



CHAPTER 2

BEYOND SG50: BUILDING A FUTURE-READY MEDIA SECTOR

Even before the curtain call for Singapore's jubilee celebrations, plans to steer the nation ahead for the next few decades are in place. MDA's efforts to help local media companies and professionals level up will soon be boosted by infocomm technologies and insights from the restructured IMDA. Forging ahead, the IMDA is committed to continued fostering of a vibrant media ecosystem and grooming of local talents.

GEARING FOR CHANGE

With the growing convergence of infocomm and media technologies, a major stride was taken towards making the two key sectors future-ready.

On 21 January 2016, the Ministry of Communications and Information announced that the industry development and regulatory functions of IDA and MDA will be combined to form IMDA.

As a unified authority, IMDA will be able to deepen regulatory capabilities for a converged infocomm media sector, safeguarding the interests of consumers and fostering pro-enterprise regulations.

IMDA will be officially established in the fourth quarter of 2016.

The formation of IMDA builds on the converged foundation laid by the [Infocomm Media 2025 Plan](#), to steer and grow Singapore's infocomm media sector for the next 10 years. The key directions of the plan are summarised below.



BUILD ON THE POWER OF DATA INSIGHTS AND COMPUTATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES TO TRANSFORM KEY SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY



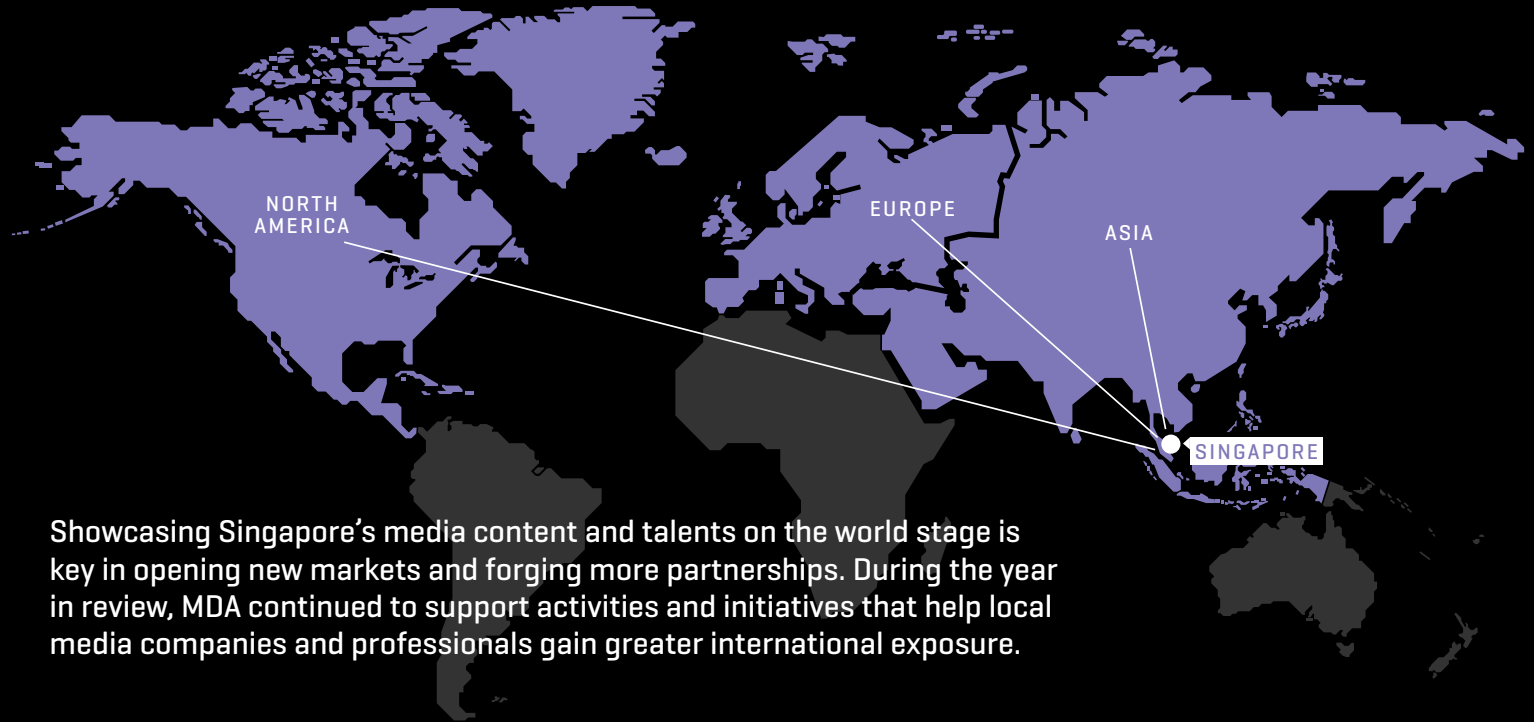
DEPLOY INFOCOMM MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES IN A PEOPLE-CENTRIC MANNER



DEVELOP A FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE AND BUSINESSES THAT EMBRACE RISK-TAKING AND INNOVATION



GOING GLOBAL



Showcasing Singapore’s media content and talents on the world stage is key in opening new markets and forging more partnerships. During the year in review, MDA continued to support activities and initiatives that help local media companies and professionals gain greater international exposure.

EUROPE

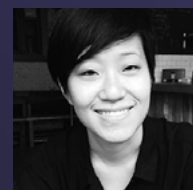
At the Cannes Film Festival in May 2015, MDA hosted a Singapore Networking Party attended by 70 members of the local and international film industry.

Also at Cannes was MDA’s Media Education Scholar Kirsten Tan to promote her first feature film *Popeye*. The film was Singapore’s highlight at the Festival and was selected for the 11th Cinéfondation’s L’Atelier 2015, a segment which connects promising filmmakers with established industry professionals.

The 4th International Emmy® Kids Awards was also held at Cannes, which saw the screening of MDA-supported telemovie, *Spelling Armadillo*, as part of the nomination process. The telemovie was nominated in the category “Kids: TV Movie/Mini-Series” and was the first Southeast Asian production to be nominated in this category.

MDA led 16 Singapore media companies to MIPCOM 2015 in Cannes from 5 to 8 October 2015, armed with more than 600 hours of local content across the factual, drama, infotainment, lifestyle and kids genres. Notable milestones at MIPCOM 2015 include:

“It is a very rare honour to be part of L’Atelier. Internationally, there are only 15 projects (shortlisted), and I am a first-time filmmaker! The experience has been a really good learning process for me.”



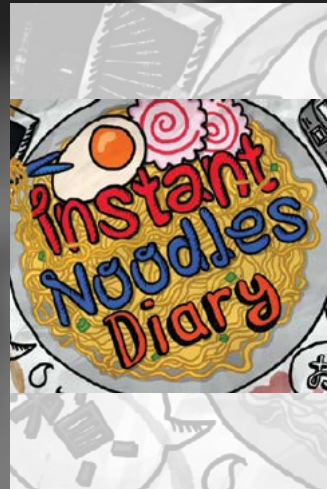
KIRSTEN TAN
Director of *Popeye*



Award-winning animation studio Omens Studios made its trade market debut at the event with *Leo the Wildlife Ranger* and *Gnome*.



Hub Media Group was appointed by FITA Studios Malaysia as the exclusive worldwide distributor for their film *Chowrasta*. FITA will also co-invest in three Hub Media co-productions: *The Eco-Warriors*, *Project Inspire* and *Batoor: A Refugee's Journey*.



The offering of original Singapore formats and content with Asian appeal, which included titles such as *Instant Noodles Diary*, *Master Chefs* and *Cash Cab Asia*.



Beach House Pictures announced a co-production deal with Canadian production company Breakthrough Entertainment for the tween TV series *Mr Midnight*.

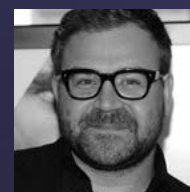
NORTH AMERICA

The Singapore skyline took centre stage in the Hollywood film *Hitman: Agent 47*, with iconic buildings such as the Esplanade and Marina Bay Sands making their maiden appearance on the big screen. This was the result of a coordinated effort to attract more international productions to use Singapore as a location.

As evidenced by *Hitman: Agent 47*, such efforts have a positive spillover effect on the Singapore media industry. The movie involved more than 150 Singaporean talents, including fresh graduates, who got the opportunity to work on the film and learn first-hand from the best in the industry.

Besides attracting media companies to use Singapore as a production or location base, MDA also paved the way for local firms to make their foray into North America. For example, MDA set up a Singapore Game Box Pavilion to help 12 local game developers promote their offerings and connect with the international community at the Game Developers Conference 2016. The event was held in San Francisco, California from 14 to 18 March 2016.

“When I heard that we had the opportunity to shoot in Singapore and that it had never really been featured on the big screen, I went there a year before to scout it. And wow, Gardens by the Bay – I had never seen such views before!”



ALEKSANDER BACH
Director of *Hitman: Agent 47*





ASIA

Asia remains a key audience for Singapore's media content, with MDA and local companies consistently making a strong showing at key trade markets here.

MDA hosted a Singapore Pavilion at the China International Film & TV Programs Exhibition 2015 in Beijing from 20 to 21 August 2015.

A delegation of 36 local companies also headed to the Hong Kong International Film & TV Market 2016, held from 14 to 17 March 2016. The delegation offered more than 180 hours of film and television programmes for international sale and distribution.

At KL Converge! 2015, MDA led four media companies – GameStart Asia, mm2 Entertainment, The Moving Visuals Co and Papahan Films – to exhibit at the Singapore pavilion. The Singapore contingent also seized the opportunity to spotlight other local media events and content, such as Royston Tan's film *3688*, the Singapore Media Festival 2015 and GameStart Asia 2015.

MDA led 10 local game companies to ChinaJoy 2015 in Shanghai, China from 30 July to 2 August 2015. It was double joy for Singapore as two major deals were signed by local developers:

- Autumn Interactive will have Chinese company Zplay publish their game *Autumn 3K* in the China market.
- Crimson Games signed a software licence agreement with Chinese company Shanghai Boyojoy Network Technology Co Ltd. to publish *Pirate Crusader* in the European and Southeast Asian markets.

“The seeds that were planted from meetings at last year’s HK Filmmart came to bear fruit for our company this year. Our media business is built off of quality productions that can sell, but more importantly, it’s the relationships you build at these international markets.”



CHRISTIAN LEE

Director & Co-founder of
BananaMana Films

SINGAPORE

Back home, MDA organised the second Singapore Media Festival (SMF) from 26 November to 6 December 2015. Some noteworthy highlights include:



The launch of Digital Matters, a new constituent event showcasing the use of new media in branding content.



The Southeast Asian Audio-Visual Association and ScreenSingapore partnered to launch the first ever Southeast Asian Film Financing Forum and Project Market. This new initiative helps filmmakers in the region attract investors and stimulate collaborations between local and international players.



The other constituent events, Asia TV Forum and Market, and ScreenSingapore, attracted over 5,000 media executives from 60 countries, while 3,000 guests attended the Asian Television Awards.



The 26th Singapore International Film Festival drew over 14,000 people from across the region with 146 short and feature films, and wrapped up with 14 sold-out screenings.

“Our stronger focus on digital content at this year’s SMF promotes greater collaboration and partnership across the film, TV and digital sectors - a key differentiator from other traditional film and TV events. The new elements at this year’s SMF also strengthen investment opportunities for media players, establishing SMF’s valued position as a key connector and platform for global media players venturing into Asia, and for Asian media professionals going global.”



ROBERT GILBY

Chairman of the SMF Advisory Board and Managing Director of the Walt Disney Company [SEA]



MDA supported the Games Solution Centre pavilion at GameStart Asia 2015, which ran from 13 to 15 November 2015 and received about 17,000 visitors. Sixteen local developers participated, including Witching Hour Studios, XII Braves and Daylight Studios, which hosted their own booths. MDA also supported GameStart Asia’s exclusive mobile game for this event, which featured some of the SG50 game characters.

During the year in review, [DigiPen Game Studios](#) (DGS) opened its doors in July 2015. Established by DigiPen Institute of Technology Singapore with support from MDA, this initiative helps developers make and publish games, starting with the Nintendo 3DS platform. DGS will organise annual technical conferences for third party developers, where shortlisted projects can receive support from MDA.

“Thanks to strong support from key partners like MDA, GameStart has grown from strength to strength since our first event, and we’ve been able to give more exposure to our local talents, which is one of GameStart Asia’s objectives.”



ELICIA LEE

Organiser of GameStart

ENHANCING LOCAL CAPABILITIES

MDA ramped up its efforts to help local media companies and professionals level up their competencies and skillsets in the last 12 months – from forging new international partnerships to awarding training grants and scholarships.



TELEVISION



DIGITAL



IDEAS



INFRASTRUCTURE

TELEVISION

FOX FORMATS LAB

Local documentary producers had the opportunity to learn from international industry veterans at FOX Networks Group (FNG). MDA and FNG launched the FOX Formats Lab in May 2015, an initiative to strengthen the capabilities of local producers to make moving stories with global appeal.

A total of 142 participants attended four workshops between May 2015 and April 2016. After careful selection, five out of 70 proposals were commissioned under this initiative to be aired on National Geographic Channel. The completed programmes will premiere from July 2016 in Asia and roll out internationally from September 2016.

“The Fox Formats Lab has pushed us beyond our comfort zone and opened our eyes to what’s out there in the international market. It has enhanced our production skills and given us insights into the expectations of international broadcasters, enabling us to take on more of such projects in future.”



TAN CHIH CHONG

Executive Producer of Sitting In Pictures





HBO PARTNERSHIP

MDA partnered HBO Asia to support, grow and develop Singapore's drama production capabilities. Over two years, HBO Asia will train local practitioners and work with local production houses and talents to produce content for global audiences.

As part of this arrangement, HBO Asia conducted two training forums on pitching, development and production in December 2015 and February 2016, attracting 183 attendees in total.

“As a Singapore production company specialising in Asian scripted dramas in English for international distribution, we were very interested in getting involved with the HBO Asia workshops, as their goals seemed aligned with ours. We hope to partner HBO Asia to continue developing aspirational dramas for regional distribution.”



CHRISTIAN LEE
Co-founder of Bananamana Films

DIGITAL



MAKER BOOTCAMP

The Maker Bootcamp, held in Singapore from 20 to 21 May 2015, was launched with MDA's support to spur budding local talent in digital content creation capabilities. Over 30 creators got to learn from global online video stars to make compelling videos, promote their works and build a strong fan base.

The experts included local creators such as Night Owl Cinematics and Wah! Banana, and international stars The Fung Brothers, Timothy DeLaGhetto and Tiffany Alvord.

CREATORS' SPACE

The Creators' Space initiative, developed in November 2015 with MDA's support, helps online video creators improve their production quality and audience engagement. It aims to turn ideas into commercially viable content using shared production facilities, business networks, mentorships and training programmes. The facility is targeted to launch in November 2016.

To date, seven industry players have joined the initiative to support Creators' Space participants – Adobe, Autodesk, Brand New Media, CloudStringers, Dailymotion, Maker Studios and Victorious.

“We see Creators' Space as an ideal first step to equip a new generation with the skills to succeed in a rapidly changing media industry.”



DAMIEN BRAY
CEO [Asia] at Brand New Media



GAMES SOLUTION CENTRE

Set up in 2011 and managed by Nanyang Polytechnic, the [Games Solution Centre](#) (GSC) is a one-stop resource centre for rapid prototyping and incubation support for local game developers. It also provides opportunities for international exposure.

During the year in review, GSC led delegations of local game developers to several international trade shows, including the Game Developers Conference, Tokyo Game Show, GameStart Asia, Casual Connect Asia and more.

Other GSC milestones include:

- Incubated 44 game start-ups and of these, 75% successfully completed their games and demos.
- Five game start-ups secured seed funding ranging from \$100,000 to \$2 million.
- Over 20 projects released commercially on Steam, iOS, Android, PlayStation, and other platforms.

Some successful titles GSC supported for the year in review:

- Mosscube's *Roccorocco Roshambo*, featured in the "Best New Games" category on iTunes in 97 countries in 2015.
- Rottenmage's *Spacejacked*, which won the INTEL Level Up Award 2015.
- Ratloop Asia's *Rocketbirds 2: Evolution*, nominated for the Dengeki Tokyo Game Show 2015 award.

 IDEAS

STORY LAB

Everyone has a story to tell but can you tell yours in original and compelling ways? MDA's newly launched Story Lab aims to teach just that. The first programme under Story Lab was presented in March 2016 when MDA hosted a master class on writing for games with industry veteran Toiya Kristen Finley, which was fully subscribed with about 40 participants. Hear from Toiya herself and some of the participants who were there in this [video](#).

Through Story Lab, MDA aims to develop storytelling capabilities and nurture quality storytellers by gathering talent from different backgrounds to incubate ideas and explore innovative story platforms. Story Lab will also work with partners to roll out storytelling appreciation programmes for students and the general public.


 INFRASTRUCTURE

MILESTONES IN DIGITAL TV

In sync with ASEAN's commitment to the digital switchover, the government has announced that Singapore's analogue TV transmission will cease in end-2017. The freed-up spectrum, used previously for analogue broadcasting, will provide more capacity for mobile broadband services and support Singapore's Smart Nation plans.

As of March 2016, 80% of households in Singapore are able to receive digital TV signals. MDA launched the DTV Assistance Scheme in September 2014 to help low-income households make the switch to DTV. The Assistance Scheme package, offered in tandem with the rollout of the DTV network, comprises a free DTV set-top box, an indoor antenna and installation.

MDA worked with various agencies, including the Housing and Development Board, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Ministry of Health, People's Association and self-help groups to identify eligible households to receive the package. One- or two-room HDB rental flat dwellers and recipients of ComCare, Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS), Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA), Yayasan MENDAKI, Sikh Welfare Council and Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC) public assistance who meet the eligibility criteria are automatically included in the DTV Assistance Scheme. So far, MDA has reached out to over 84,000 auto-included households and some 39,000 households have received the package. MDA is working with the grassroots and voluntary welfare organisation (VWO) networks to extend the Scheme's reach.

During the year in review, MDA and Mediacorp have ramped up efforts to educate the public and encourage the switch to DTV. For example, MDA participated in the 50plus Expo, IDA's Silver Infocomm Festival, as well as the Public Service Festival to reach out to seniors and the wider public.

Working with retailers, TV manufacturers and set-top box supplier New Media Solutions, MDA piloted a DTV Experience Corner at Best Denki Ngee Ann City from 11 to 20 December 2015. The exhibit provided shoppers with comprehensive information on DTV and DTV-ready equipment. This initiative was subsequently extended to NTUC NEX and NTUC Jurong Point in early 2016.

Finally, to help businesses adapt to DTV, MDA helped enhance a 12-hour Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications module, "Provide Advice on Electrical and Electronic Products (Digital Switchover)", to equip retail personnel with knowledge on DTV products and the DTV rollout. A DSO e-learning programme was also launched in June 2015, shortening the module to 8 hours of classroom time and 1.5 hours of online learning, giving trainees the flexibility to learn at their own pace.

"It is heartening to see that MDA is sparing no effort in reaching out to the disadvantaged seniors in our midst by working closely with voluntary welfare organisations. Some of our seniors who are illiterate or socially isolated may not be aware about the transition, and our volunteers and staff play an important role in engaging them with support from MDA. No one should be left behind in our progress toward a Smart Nation."



DR CHEY CHOR KHOON
Executive Director,
Lions Befrienders Service
Association (Singapore)

SUPPORTING TALENTS



NEW TALENT FEATURE GRANT

MDA's New Talent Feature Grant encourages first and second-time directors to launch their careers in feature filmmaking for broadcast, cinema and film festivals. A total of 18 applications were received in 2015, including *Popeye*, produced by Anthony Chen and directed by Kirsten Tan. *Popeye* entered the Berlin International Film Festival's Script Station and won the Production Award Top Prize at Torino Lab 2014. It also made the Cinéfondation L'Atelier shortlist at the Cannes Film Festival in 2015.

TALENT ASSISTANCE TRAINING GRANTS

To build a cutting-edge media workforce that can keep up with the evolving media landscape, MDA disburses training grants for media professionals to equip themselves with relevant skillsets. During the year in review, MDA awarded 732 Specialised Training Grants for individuals to attend various media-related courses by subsidising up to 90% of the course fees, as well as provided airfare subsidies and living allowances for those attending overseas training.

MDA also awarded 121 Training Allowance grants to supplement freelancers' income when they attended selected media-related courses.





MEDIA EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

To nurture new generations of media practitioners, MDA co-sponsors media students through the Media Education Scholarship with partnering media companies. In August 2015, seven aspiring media change-makers out of 132 applicants received the Media Education Scholarship.

Scholars awarded the Media Education Scholarship in 2016 will have the opportunity to work with these companies upon graduation: Mediacorp, mm2 Entertainment, Monstrou Studio, Singapore Press Holdings, The Moving Visuals Co, Times Publishing Group, Ubisoft, Viacom International Networks and World Scientific Publishing.



MEDIA EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP 2015 RECIPIENTS

CHONG LII
Singapore Press Holdings

DARIAN TAN
Times Publishing

JOHANN FONG
MES (Film)

KANNAN S/O VIJAKUMAR
MES (Film)

KOH ZHI HAO
MES (Film)

LOW SER EN
mm2 Entertainment

RUBECA WONG
Singapore Press Holdings

“The Media Education Scholarship undoubtedly relieves financial burden, as it can get really costly studying abroad. Besides the monetary benefits, it’s icing on the cake for my résumé and reminds me to contribute to the industry as a citizen. Being a little red dot on the map, Singapore has a long way to go. The future is in the hands of our generation.”



RUBECA WONG
Media Education Scholar (2015)