

CLOUD BENEFICIARY 1

Govt creates its own YouTube

It used Cloud to develop its own video-hosting service, saving money on servers and avoiding ownership issues

Government agencies like the Ministry of Transport (www.mot.gov.sg) are using short video clips on their websites to better explain policies to citizens. The videos are hosted on the cloud but popular video hosting site YouTube has nothing to do with it.

Khoong Hock Yun, assistant chief executive officer of the Infocomm Development Authority (IDA), said: "YouTube has made videos popular. But government agencies hesitate to use it because any video posted on YouTube belongs to the website. If there is a court case, it must be heard in the United States. There is also a discomfort knowing that our videos on National Day parades, for example, can be spoofed."

The IDA came up with a video-hosting service last March which any government agency can use to put up videos on their websites. Instead of building its own hardware to host the videos, the IDA is making use of the cloud to host and stream the videos.

Dubbed Envision, the video-hosting service was awarded to two local consortia Evvo Media and ServTouch through a public tender earlier this year.



In this screen shot, Transport Minister Raymond Lim explains his ministry's land transport policy in a video embedded in the Ministry of Transport website.

There are three key benefits to Envision, said Khoong.

By using a shared resource, each agency pays only when they use the service and save on high capital expenditure on servers and networks.

There are two different service levels to ensure smooth video streaming experience. One is on a best effort basis where some lag during video streaming is acceptable. Said Khoong: "Agencies will use this for

promotional videos."

The other is a guaranteed level of service where a large number of people can sign in simultaneously and the high Internet bandwidth assigned for this service will ensure that the videos will play without lag or stalling.

Copyright and ownership issues form the third benefit for users. There is no worry over who owns the videos hosted by the service providers.

Explaining why IDA went for a cloud service, Khoong said: "It's difficult to know how much storage capacity and bandwidth to plan for. If we over-provide, it's a waste. If we under-provide, we can't scale easily when demand increases."

With Envision, the savings can be substantial. A 10-minute video, made available for one month and in which 150 concurrent users could tune in, could save an agency about \$5,000 a month by using the cloud service compared to paying \$10,000 to a dedicated video-on-demand provider. The Ministry of Transport, Mindef, the Public Service Division and IDA are the initial agencies interested in Envision services.

A video search in the www.gov.sg website will be rolled out soon, which will let people search online for all videos created by the Government.

In phase two of the project next year, Envision will be rolled out to schools where teachers and students can access videos and other interactive digital material for learning and teaching.

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