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S'pore to set up commercial grid

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SINGAPORE--To bolster the adoption of grid computing in the island-state, the government announced Wednesday the development of a commercial grid infrastructure.

Speaking at the opening of Grid Asia 2007, Leong Keng Thai, deputy chief executive of Singapore's Infocomm Development Authority (IDA), said the industry regulator is currently in talks with government agencies and industry players such as Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Microsoft, Sun Microsystems, and Oracle, to develop a commercial grid infrastructure. Once implemented, the infrastructure will give enterprises on-demand access to grid computing on a pay-per-use basis.

Called the National Grid, the grid infrastructure will be ready by the end of this year or early 2008, and aims provide high-performance computing, software-as-a-service and large storage capacities to companies, especially small and midsize businesses (SMBs).

Leong noted that grid computing today has gone beyond the research community. For example, animated movies have already been made using grid technology, and financial institutions are also using grids to run risk analysis and actuarial calculations.

"The grid model promises optimum utilization of IT resources and tremendous cost savings for businesses," Leong said. "In the near future, this nascent technology will be required by many more businesses as a critical resource to help them stay ahead of competition."

More importantly, Leong added, pay-per-use grids help realize a future where no company is denied the opportunity to tap on high-performance computing.

"Computing, storage and software are ideally delivered as services, much like utilities and water electricity, so that no one, especially SMBs, need to worry about hefty investments to leverage grids for greater innovation and growth," Leong explained.

Singapore has been [progressing well](#) in the development of grid computing in the last few years, Leong said.

In 2006, more than 60 percent of organizations polled in Singapore had implemented or were likely to implement grid computing, according to Oracle's Global Grid Index IV report released in June 2006.

According to Leong, Singapore's National Library has [used grid technology](#) to archive more than 1,000 Web sites in seven days. The same task undertaken with a single processor would have taken five months, he added. The country's National Grid Pilot Platform has also expanded its computing capabilities to 1,000 CPUs since its inception in 2003.

However, Mark Linesch, president of the [Open Grid Forum](#), a global organization that promotes grid adoption, noted in his keynote address that pervasive adoption of grid computing is a work-in-progress.

He said stakeholders need to break through barriers such as multiple technology standards that "prevent us from interoperating one grid with another", as well as the reluctance of people to share computing resources.

"People don't like to share," he said, adding that most organizations will only free up computing resources that are not in use, and will take back computing power from the grid if needed.

Analyst company IDC forecasts the global grid market will be worth about US\$12 billion in 2007.