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NTU's \$7 million research lab can help cut production costs for films and games

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A film still from *The Boy And His Robot*, a science-fiction live action film by home-grown production company Richmanclub Studios. The company had used tools developed in-house by the Nanyang Technological University's Future Studios Research Lab, which was officially launched on Jan 21, 2014, to help create visual effects such as the battle scene involving robots and soldiers in the film still. The tools are estimated to cut the production costs of the film by up to 80 per cent. The film is slated to be released at the end of 2014 or early 2015. -- PHOTO: RICHMANCLUB STUDIO

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By Kenny Chee

A \$7 million research lab that could significantly cut the cost of making films, animation and games was launched on Tuesday by the Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

The Future Studios Research Lab, which is sited in NTU, is already poised to help home-grown production company Richmanclub Studios reap cost savings for a movie that it is currently making at the lab. Entitled *The Boy And His Robot*, the science-fiction live action film is slated to be released at the end of this year or early next year.

By using the lab's equipment and technologies to create the film's visual effects instead of traditional production methods, the movie's production costs and the number of workers needed are expected to be slashed by up to 80 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively.

The lab's equipment include computer servers from HP and high end Nvidia graphics cards.

Technologies developed at the lab used for the film include a cloud computing system and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. The former allows artists from different parts of the world to work on a project through an online network, while the latter can shorten the time needed for animating digital objects.

NTU intends to commercialise these technologies developed in-house together with Richmanclub Studios.

The Media Development Authority provided the bulk of the lab's funding, while HP and Nvidia sponsored equipment to NTU.