

# **New Hopes of Software and Digital Content Industries in Thailand**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to give a speech at this conference today. Today we are going to talk about the IT industry in Thailand, especially in the areas of software and digital content industries. First of all, I have to introduce the organization, Software Industry Promotion Agency (SIPA) that I am working to you. I just join in this organization for one year, and recently I make a commitment to the public that I will transform this organization to lead the software development in Thailand and we promise to generate a growth of the industry from currently at about 60 million a year to be more than 150 billion baht a year within the next three years.

So the topic of the next discussion is the question of how to make this kind of breakthrough commitment in the Thailand. In Buddhism, we are thought that in order to making the achievement, we have to know the root cause of the problem that stopping us to reach the goal first, then if we can resolve the problem by taking necessary actions. The objective can be achieved easily. Now we will discuss about the problem of the software and digital content industries in Thailand. Twenty years ago Thailand was among the few countries such as Singapore, S. Korea or Malaysia that realized the important of Information Technology. However right now when we look at the ICT competitiveness ranking by either IMD or World Economic Forum (WEF), we can see that Thailand is ranked at the low end and being placed among those of

under-developing countries in ICT readiness. Last year (2008) the number of foreign Software investment in Thailand is at 376 million baht, and the Thai Software export is only 4,000 million baht of which are very low comparing with other developing countries in Asia. Therefore there must be something that some other countries know and do it right while there must be some wrong doing in Thailand and block the ICT development in Thailand. So what are the secret of which people in those other countries know and we, the Thai, do not know.

We can observe that there is a similar key success factor of those countries like Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam in develop the local ICT industry and that is to partnership with major ICT international companies. It is very true that the ICT industry is dominated by a few international companies in the world (just like what happening in electronic industry, oil industry and automotive industry). These international companies competing each other and secure the whole world marketing channels among themselves. Therefore Thailand should open up and welcome all the international companies to invest in software industry and build up the production based in Thailand. In partnership with those international companies we can get not only the typical foreign investment and jobs but also the technology transfer to local industry and the world wide marketing channel/network.

At present SIPA initiates four national flagship projects, that is, the ICT Innovation Paradise in Phuket, the Thailand Digital Content Center in Bangkok, the Global Outsourcing in Chaingmai and the ICT City (Incubation and Training Center) in Khonkaen. Phuket ICT Innovation Paradise - The hub of ICT (software) innovation, research and development is located in Phuket, a tourist paradise with an open society and a healthy investment ecosystem. Cooperating with TOT and CAT , SIPA is creating a paradise for software developers by providing them with high-technology telecommunications infrastructure including fiber optic network, 1 GB internet access, Wi-fi, etc. Phuket is ready to serve the needs of software researchers and investors with high-standard leisure facilities, excellent transportation links, health care services and educational facilities. The Thai government is preparing to facilitate investors with a government service center and profitable incentives such as 8-year tax holidays and more.

Thailand Digital Content Center - With a broad vision to realize the potential of the digital content market, SIPA is positioning Bangkok as a center for the Thai animation, game, multimedia and edutainment industries. The Thailand Digital Content Center (TDCC) aims to capitalize on the Thais' well-know artistic talent, which has already played a significant role in many world-class multimedia productions. TDCC will serve the increasing international demand for digital content by providing both Thai and foreign e-media developers with the optimal environment to grow, including the best workforce, data center software, marketing software, tooling software, etc.

National Software Incubation Center - As a main educational center and a huge source of hard-working and competent human resources in Thailand, Khon Kaen is the most suitable location for the National Software Incubation Center. SIPA will work closely with universities clustered in Northeastern Thailand to accelerate the development of human resources to international standards in the areas of embedded technology, animation and digital content, software development, mobile technology, e-service technology, etc.

Global Outsourcing Center - Thais are service-minded by nature, so Thailand possesses great potential as a global outsourcing center. Chiangmai is considered the best location for specialized e-services with its plentiful service-minded and skilled human resources. Chiangmai also has an excellent basic business infrastructure, plentiful higher educational institutions, competent personnel and a unique cultural and natural heritage. The potential e-service outsourcing opportunities from overseas and local Thai businesses include e-learning applications, digital media and broadcasting, document management and health and hospital services.

These four ICT National Flagship Projects will bring in new opportunities for international companies and local Thai companies to partnership, co-production and to develop Thai software and Digital Content to the world market. And I hope SIPA is opening up a new era of Thailand Software and Digital Content Development in Thailand.