Foreword

In this issue of the CNM Magazine there is no news flash. We simply relish the joy of sharing with you how CNM continues to grow.

Not only have our undergraduate and graduate student numbers reached new heights, but our professors’ research is being presented at international conferences more often than ever before and our external research grant funding continues to increase. We are also reaping research and teaching awards, and our graduate and undergraduate students are participating in conferences, seminars and symposia all over the world.

It seems like yesterday we were just getting started. Now our path is clear. We are growing, and our alumni are making a mark in the communications and media industry. No news flash, but good news nonetheless, and you will read about it in this edition of the CNM Magazine.

What’s next? We want our alumni to become part of the story. We are collecting information about our alumni’s jobs, achievements, marriages, and even their children. After all, in CNM we think of ourselves as a big academic family, and our alumni and supporters are a big part of our success. So send us your story or information about your jobs and achievements at cnmalumni@nus.edu.sg and join our Communications & New Media @ NUS group on LinkedIn.

In the meantime, enjoy this issue. We hope to see you featured in the next one!

Millie Rivera
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It may be called Random Blends but this is a project which is anything but random. From conceptualisation to execution to final delivery in the form of a public exhibition between 20-28 March 2010, it was a labour of love painstakingly put together.

This year, the multi-media public exhibition, which first started in 2009, took on a higher profile. It was part of the Media Development Authority Media Fiesta 2010, an event that showcases creative works and designs in culture industries. The link is yet another affirmation of CNM’s ongoing efforts to equip students with ‘real world’ learning through collaborations with key organisations in the industry.

Officially opened by Professor Tan Tai Yong, Vice Provost (Student Life), NUS, on 19 March at Old School in Mount Sophia, Random Blends 2010 was a project that can be truly described as “for the students, by the students” – with the support of CNM staff. Students from Principles of Visual Communication (NM2208), Designing Content for New Media (NM3208), Game Design (NM3216) and Digital Photography and Imaging (NM3223) created the exhibited works as part of their design classes. They were also responsible for putting together all the publicity materials and secured Epson as a sponsor. When it came to curating the exhibition in the gallery, they had to depend on themselves as well, with the guidance of CNM instructor Chiang Jing Ying who spent countless hours with her charges.

Speaking about the students’ efforts, Associate Professor Millie Rivera, Head, Communications & New Media, NUS, said, “Organising this exhibition took a huge amount of time and dedication. So having a full house at the opening was indeed heartening for the students.” Students were also greatly encouraged by the fact that guests showed much interest in their photographs, children’s story books, short videos and video games.

By Chua Chong Jin
STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Student Achievements

He started out almost like any of his classmates in CNM’s writing classes. But because he took the plunge into the deep end and had initiative to search for opportunities to develop his skills, Jerome Seow has gone places in more ways than one.

For a start, he made “campus news” last December when he was selected by a client to cover the SEA Games in Vientiane, Laos. Earlier, he had honed his skills in news reporting through internships at The Straits Times’ Sports Desk and freelance reporting for Team Singapore’s website.

Asked about the experience in Laos, Jerome, a third year CNM student, said, “On a professional front, covering a large scale sports event really opened my eyes to the media’s challenges. It was the passion to bring sporting news to the masses that really kept everyone going despite the fatigue and obstacles we faced.”

The SEA Games experience, he noted, has given him insight into how reporters work to meet tight deadlines during a major event. “I have come to appreciate the steep learning curve of the journalistic trade,” he added.

He also learnt something beyond the media through his two-week stint in Vientiane. “I experienced the warmth of my Laotian hosts, and this is something that I hold dearly, having previously not known much about the country. Despite their relatively poor living standards, the people were happy, and that was all that mattered,” he said. Up next for him is an opportunity to cover the Youth Olympic Games which will be held in Singapore in August 2010.

Against the Odds, Against the Best

By Chua Chong Jin

They competed against top teams. They had their fair share of obstacles to overcome. Yet the CNM team of Vu Giang Thanh, Muhammad Shafi B Rafie, Muhammad Farkhan B Salleh, Tan Xiu Fang and Inosha Wickrama showed they were made of sterner stuff.

Taking part in the CHI 2010 Student Design Competition, they clinched the second prize with their project “Living Avatars Network”. Delivering the good news from the 28th ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems held in Atlanta from 10-15 April, CNM Instructor Foong Pin Sym said, “By all measures, the team met and exceeded expectations. The schools they competed against are reputable schools. The team that came in first comprised graduate students from the University of Michigan, School of Information. Our students have shown that they can be formidable competitors with a lot of polish.” The four finalists were selected from 92 submissions across 16 countries, an extraordinary achievement for the students and CNM.

Giving some insights into the cutting edge nature of the project, Assistant Professor Denisa Kera explained, “Living Avatars Network (LAN) TV is a design prototype of a real-time TV merged with a social networking platform that encourages users to exchange, volunteer or simply buy and outsource different experiences in real-time. Users can offer personal, unique, dangerous or interesting experiences and stories to other users and share them in real-time.” Translated into reality, this means that one may be able to experience an exotic location through the eyes of a local person or even re-live the nostalgic past of one’s grandparents in real-time by serving as their living avatars.

Taking the Plunge

By Chua Chong Jin

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Into the Deep End

By Chua Chong Jin

Throw our students into the deep end – and they will not only survive but even thrive. That seems to be the message from the experiences of CNM’s Mohammad Ridza Bin Salim and Audrey Tan as they share their experiences at Silicon Valley in California, USA. We get Ridza to share his experience in some depth while Audrey tries to sum up her feelings in a quote.

Filling The Gaps
Mohammad Ridza Bin Salim

“I am an intern at Zong Mobile Payments as part of the one-year NUS Overseas College at Silicon Valley Programme. The programme gives us full-time work at various Silicon Valley (SV) start-ups while we attend classes at Stanford University.

“Zong allows users to pay for virtual goods on Social Networking Sites and online games through their mobile phones. It is a two-year old company based in downtown Palo Alto, California, one of the Valley’s most prestigious locations – and the very place where Internet powerhouse companies like Facebook and Google had their humble beginnings.

“Apart from work, we attend classes twice or thrice a week. Recently I took a marketing class conducted by the Management Science & Engineering Department. It was a unique experience as we learnt marketing and communications from an engineering and technical perspective. The lessons were highly hands-on and interactive. We also had the opportunity to attend seminars where senior executives of companies like Baidu, Intel and Sun Microsystems were invited as guest lecturers.

“Working as an intern has made me realise the importance of being proactive in a dynamic and fast-changing environment. As time and resources are limited in a start-up, it is difficult for staff to give step-by-step guidance or close supervision. As interns, we are expected to be keen observers. We have to take the initiative to fill the gaps.

“Besides, there are only 16 of us in the team. Although we are a small team, we are highly diverse. Zong has a good mix of individuals from Asian, Middle-Eastern, European and American descent, who bring with them a wealth of experience. Our flat hierarchy and an open office environment facilitate communication across the various departments. The learning curve is nothing short of exponential!

“The whole SV experience here has been challenging yet fulfilling. Studying while working has been tough but the pace is so fast that you just keep going. This is the second internship I have done as an undergraduate. Previously, I did an internship with the Civil Service in Singapore. Through my experiences, I strongly feel that CNM’s integrated and multi-disciplinary approach is highly relevant in the real world environment.”

New Mindset
Audrey Tan

“The SV experience has broadened my worldview tremendously, opening up many possibilities of the unknown. It has taught me many intricate lessons about life, opened up many friendships and memorable experiences on entrepreneurship. It’s not only a life changing experience; it unravels the start of a journey that adopts a new mindset which says you are the author of your world.”
In January 2010, I spearheaded the One More Green Campaign (OMG) with a team of seven CNM undergraduates to encourage recycling in NUS.

“OMG” is an acronym widely used to exclaim “Oh My God!” There is indeed reason to exclaim. In 2008, NUS recycled 12 percent of its waste — trailing far behind the national recycling rate of 56 percent. NUS needs to catch up.

We used light-hearted yet engaging messages to stress the imminent need to recycle. The messages appeared on bins to deter mindless trashing and induce conscientious recycling. Their eye-catching nature earned commendations for effectively stimulating recycling among our peers.

Besides attracting media attention by the quirkiness of “OMG” and “BRB: Bring Rubbish Back”, the latter also received coverage by youth.sg and RazorTV for encouraging recycling at the event itself.

Working on the campaign taught us how to speak to campus officers, government bodies, corporate leaders and business owners to seek their support. For first timers running a campaign, the team gained tremendous exposure.
Our CNM students have been very successful in securing internship opportunities with the NUS-MDA Singapore Hollywood Attachment Programme (NUS-MDA SHAPE). This programme provides exciting opportunities for industry professionals and tertiary students in Singapore to gain invaluable work experience, industry knowledge and build networks by working with top Interactive and Digital Media (IDM) institutions in the US. This year, 7 of our CNM students have been accepted into the programme and are currently embarking on various media related projects for IDM companies in California. They are Juliet Huang, Tan Han Cheng, Gloria Wee, Rosmayati Tay, Muhamad Farhan Abdul Hamid, Nur Liyana B. Sulaiman and Muhammad Farkhan B Salleh.

Juliet is attached to the organising team for the National Film Festival for Talented Youth 2010. Her task is to generate greater awareness of the organisation. Her creativity and skills in design and social network marketing have helped her in creating greater publicity for the organisation’s work and objectives.

Han Cheng, Gloria and Rosmayati are currently working with Concisys, a company looking to design and create devices that would create a new paradigm of interactivity in new media. The trio are presented with many experiential learning opportunities as they explored the use of various website-related technological tools and created mock-up web layouts.

Farhan is working with Qik, a leading mobile video sharing service that allows for highly efficient live video sharing among friends, family and social networks. He will be joined by Liyana and Farkhan who are scheduled to start their overseas internships with Qik in October.
Industry involvement in CNM Instructor Foong Pin Sym’s modules occurs in a variety of ways, all of which aim to provide opportunities to serve as a bridge between students and the media industry.

Talks in Introduction to Interactive Media (NM2216) have allowed students to interact with industry players like iCell Networks’ Chief Executive Officer Ken Chua. The overall theme of the module’s final projects revolves around creating products for clients such as Singapore Tourism Board and Philips Design Singapore. The best 5 student presentations are made to representatives of the client companies during one of the lecture sessions.

In User Experience Design (NM4210), where the focus is on innovation and design, media industry players like Kelvin Tan (Brand Director at Gosh Advertising) and Bernard Chen (Director of User Experience at Ubisoft Singapore) attended the Poster Session for final projects as judges or guests. “Having these industry members come in and give feedback on the students’ work gives different perspectives on problems being worked on,” said Foong, on the benefits of having external judges to provide feedback on the students’ work.

Getting industry players to collaborate with CNM in this regard has also led to connections for jobs and internship opportunities being developed between these companies and CNM, which can only mean good things ahead for CNM students and graduates who are interested in breaking into the media industry.
Our graduate students shone at the 2009 SHOOOT Awards, bagging the Best TVC award (school) and Best Long Machinima (school)! The SHOOOT Awards, supported by the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts and the Creative Community Singapore, aim to inspire innovation and creativity in New Media content creation. The Best TVC award (school) went to “Smoking is ‘Good’”, a short, humorous film about the dangers of smoking while the Best Long Machinima (school) award went to “The Homecoming”, a short story about a Peranakan woman’s return to her roots. The winning entries were the final assignments of six students including CNM’s John Yap Yin Gwee, Cao Yuanying and Rosalie Hooi Chet Yeu in Dr. Timothy Marsh’s Serious Games & Learning Media (NM5211) module.

Yet another graduate student, Zhou Xuanming, had his work presented at the Young Designers’ Portfolio Show of the Singapore Design Festival in November 2009. The show is a great platform for young designers in Singapore to showcase their creative works and gain exposure to commercial and academic opportunities. Xuanming displayed a computer game titled “Pangaea” which he had developed as an undergraduate at the School of Art, Design and Media, Nanyang Technological University.

Catherine Candano (top picture) received a best paper award from Emerald Publishing and has been invited to publish it as part of a book by the organisers on various aspects of climate change. Way to go, Cathy!

Two of CNM’s most promising scholars, Elmie Nekmat (middle picture) and Ou Meimin (bottom picture), will pursue their doctoral studies at universities abroad from September 2010! While Elmie will fly to Alabama to do research at the College of Communication and Information Sciences, University of Alabama, Meimin will be at the Hong Kong Baptist University researching the area of new media in public relations. Congratulations Elmie and Meimin!
Eleven graduate students took part in full paper presentations and panel sessions in myriad divisions. The Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Prof. Brenda Yeoh commended, “Congratulations on the excellent representation of 11 graduate students at the ICA! The Faculty is very proud that CNM is making waves in the international arena of communication research and looks forward to continuous growth in the area.”

Much buzz and excitement reverberated before and during the conference. Ou Meimin, who organised a panel on social media usage in Asia, said, “Besides the usual congratulatory messages all round, I felt honoured and enthusiastic that the pitching of the presentation from an industry-academic perspective worked as it was initially met with some skepticism.”

Acceptance of their work by ICA amidst stiff international competition was a critical affirmation of their scholarly endeavour. Lin Jin, who attended a pre-conference workshop, shared, “I felt inspired because it showed that some people were interested in what I was doing and my research was significant.”

Other than its location which meant less funding challenges, ICA was a clear choice for graduate students due to its international standing. According to Asst. Prof. Sun Sun Lim, “ICA attracts top scholars in the discipline. Paper presenters may find themselves sharing their findings with a highly knowledgeable and experienced audience who can provide useful and constructive critique on their work — an opportunity which is not easy to come by.”

Ng Li Ting attended the conference expecting to leverage on the large network of academics and peers, many of whom are renowned in their fields. Her exhilaration was shared by Catherine Candano who shared, “Imagine my joy when I found out that some people whose work in climate change communication I’ve read and corresponded virtually with could be in the same room with me in June!”

Being the go-getters that CNM students are, they attended the conference with high expectations in obtaining invaluable feedback that would guide their graduate work. “This paper is part of my Masters thesis. Participating in the ICA conference will give me direct benefits for my graduate work,” said Zhu Qinfeng.

On a more personal level, graduate students were also looking for a clearer direction on the path they want to pursue in the future, as Zhang Lingzi pointed out, “This experience will help me develop a personal understanding of what academia is. I will know what kind of a researcher I want to be after meeting and talking with other researchers in ICA.” Attending presentations of new research and networking in real-time with experts would also enable graduate students to discover how best to position themselves in their research areas. To Anuradha Rao, her participation would grant her “a more direct and visible impression about the academic circle,” helping her find her own niche in her research area.

Hectic but rewarding on both professional and personal fronts, ICA 2010 was indeed a memorable experience for CNM graduate students.
The Faculty is very proud that CNM is making waves in the international arena of communication research.

Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Prof. Brenda Yeoh
This year’s International Communications Association’s annual conference was in Singapore, and aside from the fact that this was the first time the conference is held in Singapore, there was nothing else that got me particularly excited about the conference. Researchers from all parts of the world converging on a city to present their works and see the works of others, well, that happens all the time.

Then, Dr. Millie told me about this plan she hatched to make the conference more fun: a short cultural tour of Singapore in the evening. For two nights, CNM graduate students would transform into tour guides and bring foreign guests attending the ICA conference to Little India for a cultural experience.

That’s a whole lot more exciting than giving and watching presentations, and so I signed up to be a tour guide for two nights, along with other grad students like Elmie, Siti, Meimin, Catharine, Carol, Ganga, Anuradha, Kund, Rosalie, Lin Jin, Qinfeng, Wang Rong, Yuanying and Cheryl.
Being Singaporean, and a fairly experienced teaching assistant, Dr. Millie deemed me suitably qualified to give a lecture about Singapore to one busload of professors and researchers as we made our way down to Little India Arcade from Suntec City on both days, so I did.

Thankfully, my busload of ‘students’ didn’t make me do an oral defence of my knowledge of Singapore’s history and culture.

On both days, we had dinner at the Banana Leaf Apolo before heading out to Serangoon Road, the main artery of Little India. The food was definitely authentic Indian cuisine, and it proved to be a tad bit too spicy for some of the guests, especially those from Europe and America.

The spiciness aside, everyone seemed to agree that the food was great. Everyone appeared to have a great time chatting, and our talented grad student tour guides were busy handing out business cards at the same time. They sure know how to maximise the value of their time!

As we walked along Serangoon Road after dinner, we stopped by the Sri Veeramakaliamman temple for a short while as our guests marvelled at the temple’s architecture, and some even went into the temple and got blessed by the temple priest!

The walk ended at Mustafa Centre for our guests to shop to their hearts’ content at Singapore’s only 24-hour shopping mall for the rest of the night.

Judging from the happy faces of our guests, I suppose all the grad students who helped in the cultural walk can now safely list being a tour guide as a speciality on their CVs.

By Aaron Ng
“Our guests marvelled at the temple’s architecture, and some even went into the temple and got blessed by the temple priest!”
All it took was a Twitter message, also known as a tweet, and a student went home with a free copy of Microsoft’s latest computer operating system, Windows 7.

CNM Industry Advisory Council member Stephen Forshaw, who is Microsoft’s Corporate Communications Director for Asia Pacific, gave away the prize at a discussion forum held at Lecture Theatre 14 about the impact of social media on the industry, drawing gasps of surprise from students.

Tweets were constantly popping up on the lecture theatre screen, and Forshaw, who was the panel moderator, used the tweets to liven up the discussion, much to the delight of students.

The forum was one of the two student events of the fifth CNM Industry Advisory Council meeting held on 21 January between CNM and our council members, who are senior-level executives from the communications industry.

Social networking tools were heavily utilised before and after the event. Facebook and Twitter were used to publicise the event, and Twitter was also used to provide constant updates during the day and to increase interactivity during the discussion forum.

The annual meeting allows council members to provide feedback on the CNM curriculum to ensure industry relevance, and CNM students also get the chance to interact with council members who generously share honest, and sometimes controversial, opinions.

During the second event, a lunchtime discussion panel about job hunting, all four council members on the panel agreed that a graduate with an extensive portfolio will have an edge over a first-class honours graduate with a thin portfolio. Myrna Thomas, Managing Director of Corporate Affairs at Temasek Holdings, even added that the first class honours graduate “might be a nerd.”

CNM head Millie Rivera quickly defended the value of an honours degree, saying that the honours degree “is especially useful to someone who seeks a specialisation in a particular area.”

This year’s council included four new members: Victor Ocampo from Yahoo! Mobile, Koh Kew Soon from the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts, Leonard Lin from Tyler Projects and Dr Chitra Rajaram from MediaCorp.

The addition of four new members with diverse backgrounds into the advisory council indicates greater interest and attention from the industry.

“Our IAC, just like CNM, is becoming more mature. We now have a more diverse representation from media and communication companies. For instance, having Yahoo! Mobile and a gaming company like Tyler Projects will open opportunities for our students to find internships in these sectors,” CNM head Millie Rivera said.
A few quick questions with Victor Ocampo, our new IAC member

Q. Can you tell us something about yourself in one sentence?

A. When no one is looking I like to read random wikipedia entries.

Q. What would you like students to get from your involvement in the council?

A. I’d like to be able to share my knowledge of the mobile industry domain as well as my insights on what it’s really like to be out there in the (real=non-internet) world.

As these former IAC members move on, we thank them for their service and wish them all the best!

Jonathan Thurlow

“I found serving on the IAC an enriching experience — I was really impressed with the creativity and the innovative thinking of the students and found the faculty team passionate and incredibly hardworking. CNM richly deserves the reputation and success that it is enjoying.”

Tan Tarn How

“I’ve been very impressed with the great work done by the CNM team under the dynamic leadership of Prof Milagros. I am also heartened that the programme, through the IAC and other initiatives, is ensuring that students are being given skills and knowledge relevant to industry. I have also learned a lot from being part of the council, so Thank You!”
 Gui Kai Chong joined the CNM Programme in January 2009, and has been teaching Theories of Communications & New Media and Culture Industries. His research interests include critical discourse analysis, cultural globalisation, and the online public sphere. He has been a member of the Advisory Committee for Chinese Programmes at Media Development Authority of Singapore since 2006.

Chan Yoke Hian joined the CNM Programme as the internship coordinator after his teaching stint in Hwa Chong Institution. His research interests include socio-cultural impact of new media, legal and ethical issues, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. To date, he has presented a paper in a semiotics conference in Sydney and another paper in language education in Hong Kong.

Dr Iccha Basnyat is a visiting fellow. Since joining CNM in 2008, Iccha has been teaching courses in Public Relations, Research Methodology, Health Communication and Communication Campaigns. During this time, Iccha has also continued her research that examines the construction of health meanings and access to health care in marginalised spaces. Iccha received her PhD from the Department of Communication at Purdue University. Additionally, she received her MPH from the School of Public Health at University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Charlene Wee was promoted to Instructor from Teaching Assistant in January 2010. With a background in public relations and branding from the private sector, she is part of the Communications Management team and has more recently been involved in modules such as Publications Graphics & Design (NM3217) and Advertising Strategies (NM3215). Her area of interest is health communications.
Dr Julian Lin is an IT practitioner with more than 14 years of experience, having helped various organisations develop content and user interface for new media. He has more than a dozen industrial certifications (Certified Principal System and Application Developer in Domino, Sun Java and Adobe Certified Expert). He has published in several reputable journals and conferences. His current research interests centre on instant messaging, competing new media, technologies and models, personal digital assistants, and IT adoption and diffusion.

Christopher Ong is rarely seen without his windbreaker and sunglasses. A recent CNM alumnus and full-time teaching assistant, he is interested in all kinds of design, especially those relating to websites, games and interactive media, having worked previously as a freelance web and publications designer.

Maria Kozhevnikov’s research focuses on examining mechanisms of visual imagery. Since 2001, she held faculty positions at Harvard, Rutgers, and George Mason Universities, and in the past two years, she served as a Programme Director for the Science of Learning Centres Programme at the US National Science Foundation. Maria joined the National University of Singapore (Department of Psychology jointly with CNM) in 2010.

Kan Siew Ning is an engineer, project manager and knowledge management (KM) practitioner. Since 1985, he has worked in several government departments, and is also teaching part-time in NTU on KM, and in SMU on Technology & World Change. He has edited four issues of a journal for iKMS, the Information and Knowledge Management Society. His research interests include KM and history of technology.
CNM handles a total of S$1,621 million in research grants. Here are some of the department’s current research projects:

1. **Youth, ICTs and Political Engagement in Asia** examines the role of information and communication technologies (e.g. mobile phones, the Internet and games) in adolescents and young adults' political engagement within six Asian countries – Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India.

   ICTs are a significant factor in youth engagement as the technologies introduce new tools for political engagement, reshape the relationship between youth and political institutions, and transform youth's civic identity and political agency. Researchers from six countries conduct in-depth interviews and focus groups to examine the phenomenon, and collaborate with each other using ICTs (e.g. Google group, Google talk and Skype).

   This two-year, S$170,000 project is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, through ideacorp, Philippines.

   CNM researcher: Dr Zhang Weiyu

2. **Asian Biopoleis: Biotechnology & Biomedicine as Emergent Forms of Life and Practice** studies the phenomenon of biotechnology in Asia. The broad goal of this project is to make Singapore the centre for the study of emergent technologies in Asia from the social, historical, and cultural perspectives.

   CNM is part of a consortium that was awarded a three-year Academic Research Fund Grant for this S$1.4 million project.

   CNM staff members are active in the Science Technology and Society cluster at FASS and the Asia Research Institute, and are collaborators on this grant.

3. **A Deterrence Model of Internet Piracy: Multifaceted Risk Perception and Behavioural Determinants of Internet Piracy** seeks to answer this question: “Why do people persist in downloading music illegally or using pirated software despite the known risks?”

   The S$20,000 study examines multidimensional aspects of risk perception and their respective effects on piracy intention and behaviour in different countries, such as Singapore, Korea, China and the USA. It will provide policy makers and businesses with comprehensive insights about internet piracy, and thus help them develop effective means of dealing with the problem.

   CNM researchers: Drs Chung Siyoung, Milagros Rivera and Cho Hichang

4. **Social Media in Asia: A Multidimensional Study of Organisational Adoption and Adaptation** examines adoption and adaptation of social media in organisations in Singapore, South Korea, China and India.

   This S$1.44 million study examines how organisations use social media to communicate with internal and external stakeholders, explores the perceived risks and benefits of social media use and the types of policies they elicit. It will also study the factors that influence social media adoption, and develop recommendations for organisations to use social media more effectively.

   CNM researchers: Drs Cho Hichang, Lee Seow Ting, Julian Lin and Millie Rivera. Doctoral student Ganga Sasidharan was instrumental in writing this grant.
Global Networked Concert Hints at What the Future Holds

“Telematic arts” is a confusing domain: music, electronics and multimedia are often jumbled together in pictures and sounds. But for NUS’ Yong Siew Toh Music Conservatory, this is where musical opportunities abound.

The conservatory extended its global reach on 30 January in a breakthrough collaborative concert with leading musical institutes from around the world. CNM faculty member Lonce Wyse and research fellow Nori Mitani, who are conducting research on networked musical ensembles, produced the concert in Singapore with musicians from the conservatory.

Avant-garde music pieces “Nuo Rilang” and “Stones” were broadcast live to audiences in four different time zones. In a display of synchronicity, musicians in Canada, Beijing, United States and Singapore played live from their studios, while boosting their music with electronic elements from laptops and synthesisers.

Wyse and Mitani, who are also members of the Interactive and Digital Media Institute’s Arts and Creativity Lab, conducted the audio and video network communications with the remote sites.

For more information about this event or the Networked Music Ensemble research project, visit www.anclab.org.

Honours student Paul Lim contributed to this article.
Curious students, passionate teachers inspire CNM’s outstanding lecturers

By Francesca Nathan

CNM’s Outstanding Lecturers

Inquisitive students give Dr Sreekumar Pillai a buzz. Their questions spur him to draw more from himself as he responds to the queries.

“There is a synergy created between the student and teacher. My inspiration comes from interaction with students in my class,” said the lecturer who won a department teaching award last year. Sreekumar is one of six CNM educators who were honoured last year for teaching excellence at the department, faculty or university levels.

His colleague, Alex Mitchell, who won a university teaching award, said he was similarly inspired by his students.

“I see teaching as a collaborative effort between teacher and student. The enthusiasm, dedication and appreciation of the students is what makes a module successful, and what makes teaching worthwhile,” said Mitchell.

Three other outstanding educators credit their own teachers for sparking their passion to teach. Dr Ingrid Hoofd, who won a faculty teaching award last year and a university teaching award this year, acknowledged her former supervisors – Rosi Braidotti and Berteke Waaldijk from Utrecht University, and Ryan Bishop from NUS.
“They are all very engaging and passionate teachers, and I seek to display the same passion to my students,” she said.

Similarly, doctoral student Ganga Sasidharan credited her supervisor Dr Millie Rivera for advising her to connect with her students, rather than merely focus on delivering content in class.

“Engaging and connecting with students as individuals and not as nameless faces in the crowd made all the difference,” said Sasidharan, who received the department’s teaching award for scholars.

For Dr Kevin McGee, teaching is a way to “pay it forward”.

“As a student I was fortunate to learn some remarkable things from exceptional teachers. So I attempt to engage and challenge students just as my mentors did,” said the lecturer who won the department’s award for excellent teaching.

His motivation differs from that of department head Millie Rivera, whose zest for teaching stems from her love for lifelong learning.

Rivera was inducted last year into the university’s Honour Roll, the NUS equivalent of a Hall of Fame for lecturers, which commends...
Keeping in Touch

By Francesca Nathan

Staff on leave, currently pursuing their PhDs

**Alex Mitchell**

“Since January 2010 I’ve been on leave pursuing my PhD under the NUS Graduate School for Integrative Sciences and Engineering (http://www.nus.edu.sg/ngs/).

“My research focuses on interactive storytelling, a topic that cuts across many different disciplines, including computer science, English literature, human-computer interaction and interaction design.

“Although I never really left AS6, I’ll be back full-time at CNM in January 2012.”

**Raghu Reddy**

“Since my family and I moved to Brisbane in May 2008, our lives have been very hectic. I joined my PhD programme immediately, with deadlines looming just three months after our arrival here.

“Last May, I crossed the last big hurdle — confirmation of candidature. My research focuses on designing complex technological devices that the elderly can use easily.

“At present I am working on my first set of experiments to investigate the impact of ageing on the use of technology. It is in its final stages and I am now experiencing the mind-boggling world of statistics. Mere mention of SPSS gets me high (saving money on beer). I even miss NUS canteen food (now you understand how sick I am with this stuff).

“I am hoping, if everything goes according to plan, to finish this ordeal by late 2011. See you soon!”

**Raaj Chandran**

“After moving to Canada in 2007, I now work as communications advisor at the Calgary headquarters of a global environmental engineering consultancy.

“Our international family has grown – my Singaporean wife and I now have a Canadian son.

“Emails from many former students are a heartwarming reminder of my NUS stint and of a teacher’s impact.”
Some serious play took place in the Playroom on Saturday 15 May when CNM held its first Children’s Party. In attendance were CNM juniors – children of CNM staff and students. With party food, multimedia entertainment and lots of games, the party was a real hit.

Meet Louis Tjendra: CNM’s Superman

By Francesca Nathan

“Hi! I am Louis, the latest addition to CNM Programme. I am generally known as the department manager of CNM. Many would not expect that I am Superman by day (think Superman Returns, not Smallville) and Lex Luthor by night. At this point, you may think I have serious split personality issues but please bear with me.

“My day job requires me to be hunkered in my workstation until I receive a distress call from the Dean’s Office or other locales requesting for help, then I’ll be off doing what I have to do. Fortunately, my Head of Department is rather lenient when it comes to my outfit. That spares me from having to be familiar with the location of the nearest phone booth. I probably should also mention that while I have met my Lois Lane, we do not work in the same place. (DC Comics really should stop telling everyone that we are!)”

“I normally assume my role of Lex Luthor every evening at home. For those of you who wonder how I pull off the role switch, let me assure you that it is a routine for me now, so no problem! Every night, I will try to control my younger sister’s world by drowning her in advice or by holding her pet hamster hostage until she does my bidding. On my lucky days, I will have access to my ‘guilt-gun’ and I will try to send her to purgatory with it.

“That pretty much sums up who I am. See you around!”
GOING PLACES

By Chua Chong Jin

They were once students. Now they are going places out there in the industry. They still talk about pressure, deadlines and the need to stretch oneself. But the stakes have been raised considerably compared to the demands of campus life, going by the experiences of CNM graduates like The Straits Times’ news reporter Tan Weizhen and Soh Junhao, co-founder of MediaEcho Pte Ltd and PurpleForest LLP.

About Her

Tan Weizhen, News Reporter, The Straits Times

Rare Opportunity

“Being in a multi-faceted organisation like the Singapore Press Holdings has given me a rare opportunity to develop skills for both new and old media platforms.”

In The Beginning

“I entered SPH first as a multimedia content producer at STOMP, a social networking and citizen journalism site. It was an exciting stint and I learnt how to produce interesting content to engage the fickle web audience, be it creating new sections or videos. My favourite was producing edgy reality shows.”

Moving On

“I then moved on to The Straits Times as a news reporter, with technology as my main beat. I have experienced what a real newsroom is all about – meeting deadlines, dealing with different people all the time, producing good stories. The rush of scoops is also indescribable.”

About Him

Soh Junhao, Co-founder of MediaEcho Pte Ltd & PurpleForest LLP. His diverse duties include marketing, client servicing, photography and event management.

Big Challenge

“One big challenge was to design and build MediaEcho’s online corporate interface with the potential users in mind. Over at PurpleForest, every project is a learning experience as we dabble in product photography, videography, events management and website design.”

Snubbed & Ignored

“It is hard to talk to people when you are a startup. You get snubbed and ignored. But if you keep doing what you do best, someone will notice your efforts and recognise you eventually. For me, I believe that no matter how hard things get, there will always be a solution if you persevere and keep trying.”

Talented Individuals

“One of the best experiences I had working with an external organisation was with the Association of Comic Artists Singapore (ACAS), where I worked on a website for an initiative called IGNITE! and covered events as a photographer. I was given the opportunity to gain insight into the working styles of the comics industry in Singapore. I also had the chance to meet and work with many talented individuals.”

Staying Updated

“I have met a lot of creative people from the industry. They do not seem to ‘age with time’. Instead, they become younger and are more willing to try out new things. Many of them are even more updated than I am on the latest technological and creative trends.”
Name: **Lim Su Pei**  
Graduated: 2009  
What I am doing now: I’m doing marketing and PR for Asian Culture Enterprise Singapore, a subsidiary of The Old Parliament House that runs The Arts House (amongst the many things I do for this new startup).  
Contact: supei.lim@spaces.org.sg  
Best memory of CNM: The very fun and stressful honours year and commencement one year ago.

Name: **Nilar Aye (Nicole)**  
Graduated: 2008  
What I am doing now: I am currently working as an Interactive Marketing Executive at Convertium Pte Ltd. I strategise marketing plans for various brands and products to strengthen their brand propositions and make them profitable in the digital realm.  
Contact: nilar.aye@gmail.com  
Best memory of CNM: My best memory of CNM is of CNM people and professors, who have walked through the journey together with me at NUS. My CNM journey helped me realise my passion and encouraged me to follow it. I will never forget the various CNM projects (PR Communications, New Media, Graphic Design, Game Design, etc.) that have given me so much fun to accomplish then and equipped me with useful skills to perform well in what I am doing now.

Name: **Ravindran Mark**  
Graduated: 2008  
What I am doing now: Taking a game design course at the Digipen–Ubisoft campus in Singapore  
Contact: KnightLock@gmail.com  
Best Memory: I absolutely loved the design courses! I think it was NM3208 that we did the music video? It was totally memorable cutting and editing the whole thing and bringing it all together. Good stuff.
Name: **Wong Yao Dong (Wes)**  
Graduated: 2009  
What I am doing now: Game Tester at LucasArts  
Contact: henwee@yahoo.com  
Best memory of CNM: Sitting in the library and chilling with Robbie and Pegan. Walking along A56 and chatting about random game development with Chris. Sashaying into the LT dressed as a transvestite for our presentation with Arly and gang. So many memories of CNM...  

Name: **Liau Yun Qing**  
Graduated: 2009  
What I am doing now: IT journalist at ZDNet Asia  
Contact: sg.linkedin.com/in/liauyq  
Best memory of CNM: Going for dinner with friends after late night classes. Rushing (grumbling about) project deadlines with friends in the CATI Lab.  

Name: **Audrey Li**  
Graduated: 2008  
What I am doing now: Marketing Executive at an IT company called Vi8e Interactive Pte Ltd  
Contact: audrey@vi8e.com  
Best memory of CNM: The people — from the lecturers, TAs, administrative staff, right down to fellow course mates. They made CNM what it is today with their passion to progress in the Communications and New Media industries and where iron sharpens iron here, you get tons of sparks that just make the whole study experience sizzling hot! =)  

Name: **Pham Hai Dang**  
Graduated: 2006  
What I am doing now: Game Artist at Mikoishi Studios  
Contact: phamhaidang@gmail.com  
Best memory of CNM: Classes with Alex Mitchell & Kevin McGee, Linda Perry, Gene Van Heerden, Daniela Plewe... what a bunch of lovely teachers!  

Name: **Aaron Su**  
Graduated: 2009  
What I am doing now: Copywriter in a creative agency dealing with advertisements for major players like HP, Sony, Nokia, AsiaMalls, amongst others. A copywriter is essentially the head of a creative team — he writes the headlines, taglines and accompanying copy but is also in charge of conceptualising the idea into words so that the idea could be sold without the use of visuals. Hence, he is there from the idea generation till the completion of the accompanying visual.  
Contact: aaronashersu@gmail.com  
Best memory of CNM: To be honest, there is no best memory as all my memories of CNM have been great. But if you have to let me narrow it down, it would be my honours year when the class became more familiar and hence, closer. Perhaps the best memory in that year would be a project from this module called Transnational Media Producers where my group of 10 people replicated an American Idol episode to try to demonstrate the idea of music reproduction and the things that go behind the scenes in producing the next star.