

## HOME

## Special effects in a jiffy

A \$7 MILLION lab was launched in Singapore yesterday aimed at boosting the film special effects industry. The Future Studios Research Lab at Nanyang Technological University boasts high-end computer gear that could slash the time it takes to render digital effects from days to minutes. PAGE B6

# NTU rolls out \$7m high-speed digital effects lab

By KENNY CHEE

IT CAN take days to render and process just one second of visual effects in a film.

But a new research lab at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) can get the work done in a minute or less, in what is expected to result in huge cuts in the cost of making films, animation and games.

Called the Future Studios Research Lab, the \$7 million facility launched by NTU yesterday boasts advanced computer equipment that can render digital effects faster than using traditional methods.

It has computer servers from HP equipped with high-end Nvidia graphics cards, which can compute much faster compared with just using a computer's processor.

The facility is open to NTU's students and staff as well as companies that are partnering with the university.

Indeed, the lab sited at NTU already has a client in home-grown production company Richmanclub Studios.

The studio is making a movie titled *The Boy And His Robot* with help from the lab.

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 resources, the movie's production costs are expected to be cut by up to 80 per cent, and the number of workers needed reduced by 30 per cent.

Mr Rich Ho, director and producer at Richmanclub, said a movie like his could cost US\$100 million (S\$128 million) to make.

The studio is also using a cloud computing system to allow artists from around the world to work on a project together through an online network, as well as artificial intelligence, or AI technologies that can shorten animation time.

NTU intends to commercialise the in-house technological innovations with Richmanclub.

The Media Development Authority provided the bulk of the lab's funding. NTU received equipment sponsored by HP and Nvidia.

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