

Singapore



*An update from the
Singapore Embassy*

January 2005

Singapore Strengthens Copyright Law

To spur greater innovation in the biotechnology, branding, media and other intellectual property-rich industries, Singapore has toughened copyright protection. Starting January 1, 2005, first-time copyright offenders in Singapore will face harsher penalties, including a fine of up to US\$12,000 and/or a jail term of six months for copyright infringements.

There is now an even stronger legal framework to protect the rights of authors and composers, especially with new technologies

available that can take advantage of the Internet. Moving the bill through Parliament, Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Law Minister S. Jayakumar said the changes would keep the law relevant in the face of advancements such as high-speed Internet access and digital compression technology. Such technology enables a person to compress a song or a movie into a few megabytes and send it around the world in a matter of minutes. He explained that the legislation targets people who infringe copyrighted material for commercial benefit.

The new copyright law changes would bring Singapore's IP protections in line with countries such as the U.S., Australia and Britain.

Jimmy Wu, a partner at Deloitte & Touche said: "Singapore has one of the strongest and clearest regulations in the Asia Pacific."

The Entertainment Software Alliance, which represents U.S.

game publishers, says it is satisfied with what Singapore is doing to fight intellectual piracy. Cyril Chua, partner, ATMD, acting for Entertainment Software Alliance said: "We are happy with the development of the law, and how Singapore is moving ahead with IP protection. It's very vital, in fact it's everything... If there's no IP protection, you'll find that these game publishers will never come to Singapore or sell their products here."

DPM Jayakumar said in Parliament that the Ministry of Law and the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) will ensure that Singapore's IP framework keeps pace with international and domestic developments. He also added that Singapore will strengthen its partnership with the World Intellectual Property Office, which has decided to open an office in Singapore to service the needs of the Asia-Pacific.

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One of the many advertisements produced by IPOS to raise awareness in the business community on copyright protection in Singapore



Image: IPOS

U.S. Schools Look to Singapore Math

The success achieved by Singapore students has gained the attention of U.S. educators

Singapore Strengthens Copyright Law

Continued

Educating Businesses and the Public

Over 100 retailers participated in the first seminar on January 14 aimed at helping them understand the new copyright and IP laws. The first of a series of seminars on IP for retailers in the music, movies, gaming and publishing industry organised by IPOS, participants heard about how the changes to the IP regime would affect their business, the do's and don'ts of doing business in the new copyright environment and got tips on how to identify pirated music and movie products.

Mr. Tan, CEO of video rental chain Video Ezy and participant of the seminar said: "When the law is toughened, the dubious retailers will have to clean up their acts and this is all about fair competition." He was happy to hear of the tougher copyright legislation, and to show his support, his company is including anti-piracy trailers into locally produced videos.

Even before the new year began, a record 1,500 people attended a public seminar in December to find out how to stay on the right side of the copyright law. A number that was more than double that at the seminar in September. These public seminars were conducted by IPOS and the Business Software Alliance.

Since the tougher copyright law came into effect this year, software companies Adobe, Autodesk and Microsoft saw increases in the sales of their software. These three software companies were part of a 10-vendor consortium that offered software discounts of up to 40 percent till the end of last year to help Singapore companies change to genuine software. ❖

Tsunami Relief to Reconstruction: *Singapore committed for the long term*

"We want to help. We should do it in areas where we have expertise and we can deliver quickly," said Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Tony Tan when he visited Banda Aceh during his working visit to Indonesia from January 31 to February 2. The provincial capital had been devastated by the Boxing Day tsunami.

DPM Tan said that Singapore had identified a number of areas in Aceh where it can provide assistance. This included constructing a 150-bed hospital in Banda Aceh, and a school and a barge pier in Meulaboh.

During his visit, DPM Tan also met UN coordinator for the humanitarian mission in Aceh and North Sumatra, Joel Boutroue. DPM Tan said: "We have assured the UN that we will help them with whatever they need, including the provision of an office in Singapore for them to coordinate efforts in Indonesia."

Although the Singapore Armed Forces and the Singapore Civil Defence Force sent home about 700 personnel last month, leaving about 50 officers to operate the three Chinook helicopters that remain, Singapore's aid efforts continue through non-governmental organisations and volunteers led by the Singapore Red Cross.

Earlier, Defence Minister Teo Chee Hean,



Singapore Minister for Defence, Mr Teo Chee Hean, exchange warm greetings with TNI commander in Meulaboh, Colonel Geerhan Lantara

accompanied by the Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports, Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, also visited Meulaboh to mark the transition from emergency relief to the recovery phase. Minister Teo noted that the situation in Meulaboh has stabilised. "Life is slowly returning to normal. This is testimony to the strong spirit and resilience of the Indonesian people."

In moving from emergency relief to the rehabilitation and reconstruction phases, Singaporeans with specialised skills from NGOs and the private sector are expected to play an important part in sustaining Singapore's commitment to help restore normalcy in the stricken areas. Earlier in January, several Singapore companies with expertise in road and port construction, and telecommunications had taken part in the Infrastructure Summit held in Jakarta. ❖



Singapore Armed Forces Staff Sergeant Muhamad Azam Aziz delighting the children of Meulaboh

Photo: MINDEF

Photo: MINDEF

United States Congressional Delegation Visits Singapore

Representative Joseph Crowley (D-NY-7th), ranking member of the House International Relations Committee, led a five-member U.S. Congressional delegation to Singapore in January. The delegation, which included Representatives Al Green (D-TX-9th), Steve J. Israel (D-NY-2nd), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX-18th) and Linda T. Sanchez (D-CA-39th), met Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong and Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew.

Their discussions touched on the recent Tsunami disaster, Singapore's economic strategy, counter-terrorism efforts, the near and long-term challenges facing the Asia-Pacific region and the role of the U.S. in the region.

The Codell also visited the Changi Naval Base and the Paya Lebar Airbase where they saw the tsunami relief operations.

"The relationship between the United States and Singapore is thriving in all sectors. During the trip, my colleagues and I had the opportunity to see this relationship in action," said Rep. Crowley. "From the coordination between our two militaries, our ever increasing trade and our shared work on container and port security, the relationship between our two countries is thriving. I know that my colleagues and I were impressed and are enthused to make this special relationship even stronger." ❖

Singapore to Host 1st Asia-Middle East Dialogue

Singapore will host the inaugural Asia-Middle East Dialogue (AMED) for two days in June, bringing together officials, academics, religious leaders and other opinion-makers from about 50 countries.

The idea of the dialogue, meant to forge closer political, security, economic and socio-cultural relations between the two regions, was first raised by Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong when he visited the region last year.

In announcing that Singapore would host the first AMED, Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Raymond Lim said that stronger inter-regional links will yield economic opportunities beyond the oil industry for the Asia region, as the Middle East liberalises and diversifies its economies. He also noted that the Middle East was undergoing fundamental changes in all spheres that had an impact on Southeast Asia, such as the threat presented by global terrorism stemming from a militant, extremist ideology using religion to foment divisions in and between societies.

"To help counter this threat, the Asia-Middle East Dialogue seeks to provide a platform for moderate Muslim countries to speak up and challenge the extreme strain of Islam," Minister Lim said. ❖

President Bush and Prime Minister Lee Meet at APEC

President George W. Bush met Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong when both leaders were at the recent Asia-Pacific Cooperation (APEC) summit held in Chile last November. It was their first meeting since Prime Minister Lee took office in August, and the two leaders used the opportunity to discuss recent developments in East Asia, including the continuing cross-strait tensions between China and Taiwan.



Photo: Singapore Press Holdings

Biopolis Hosts Global Genetics Meeting

More than 700 scientists from all over the world met at Singapore's Biopolis research centre from November 17 to 20, 2004 to discuss new technologies for discovering genes, the role of genes in disease, how human migration contributes to disease, and legal and ethical issues involving genetic research.

The occasion was the combined 5th Human Genome Organisation (Hugo) Pacific Meeting and the 6th Asia-Pacific Conference on Human Genetics. Hugo is an international body established in 1989 by a group of

scientists involved in the Human Genome Project to uncover the genetic blueprint of man.

The conference was organised by the Genome Institute of Singapore, with support from the Agency for Science, Technology and Research and its Biomedical Research Council.

Singapore Deputy Prime Minister and Co-ordinating Minister for Security and Defence Dr. Tony Tan told participants that he is confident that Singapore has the prerequisites to be a

global research and development hub, which included its strong legal frameworks for research, transparent guidelines for acceptable ethical behaviour in the life sciences, and good patent protection for innovations. He also highlighted Singapore's education system, which promotes science and mathematics studies, as well as Singapore's cosmopolitan society, which scientists and researchers from all over the world find to be an easy environment for themselves and their families to adapt to. ❖

Business Briefs

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FedEx Opens Singapore Financial Services Centre

FedEx, the world's largest express delivery company, has opened a financial services centre in Singapore, the first of its kind outside the U.S.

The Singapore financial services centre will handle accounting and revenue operations for customers in 14 countries and regions, including China, Hong Kong, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Thailand.

The company attributed the choice of the centre's location to Singapore's infrastructure, its educated workforce, as well as its multi-cultural environment. The centre, with 140 employees at present will help FedEx to improve its services by standardising processes across the Asia-Pacific region and ensuring consistent service levels.

Tishman Speyer Teams Up with Singapore's GIC

New York-based Tishman Speyer Properties has formed a US\$1.85 billion private property trust with the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation (GIC).

GIC, through its property arm GIC Real Estate (GIC RE), sold a 51 percent interest in 10 class A office buildings in seven U.S. cities to Tishman. GIC RE in turn acquired a 49 percent stake in two office buildings owned by Tishman – the Colgate Building on Park Avenue in New York City and 400 Castro Street in Silicon Valley.

Together, they now jointly own 12 major office buildings in eight U.S. cities, including three in New York City. The portfolio will be managed and leased by Tishman Speyer Properties.

Western Union Expands Presence in Singapore

Western Union, the money transfer subsidiary of Colorado-based First Data Corporation, is stepping up its presence in Singapore and Asia to tap into the increasing flow of money that migrant workers send home.

"We are seeing huge growth in the flow of migrant workers in the Asia-Pacific – growth faster than most other areas," said Ian Marsh, Western Union Asia-Pacific's managing director.

In Singapore, Western Union has opened seven new locations at Singapore Post since September. This raises the number of Western Union agency locations there from four to 49 in just four years.

Motorola Opens 3G R&D Centre in Singapore

Illinois-based Motorola, the world's second largest mobile phone maker, has opened a research and development (R&D) centre in Singapore to develop "3G" handsets.

The new centre will add about 60 engineers and designers to the approximately 2,200 people currently employed in Singapore, which is Motorola's Asia-Pacific headquarters.

Motorola will send an initial group of 28 engineers to Motorola's 3G R&D centre in the U.S. for advanced training. The engineers, who will spend one year in the U.S. and will work with U.S.-based teams on ongoing projects, will be sponsored by a training grant from the Singapore Economic Development Board.

Singapore Researchers Discover Cancer-Fighting Drug

A team of four researchers from the Genome Institute of Singapore (GIS) and the National University of Singapore have developed two synthetic proteins that can prevent cancer cells from multiplying in the body.

The proteins could yield a new class of cancer-fighting drugs if continued successful testing leads to clinical use in about five years. Unlike chemotherapy and radiotherapy, which tend to kill both healthy

and cancerous cells, the synthetic proteins can be designed to target only cancer cells. The groundbreaking research was featured on the cover of the October 2004 issue of the U.S.-based scientific journal, *Cell Cycle*.

Dr. Stephen Hsu, group leader of population genetics at GIS said: "It is very difficult to find new drugs. So that is probably the most important discovery that we have found — a new class of

drugs that seems to kill cancer cells in a different way and, perhaps, in an even specific way that will minimise side effects."

Singapore's Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) is seeking private sector participation to help move research on the two proteins forward. An A*STAR official said it is looking for industry partners, noting that development will have to come from the industry. ❖

Singapore Dispatches Landing Ship Tank to Aid in Reconstruction of Iraq

The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) dispatched a Landing Ship Tank (LST) with a crew of 180 to the Gulf in November 2004.

The ship RSS Resolution will stay in the Persian Gulf for three months. The crew's mission is to monitor the waters around key oil terminals, provide logistical support for coalition vessels and helicopters, and conduct patrols and boarding operations.

This is the fourth deployment of the SAF to the Gulf region. Singapore earlier deployed another LST, a C-130 transport plane and a KC-135 tanker aircraft to the Gulf to aid the Iraq reconstruction effort. It also sent two groups of police officers to Jordan to train Iraqi police, one in July 2004 and the other, which is still in the Gulf, in October 2004. ❖

U.S. Schools Look to Singapore Math

It is estimated that Singapore Math textbooks for the primary grades are being used in more than 200 schools across almost all 50 states in the U.S.

The latest report of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) once again ranked Singapore students as the top performers in both mathematics and science at the fourth and eighth grades. The study said that one of the reasons for the Singapore students' success was that three in four students said they enjoyed learning math and science. Other reasons cited were good home and school environments, highly motivated students and access to resources.

The success achieved by Singapore students has gained the attention of U.S. educators. In particular, an increasing number of school systems in the U.S. are turning to math textbooks from Singapore and, in many cases, improving students' performance.

"Singapore Math," as it is better known, uses not only rote learning, but also visual tools to help children understand abstract concepts. The elementary level textbooks, for example, cover only one-third of the topics typically found in U.S. textbooks, but the Singapore Math material is taught in more depth.

The elementary level Singapore Math textbooks are growing in popularity in the U.S. Several thousand books are sold a year in the U.S. and sales have gone up by 30 percent every year since American teachers and parents began using them in 1998.

Singapore Math first caught on in 1999, when Singapore's students ranked first in the TIMSS. (U.S. students finished 19th out of 38.) Singapore had placed in the middle

of the pack four years earlier, then implemented a new teaching system, which yielded the much improved results.

Noting Singapore's results, the Massachusetts Department of Education began looking for a school district to implement the island-nation's techniques. North Middlesex was the first to accept. This fall, more than 100 classrooms in the North Middlesex district, including all students in grades 1 through 6, began learning mathematics with this method. To better gauge the program's success, the North Middlesex district has joined with Stanford University to develop an assessment test that will determine the success of the programme.

In addition, the district will lead the way for about 10 other Massachusetts towns to adopt this teaching method. Overall in Massachusetts, 20 schools in 20 different districts across Massachusetts are now operating Singapore Math pilot programmes.

In rural Bethel, Oklahoma, Administrators at Bethel Public Schools will become the first in Oklahoma and one of a few in the country to implement a new Singapore math curriculum for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students. In addition, College Gardens elementary school in Rockville, Maryland has been using Singapore math for four years. There are similar examples throughout the U.S., as it is estimated that Singapore Math textbooks for the primary grades are being used in more than 200 schools across almost all 50 states in the U.S. ❖

“Christmas in Singapore” with the Choral Arts Society of Washington

Singapore orchids filled the ballroom of a downtown hotel one December night — all 3,650 stalks of jade, burgundy, pink and white orchids flown in specially to recreate a bit of hot, tropical Singapore during a wintry Christmas in the U.S. capital. The result was “Christmas in Singapore”.

Singapore Ambassador Chan (right) with U.S. Ambassador to Singapore Frank Lavin and benefit chair Penny Yerks at the Choral Arts Society of Washington’s 24th Annual Christmas Benefit



Photo: Choral Arts Society of Washington

More than US\$625,000 was raised at the Choral Arts Society of Washington’s Christmas Concert and Benefit held on December 13, 2004. To benefit one of the city’s best-known gems, the Society invited Singapore Ambassador Chan Heng Chee to be the Honorary Patron of this year’s annual gala.

The evening began with a concert at the Kennedy Center. Choral Arts Society Music Director Norman Scribner had the audience on their feet singing Silent Night — in Mandarin! The choir wanted to honour Singapore by singing a favourite carol with a twist.

Music lovers were later enticed to bid in a silent auction for a brand new convertible, exotic getaways, Super Bowl tickets, Asian artefacts, fur coats, and dinner with the Singapore Ambassador to the U.S.

A pair of business class non-stop tickets from New York to Singapore donated by Singapore Airlines, with four nights stay at the Oriental Hotel, ignited a bidding war. The event also saw participation and contributions from companies such as AIG, Boeing, Pfizer, General Dynamics, Time Warner and Wachovia Bank.

The guest list included several U.S. Senators and members of Congress, U.S. Ambassador to Singapore Franklin Lavin and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Each of the 700 guests received party favours of quintessential Singapore products — a Singapore Airlines bag filled with My Mum’s Cuisine Traditional Asian Spice and Sauce, Tiger Balm ointment, Gold Kili Chrysanthemum packet drink and an orchid pin. ❖

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