programme combines classroom-based courses and department-based mentorship. The JuMP apprentices learn to produce top-notch quality work whilst being exposed to the Lucasfilm production pipeline.

With the help of JuMP, the Singapore studio has expanded to more than 270 full-time staff, 80% of whom are artists, working in positions such as animators, character animators, digital artists, game vfx artists, game designers and concept designers. IT and admin staff make up the balance.

“We’re in the business of telling great stories and making magic. Nowhere else in the world can an artist experience working in a truly multi-media studio – with the ability to contribute to a game, a TV show and visual effects – all under one roof,” says Miss Danzo.

That is not all that Lucasfilm has to offer.

She points out, apart from competitive starting salaries, “Lifestyle – the work environment, the benefits and the

company culture – is often a big motivator for new graduates. What people might not know is that there is no dress code. Executives are regularly spotted wearing jeans, sneakers, flip-flops – you name it.

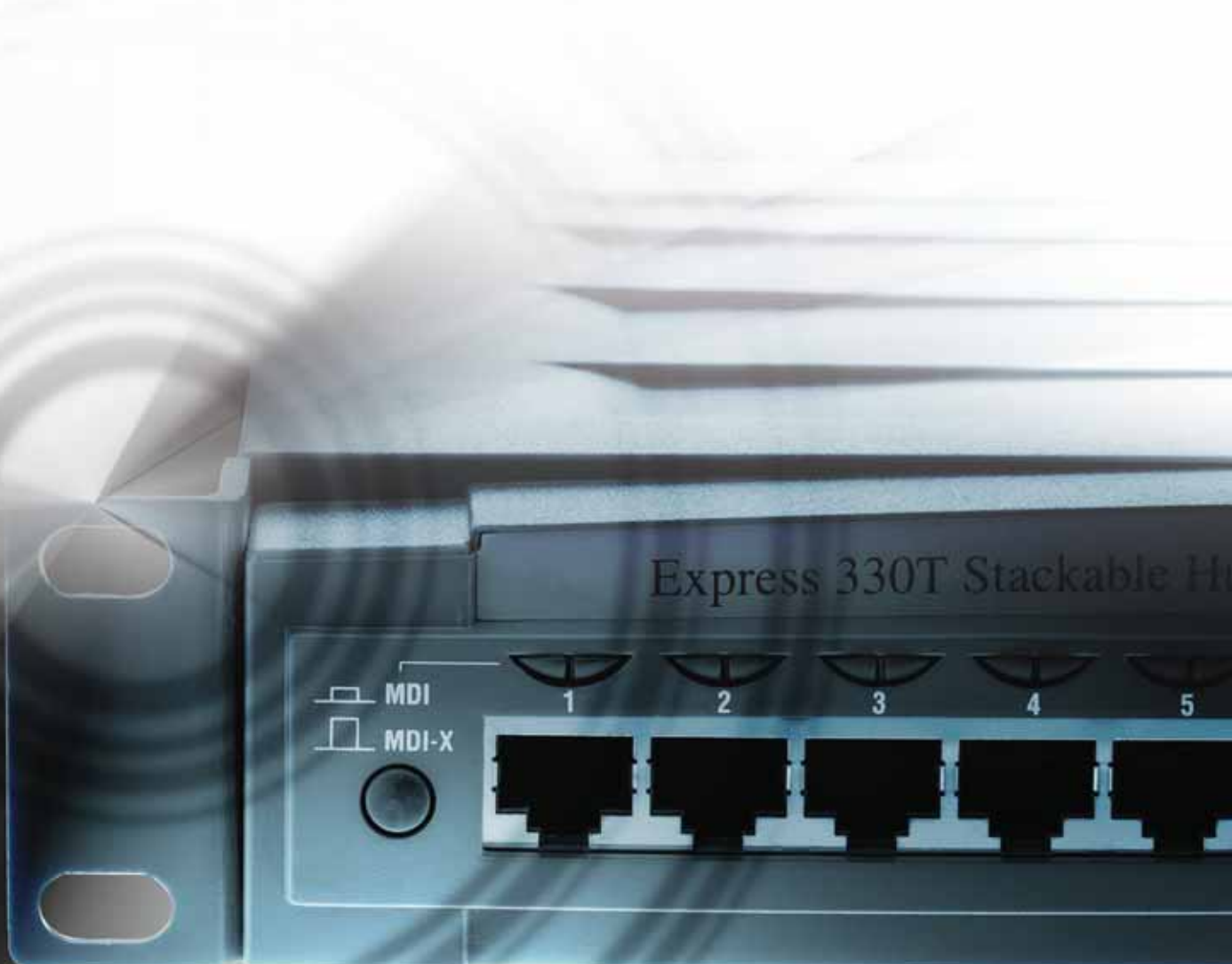


“We encourage creativity. To do this, the cubicles are covered in toys and we offer free movies twice a month. We believe we can also foster creativity by creating a diverse workplace. Our studio is a multi-cultural work environment with employees from over 40 countries.

“We care about our team and consider each role in the production pipeline important from an entry-level artist to a supervisor.”

Lucasfilm Animation Singapore is still on the look-out for artists, engineers and production people with a strong foundation of artistic and technical skills. An equal opportunity employer, its selection is based purely on talent.

“We’re looking for the best and the brightest. We want people to come to work everyday with new ideas,” she said.





Everyday Is Friday At Ubisoft Singapore



Mr Tan Meng Aun, Business Development Manager for Ubisoft.

A newcomer to Singapore, Ubisoft, the French gaming company founded by five brothers, is actively looking to augment its current staff strength of 70. That number is likely to hit 300 in the mid-term.

Strong growth like this has been part of the company's history since it started in 1986. In terms of industry ranking of independent publishers (excluding Japan), it shot up from 20th place in 1996 to third in 2007.

Today, the developer, publisher and distributor of interactive entertainment products employs more than 5000 people worldwide. It boasts the second largest internal production workforce in the industry and a global distribution network that covers over 55 countries.

Ubisoft Singapore is focused on developing high-quality game titles for console and PC as the company's 18th internal development studio. A core team of Ubisoft veterans came to kickstart the studio in July 2008. Today it has a development team ranging from experienced hands who created games such as Far Cry 2, Assassin's Creed and Rayman's Raving Rabbids to graduates fresh out of college.

And it is still growing.

"Currently, we are looking for talented programmers, graphic artists, animators and game designers to join our production teams. We are looking for staff in areas such as programming, art, animation and game design.

"Of course, a core requirement for these candidates is a deep passion for video game development! For the specific roles, there are more specific things we look out for. For example, for programmers, we look for individuals who are very skilled in C++ programming, whereas for artists and animators, besides technical capability, we look for candidates who also possess a very strong artistic sense," said Mr Tan Meng Aun, Ubisoft's Business Development Manager.



Ubisoft employees having fun.



While the company is open to both entry-level and experienced staff, it has a strong tradition of junior people.

“We aim to take talented students, provide them with mentors, who are the best in the industry, and then train them on our established technologies and processes

to take on intermediate and senior positions in the future.

“In addition, we often send our game developers to Paris for further training and we have also brought in experts from our studios in Montreal and France to help train our staff,” added Mr Tan.

Besides a competitive salary and benefits package, he cites two other pluses of working for Ubisoft – the flexible career paths and the environment.

“We have an extremely flexible career path for our game developers. We give our staff the freedom to develop their

skills and grow in the direction that they want. For example, a game developer may start off as a generalist programmer but later, move into a completely different track as a game designer, or a producer. Of course, even within the vocation, there are many possible career tracks ranging from more technical tracks to more management-oriented roles

“The same flexibility exists for our artists, animators and game designers,” he said.

“The corporate culture of the studio is casual but intense. There is a very strong buzz about the place which you can feel as soon as you walk in and everyone is very excited to be seeing and working on some great games here.

“The office is very open – there are no cubicles! There is no dress code, and everyone is free to chat and discuss their ideas with other like-minded game developers in the studio.”

There is also a high percentage of global talent with staff coming from France, Canada, Australia, Ukraine, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Korea in addition to Singapore. There are no specific policies for the employment of global talent as everyone is taken in based on merit.

From School To Home: Trinh Tran Chau



Vietnamese Trinh Tran Chau came to Singapore at the age of 19 to study and four years on, wants to bring her parents over and settle down here. Now an Assistant Manager at The Elizabeth Hotel and a Permanent Resident, she started her life in Singapore pursuing a Diploma in Hospitality Management.

Before that, she came with her parents to 'recce' Singapore, which met their expectations. Important factors which had made them think of Singapore at first were its proximity to Vietnam and its English-speaking environment.

Once the decision was made, an agent in Vietnam took over and did all the paperwork and arrangements for her course and accommodation.

"When I got here, I had to go around to find out more about Singapore myself. But it wasn't too difficult," she says.

As she already knew English, classes were not that difficult to follow. But the educational system was an eye opener.

"At school – the PSB Academy followed by the Raffles International Training Centre – there was a lot of student participation, discussion, research, presentations and projects. Back in Vietnam, it was mostly theories from the lecturer – very one-sided.

"I had an internship for six months during which I was attached to different departments in a hotel. So, I was well exposed to overall operations before I came out to work."

She found a job with Far East Organization's The Elizabeth Hotel, working her way up to Assistant Manager. Besides supervising the Front Desk Operations, she is helping to set up Quincy, Far East's latest hotel. It is next door to The Elizabeth and is due to open later this year.

"I enjoy being on the frontline, attending to guests' queries and managing my subordinates. Every day is a new experience: you never know what is going to happen.

"There is a lot of interaction, not only with guests but also with my superiors and subordinates. The job requires me to be tactful and to handle all requests speedily and efficiently.

"As we are in operation 24 hours a day, and the job requires multitasking, everyday is a challenge regarding tools and manning. Some of the balancing acts I must maintain include maximising guest satisfaction while minimising cost and the possibility of mistakes by staff during a busy day," she says.

Competent and confident, she thrives in the competitive work environment.

"Everyone is serious about his work and strives to do his best. Mediocrity cannot survive in Singapore. It is this positive competitiveness that urges me to keep on improving myself to catch up with the pace here," she says. She has been promoted in each of her three years at Far East.

Through working and living in Singapore, she has made friends with people from all over – China, Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia and Philippines – in addition to Singaporeans and Vietnamese, citing the cultural diversity as one of the country's plus points.

As in her student days, she relaxes by shopping, going on outings, and dining with friends. And she continues to appreciate the infrastructure that made it easy for her to adapt to and enjoy life in Singapore.

"I find it very convenient to travel around because Singapore has a great transportation system.

Furthermore, unlike Vietnam and some other countries, it is really safe here. I can go back from work late at night without having to worry about my safety," she says.

If she has a grouse, it is the negative attitude of some of the taxi drivers, she says.

She adds, "I think they need to improve a lot in terms of being customer centric because they are the ones who have a lot contact with tourists. This will greatly enhance the image of Singapore as a friendly and courteous city."

But knowing Singapore for what it is, she is at home in the bustling, polyglot setting she finds herself in.



Folks At Contact Singapore

Interview with Deputy Director, Mr Raymond Tan



1. As someone who has been with Contact Singapore (CS) prior to its alliance, how do you see its evolution?

When I first heard that Contact Singapore was to be jointly led by the Ministry of Manpower and the Economic Development Board, I saw this as a fresh and bold approach which will help Singapore better compete in the global race for talent.

2. What areas of CS's work do you enjoy more? Why?

I am excited about opportunities to strengthen "talent" as an engine and enabler of economic growth for Singapore. After all, as our globally competitive workforce embarks on a journey from "good" to "great", talent makes the difference, particularly for our new and emerging industries. And yes, it is not a secret that understanding prevailing and potential talent markets keeps me continually invigorated.

3. What is your current portfolio?

My key role is to provide support to my team of colleagues who are highly motivated in co-formulating strategies and initiatives with industry partners and companies, to attract professionals to work in the key growth and emerging sectors in Singapore. To then successfully implement outreach programmes and interactive platforms that best engage various talent groups are responsibilities that my team shares with our overseas colleagues.

4. What can talent look forward to in Singapore despite the downturn?

As Singapore's well-diversified economy remains committed in shifting towards an even higher value-added and more knowledge-intensive economic paradigm, talent can look forward to contributing their skills and expertise in more new growth industries, such as in the areas of biomedical sciences, interactive and digital media, as well as environmental and water technologies.

Amidst this economic downturn, we continue to see many global companies investing in Singapore. For instance, Rolls-Royce recently announced the moving of its global headquarters of its marine businesses from London to Singapore; and Hitachi Data Systems just invested in a new regional headquarters and business solutions centre in Singapore.

With such investments and many others in the pipeline, we expect Singapore to emerge from the current times even stronger and more resilient, as we have done so after the 1998, 2001 and 2003 downturns.

Singapore's opportune position in the heart of the Asian markets and as an instrumental player and catalyst in the Asian growth story will also serve to bolster us during this challenging period. Asia as a region is projected to continue with its economic and business dynamism even as leading global economies slow down. As one of Asia's global financial centres, Singapore is well-positioned to ride this economic storm on the back of these growing economies. For talent, building your career here in Singapore means being part of an exciting chapter of the Asian growth story, which presents career and business exposure within and beyond this region.