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News

Made-in-Singapore 'Simputer' to roll out by April

Encore Singapore hopes to sell 50,000 to 100,000 units by end-2002

By Leo Kee Chye , Business Times
14 Jan 2002

A JOINT venture formed on Friday says it will produce a commercial version of the India partner's flagship Simputer handheld computer in less than four months.

Encore Singapore, a joint venture between Bangalore-based Encore Software and Singapore startup Time2Talk, expects to roll out the first batch of 1,000 units of the Simputer by end-April 2002. Each will cost about US$200.

The Simputer was co developed by Encore Software and the Indian Institute of Science, and has been highly praised for applying advanced technology to make it easy to use even by illiterate rural workers.

The manufacturing of the new version will be outsourced to contract manufacturers in Singapore, said Encore Software chairman and CEO Vinay L Deshpande.

'Currently, we are in the midst of discussion with a few of them,' he said.

Encore Singapore will also develop and market mobile applications and solutions around the product. It will employ 20 engineers, the majority from India.

Time2Talk CEO Ravi Desiraju, who also heads the new joint venture, said the company was 'looking at selling about 50,000 to 100,000 units by end-2002, and 500,000 to one million units by 2003.'

The joint venture will leverage on Encore's knowledge in technology building and Time2Talk's bring-to-market expertise, Mr Desiraju said at the signing of the joint venture in the Economic Development Board of Singapore's offices.

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The joint venture's mobile solutions - applications bundled with Simputer - will be targeted at the government, businesses and consumers, said Mr Desiraju.

Currently, the company expects to complete several pilot implementations of the Simputer in e-government, e-learning and enterprise workforce automation within H1 2002, he added.

'This is probably the first time that technology is coming here - in Singapore - from India,' said Mr Deshpande. 'Previously, it was manpower, but now it's brain power.'

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