

# News Release

For Immediate Release

## **Five New Media projects awarded S\$7.6 m funding by MDA**

*Selected projects expected to create 300 jobs and inject S\$70 m to the local media sector*

**Singapore – 12 January 2009** – To propel local companies with innovative new media services, applications and business models into the global market, the Media Development Authority (MDA) has awarded five New Media projects with a total funding of S\$7.6 million. These projects, ranging from development of games to media-rich learning, are expected to create 300 new jobs in the local media sector and achieve for Singapore S\$70 million in Total Investment Committed<sup>1</sup>.

The five projects were selected from 26 proposals submitted in response to the inaugural Call For New Media Applications and Services Projects which closed in September 2008. The Call was a timely effort to ride on the rising trend of media digitization. It aims to address the last-mile commercialization hurdles for companies that have developed innovative applications and services in new niche areas that best demonstrate the potential to go global and at the same time, attract digital media resources to congregate in Singapore and bring the country a step closer to being the digital node and a regional hub for digital media assets. The Call also attempts to drive innovation among companies and encourage them to go digital.

"The selected projects strengthen Singapore's goal to be a leader in the New Media sector. Our support will help the companies scale up their international exposure significantly. These projects will in turn support some 200 companies to help build the New Media ecosystem. This funding initiative complements MDA's

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<sup>1</sup> Total Investment Committed refers to the development cost plus all items pertaining to the company's efforts to promote, market and establish the project.

ongoing effort to support innovative content development and research and development in Interactive Digital Media (IDM).” said Mr Michael Yap, Deputy CEO, MDA.

All projects were evaluated by a committee made up of representatives from MDA, Infocomm Development Authority and International Enterprise Singapore based on its relevance to New Media, its potential impact on the New Media ecosystem, the committed team’s ability to execute, cost realism, contributions to key performance indicators, and returns.

In response to MDA’s support, Mr Eric Berthier, CEO, Popular e-Learning Holdings said: “POPULAR’s New Media initiatives will serve as the leading regional portals for Singapore education service providers, media owners and other media service providers. Our partners will have a ready reach to markets in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong through POPULAR’s one million membership database. Through these trusted portals, education and media buyers will be able to access digital content show-casing the best of Singapore education and media companies. In light of the present economic climate, the funding from MDA will help POPULAR defray some of the business risks associated with these New Media initiatives and allow POPULAR to be more ambitious in our development and marketing regionally.”

Sharing the sentiment is Mr Vincent Ng, COO and Co-Founder of Fresbo. He said: “The funds granted by MDA will help us to rapidly scale up and take advantage of our current position, especially in view of the current financial situation.”

Separately on the effort to position Singapore as a digital node and a regional hub for digital media assets, Mr Tom Navasero, Executive Chairman, Glocal said: “Our move to Singapore will support the Singapore government’s vision of positioning the country as a digital media hub. The presence of Glocal in Singapore will provide the new media industry the opportunity to find a marketplace for their content to be accessible to over 20 million viewers worldwide in key media markets such as United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, France and the Middle East.”

Please refer to Annex A for the list of projects funded and Annex B for the quotes from all the funding recipients.

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***Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA)***

*Formed in 2003, the Media Development Authority of Singapore (MDA) plays a vital role in transforming Singapore into a Global Media City and positioning it at the forefront of the digital media age. MDA spearheads initiatives that promote developments in film, video, television, radio, publishing, music, games, animation, media services and Interactive Digital Media. At the same time, in ensuring clear and consistent regulatory policies and guidelines, MDA helps to foster a pro-business environment for industry players and increase media choices for consumers. For more information, visit [www.mda.gov.sg](http://www.mda.gov.sg) and [www.smf.sg](http://www.smf.sg)*

Annex A

<b>Game</b>	
<u>Fresbo</u>	<p>Fresbo is a 3D virtual world where players from all over the world can come in to chat and play games. It is tucked inside social networks such as <a href="#">Facebook</a>, <a href="#">MySpace</a>, <a href="#">Friendster</a> and Bebo. Users can shop for clothes and other items to customise their avatar, decorate their own virtual room with different furniture, interact with friends and the rest of the Fresbo community. Users can invite their friends to hang out at their home, go to the amusement park and football pitch to play games, shopping mall to buy virtual goods, classrooms to learn, and even adopt pets. To date, Fresbo World has about 340,000 users.</p> <p>MDA will be funding Fresbo to create and implement new content to keep users engaged in the Fresbo World. Currently it has about 200 virtual items and hopes to triple the number of items by next year. To be released on a weekly basis, the items for sale will include clothing, home furniture, maps, environments, mini-games and clubs.</p>
<u>BotsLIFE:</u>	<p>BotsLIFE provides a web-based 3D virtual platform to allow anyone without mechanical and software engineering background to create sophisticated robotic toy movement in a virtual game environment. The first product is targeted at kids aged 6 to 12 years old to enrich the level of virtual and social interaction.</p> <p>MDA plans to fund the development of five new social games and two applications based robotic toy system. For example, Dotz Chess allows users to play Chinese chess with each other in a virtual chess room or they can play directly on a physical Dotz Chess board. The physical chess pieces are DotZ robots, each of which has a Chinese character on its body to indicate its role. The chess board is a physical robot arena. The player, who plays in a physical chess board, moves the chess piece by placing the robot to its destination point. If he wants to conquer his peer's robot, he has to move his robot to the side of his peer's robot. His peer's robot will automatically move out of the game area; the winning robot will replace the defeated robot. During the conquer quest, the player can configure his robot war cry animation.</p> <p>MDA is supporting this project as this is a new emerging market. BotsLIFE have already secured partnerships with Gadget Yards and Toys R Us, with interests to corner the US, HK &amp; China markets.</p>
<b>e-Learning</b>	
<u>Personal e-Motion</u>	<p>Developed KooBits, a platform for children to create interactive stories, publish e-books, and network with other KooBits users. It aims to enhance user experience through real-time interactive publishing and networking portals to tell stories, publish e-books, share resources, build communities and realize their creative potential. KooBits already have more than 50,000 customers in Singapore and 80,000 globally and have already established a presence in China and Southeast Asia.</p> <p>KooBits is a winner of the e-Learning category at the Infocomm Singapore Awards 2008 and the Asia Pacific ICT Award 2008. Its co-founder Stanley Han is a finalist of BusinessWeek - Asia's Best Young Entrepreneurs 2008.</p> <p>MDA is supporting this project to develop new media content such as</p>

	<p>interactive animation e-books and 'intelligent' media resources e.g virtual flower growing over time or virtual car with virtual petrol. This will build the digital e-learning library and resources for regional distribution.</p>
<p><u>Popular e-Learning Holdings</u></p>	<p>Popular e-Learning Holdings Pte Ltd has developed interactive and media rich education products and resources that are used by many parents not only in Singapore but also in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong for example, primary school students are already using our locally developed "Digital Textbooks" as important tools in everyday teaching and learning of core subjects including English, Mathematics and Science.</p> <p>MDA is funding the development of three portals to promote e-Learning and position Singapore as the e-learning hub in the region. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edu Community Web Portal - One-stop education directory for parents and teachers</li> <li>• EduPop Assessment Portal – An aggregation of educational content and applications for publishers and vendors to tap on</li> <li>• Youth Portal – A showcase platform of locally-developed media and applications to Popular customers both locally and overseas</li> </ul> <p>Popular has already developed a reputable brand name in education in Singapore, HongKong and Malaysia. The development of the three portals leverages upon their retail reach via some 117 stores in these countries and also from their existing 1,000,000 membership base. Popular intends to expand into the ASEAN market and the wider Asia region through establishing strategic partners.</p>
<p><b>IPTV</b></p>	
<p><u>Glocal</u></p>	<p>Glocal acquires and produces video programming, assembles them into a "channel" for various pay TV operators on global cable, satellite, IPTV, web and mobile video platforms. Glocal plans to shift their operation from the US to Singapore.</p> <p>MDA's support will enable Glocal to develop and operate a fully integrated digital hub infrastructure with direct connection to the pay TV operators and consumers. It is an interactive online video streaming centered around community based interests with features such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Combining social networks &amp; communities with VOD</li> <li>- Integrating print, mobile and the Internet</li> <li>- Utilizing the latest online video streaming technology with zero buffering (no waiting to view)</li> </ul> <p>Glocal already has existing long-term contracts with 10 pay TV operators and existing 17 channels in six countries including US, Canada &amp; Japan.</p>

## Annex B

### Fresbo

“The success of this project will be a testament to the efforts and effectiveness of the initiatives of MDA. This will thus raise Singapore's profile as a regional hub for digital media and attract more companies and startup into this space, creating a vibrant and bustling industry.”

“Fresbo is in the virtual world market which is one of the most technically and graphically intensive industry in the digital media space, known to require large development teams and multi-million dollar budgets. Being a young startup which has just established a foothold in the virtual world-social network niche market, we need to move fast to stay ahead of the curve. The funds injected by MDA will help us to rapidly scale up and take advantage of our current position, especially in view of the current financial situation.”

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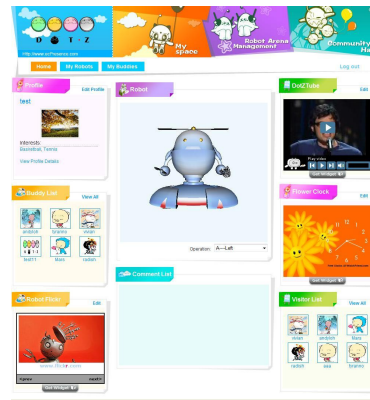
### BotsLIFE

“With sufficient funding and the right strategic partnerships, we are confident of becoming the market leader of virtual/physical content and applications. This will establish Singapore as the birthplace of such business and, together with other Singapore based organizations such as the Mixed Reality Lab and Gadgets Yard Ltd, become well known for virtual/physical businesses.

Singapore's stature as a digital node and a regional hub for digital media assets can be raised due to our project's impacts / offerings:

- a) Create the capacity for our youth generation to innovate in the robotics arena.
- b) Position Singapore to be at the forefront of Web based application and create a global community based on robotic toy lovers and creators.
- c) Potential to establish a whole new sub-industry of toy designers by allowing them to use our web applications to start their businesses.
- d) Potential to pioneer a completely new genre of integrated physical-virtual activities that have no corresponding activities existing today..

In order to position Singapore as a digital node and a regional hub for digital media assets, our nation's digital offerings must grow. The only way to increase our digital assets is to encourage more local, aspiring entrepreneurs to venture out of their comfort zone, allow them to focus full-time on their passion and to let them conceptualize their ideas into digital assets. Currently, our digital offerings are neither comprehensive nor cutting-edge. The problems do not lie with the nation's capability but because the founders often cannot commit full time to the project due to financial difficulties. Often, these fantastic ideas end up as hobby-work and fade off slowly as there is no one to champion the idea. MDA can help in that clause by supporting them with funds and laying down a platform for them to excel.”



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**Personal e-Motion**

“Our proposed new media project will help to create new economic opportunities in the area of online publishing of interactive digital media (IDM), not just traditional digital assets, but a whole new breed of interactive, intelligent and dynamic new media content to help users around the world with their learning, leisure and work. It also helps to create new traction in the area of online content sharing and online social sites, and bring Singapore a significant portion of internet traffic, which has many economic values.

The completion of this project will also help Singapore companies own the rights of millions of digital publications and assets which have great economic value in terms of IP licensing in the future. These new media content, mounted onto our IDM technology KooBits, will help to build an indispensable online IDM platform and infrastructure for individuals and businesses from all over the world.”

“The funding from MDA has increased our company’s cashflow capacity to enable us to focus on long-term global strategies rather than short-term survival strategy. Without the injected fund, it will be difficult to cross the chasm of establishing global presence in the IDM industry. MDA’s fund also injects credibility to our products and increases our customers’ confidence as we are in a good position and capacity to serve them.”



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### Popular e-Learning Holdings

“POPULAR’s New Media initiatives will serve as the leading regional portals for Singapore education service providers, media owners and other media service providers. Our partners will have a ready reach to markets in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong through POPULAR’s one million membership database. Through these trusted portals, education and media buyers will be able to access digital content show-casing the best of Singapore education and media companies. In light of the present economic climate, the funding from MDA will help POPULAR defray some of the business risks associated with these new media initiatives and allow POPULAR to be more ambitious in our development and marketing regionally.”

Name: Eric Berthier  
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### Glocal

“Our move to Singapore will support the Singapore government’s vision of positioning the country as a digital media hub. The presence of Glocal in Singapore will provide the new media industry the opportunity to find a marketplace for their content to be accessible to over 20 million viewers worldwide in key media markets such as United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, France and the Middle East.”

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