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Five digital media projects set to draw \$70m investments

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MDA to subsidise 10% of companies' project bill through a funding grant

SINGAPORE'S digital media sector continues to buck the economic trend, with five new projects expected to draw \$70 million of investment in developing games and interactive learning applications.

This shot in the arm for the nascent industry is set to create 300 jobs and add to Singapore's credentials as an emerging regional hub for creating everything from 3-D movies to animation and computer games.

The five companies spearheading the projects are Fresbo, BotsLIFE, Personal e-Motion, Glocal and Popular e-Learning Holdings.

Fresbo plans to ride the social networking wave through a virtual world in which players can interact using online avatars.

Like the popular Second Life portal, they can also buy and trade items such as clothing, maps and even furniture for their cyber abode.

BotsLIFE has developed a 3D platform that allows anyone to create complex robotic movements without mechanical or software engineering know-how. The company plans to use this as the foundation for creating other products such as computer games.

Personal e-Motion and Popular are both focusing on e-learning applications, while Glocal is looking to beef up its Internet television infrastructure.

As a sweetener, the Media Development Authority (MDA) will subsidise almost 10 per cent of the companies' project bill through a \$7.6 million grant to offset the cost of developing and marketing products.

The five firms' projects were chosen to receive the MDA subsidy from a pool of 26 proposals submitted in September last year.

Through the funding exercise, the media regulator hopes to help companies that have already developed so-called new media products such as electronic books or computer games to enhance and commercialise their offerings.

For example, MDA is funding the cost of developing new content for **Koobits**, the flagship product from Personal e-Motion. The platform allows users to create and publish their own electronic books and share content with others in the Koobit community.

'This funding initiative complements MDA's ongoing effort to support innovative content development and research and development in interactive digital media,' said MDA deputy CEO Michael Yap.

Stanley Han, co-founder and general manager of Personal e-Motion, said: 'The funding has increased our company's cash flow capacity to enable us to focus on long-term global strategies rather than short-term survival. Without the funds it would be difficult to establish a global presence.'

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