

S'pore to host top computer graphics show

Siggraph Asia, to be held next year, will showcase latest in graphics, animation technology

BY LEUNG WAI-LENG

SINGAPORE will host the region's version of the world's largest and most prestigious computer graphics show.

More than 6,000 visitors and 1,000 trade delegates from all over the world are expected to attend the inaugural Siggraph Asia show, from Dec 10 to 13 next year.

To be held at the Suntec convention centre, it will showcase the latest animation from top studios like Lucasfilm, cutting-edge computer graphics technologies, animation workshops and digital media research papers.

The premier annual Siggraph event, in San Diego in the United States, is attended by about 25,000 people and costs about US\$10 million (\$15 million) to organise, said Siggraph Asia conference chairman Lee Yong Tsui.

The world's largest computer graphics society – the Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group on Computer Graphics (ACM Siggraph) – hosts the US show.

Singapore won the bid to host the first Asian show due to its world-class conference infrastructure and ease of access for international participants.

Several countries in the region, such as South Korea, Australia, Japan and China were keen to host the event. It later boiled down to a three-way contest between Singapore, Tokyo and Shanghai.

Animation companies from the US are expected to hold recruitment drives for Asian talent at the Singapore show.

ACM Siggraph president Scott Owen said the association decided to hold an Asian show, given the "huge increase in the amount of high-quality technical and creative work from Asia".

The drop in Asian attendance at the US show was also a contributing factor.

Asian attendance rates in San Diego have dropped by about 30 per cent since 2001, due to the costs and time involved in travelling, as well as increased difficulty for attendees from some Asian countries in getting visas to travel to the US, said Dr Lee.

According to Dr Lee, a combined effort between the Singapore Tourism Board, the Media Development Authority and Infocomm Development Authority also impressed Siggraph's decision-makers with their support of the industry.

As a consolation for Japan, Yokohama was awarded the bid to host the second Asian show in 2009.