

SPEECH BY RADM (NS) LUI TUCK YEW, ACTING MINISTER FOR
INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS, AT THE OFFICIAL
OPENING OF IMBX 2009, 16 JUNE 2009, 9:35 AM AT SINGAPORE EXPO

Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. Good morning, and a warm welcome to this year's Infocomm Media Business Exchange, or imbX 2009.

2. We meet this year amidst economically challenging times. However, despite the downturn, Singapore's infocomm sector showed continued growth in 2008, albeit at a slower rate compared to the past few years¹[1]. Last year, revenue for the infocomm industry grew 12.4 per cent to S\$58.1 billion. In terms of domestic revenue, we saw a strong growth rate of 25.9 per cent, driven largely by the increase in voice communication and IT implementation services.²[2]

3. The constantly evolving nature of infocomm technologies means that there will always be new growth

opportunities. Web 2.0 used to be the latest buzz word, but it is now taking a backseat to emerging technologies such as Cloud Computing where operating systems and applications are able to run on virtual machines in a data centre that can be accessed from any networked device, anywhere in the world.

4. In Singapore, we launched the Intelligent Nation 2015, or iN2015 masterplan three years ago, as a continuation of our efforts to harness the power of infocomm for economic and social development. This year, the Singapore Government intends to call for S\$1.73 billion worth of new infocomm tenders in this financial year³[\[3\]](#). This is in addition to a number of new infocomm initiatives that the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore, or IDA, is implementing with the industry's support.

5. For the media industry, we are launching the Singapore Media Fusion Plan (SMFP) spearheaded by the Media Development Authority of Singapore or MDA. The Singapore Media Fusion Plan builds on the groundwork laid by Media 21, which was launched in

2003 to chart Singapore's growth into a vibrant media city. It aims to strengthen the media ecosystem; fuel the creation of innovative content and services with global appeal; and develop and attract a critical mass of world-class talents to support a thriving industry.

6. Let me take this opportunity to share more on these plans and what Singapore is doing in terms of **manpower** and **infrastructure** development, as well as how we are helping Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (**SMEs**) in these challenging times.

Manpower Development

Infocomm – New Manpower Initiatives

7. Central to the innovation and capability building for our infocomm industry is the need to ensure that a pool of high-quality infocomm manpower is available. In 2008, the number of such professionals in Singapore grew 6.6 per cent to reach 139,000, up from 130,400 in 2007⁴. To ensure that infocomm graduates are employed as well as infocomm professionals remain in the industry,

especially in this downturn where companies may face hiring constraints, IDA is launching the Infocomm Training and Attachment Programme, or iTAP in short. This initiative will offer attachment opportunities in a variety of infocomm-related areas at MNCs, local companies and start-ups. The attachments will help fresh graduates and infocomm professionals gain employment and industry experience in this economic climate.

8. Another initiative by IDA is the new Infocomm Leadership and Development Programme, or iLEAD, where IDA will work jointly with the industry to prepare a ready pool of infocomm professionals for the new growth areas through local and overseas attachments, internships and specialised courses.

9. In total, IDA will be investing \$20 million in these two programmes, iTAP and iLEAD, which together will see up to 1,000 fresh graduates and infocomm professionals benefiting from them over the next two years.

Media – Manpower Development

10. Like the infocomm industry, talent development is also a key strategy for the development of our media industry. Indeed, this is a key component of the Singapore Media Fusion Plan.

11. We embarked on a new programme announced earlier this year called the Media Training & Attachment (META) to give global work exposure and training opportunities to local talents and media professionals. Through META, MDA will support the training of professionals in the areas of broadcast and content distribution through training programmes at the Broadcast Innovation Centre. In addition, SingTel will also collaborate with institutes of higher learning to provide mentorship programmes and specialised training to polytechnic students.

12. We are also collaborating with the Interactive and Digital Media Institute (IDMI) of the National University of Singapore, or NUS, to provide attachment programmes at major movie and television studios for media professionals and undergraduate students joining the workforce. Facilitated through the NUS-Digital Hollywood Lab, this initiative kicks off later this year and will see 40

talents matched with companies such as ESPN and The Jim Henson Company in the USA for six-month stints. This will provide our talents with advanced technical and specialised training as well as invaluable work exposure

Infrastructure Development

Infocomm - Broadband Infrastructure and Wireless @ SG

13. Let me now turn to infrastructure development. Connectivity has become a critical enabler that will underpin how we work, live, learn and interact in the future. Bandwidth-intensive applications will fill our broadband pipes of tomorrow. Today's pipes will not be sufficient to support this trend. Already, video-sharing site YouTube alone is said to have generated more Internet traffic in 2006 than the entire Internet did in 2005^[5].

14. In this regard, the Next Generation National Broadband Network, or Next Gen NBN is Singapore's broadband backbone for the future. Over the past year, we have commenced deployment of

the network to buildings. We expect to cover 60 per cent of homes and offices by 2010 and achieve nation-wide coverage by 2012. Commercial services are also expected to be offered by the first half of 2010. We will be discussing these developments in greater detail at the Next Generation Broadband Forum later this week.

15. In 2006, we launched the Wireless@SG programme to complement connectivity in the home and office, and today, there are 7,500 hot spots across the country and 1.3 million subscribers. I am pleased to announce that this programme will be enhanced and extended for another four years, till March 2013. The enhancements include improvements to access speeds of up to 1 Mbps, using a new seamless log-in process. IDA will also be rolling out more services over Wireless@SG, such as cashless payments, location-based and facility-monitoring services.

Infocomm - Next Generation Services

16. We are already beginning to see the potential behind some of these Next Generation services. Under the Next Generation e-Payments Programme, IDA is encouraging the deployment of

contactless payment terminals in businesses all across Singapore. These terminals will also support future mobile payment solutions which will allow consumers to make payments conveniently by just tapping their phones on these terminals. Beyond mobile payments, mobile phone users will be able to experience richer and more personalised mobile services to be developed under the new Digital Concierge programme.

17. The possibilities for Next Generation services are vast and limited only by our imagination. IDA and the industry are working together to establish Next Gen Innovation Centres, or NGICs, which will allow major corporations to use Singapore as a test bed for new products, services and business models.

Helping Small & Medium Enterprises

Infocomm - Exporting Singapore's Public Sector Infocomm Expertise

18. IDA International was set up earlier in the year to help our infocomm companies gain access to new markets overseas and work with them to tap new business opportunities. IDA International

facilitates the sharing of our experience and expertise with the international community through Government-industry partnerships and systematically builds up our e-Government capabilities.

19. The export of public service infocomm will soon get a greater push with the synergy derived from a new Global Business Development Centre of Excellence. The Centre will accelerate market access and expand the business opportunities overseas with the formulation of concerted go-to-market strategies. The Centre will also serve as a repository that will harness the value of the institutional knowledge and experiences of key exportable e-Government implementation from the past three decades.

Infocomm - A Digitally-Inclusive Society

20. The demand for infocomm services will only increase as Singapore develops further as a highly connected society^[6]. To ensure that everyone has access to computers and the Internet, IDA, together with the industry has also put in place programmes to help the under-privileged. To date, more than 27,000 low income

households have benefited from IDA's NEU PC Plus programme, where school-going children have their own computers that come bundled with free broadband service. Moving forward, enhancements to the programme include raising the qualifying income cap from S\$2,000 to S\$2,500, and reducing recipients' co-payment through a two-tier subsidy approach. In addition, there will be a new Broadband-Only-Scheme, which will provide subsidised three-year broadband service to households with school-going children under the Financial Assistance Scheme.

Media - Strengthening the Ecosystem & Innovations in Digital Media

21. We are also investing heavily in strengthening the media ecosystem to complement the demand for infocomm services. Over the past year, more Interactive and Digital Media R&D centres have been set up, helping our companies penetrate overseas markets and strengthening Singapore's strategic collaborations with the international community.

22. The launch of the Broadcast Innovation Centre (BIC), an initiative between MDA and SingTel that connects with Mediapolis via

high speed network links, houses state-of-the-art broadcast facilities with advanced satellite and terrestrial links to many parts of the world. This partnership will increase the attraction for media producers and broadcasters to develop and distribute their projects from Singapore.

23. To further develop our expertise and capabilities, MDA entered into collaboration with Sweden's City of Gothenburg, home to some of the world's best technology companies, to promote cross-border B2B collaborations involving joint application development and test bedding of Interactive and Digital Media applications. The MOU will facilitate the entry of Singapore companies into the Swedish market while Swedish companies can use Singapore as a regional launch pad to offer their products and services into the Asian market.

24. I am also pleased to announce that major players of the industry are joining forces to form a FutureTV partner network comprising of companies like MediaCorp, Starhub and Motorola. This partner network will use Singapore as a test-bed for innovative services to shape the Future of TV.

25. The partner network, supported by MDA, will be making various calls for proposals to seed ideas or collaborate in developing new generation of media experiences for viewers. I strongly encourage industry players to participate in these calls to shape the Future of TV not just for Singapore, but for the world.

Conclusion

26. I have outlined some broad trends earlier that are developing and changing the economic and social landscape that we know today. Emerging technologies will enable new possibilities and opportunities in both the infocomm and media sectors, and power our next generation living.

27. I wish all local and overseas participants a rewarding time at this year's imbX, especially as you get to see first-hand, the latest in infocomm technology as well as Next Generation services on show. Honorable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, I declare imbX 2009 open.

28. Thank you.