



Exploit  
Technologies

# EtpLicit

ETPL is the commercialisation arm of A\*STAR

November 2003

## The Chair Speaketh...



Greetings from the Biopolis!

The month of October has been filled with good news and happy events.

ETPL has moved to the Matrix Block next to SERC. By the time you read this newsletter, SERC and CPAD would have moved into their spanking new premises as well.

In this issue, we share with you three success licence stories, two pertaining to licence of intellectual property created by our researchers from IMCB, and one from I<sup>2</sup>R.

We are truly proud of our team of researchers from IMCB who persisted in their work on the SARs antibody-based tests in collaboration with Genelabs.

We are similarly proud to be associated with a new home-grown company, Meta Concepts, which has licensed natural language processing technologies developed by I<sup>2</sup>R. All the best to Meta Concepts!

More good news-SIMTECH's researchers, Dr Ivan Lee, Seow Yit Yuae, Wong Pei Lee and Zhang Chunning have received in-principle approval to incubate a web-based software solution/technology codenamed "EPcit".

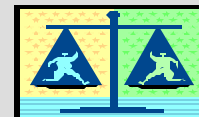
The founders have found angel investors and will be investing their own money in the venture. ETPL will match per dollar of the investment raised up to one million dollars. We wish Ivan and his team all the best in their corporate venture look out for Business Life Cycle Solutions Pte Ltd (BLC Solutions).

In the mean time, continue to keep well and have a good end to the year.

From us all at ETPL:

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY 2004!!!

## LegaLIP



### Lack of inventive step?

Patentability requires that subject matter be new, involves an inventive step, and is industrially applicable. To meet these patentability requirements, the subject matter to be patented is compared to prior art. These prior art includes, but is not limited, to the following:

- published patent applications;
- granted patents;
- general publications in newspapers;
- subscribed journals or magazines; and
- materials from websites accessible by the general public.

Although 'new' is easily met when there is an element or a method step that is different, 'inventive step' requires more than a physical or procedural difference.

Consider the following questions, where appropriate, to overcome rejection by a patent examiner who states that your invention, though new, does not have an inventive step:

- Has the patent examiner misunderstood the prior art or your invention?
- Does the invention provide superior or unexpected results not achievable by the prior art?
- Why has a problem not been solved using the invention in the prior art?
- Is there another element or method step in the prior art that would hinder or limit use of the invention?

Most importantly, don't give up without challenging the rejection by the patent examiner!

## Spotlight1



## Genelabs Diagnostics Pte Ltd

Genelabs Diagnostics Pte Ltd signed a licensing agreement with Exploit Technologies on the 26th of September 2003 for the use of two Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) recombinant proteins developed by the Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology (IMCB) for SARS serological diagnostics. Genelabs and IMCB jointly developed the two antibody-based tests during a two-month research collaboration. The two newly developed tests include a rapid 15-minute test and an Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) test which had a successful press release on the 5th of September 2003.

Genelabs is a diagnostic company focused on the development and manufacture of in-vitro diagnostic tests for the detection of infectious diseases in humans. The Company began operations in Singapore in 1985 and currently has subsidiaries and offices in the U.S., Switzerland and China and markets its products through a network of distributors worldwide.

## Spotlight2



## Merlion Pharmaceuticals Pte Ltd

A team at IMCB lead by Dr Wang Yue has built up and characterised a diverse collection of 10,000 strains of equatorial actinomycetes from Singapore. The diversity of the microbes, some of which represent new taxa, surprised the researchers, considering the small size of Singapore. Searching for novel actinomycetes constitutes a crucial component in natural product-based drug discovery as these organisms are known to produce vast number of metabolites from which antibiotics and other pharmaceutical useful compounds have already been developed.

This unique collection has been licensed to Merlion Pharmaceuticals for use in their drug discovery process. Merlion Pharmaceuticals, a Singapore-based privately held company which specialises in drug discovery and development by screening of natural products, has assembled one of the largest and most diverse natural product collections for screening. Merlion is currently working in partnership with a number of the multi-national pharmaceutical companies.

## Inteligencia



### Trade Show Intelligence

To recap, the first steps in obtaining trade show intelligence is to plan and strategize how to approach a trade show. The next steps will detail what to do when you are physically at the trade show.

**The move.** You are now at the trade show and you must put your plan into action. How do I do it? How do I elicit information from strangers? Going back to the dating allegory, you've made a plan to approach a girl (or boy), now you must find a way to break the ice .

One good way to break the ice is simply saying "Hello" and introducing yourself to the representative manning the booth. Try to find a common platform to carry the conversation further. For instance, it could be that you came from the same state or university or even carry the same mobile phone as the representative!

1. Plan
2. The move
3. On-site debrief and re-strategize
4. Debrief & Circulation

Beware! It may be a frustrating experience as you may get rejected or not be able to get the information that you want. Also, be very careful of counter-elicitation, where your target actually elicits information from you, thus making you the target instead. Below is a short guide on some of the questions you can use as ice-breakers and how it may lead to obtaining the information:

| Trade Show Intelligence Elicitation   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Date Conversation   |
|---|---|
| My name is..... and you are?  | My name is..... and you are?  |
| How is the conference so far?   | Have I seen you somewhere before?   |
| (Establishing a common platform)<br>Have you read about the new networking technology?  | (Establishing a common platform)<br>Do you know Jack from Zouk? (Jack is a mutual acquaintance)   |
| (Moving in for the kill)<br>What are your thoughts about this new technology? By the way, any plans to work on something similar? – <i>This is the elicitation question</i> | (Moving in for the kill)<br>By the way, would you be interested to go out for a movie or a cup of coffee and perhaps a meal afterwards? – <i>This is the real intention</i> |

Next issue: Debriefing and Restrategizing.....

## Face to face with... Mr Marc Su



Marc Su is the founder and CEO of Meta Concepts, the maker of ECHO – the mobile-based cross-language enabling solution. Meta Concepts recently licensed I<sup>2</sup>R's Natural Language Processing technologies from ETPL and integrated it into its own META software to create the ECHO service. The team of inventors from I<sup>2</sup>R helped to transfer the technology to the start-up (see photo-insert below). Early this year, ECHO was awarded the Grand

Prize in the Wireless Challenge 2003 organized by Singapore Infocomm Technology Federation (SiTF). Since then, ECHO has been adopted and launched by MobileOne as "SMS Translator" service to the mobile users. A few other regional Telco operators will be launching ECHO service within the next two months.

### **How was Meta Concepts founded?**

The Asian Financial Crisis and the Dot-Com burst has severely affected many companies, including many well-established western organizations, which I have worked for most of my career. Like many other people, I had grown to believe that one needs to have the muscles of MNC to build strong and big business. Nevertheless, the market downturn has exposed the MNC's vulnerability, which has little difference from many local SMEs. Ironically, this led me to believe that the reverse could also be true; i.e. an SME can be as strong as any MNC.

Since then, one question has been lingering in my mind – do I want to spend the rest of my career with another equally vulnerable MNC, or do I want to build a company that may be equally strong with the right vision and management. Subsequently, I spent more than 3 months of personal times traveling in various countries, in an attempt to find out for myself, what do I want to do? And what would the market want?

Finally, my answer is Meta Concepts.

**I<sup>2</sup>R's Machine Translation Team (Left to Right): Ms Yeo Poh Khim, Ms Aw Ai Ti and Ms Fan Zhen Zhen.**



### **What are the challenges?**

§ As a start-up company, we worked against a non-existence track record and references. Although winning the Wireless Challenge 2003 for ECHO does help a little, but we have no history to prove that we are indeed capable of delivering and meeting the high service level requirement that is mandated by the Telco industry.

§ ECHO service being a brand new concept, we have to overcome the skepticism of the Telco operators and convince them of the market viability.

§ Pro-long economy slow down has created a market that is not conducive for business or investment. Organizations are overly cautious with their spending these days.

§ As a young company that is still in early stage of building up customer base, we face with extremely tight cash flow. Despite the early success, we are still not able to obtain loan facility from financial institution with reasonable terms. This is a chicken-&-eggs situation for us, as we really need more capital to expand and to prove the viability of the business, yet we must already be there in order to be granted such facility.

### **What is your vision for the future?**

The future is in the mobile space. ECHO is only the beginning, with our very own META (Message Exchange Transactional Architecture), which would allow traditional applications to be converted into mobile / wireless solution in very short time-to-market. ECHO is one such example, which was built on top of META. We will continue to exploit interesting technologies through organizations such as I<sup>2</sup>R, and then we will inject our pragmatic business approach and transform them into many more mobile services that will become way-of-life for mobile users.

The vision for Meta Concepts is to become an influential mobile contents aggregator that offers services that have REAL value. (Who needs another ring tones provider?)

**incub@tion**



Congratulations to Dr Ivan Lee, Seow Yit Yuae, Wong Pei Lee and Zhang Chuning of SIMTech for their proposal to incubate a web-based software solution codenamed "EPcit".

### **Technology**

EPcit is an innovative Web-based solution that enables enterprise-wide collaboration and management of critical information pertaining to products, processes and resources in discrete manufacturing industries.

The EPcit system enables companies to integrate their design with sales, planning, purchasing, production and shipment processes seamlessly across the whole demand and supply chains of discrete manufacturers.

### **Sound Business Model**

The team has identified a niche market of SMEs in precision engineering, and mold making companies for their technology. In these markets, product designs are becoming increasingly complex whilst the SMEs face increasing pressures to reduce cost and cycle time in their businesses. EPcit answers these challenges.

The EPcit system has been pilot-tested at a local mold making company. Preliminary analysis shows that the system can improve the company's efficiency significantly.

### **Commitment from Founders**

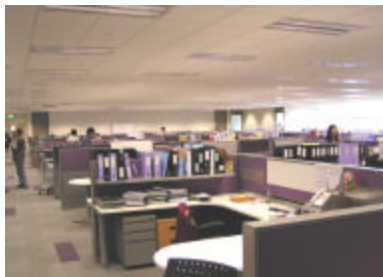
The founders have found angel investors and will be investing their own money in the venture. ETPL ISM will match per dollar of the investment raised up to one million dollars.

**We wish Ivan and his team all the best and look forward to working closely with them.**

## Back Page...

### OVERHEARD ON 10 OCTOBER 2003

*"Very efficient, very fast!"  
"Cold" "No lah, now OK" "Thermostat not working"  
"More leg space" "Very luxurious!" "Too small"  
"Close proximity to my people"  
"Finally will be very nice"*



### THE REAL STORY

No, this conversation did not take place in an airplane and no, the comments were not about the SQ airplane seats. These folks at ETPL were talking about the long-awaited and much-anticipated move to The Biopolis.

The move to ETPL's new premises took all of one day, all thanks to the efficient co-ordination and hard work of the move committee. Whilst planning for the move, we did not forget charity-ETPL's furniture was donated to the Salvation Army.

ETPL now occupies the ninth floor at the Matrix block side by side with SERC. So come by to visit us if you wish.

When you do come by, remind us to take you to this market for a sumptuous char siew and siew yok fun lunch!

## You ask we answer...



### **How do I review prior art cited in a prior art search relating to a patent application for an invention?**

ETPL replies...

Note that a patent application has to have claims that define the boundaries of an invention. If basic or independent claims of the invention have been described in the prior art, then such claims are likely to be rejected. Hence, reviewing the prior art typically requires distinguishing the independent claims of the invention against what is described in the prior art, not what is claimed by the prior art.

### **What can be done if an Examiner rejects claims of a patent application because of cited prior art?**

ETPL replies...

If the Examiner rejects the claims because of cited prior art, then the following are possible approaches:

- Provide reasons or arguments to show why the invention as claimed is different from the prior art without amending the claims;
- Amend the claims to overcome the Examiner's rejection; and/or
- Cancel the claims that are rejected and provide new claims that overcome the Examiner's rejections.

It is important not to add matter not already provided in the patent application when taking one of the above approaches.

## The Classifieds November 2003



The month of October was a busy and exciting one for ETPL! We participated in a number of major events that provided excellent platforms to help commercialise A\*STAR technologies. The following are two events which we are proud to share with you:

### **Tripartite Meeting**

A tripartite meeting between ETPL, Columbia University and Imperial College was held on the week of 27 October 2003. Technical themes discussed include Bioinformatics, Photonics and Stem Cells.

### **IP & Technology Exploitation Forum (IP & TEF)**

ETPL partnered NTU, NUS and IPOS on the IP & TEF event held at Suntec City from 30 - 31 October. ETPL chaired a session on International Collaboration in Commercialisation of Technologies with speakers from our tripartite partners. A\*STAR technologies were showcased in this Forum.

LOOK OUT FOR MORE UPDATES  
IN OUR NEXT ISSUE!

## Tell us!



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