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MEDIA RELEASE

NIE DESIGNS FIRST COMMERCIALISED STUDENT GAME

Social Studies curriculum for secondary level students in Singapore may be a gaming affair in the future with a new game-mediated learning programme conceptualised and designed by a team of 11 academics and staff from the Learning Sciences Lab (LSL) of the National Institute of Education (NIE) Singapore.

Titled as *Statecraft X*[™], the commercialisation of the game was finalised in November 2011. Design and development of the game, together with associated curricular materials, was carried out by a team from NIE comprising educational researchers, game designers, game programmers, and graphic artists. This work was funded by the National Research Foundation, through the Ministry of Education Singapore. A contract was signed between NIE and Immersive Play Pte Ltd (Immersive Play) for the commercialisation of the game. *Statecraft X*[™] is a multiplayer 24/7 server-based game that can be played on Apple[™] iPhones[®] as well as on Web browsers, accessed via desktop, laptop, and tablet computers. Initial trials conducted by NIE over a period of 15 months have already yielded positive results from 15 year-old students.

***Statecraft X*[™] Learning**

Designed for youths to construct meaning and identities in the context of citizenship education, *Statecraft X*[™] game play helps students to understand and put into practice concepts related to citizenship, governance, and leadership. Through game play, students are engaged in providing for the basic needs of the citizens (e.g. housing, jobs, healthcare), maintaining multi-racial harmony, fostering trade and economic well-being, establishing an effective defence force, engaging in international diplomacy, and responding to an invasion of the country. Students play the role of governors of towns in the medieval fantasy game world of Velar. They have to govern and lead the citizens of their towns, comprising dwarfs, elves, humans and trolls as they attempt to assume leadership of other towns, with the ultimate aim of assuming leadership of the kingdom's capital city, Topezios, and thus of the kingdom itself. From managing a town's economy to building up defences against aggressors, from forging diplomatic ties to gaining the trust of the town citizens that a player governs, *Statecraft X*[™] creates a comprehensive and exciting social studies experience in and out of the classroom. Game sessions typically run over a period of three weeks with up to 20 players in any single session. Players are organised into factions, and faction scores are calculated according to two factors: the average happiness of all people in those towns, and the amount of gold that a faction possesses at the end of the game. These scores are announced at the end of every day on the game's web portal.

Professor Lee Wing On, NIE Dean of Education Research, says, "We are honoured that this pioneering effort from one of our 5 main research clusters has received favourable response from the community and stakeholders. We hope that this will help to illustrate our on-going research endeavours that are aimed at bringing richer classroom experiences. With *Statecraft X*[™], we hope to also demonstrate how we approach learning with a holistic view of

not only utilising the available technological advancements to promote learning but also reinforce meaningful values that build character through varying situation awareness.”

The project’s Principal Investigator, Associate Professor Chee Yam San, added, “Our research shows that students who learned citizenship and governance with the *Statecraft X™* curriculum performed better than those who learned based on traditional classroom teaching, when assessed using an essay evaluated on the basis of the criteria relevance of content, adoption of multiple perspectives, and investment of personal voice. Interview data also show that students demonstrate greater understanding of and empathy for government policies. Female students enjoyed taking care of their towns’ virtual citizens and empathised strongly with the challenges that the citizens faced. Male students enjoyed the element of competition in game play and the strategic thinking required to capture the capital city.”

Mr Samuel Lee, Managing Director, Immersive Play Pte Ltd, said: “We are pleased to be involved in bringing a powerful first-hand experience to students on a wide range of topics through *Statecraft X™*. We hope that the game-mediated learning format will enable students to experience everyday lessons in a way that traditional classroom learning is not able to provide.”

ABOUT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION (NIE), SINGAPORE

The National Institute of Education (NIE) is an institute of the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore.

NIE provides all levels of teacher education, from initial teacher education programmes to professional development programmes for in-service teachers and executive leadership programmes for Principals, Departmental Heads and other school leaders. NIE also offers postgraduate programmes that lead to the award of higher degrees. In addition, NIE also offers part-time programmes that make it possible for current primary level teachers the opportunity to earn a Bachelor of Education degree.

Expanding her wings beyond local shores, NIE is also lauded for programmes such as *Management and Leadership in Schools (MLS)* and *Leaders in Education (International) (LEPI)* by overseas education leaders.

NIE Singapore is a founding member and inaugural chair of the International Alliance of Leading Education Institutes (IALEI), which was first established with seven other world-leading education institutions in August 2007. Currently, the IALEI has seen an inclusion of two new members to the think tank that will influence the education sector globally. Together, they will draw expertise and research in education to generate ideas, identify trends and serve as a collective voice on important educational matters and thus influence policies and practice in education.

The National Institute of Education, Singapore is one of the leading teacher preparation institutions in the world. NIE collaborates with MOE and its schools to transform the teacher preparation system and to ensure it continues to meet changing needs of the education system. NIE also plays an important role in providing education research and research based-pedagogical curriculum and direction to the Ministry and its schools. This is all in line with the mission of the Ministry, which is to mould the future of our nation.

For more information, please visit www.nie.edu.sg.

ABOUT IMMERSIVE PLAY PTE LTD

Immersive Play is a Singapore based company with a reputation for creative design, educational games and interactive media development across the entire media platform.

Established in 2008, Immersive Play has offices and an Animation Studio in the Philippines, producing TV and Feature animation content, and a Singapore based subsidiary developing casual and mobile games for consumers and businesses.

Besides partnering with Institutions like NIE to bring innovative educational games, content and software to homes and classrooms, Immersive Play also creates her own educational media products comprising animated TV Series and Interactive Games for the Web and Mobile Platform under the Immersive Learning System brand.

For more information, please visit www.immersiveplay.sg or call Mr James Chan at 9670 9516.