

IT firms gear up for regional contest

Asia-Pacific ICT Alliance Awards will see best of S'pore IT talent strut their stuff

BY OO GIN LEE

ONE provides the IT set-up which ensures that Indonesian oil and gas giant Pertamina's fleet of tankers are not skimmed.

The other built the "IT engine" that lets India's top two cinema operators offer cellphone movie ticketing.

Transmex Systems and Tagit are two of many trailblazing Singapore IT solutions firms.

They were also among 14 local infocomm technology (ICT) companies that came up tops in their categories at the Singapore leg of the annual Asia-Pacific ICT Alliance (Apicta) Awards held here on Wednesday.

Started in 2001, Apicta today has 15 member countries from the Asia-Pacific region, including China, India and Australia. It sets the stage for ICT innovators in the region to benchmark their products against their counterparts.

Transmex Systems developed a multi-million dollar fleet tracking system for Pertamina earlier this year.

Some 2,000 trucks were fitted with Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers, which enabled Pertamina to keep track of them in real time. The trucks were also given anti-pilfering capabilities.

Thanks to an on-board computer – which has the GPS coordinates of the trucker's legitimate stops – a tanker will open its valves to offload petrol only at these stops.

Mr Roland Pang, Transmex chief executive officer, said Pertamina had faced a problem of errant truckers siphoning off petrol.

"We expect Pertamina to save several times its capital outlay every year from this anti-theft system and to recoup its investment in about six months," said Mr Pang.

The other Singapore IT solutions company, Tagit, won contracts from India's top two cinema operators, PVR and Adlabs.

As a result, Indian cinema patrons can now book their movie tickets and even their seats with their mobile phone on the Internet.

Payment is via credit card and a bar code sent to the user's phone. The code is then flashed at a machine reader near the cinema.

Mr Navtej Singh, co-founder and chief executive officer of Tagit, said: "We are working on an even more affordable version that makes use of standard PC web-cameras to read the codes, instead of the more expensive proprietary readers."

A web-cam costs about \$20 compared to a reader, which can cost about \$1,000.

Transmex and Tagit, with the top three winners in each of 15 categories, are eligible to represent Singapore at the Apicta regional challenge to be held here next month. The challenge will decide the regional champion.

This is the first time the regional finals will be held in Singapore. They will be organised by the Singapore Infocomm Technology Federation.

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