



Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology

News Release

Innovation Centre's Grant Programme Adopts the MIT Desphande Center Model to Accelerate Good Scientific Discoveries Toward Commercialisation

Singapore, 2 Feb 2010 – Making collaborative web search a reality for work groups? What about a made in Singapore art-focused 2D puzzle platform game that pushes both the aesthetic and interactive aspects of gaming to new heights? These are some innovative ideas by students from local universities selected by the Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology's (SMART) Innovation Centre for its student grant programme. The Innovation Centre today announced that it is awarding S\$1.3 million in grants to seven faculty research projects and four student projects in the areas of media & entertainment, infectious diseases and cancer drug research, water treatment and therapeutic stem cells. Amongst the winners are students and scientists from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), local universities and research institutes.

Modelled after the successful Desphande Center for Technological Innovation, SMART's Innovation Centre administers two grant programmes. The Innovation Grant (up to S\$250,000) is designed to help faculty and their research team explore new avenues of market-driven research and participate in programmes that will help accelerate innovations toward commercialisation. The Explorer Grant (up to S\$50,000) is a student focused grant programme that assists students or student groups, with their faculty mentor, explore further development and commercialisation of innovative work originated by the student(s).

"We are pleasantly surprised with the quality of applications received. The ideas are very innovative and some projects have good commercial promise. In fact, quite a few have the potential to transform into real world applications that can benefit lives," said Howard Califano, Director of SMART Innovation Centre.

He continued, "The Centre plays a critical role in identifying and nurturing innovation. By adopting the best practices of MIT, the Centre not only provides grant funds, we also provide the necessary business expertise to accelerate product development from the laboratory to the marketplace. Each project is managed by the Innovation Centre to meet goals to de-risk technology and establish a got-to-market strategy. We have also set-up an extensive network to connect student and faculty innovators with investors, entrepreneurs and the venture capital and business community. Our ultimate goal is to develop a well-defined business opportunity attractive to start-up company formation or licensing to a commercial firm."

The list of recipients for the Innovation Centre's January 2010 Explorer and Innovation Grant award:

Explorer Grant (Student category)

- **Bigger Picture (MIT)**
A multi-player real-time strategy (RTS) game for iPhone and iTouch, in which players interact with their devices placed side-by-side (Tony Eng, Jeremy Rossmann, Daniel Fremont, Geoffrey Dawson, Yihui Saw, Eddie Obropta, Timur Balbekov).
- **EventHive (MIT)**
Provides tools and analytics for event organisers that leverage social media to drive attendance, attract sponsors, improve content, gather feedback, and supply analytics (Edward Barrett, Senior Lecturer, Albert Chow, Boling Jiang, Brian Patt, Anne Westermann).
- **Integrated Collaborative Environment (ICE) For Search (SMU)**
Making collaborative web search a reality for work groups? A tool designed to support collaboration in web search featuring new innovative functionalities such as group search trail indexing and building upon existing collaborative search tools (Benjamin Gan Kok Siew, Steve Sng Wei Zhuang, Timothy Tan, David Chua).
- **Warypy Boy (NTU)**
A made-in-Singapore art-focused 2D puzzle platform game that pushes both the aesthetic and interactive aspects of gaming to new heights. It is a game that emphasises heavily on visuals and games as an art-form (Vladimir Todorovic, Joanne Loo Ling, Pradashini Subramaniam).

Innovation Grant (Faculty and Researchers Category)

- **Humanised Mouse Models for Drug Development (SMART)**
New therapies for infectious disease and cancer are now possible with a mouse having a human blood system (Chen Jianzhu, Ilya Leskov, Camille Jusino).
- **High Performance Protein MicroArrays (NUS)**
Protein microarray that could revolutionise medical diagnosis and research (Dieter Trau, Daniel Lubrich, Siu Wei (Stephen) Yeung, Andreas Schmidt).
- **Water Purification for Remote Location (MIT)**
A very low energy method to convert seawater into drinkable water (Jongyoon Han, Nam-Trung Nguyen, Sung Jae Kim).
- **Three-dimensional Microfluidic Assays for Cancer Drug Screening (SMART)**
A novel microfluidic assays to screen drugs to prevent cancer metastases (Roger Kamm, Seok Chung, Joseph Charest, Harry Asada).
- **Terahertz Swept Source Optical Coherence Tomography (MIT) – Ignition Grant**
A terahertz laser system for the pharmaceutical and manufacturing segment (Qing Hu, Alan Lee).
- **A Platform to Prime Peripheral Blood Monocytes for Induction into Multi and Pluripotency – Phase 1 (NUS) – Ignition Grant**

*A revolutionary method to extract therapeutic stem cells from peripheral blood
(Michael Raghunath, Anna Blocki).*

- Vector Control of Dengue Mosquito Larvae/Pupae Using Ultrasound – Ignition Grant
An ultrasound device to destroy mosquito breeding (Alfred Tan, Franz Hover, Chia Tze Yong).

About SMART Innovation Centre

The Innovation Centre operates under the Singapore MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (SMART) and is funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF). Its programmes and grants are available to all Universities and research centers in Singapore (including NUS, NTU, SMU, SMART Centre, SIM, Polytechnics, etc).

Through its INNOVATION GRANTS (up to S\$250,000) and EXPLORER GRANTS (up to \$50,000 for students), the SMART Innovation Centre enables faculty and students to pursue exciting new avenues of market-driven research and participate in programs that will help accelerate their innovations toward commercialization.

Modelled after the successful Deshpande Center at MIT, the Innovation Centre has created a fertile environment for faculty to accelerate their innovations from the laboratory to the marketplace. In addition to grant funds, the Centre connects faculty innovators, investors, entrepreneurs and the Singapore and international business community. Through its Catalyst Program, the Centre provides business advice, market input and IP strategy to define a go-to-market strategy for each funded project. The Centre, in a cross-campus collaboration forms qualified pre-selected teams of researchers and business students (called “i-Team”) to assist each project in plotting its business direction.

About SMART

SMART is a major new research enterprise established by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in partnership with the National Research Foundation of Singapore (NRF) in 2007. It is the first entity in the Campus for Research Excellence and Technological Enterprise (CREATE) being developed by NRF. Serving as an intellectual hub, cutting-edge research projects in areas of interest to both Singapore and MIT are undertaken at the SMART and interdisciplinary, experimental, computational and translational research are conducted.

Four Interdisciplinary Research Groups (IRG) have been established to date: they are BioSystems and Micromechanics (BioSyM), Center for Environmental Sensing and Modeling (CENSAM), Future Urban Mobility (FM) and Infectious Diseases (ID). The SMART Innovation Centre, similar to MIT’s Deshpande Center, has also been established to identify and nurture ideas for emerging technologies and accelerate their migration from laboratories to the marketplace.

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