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NTU develops first made-in-Singapore drawing and animation software

Hopes to bring world of animation into homes and offices

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) researchers have scored a first for Singapore with an innovative piece of drawing and animation software.

The software will be a boon to the local design and media industry, particularly animation businesses.

In animation, designers have to sketch a series of many intermediate movements or frames to achieve a smooth sequence of animation. With the NTU software, designers only need to sketch the first and the final frame or picture. Using these two key frames, the NTU software will generate all the intermediate frames needed to make up the final frame or picture, saving the animator much time.

The research team of eight NTU staff members and students led by Assoc Professor Seah Hock Soon, Dean, School of Computer Engineering, NTU, took just a year to develop this prototype software.

The team hopes to commercialise their software. They are now in talks with a world market leader for pen tablets. Using the NTU software as a pen-based software would mean that the software would be very easy to use, so easy that the team expects primary school students to be able to use the software.

Assoc Prof Seah and his team are also exploring how their software may be offered as a plug-in, thereby giving many men-in-the-street, who would normally not have access to animation software, a chance to give animation a try.
Asked about the significance of this team’s innovation, Assoc Prof Seah Hock Soon says, “By bringing animation out of sophisticated animation studios and into the homes and offices of the masses, we hope to allow them to express themselves artistically through it, learn using it and even create their own animated movies. In time, this will hopefully translate towards greater capabilities in computer animation in support of Singapore’s emerging film and animation industry.”

Looking ahead, the team is working towards enhancing their drawing and animation software such that it can also be used for 3D animation.

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About Nanyang Technological University

Nanyang Technological University was recently ranked by the Times Higher Education Supplement at the 50th place globally and 7th in Asia, in its ranking of the 200 best universities in the world. The campus was originally developed for a Chinese language university, Nanyang University in 1955. In 1981, Nanyang Technological Institute was established on this campus to educate engineers for the rapidly developing Singapore economy. In 1991 Nanyang Technological University was inaugurated.

The university has a strong engineering school ranked among the best in the Commonwealth, a business school with one of the top 100 MBA programs in the world, an internationally acclaimed National Institute of Education, one of the best Schools of Communications and Information in Asia, and a new (2001) School of Biological Sciences playing a leading role in Singapore’s Life Sciences initiative. The Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies is an international authority on terrorism. The university is in a major expansion from 16,000 to 22,300 undergraduate students. During this expansion three new schools are being built – the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, the School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences and the School of Art, Design and Media.

A traditional strength of the university is the high employment rate and high remuneration received by its graduates. The university is now in the process of realizing its New Undergraduate Experience initiative with a comprehensive curriculum, wide choices of options for students, vibrant campus life and international experience. Strong international relationships and collaboration programmes is a hallmark of the university. This includes the Singapore-MIT Alliance, Singapore-Stanford Partnership, Cornell-Nanyang Institute of Hospitality Management, Singapore – University of Washington Alliance in Bioengineering, Global Immersion Programme with Peking University, Tsinghua University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, University of Washington and Georgia Institute of Technology, among many other programmes in US, China, India, Japan and Europe.

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