

## Supermarket, museum – where do you want to study today?

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INSTEAD of sitting in classrooms, students are in front of their computers, conferencing with international students on the Internet.

And instead of doing sums in class, students go to supermarkets to understand the make-up of ingredients in a product as part of their mathematics lesson. They then send their findings via wireless Internet to their teacher in school.

Such is the concept of a virtual classroom, where students need not be confined to a fixed enclosure – they can learn from anywhere.

This is the vision of a project entitled Global School of the Future (GlobalSOF), which will allow next-generation learners to spearhead their own learning, as well as pave the way for a seamless integration of technology into the learning environment.

Learners are empowered to drive and direct their own style of learning with the help of digital devices such as notebook computers and personal digital assistants.

According to Ms Anthea Ong, the 38-year-old chief executive officer of Knowledge Director, this kind of learning is “imperative” in an increasingly mobile society. Knowledge Director is a local e-learning solutions company that provides customised e-learning templates for the education and enterprise sectors.

Said Ms Ong: “New learning concepts such as mobile learning will see classrooms and workplace learning take on a different meaning. Students no longer need to be confined to learning within the four walls of the classroom in school.”

The GlobalSOF project is led by Optara, a Singapore-based strategic consulting firm, with a group of non-governmental organisations and international experts.



**MAKING VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS POSSIBLE:**  
Ms Anthea Ong, the 38-year-old chief executive of Knowledge Director.

Knowledge Director is one of the consortium members that provides the technological expertise.

“The United States, United Kingdom and Taiwan have started the GlobalSOF effort. Singapore’s education system is one of the region’s most advanced and has undergone significant changes in recent years,” said Ms Ong.

“With our Intelligent Nation Masterplan and recent announcements on the introduction of Wimax services this year, there are exciting possibilities in the arena.”

Similarly, the concept of border-less learning can be extended to enterprises and workplaces. Working professionals, who travel often, may find that e-learning on the laptop caters to on-demand learning at the click of a few buttons.

For example, a sales executive might have studied the details of a product a long time ago, but may need to refresh his memory before the product is launched. E-learning on the laptop can provide timely help with immediate access to information.

“We predicted two years ago that workplace learning will become less rigid and stoic as the mobile, millennial generation comes into the workforce where they expect speed to know, on-demand learning, and highly interactive and engaging content that makes learning fun and personalised,” said Ms Ong.

Knowledge Director plans to officially launch LearningDirector 3.0 next month. This web-based application will provide digital game-based and interactive animated learning targeted at enterprises and schools.

## Dynamic about data

### Business automation fuels growth of the \$21-billion data integration market

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AS ORGANISATIONS move towards greater automation of their business processes, there is a need to optimise the way data is being used. This process is known as data integration.

And Informatica Corp intends to cash in on this lucrative market.

The provider of enterprise data integration software and services aims to grow its business from data warehousing to the broader data integration market.

The data integration market, valued at US\$13 billion (\$21 billion), is five times larger than the data warehousing market, according to the International Data Corp, Mr Sohaib Abbasi, Informatica’s president and chief executive officer told TODAY.

“Organisations have silos of data in different formats and in various departments, which can lead to inconsistencies in the process of automation. Hence, companies realise that they have to integrate their data,” said Mr Abbasi.

Traditionally, companies were storing their data through the process of data warehousing. Now, as businesses become more information-based, companies realise that they need to get more value out of their data.

“There are four different ways for organisations to get more value out of their data. Namely – migration, consolidation, synchronisation and the building of data hubs, in addition to data warehousing. Informatica is able to automate all these processes simultaneously,” said Mr Abbasi.

Key to the growth of the data integration market is the outsourcing phenomenon. This is characterised by different modes such as business process outsourcing, run-

ning software as a service and outsourcing of IT, human resource departments and cost centres. Data is therefore straddled across various locations and companies that outsource no longer have the data in-house.

As a result, a new model of doing business – known as the virtual enterprise – emerges.

Here, organisations concentrate on their core competency and outsource everything else, said Mr Abbasi.

Focusing on this new model, Informatica’s solutions aim to help organisations integrate their data and achieve greater business value.

But it has not been all rosy for the company. After four years of not achieving growth, Informatica is now seeing 22 per cent growth year-on-year, said Mr Abbasi.

The main driver of this growth is the company’s strategy towards establishing itself as an enterprise data integration software leader.

The Asia-Pacific region looks set to help propel the company’s growth. Last year, Informatica’s revenue from the region more than doubled, said Mr Abbasi.

The company has more than 2,400 customers, with about 400 belonging to this region. In the Asia-Pacific, Informatica is focusing on key verticals such as finance, life-sciences, public sector and manufacturing.

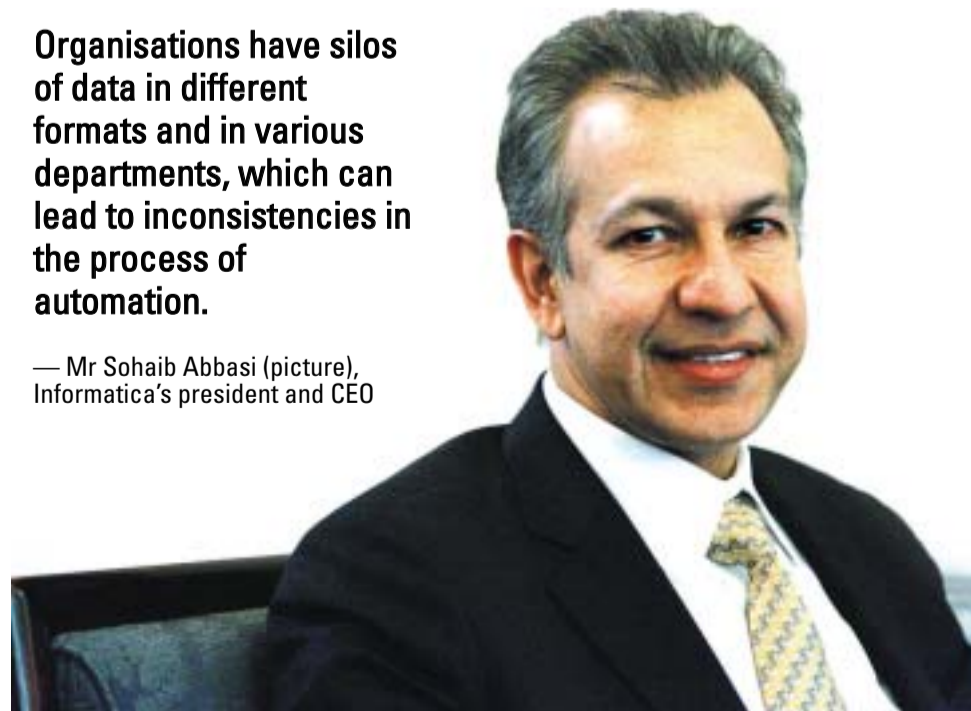
Extending its presence in the region, the company set up its South Asian representative office in Singapore last month, adding to its offices in Beijing, Korea and Taiwan, which were set up last year.

Specific to Singapore, the finance market is the strongest for Informatica right now, said Mr Joel Momberger, regional manager (South Asia), Informatica.

“The Singapore Government’s initiative to promote automation in the life-sciences industry is also beneficial to Informatica, together with greater consolidation in the public sector,” he said.

**Organisations have silos of data in different formats and in various departments, which can lead to inconsistencies in the process of automation.**

— Mr Sohaib Abbasi (picture), Informatica’s president and CEO



KOH MUI FONG

## SHORTCUTS

### BEHOLD INTEL'S XEON PROCESSOR

Intel introduced the first dual-core low-voltage Xeon processor that helps boost energy-efficient price/performance with up to four times the performance-per-watt of previous Intel Xeon processors and platforms.

With the new processor, equipment manufacturers will reportedly be able to optimally balance processing capabilities with power and space constraints to help meet demands for smaller devices, lower cooling bills or better price and performance per watt.

The Dual-Core Intel Xeon processor LV 2.0 GHz and 1.66 GHz are available from Intel now for US\$423 (\$683) and US\$209 per unit respectively in 1,000-unit quantities.

### EMC SMARTS IP MANAGER LAUNCHED

EMC Corp has unveiled the EMC Smarts Internet Protocol (IP) Availability Manager for network-attached storage (NAS) that automates root-cause and impact analysis across all IP and NAS devices. The solution automates real-time, root-cause analysis of critical network availability problems, including NAS IP connectivity, and identifies the service impact of these problems. It is capable of auto-discovering NAS system elements as IP devices and supports EMC Celerra systems and NetApp filers. The solution is built upon the Smarts common data model, which updates automatically as the environment changes, resulting in a lower total cost of ownership. The Smarts IP Availability Manager for NAS is available now in the IP AM 6.2 Smart Pack 3.