Message from CEO

Three years ago, we set out to be a pan-Asian leader in providing innovative ICT solutions to support teaching and learning. We have now achieved a major milestone in that journey.

ASKnLearn will merge with Educomp Solutions Ltd, India’s leader in ICT solutions for schools. It opens up exciting new channels for us. We can now tap on Educomp’s network into a potential 1 million Indian schools, as well as ride on Educomp’s outreach in the USA and Middle East. The many innovative products we have built over the last 7 years can now find their way into these exciting markets. At the same time, ASKnLearn can tap on thousands of high quality multimedia content that has made Educomp into the leading supplier of teacher-led multimedia content in India. This will strengthen our product offerings to our existing customers throughout Asia. Indeed a synergistic tie between two leading education technology companies!

Operationally, there will be no change. We will continue to service our many loyal customers in Singapore and in the region. ASKnLearn will be the operational HQ for Asia, as well as a base for research and development. ASKnLearn will continue its tradition of innovating education. Educomp has been a leader in India in R&D in ICT in Education. Both companies will continue the culture of constantly exploring technology to more efficiently and effectively deploy solutions to support teaching and learning.

In this issue, we feature Educomp, various ASKnLearn and partners’ technologies, stories from schools in the use of ICT, and spotlight our ICT training programme that has helped a number of schools win national awards. We also welcome back Marc Checkley as our resident Editor and video journalism specialist.

We look forward to your continued support.

Yee Jenn Jong
CEO, ASKnLearn Group of Companies
THE JOURNEY OF INNOVATION

Educomp Solutions began its journey in 1994 with a vision to use technology to transform the teaching-learning process.

Founded by Shantanu Prakash, an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM-A), he foresaw vast potential in growing Information Technology based education and its impact on raising the quality of learning. His dynamic pursuit of technology-enabled education resulted in Educomp becoming the number one education company in India reaching out to more than one million learners, with operations in the US and South East Asia.

Investment in Research and Development has been critical to Educomp’s growth. Today it has the largest R&D budget for education in India’s private sector. This has resulted in a multitude of pioneering world-class educational products launched by the company.

One of these products is Smart Class, installed in more than 330 Indian schools, is a teacher-led content system that dramatically improves learning effectiveness in classrooms. It allows teachers to move beyond ‘chalk and talk’ to create a multi-sensory learning environment.

Another of Educomp’s core product is providing ICT training and resources for government schools, where it is supporting some 8,000 schools currently across various states. Within the past 2 months for example, Educomp secured new contracts from the Gujarat and Haryana state governments to support some 3,600 schools in ICT training.

Other examples are Roots 2 Wings, India’s first structured pre-school learning system and the Learning Leadership System that consists of more than 200,000 pages of lesson plans, books, processes, policies and best practices, which any school in India can adopt to transform their learning system. On the web there’s Mathguru.com and Mentoraide, unique online tutoring systems that focus on assisting overseas school students learn mathematics from some of the best teachers in India.

Educomp leverages its leadership position to further strengthen its market share in professional development and turnkey solutions for schools. It is India’s largest professional development company impacting more than 150,000 teachers, directly or indirectly, each year their proprietary programs and pedagogy systems. It partners with central and state government to bridge the digital divide in schools across India.

Over the years Educomp has been the recipient of some prestigious awards. In 2005 it won the CNBC TV18 Emerging India Award as company of the year and was recently hailed a ‘future Titan’ featuring among the top 16 hottest companies in India by Outlook Business.

“We see ourselves as an education transformation company,” says founder and managing director Shantanu Prakash. “We see a place for our products and services in every classroom in the world. As the world makes the shift to a knowledge economy, as the internet creates a level playing field for the digital have-nots of the world, we see a boundary-less world where education and learning will be the key drivers of economic empowerment.”

In the course of its 13-year journey, Educomp has grown from two to 1300 people. From being a closely held company to a public listed one that impacts more than a million students and educators every day.

With education at its heart, Educomp’s mission is to be among the top 10 learning solution companies worldwide by 2010.

Smart Class

Educomp’s Smart Class™ is a proven solution that has helped thousands of teachers in India, USA and Singapore through instructionally sound and highly engaging digital materials designed to aid teaching in the classroom. This is achieved through hundreds of hours of digital multimedia instruction materials mapped precisely to the curriculum of the Ministry of Education, Singapore.

The smart class instructional materials consist of multimedia lesson modules that teachers can display through classroom projectors to guide the lessons. The materials enhance a teacher’s effectiveness and productivity by providing media-rich resources ready for instant use. The animations, 3D models and interactive activities help stimulate students’ interest in the content.

The Smart Class repository is internet ready and can easily be accessed by the students and teachers via internet from their homes. An intranet model is also available for faster and more reliable access in the classrooms.

Subjects currently available for subscription by Singapore schools are:

- Secondary 1-4 Mathematics
- Secondary 1-4 Geography
- Secondary 3-4 Biology, Physics and Chemistry
- Secondary 1-2 General Science
ONE SITE TO BRING THEM ALL

SingaporeLearning is being revamped in preparation of an exciting new venture with IDA.

This comes after ASKnLearn was awarded a project under the Public Private Partnership Scheme to make the official one-stop-spot for students. SingaporeLearning consolidates various government information and services for five to 12 year olds under the government eCitizen initiatives.

As well as being a virtual meeting place for students to blog, they will also be able to join forum discussions, access learning content, share jokes and explore links to other kid-friendly sites on the web.

Launched only in May 2006, SingaporeLearning is undergoing a major revamp to ready itself for the new services. Already SingaporeLearning has secured partnerships with kids service providers such as Kidsworld Media (Wowa Magazine), Cybersmalayu.com, Cybertamil.com and Kidzgrow. These companies will help to provide a wider outreach to users through content, activities and publicity exchange.

The new portal is supported by the Public Private Partnership scheme, a long-term relationship between the public and private sectors to deliver services to Singaporeans. The scheme allows the public sector to focus on acquiring services at the most cost-effective basis using the expertise and resources of the private sector.

Besides being the official government portal for Kid’s services, SingaporeLearning.com will also be the site where learning and community comes together under one roof.

SingaporeLearning.com invites schools to be its partner to open up this exciting new channel for teachers to share content with each other and showcase student’s work.

Watch out for more exciting activities to be released on the portal soon!

VITAL UPGRADE

Teachers wanting to upgrade their skills can benefit from a new set of learning courseware.

The Ministry of Education has awarded ASKnLearn to supply more than 40 coursewares from the libraries of ASKnLearn and Thomson NETg. Since 2003 ASKnLearn has supplied courseware for teachers on the ministry’s staff training portal, VITAL.

One of the new coursewares helps to deconstruct science misconceptions. It is designed to clarify science fallacies among children and adults, with tips and notes for teachers on how to explain the concepts to their students.

Other coursewares supplied by ASKnLearn include.

Science And Mathematics Series

- Cycles
- Diversity
- Systems
- Energy
- Interaction
- Biologic – Man and His Environment
- Application of Nanotechnology In The Classroom
- Teaching Selected Primary 5 & 6 Mathematics Topics
- Teaching Selected Primary Science Topics

NETg Library

- Interpersonal Communication
- Presentation Skills
- Employee Performance
- Change Management
- Organisational Skills
- Leadership and Managerial development
- Service excellence
- Creativity
- Team Management
- Stress Management

These libraries are available from April 2007 to March 2008 on VITAL.
Singapore filmmakers have gained a new ally in the southern reaches of the Pacific Ocean.

A deal struck between New Zealand’s Eyeworks Touchdown Productions and Singapore’s MediaCorp Raintree Pictures will see the release of two co-produced horror films in 2007. The Tattooist and Altar are the first feature films to be made under the countries’ Audio Visual Agreement signed by Prime Ministers Lee Hsien Loong and Helen Clark last year.

The New Zealand based film Tattooist is described as a psychological thriller with elements of horror. The plot involves an American tattoo artist, played by Jason Behr (Roswell, The Grudge), who discovers the ancient tradition of Samoan tatau and is taken on a devastating journey into Pacific mysticism. The film also stars Singaporean actress Caroline Cheong (Light Years).

Altar, which begins filming in Singapore later this year, is about an Asian embryo ghost.

The films are the beginning of what is hoped to be a long-term relationship between the two production houses. It is also hoped Singaporean filmmakers will gain greater experience and opportunities from working with their New Zealand counterparts. Over the past decade the Pacific nation has earned the reputation of being Hollywood’s ‘home away from home’.

“When you consider the array of award-winning talent and infrastructure, New Zealand presents a very compelling proposition as a creative partner,” says Daniel Yun, CEO Mediacorp Raintree Pictures.

“Both Singapore and New Zealand markets by themselves are small. We believe we can use specific elements from each of our cultures to develop stories for the international market,” says Julie Christie, CEO, Eyeworks Touchdown.

It’s not just the industry that is gaining from this artistic relationship. The New Zealand Film Festival, now in its fourth year, organised by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) and the Singapore Film Society has been exposing Singaporean audiences to the eclectic portfolio of Kiwi-made films.

NZTE played a key role in facilitating the New Zealand/Singapore co-production and is providing assistance in a Strategic Investment Fund grant to Eyeworks Touchdown to develop projects in Asia using local and international talent. This is a welcome boost to Singapore’s media industry and will broaden the options for those wanting to pursue a career in film and television production.

“This is great news for the local industry,” says Benny Tan aspiring filmmaker currently in National Service. “I believe the [co-production] agreement will provide a whole new avenue for talented and creative Singaporeans. I can’t wait to be part of it.”

As the local film industry expands the education market will see a greater demand for courses in media arts and production. The alliance between Eyeworks Touchdown and Raintree Pictures is poised to generate a new economy for Singapore and South East Asia.

“No longer will film be seen as a weekend hobby but a viable career choice,” says Tan.

Filmed on locations in Auckland, Waitakere City and Singapore, the Tattooist will open on New Zealand screens on August 30. It is financed by the New Zealand Film Commission, MediaCorp Raintree Pictures and supported by the Singapore Film Commission a branch of the Media Development Authority.

Additional information from Film New Zealand.
PODCASTING THE WORLD

By Marc Checkley

Podcasting is a great way for kids to share their work and experiences with a global internet audience. Schools the world over are becoming part of this new tech-movement promoting what they do and to celebrate the achievements of their students in an entertaining way.

In essence a Podcast is like a radio programme. However, instead of being broadcast live, it is recorded and then uploaded to the internet where users can download and listen to it wherever and whenever they want. Whatever your interest, you’re bound to find a Podcast about it, from Hollywood gossip to movie reviews, cooking programmes to foreign language education, it’s all there to listen to.

Software like iTunes, available for Mac and PC, allow you to subscribe to the Podcasts you enjoy. Each new episode will be automatically downloaded to your computer where you can listen or transfer to your portable music device such as the iPod. This means you can have entertainment on the way to work or walking the dog.

For kids, Podcasting has many benefits. It’s great for developing literacy skills, writing scripts, organising interviews and researching information. It’s also a great outlet for them to practice their speaking and enunciation, which can benefit them in socialising and explaining their thoughts and ideas clearly. On the tech side, kids get to learn new ICT skills such as voice recording and editing and even foley (sound effects) and music composition.

So where do you start? The basic equipment you need is a computer with a line or microphone input and some audio recording software. Audacity is a free download for both Mac and PC. You can record, edit and mix audio all in one place. iTunes converts your recording to .mp3 or .aac(mp4) format that you can upload to your website.

The best way to get into Podcasting is to download some and have a listen. Burn the best ones to CD and play to your students. Start off small, one show per month. If the ideas start flying it could become a weekly project that can be heard in the furthest corners of the planet.

Students can broadcast their school news or record interviews from school events. They can interview other students, teachers, members of the community and visitors to the school. They can make up ‘radio plays’ and act them out or even compose/perform music for their audiences listening pleasure.

Podcasting is easy. With a bit of groundwork and practice the possibilities are endless. Not only can kids learn new creative skills, they also discover how they can be empowered by their own media. It’s the amalgamation of technology and artistic creativity.

Students and teachers can take to the Podcast airwaves by using Edulearn’s webcast function in its courseware package.

WEBCASTING

TEACHERS HOOK ONTO NETCASTING

Article by Normarina Noordin, ASKnLearn Multimedia Educator at Shuqin Secondary School

The moment I watched my friend Kevin Lim’s netcast, which showed the term finale for his class at the Singapore Management University, it left me deeply inspired. The video highlighted his unique teaching style and techniques. As people usually learn through repetition and visualisation, I believe netcasting is a fantastic way of teaching our students as it fulfills both these criteria. However, netcasting is not as widely adopted in primary and secondary schools as compared to the tertiary sector.

Why isn’t net or podcasting popular with more teachers? It’s frequently voiced that teachers perceive it to be difficult. In addition, many teachers feel too self-conscious to put themselves online.

Being a blogger and an avid netcaster myself, I know that netcasting is a wonderful way of learning and sharing information. So I decided to conduct a presentation on netcasting to Shuqin Secondary School during their weekly teacher’s meeting to share on the potential of netcasting in education.

The response was positive. A number of teachers were intrigued and are willing to give netcasting a try after seeing how it has been implemented in tertiary schools.

Mr Gopal, the head of department for mathematics at Shuqin Secondary School approached me regarding netcasting. Being self-conscious, he was initially concerned about filming himself. We worked around it by filming him solving one of his class tests without showing his face. The footage was then digitalized and uploaded to the ASKnLearn netcast function for his students to view.

The feedback from his students was positive. They appreciated the fact that they were able to pause and replay the video till they were able to comprehend the solutions. The netcast has aided their understanding at their own learning pace.

Many teachers followed suit. Ms Foo Ying Hui, used netcasting to showcase the student’s discussion on the topic of ‘Anger Management’. Ms Jasmine Tan used netcasting to archive a literature workshop she conducted. And most recently, Mdm Teresa Michael used a netcast of her science lesson for the sharing session during the yearly teacher’s renewal.

The fact that more and more teachers are aware of netcasting has been an exciting development. I believe that with time, the netcasting culture will become more widely used as the teachers further their skills in this inspirational technology.

Links
ICT Training @ AsknLearn
GROWING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

AsknLearn started the Project Engagement Team (PET) in 2005 with just 4 trainers in response to rising demand for short-term ICT training, due in part to its commitment as Adobe training partner in IDA InfoComm Club programme. Since then, the team size has more than doubled with increasing number of schools engaging our training services.

The schools we have trained in have produced impressive results, winning awards in many national competitions. Here are some of the recent awards assisted by PET training:

8th School Video Awards
The 2006 School Video Awards saw achievements for teams trained under the guidance of dedicated PET leader, Mr Astley Wong. River Valley Primary and CHIJ Toa Payoh Secondary won Silver Awards while Evergreen Secondary School & Northland Secondary received Merit Awards.

National StriTwise Challenge 2006
AsknLearn was the official training partner for the NATIONAL StriTwise CHALLENGE 2006 (http://stritwise.ict.np.edu.sg) This competition was jointly organized by the School of InfoComm Technology, Ngee Ann Polytechnic and Infocomm Development Authority (IDA) of Singapore under the National InfoComm Competition initiative. The winning teams must possess broad-based programming and design skills as well as general IT knowledge. Challenges include programming a virtual robot to compete against the robot of another team in a virtual arena, and an IT Savvyness Quiz.

Seven teams trained by AsknLearn emerged amongst the 15 winning teams. Congratulations to all winners!

Gold, Silver & Bronze award
This year’s competition required students to use digital art to create an awareness of climate change and global warming. Raffles Institution and the Singapore Sports School won Gold, Silver and Bronze awards. Ms Eka & Ms Fion Lum provided these participants with training. In addition, Tanjong Katong Secondary, with AsknLearn full-time IT educator, also secured the other Gold in the secondary category.

NYGH Winning Entries at ActionScript Awards
Article by Chiu Wee Ming, AsknLearn Educator at NYGH
It was a joyous day for Nanyang Girls’ High School as eight members of the Infocomm Club won a silver award and two merit awards in the annual ActionScript Awards competition.

The winning team underwent an Advanced Flash course (including Action Scripting) twice a week over two months, conducted by AsknLearn dedicated trainer Mr Felix Goh and assisted by myself. Within a short period of 10 days, the students completed their projects. The students put in great effort, interest and commitment in producing the award winning entry despite their busy schedules.

The entry showcased their capability and creativity with digital drawing and also their high level of understanding of Adobe Flash. Below are screen shots of their entry:

For a listing of award winning teams trained by AsknLearn, see http://www.asknlearn.com/schoolawards
**ASKnLearn** rewarded the achievements of two high-flying students at Ngee Ann Polytechnic last month.

Ng Soo Ee Faith and Lum Yi Leong Lionel received the awards at their graduation ceremonies on June 11 and June 13 respectively. The prizes celebrate achievement in information technology and E-marketing AsKnLearn has been provided to the polytechnic since 2001.

Ng (20) who graduated with a diploma with merit in business studies received the E-Marketing award as part of her marketing module that explored ways to increase net-traffic to websites.

“I find customer behaviour really interesting,” says Ng, who comes from Nanyang Girls’ High School prior to entering the polytechnic. “The module looked at bridging relationships with online customers and how viral marketing can give an I.T business more presence on the web.”

Ng is waiting to enter Singapore Management University where she will begin studies for a Bachelor of Business and Administration. Upon graduating she hopes to secure a job in marketing.

Lum (20) originally from Regent Secondary School, won the ASKnLearn prize for outstanding academic achievement, graduating with a diploma with merit in multimedia computing. He was also the recipient of the IDA Gold Medal for most outstanding performance.

When he began his studies at Ngee Ann he had no intention to win any awards but changed tack when he entered third year.

“1 consider myself very lucky. I saw the opportunity and decided to go for it. I just tried my best.”

Lum’s interest in media and art began as an after school hobby. For him, Ngee Ann was the ideal place to begin a career in multimedia. Following his National Service, which begins in October, Lum is planning to take his skills to the next level.

“I’m wanting to do a Bachelor of Fine Arts at NTU specialising in Art Design and Media. I also have an interest in business and I’m hoping to combine the two.”

Both Ng and Lum are appreciative of the award provided to them by ASKnLearn. While Ng has yet to decide what she will do with the prize, Lum says it will come in handy for his celebratory post-graduation trip to Hong Kong next month.

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**PRIZE WINNER GIVES BACK**

By Marc Checkley

**NP School of ICT, IDA Gold Medal Winner**

A **prizewinner** from Ngee Ann Polytechnic has gone back to secondary school.

Lim Wei Jie Ivan (20), who studied at Bendemeer Secondary before opting for the ICT course at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, won the **IDA Gold Medal** for the (2006/2007) academic year. He was presented with the prestigious award at his graduation ceremony on June 13.

While waiting to enter National Service in August, Ivan has returned to his Alma Matar Bendemeer Secondary to assist in IT activities.

“It was really quite a coincidence,” says Ivan. “I accompanied my mother to a school breakfast for parents. While there I chatted with the teachers and the principal about my studies. The principal then asked if I’d like to help at the school.”

Ivan’s interests in computing began during his childhood when his uncle bought a personal computer. He spent many afternoons on the now very dated 486 machine.

“From there I slowly learned about computers. Then in Primary 4 I got my own computer and took a few courses while attending secondary school.”

Whilst at Bendemeer, Ivan wants to promote and share his interests in ICT with his students. Upon completing NS he wants to further his studies by doing a Bachelor of Computer Science at NTU.

Bendemeer Secondary is one of the first schools in Singapore to offer Computer Science as an O level subject and is also offering Infocomm as a CCA under IDA support since 2006. ASKnLearn is pleased to be the ICT training and e-learning provider at Bendemeer Secondary since 2003.
Camp Comes Alive With Bloggers at Loyang Secondary School

Article by Adrian Fan, ASKnLearn Multimedia Educator at Loyang Secondary School

The school's term 1 ended with a big bang for Loyang Secondary. The whole school was involved in the Great School Camp from 5 to 9 March.

The school’s IT Educator and Infocomm Club members collaborated with the Media Club on the setup of information distribution using the EduLearn Blog System.

Infocomm Club members went through thorough blog training, ranging from resizing original photos, blog script editing to uploading and previewing the blogs posted.

The members of both clubs put in a lot of effort to gather and post the information daily with some news items going live as soon as the event was completed.

“Despite being the first time Loyang Secondary has run live blogs, the students did an excellent job in gathering the information and editing the blog site and putting up ‘live’ news,” says Multimedia Educator Adrian Fan.

“It was a great way to develop the student’s leadership skills and talents in a variety of areas especially in digital photography, video filming, writing, oral presentation and internet publishing.”

On 25 May Loyang Secondary also held an innovation day where it showcased its new portable video studio.

Overseas News

New overseas deployment – Come the new academic year, students at the Shanghai Singapore International School and Raffles International Christian School in Jakarta will be using EduLearn, contents and other innovative solutions from ASKnLearn. We welcome these two prestigious international schools into the growing fold of ASKnLearn international users and look forward to help bring Singapore education content and tools to students in China and Indonesia.

More information can be found at:

**EduLearn Email**

A new function called ‘EduLearn Email’ allows teachers to send messages to students and students to reply back to that message or send new messages to teachers or their classmates.

You can even add attachments to your message, much like email and it has a built-in WYSIWYG HTML editor for users to format their emails.

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**Content Updates**

ASKnLearn school clients can now enjoy these new content from ASKnLearn in their school portals:

- Sec 2 - Summary For Secondary Students (English)
- Sec 3 - Social Studies
- Pri 6 - Solving Mathematics Problems (Saving Phos)
- Pri 1 - Solving Mathematics Problems (Saving Phos)
- Pri 3 to 6 - Misconceptions in Primary Science
- Pri 1, 2, 3 Mathematics Mastery Quizes added into existing Primary Mathematics Series
- Educomp Primary 1 to 6 English Channels (Selected content from India’s Grammar, Genre, Reading, Vocabulary repository)

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**ArtAni**

ArtAni is a rapid animation tool developed by WizLearn in collaboration with NTU School of Computer Engineering, with support from the InfoComm Development Authority Innovation Development Scheme. It uses advance algorithms to represent drawings and to create auto-generation of in-between scenes. It is so easy to use that even primary students can easily master with just 30 minutes of training.

ArtAni is useful as an education tool for:

- Rapid prototyping of storyboards for animation students
- Creation of quick animation to illustrate teaching and learning concepts

ArtAni has been piloted tested with primary, secondary and university students in Singapore, China, Indonesia and Taiwan. An agreement was signed with Lin Tung University, the largest animation training institution in Taiwan to explore cross-borders collaboration on animation research and usage. ArtAni will also feature as an animation tool in Raffles International Christian School’s Centre of Excellence in Digital Art and animation in Jakarta.

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**eNoticeBoard**

This function allows teachers in the school to post school events, school announcements, reminders for homework, tests and exams for the entire school or for individual classes or students.

These notices appear in an easy to view calendar based layout.

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**Eduvideo function**

EduVideo is a new feature in EduLearn (Course Package) that allows teachers to easily insert MOE ETD’s educational videos to their courses.

It comes with a video preview that allows you to view the videos before adding them to your course package.

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**Subjects available:**

**Primary:** English, Maths, Science, Social Studies, Malay, Chinese & Tamil

**Secondary:** Maths, Art, Biology, Chemistry, Chinese, D&T, Geography, History, Home-Economics, Malay, Physics, Science & Tamil

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**KooBits**

ASKnLearn is pleased to partner Personal E-Motion Pte Ltd, an innovative start-up company of the National University of Singapore to bring the KooBits Interactive E-Book to primary schools.

Originally called PEM Book, the software has undergone major revamp after intensive piloting at several primary schools in 2006. It is now relaunched as KooBits, packed with more intuitive user interface, intelligent fusion of graphics and animation according to active text input, multi-language input, spell checker, increase digital libraries and many more features!
Several interesting findings arose from an item analysis and calibration project, involving the participation of over 1300 Primary 6 students from six Primary Schools in the East Zone cluster. Over a period of 3 months in 2006, a total of 500 Mathematics MCQ items were calibrated and analysed.

In the last issue, I highlighted examples of items that were identified as ambiguous or inappropriate for the students, and others which highlighted the students’ lack of understanding on a particular topic.

A third finding arose from the use of IQ-type or non-routine items dealing with logical thinking, general knowledge or practical aspects which is generally not covered in the syllabus.

**Item 1.** What is the missing number in the following sequence?

\[1, 5, 14, \boxed{21}, 55, \ldots\]

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<td>(2)</td>
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**Item 2.** Study the figure below carefully. How many cubes are needed to form the 10th layer?

![Diagram of a stack of cubes]

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<td>(3)</td>
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<td>(4)</td>
<td>75</td>
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**Item 3.** There were some soft toys in a jumble sale. Ali bought $\frac{3}{4}$ of all the soft toys and was given 10 soft toys free. Next, Bob bought $\frac{3}{4}$ of the remaining soft toys and was given 4 soft toys free. Later, Chen Ee bought $\frac{3}{4}$ of the remaining soft toys and was given 1 soft toy free. If there were 3 soft toys left in the sale, how many soft toys were there at first?

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<td>(4)</td>
<td>360</td>
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**Item 4.** 4 cuts were made on a 2.8m wooden pole to get a few shorter pieces of equal length. What is the length of one short piece in cm?

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<td>(1)</td>
<td>5.6 cm</td>
<td></td>
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<td>(2)</td>
<td>7.0 cm</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
<td>56.0 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>70.0 cm</td>
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Similarly, Item 4 is an example of an IQ-type or non-routine item which is a difficult item (only 29% of the students got it correct) with good discrimination. Unfortunately the item analysis showed that not only did alternative (4) garner a higher endorsement rate of 33%, it even had a higher item-theta correlation, which means that more of the better students had chosen alternative (4) than the correct answer (3). Obviously this item is not suitable and should be invalidated and removed from the item bank.

In conclusion, while most of these IQ-type or non-routine items do discriminate well, and are appropriate as test items, some items were found to have some “ambiguity” or “inappropriateness”. It is suggested that students be given more exposure to such IQ-type and non-routine items if these exercises are to be used in tests and assessments. Without a proper item analysis, it would not be possible to differentiate between these items.
A Blossoming Relationship: ASKnLearn partners Fujitsu Asia Private Limited

By Yee Jenn Jong

ASKnLearn is now an education partner of Fujitsu Asia. It is a meeting of minds of two innovative companies. In our visit to Fujitsu’s Tokyo headquarters in April, we were excited by the many new technologies that Fujitsu has built. Cool gadgets, robots, intelligent rooms, palm vein biometrics, Steganography and many more latest inventions clearly demonstrated the ingenuity of the company to push the frontiers of ICT. In the near future, we hope to apply these technologies to schools in Singapore and other parts of South East Asia.

An added bonus is the perfect timing of our visit to Japan, where we caught the start of the short Cherry blossom season – an auspicious sign of the start of our blossoming collaboration with Japan’s largest ICT company. Indeed a spectacular sight to behold thousands flocking to Ueno park to picnic under long neat rows of Cherry trees.

BAHASA GETS AN UPGRADE

Article by Mr Izzat B Md Ismail, EDN Media Pte Ltd, Tel: 6568 9989.

EDN Media is pleased to introduce a new product for the learning of Bahasa Melayu - the Electronic Dictionary e-Kamus, which provides immediate English-Bahasa Melayu translation with just a click of a button.

What is e-Kamus?

E-Kamus is a bilingual electronic dictionary designed to simplify the search for meaning of words and technical terms/terminology through the use of technology.

In order to cater to the varying needs of users, the latest version of e-Kamus (5.02) helps users find meanings of words with greater accuracy and efficiency. Similar to its predecessors, the content of e-Kamus is updated regularly.

Application and Use

- Can be used as a reference material/source of the meaning of words
- Solves comprehension difficulties
- Assists in preparation of homework/reports
- Helps in preparation of meeting minutes
- Aids in broadening English vocabulary

Advantages

- Convenient and faster search
- Pronunciation of words
- Clearer information display
- Provides meaning of words
- Free Malay Language spell-check, including for MS Word.
- More than 500,000 words
- Regular content-update
- Suitable for text-based applications

In its search engine these dictionaries are available:

- Kamus Inggeris-Melayu (DBP)
- Kamus Melayu-English (K.M)
- English-Malay Dictionary (Times)
- Kamus Dewan Edisi Ketiga (DBP)
- English Dictionary (Oxford)
- English Dictionary (Peter Collin)
- Kamus Istilah Sains (DBP)
- Kamus Istilah Matematik (DBP)
- Kamus Istilah Kejuruteraan (DBP)
- Kamus Istilah Komputer (DBP)
- Dictionary of Medicine
- Dictionary of Computer

EDN is Singapore’s leading provider of Bahasa Melayu and Tamil e-learning content, as well as the largest provider of cultural education tours in Singapore. EDN also provides training for students in creative writing and has a rich suite of Bahasa Melayu education CDs, software and resources.
Swashbuckling swordsmen, Georgian pirates, galactic warriors and pounding trance music came together last month for the launch of the much anticipated online game *Granado Espada*.

The massive multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) by legendary gaming producer Hakkyu Kim had its South-East Asian premiere at Singapore's Zouk dance club on June 16.

For the past 12 months Infoomm Asia Holdings (IAH) and HanbitSoft, the Korean publisher of *GE*, have been working on the first English version of Kim's Baroque-inspired game. Only a month into beta testing the game attracted more than 20,000 users. Many of the fans in Singapore were at the weekend launch – more than 3000 registering to be the first to experience *GE* first hand.

Set in a fantasy world of the European Renaissance, *GE* contains features that set it apart from the usual online game experience. One of the most exciting is the ability for one player to control multiple characters at once. The idea for the game ignited after Kim made a trip to Europe a few years ago. His passion for European history and gaming had a new outlet.

*GE* won Kim and his team best game at the South Korean Game Awards in 2006 and the English version produced in Singapore is set to do just the same.

"I think the discerning gamers here now know why *Granado Espada* is a multiple award-winning game," says Thomas Chong, director of Education Initiatives who was at the Zouk launch.

Mr Chong says that over the past three months the team at IAH has been hard at work optimising the game for its local audience, allowing for cultural and religious sensitivities while maintaining the game’s overall experience.

"It’s about conquering the New World," says Mr Chong. "It’s not your typical slash-and-kill game."

Making use of *GE*’s unique game play ASKnLearn has paired with IAH as Education Partner. For the *GE*School: Granado Espada in National Education (GENE) competition, schools are invited to enter the classical world of *GE*. The programme ties the game to national education messages.

"Twelve schools have already signed up," says Chris Ng, manager of Education Initiatives at IAH. "A total of 35 schools attended the GENE briefing and we hope after today, more will come on board."

*GE*’s launch saw enthusiastic IAH staff and gaming fans alike arriving at Zouk dressed in their favourite Baroque-wears. Following a media conference and dramatic swordplay demonstration at Velvet Underground, the event moved to the main Zouk arena where Kim was greeted by an exuberant introduction by the award-winning Tanjong Katong Secondary School band. Gamers continued their celebrations well into the early hours of Sunday at the Granado Espada Night Raid Party featuring Dutch trance-master Marco V.

Schools signed up to GESchool will have access to educational activities and worksheets related to Granado Espada and unlimited 1-year play for 40 PCs. Those interested in organising events and competitions can contact Chris Ng (education@iahgames.com) for more information. 

Link: http://ge.iahgames.com

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**GAME PLAN**

**IAH Upcoming Events**

July is proving to be another busy month for Infoomm Asia Holdings with more events on the agenda.

First up *Granado Espada* will be featured at the MOE’s ExCel Fest on July 13. The annual event showcases MOE staff’s efforts in ExCel related activities (Excellence through Continuous Enterprise and Learning). More than 3000 teachers are expected at the event to be held this year at Singapore Chinese Girls School. *GE* will be featured in Digital Media one of the key focus areas at ExCel 07. Further information at: http://go2event.net/moe/excel/home.asp

On July 17 Ngee Ann Polytechnic is hosting the *Granado Espada* Harnessing IT for Sales (GE-HITS) Challenge launch. The competition requires Secondary 3 students to craft the wildest e-marketing plan and promotional video for *Granado Espada*. Creative juices and an entrepreneurial spirit are prerequisites for this exciting event. The launch is from 2pm – 5.30pm. Register now at www.singaporelearning.com/gehits for more information.

Infoomm Asia Holdings and ASKnLearn wish to thank Ngee Ann Secondary School for their help in organising the National GENE competition launched in May. The NASS committee worked closely with IAH and ASKnLearn to come up with the GENE initiative and provided complimentary training for participant schools. Their help is greatly appreciated.