



PRESS RELEASE

NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD UNVEILS COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

- Yesterday.sg celebrates 3rd birthday with expanded features
- Launch of Heritage TV, Singapore's first heritage vodcast

Singapore – 6 February 2009

Experience refreshing new ways to engage in heritage as Yesterday.sg undergoes a major transformation. Be entertained by a quirky new web-based Heritage TV channel or better yet, contribute to it. Enjoy the thrills and spills in designing web-based games in Mission Darkstar. Finally, help to spread much-needed heritage cheer to your friends and family members as a young adult envoy in YEAH!

These new initiatives are part of the National Heritage Board's (NHB) new social media engagement plan, which looks at refreshing online **content**, engaging new **communities**, embracing fresh **channels**, and launching novel **contests**. The Board's approach leverages upon the success of the much-loved Yesterday.sg which celebrates its third year in promoting the heritage cause.

From Blog Aggregator to Social Media Platform

To widen its appeal to an increasingly sophisticated population, Yesterday.sg has undergone a significant revamp. Started since March 2006 as Singapore's first heritage and museum blog, Yesterday.sg currently attracts around 15,000 unique visitors per month with a total of 1,650 posts each averaging 300 reads. Emerging as a dynamic social media portal that encapsulates our unique heritage and culture, it now functions as a one-stop platform for citizen-centric heritage and museum content.

Said Michael Koh, Chief Executive Officer of NHB: "As a pioneer in social media, Yesterday.sg has achieved success in engaging the web-savvy young. Heritage and museums are no longer viewed as old and fuddy-duddy. The repositioning of Yesterday.sg into a social media platform creates fresh opportunities for Singaporeans to participate in heritage by sharing stories, photos, videos and other content with us. With its enhanced interactive features, Yesterday.sg will also serve as a launch pad for our other social media initiatives. Through this, we hope to reach an even wider segment of the population."

Incorporating Web 2.0 tools in a more linear and intuitive navigation system, the new Yesterday.sg will feature a discussion forum, video streaming, photo gallery, online polls, and a video platform titled Heritage TV (HTV). Offering higher levels of

interactivity and user friendliness, we hope to encourage more user-generated content while attracting a growing pool of heritage converts. The website will run on Wordpress – a blog engine that is already familiar to many bloggers and is very user-friendly even for first-timers.

The revamp of Yesterday.sg follows feedback from a survey of 300 users in July 2008. Contrary to popular belief that heritage only appeal to the mature, most visitors were young, with the majority aged between 18 and 34. Many users found the site useful as a resource for schoolwork and research projects. Survey respondents generally liked the site but asked for better navigation and more interactive features and these have been incorporated into the new portal.

A TV Channel for Heritage Content

Riding on the phenomenal success of amateur videos on Youtube, Heritage TV (HTV) provides a visual platform to engage viewers in Singapore's fascinating heritage and museum offerings. Produced entirely in-house with new episodes aired each fortnight, the short three to four minute video clips will focus on little known nuggets of Singapore's heritage, culture, and art. Done in a friendly and light-hearted manner, HTV aims to connect with the net-savvy younger generation and strengthen their affinity to heritage and our museums. To encourage sharing, an easy to use application will be built for users to contribute their videos.

Heritage Gaming takes on a New Spin

To attract web-savvy gaming enthusiasts, NHB has launched a competition for young online game designers to develop heritage-related games for their peers. Termed *Mission DarkStar*, the campaign looks at hosting these games on Yesterday.sg and will be used to foster a connection between the young and Singapore's heritage. Divided into two stages of competition, game developers may submit their detailed proposals to NHB and stand an opportunity to receive seed funding to develop their game. Three teams will then battle it out and emerge as the top heritage game.

Spreading Positive Word of Mouth

To seed a growing community of heritage and museum lovers, *Project YEAH!* (Young Envoys for the Arts and Heritage) aims to recruit young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 who have a genuine interest in arts, culture, heritage and museums. Appointed as heritage ambassadors, these youths will help to generate interest in heritage and the arts through their networks and communities. Working with tertiary institutions, youth clubs, social media communities and other groups, NHB will organize exclusive activities and gatherings for selected candidates.

Enclosed in your press folder are:

Annex A – Factsheet on Yesterday.sg

Annex B – Factsheet on Heritage TV

Annex C – Factsheet on Mission DarkStar

Annex D – Factsheet on Project YEAH!

About National Heritage Board

The National Heritage Board (NHB) champions the development and promotion of a vibrant cultural and heritage sector in Singapore. It makes heritage enriching, relevant and accessible to all through staging innovative programmes and forging collaborative partnerships. NHB leverages on technology and refreshing new approaches to make heritage more dynamic, alive and exciting for different audiences. It also manages both national and public museums, the National Archives of Singapore, and the Heritage Conservation Centre.

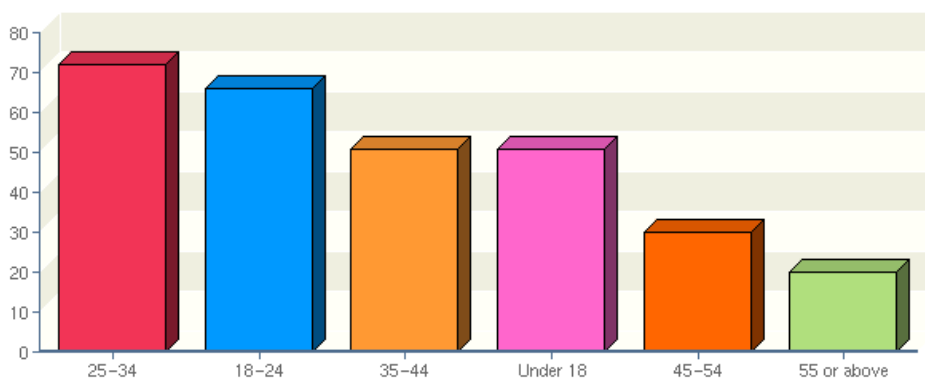
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FACTSHEET ON YESTERDAY.SG

- Launched in March 2006 with a core group of heritage enthusiasts who regularly blog on heritage-related topics on their own sites. Known as Friends of Yesterday.sg (FOYers), the group now stands at 38.
- There is at least one new post each day. To date, we have 1630 blog entries
- Average reads per post stands at about 300
- 30,000 Page Views per month
- 15,000 Unique Visitors per month
- Almost 1,500 comments made to date
- We have 2427 registered members.
- In their paper “The State of the Museum Blogosphere” in 2007, Museums and the Web ranked Yesterday.sg the 5th top museum blog in the world
- A survey in July 2008 showed that a majority of readers are in their mid-20s to mid-30s



- The top reasons for visiting yesterday.sg were:
 - Research for school/academic projects
 - To learn about Singapore’s heritage and history from a layman’s perspective
 - An interest in local nostalgia and a desire to contribute their memories and sentiments
 - Wanting to find out the latest museum attractions and events
- Highlights of the new portal
- The overall look of the new portal takes on that of a time-travel experience – hence the focus on clocks and dates. It allows users to travel back to a simpler time when Singapore’s history was being shaped. The older

contributors can share their memories and thoughts and younger readers are given a unique insight into those times gone by.

- Through the discussion platform, we hope our younger readers can pose questions arising from earlier blog entries or topics in the news and these can be debated and commented upon by all.
- Blogs – apart from submitting blog posts, registered users can also submit their photographs to our e-albums section and videos to our Internet television section
- Online polls can now be incorporated into individual blog posts when necessary allowing for quick pulse check of public sentiment
- The layout and navigation have been streamlined along with better tagging to make it easier for users can search for archive photos, posts and videos. This will help students looking for specific information.
- *Today in History* will feature major events of the day. Users can search for events of any specific day of the year. Users are encouraged to submit suggested events to be included here.
- Key upcoming events are prominently highlighted to encourage users to take part in the events and visit the exhibitions.
- *Did you Know?* – this is a section in which users can find some quirky facts of Singapore's history and folklore
- Features a chatbox for users to interact with a quick comment
- *Heritage TV* – This is a YouTube-based platform. Every fortnight, a new video clip will be uploaded. The series is filed entirely by a team from the Corporate Communications Division of NHB. Each episode lasts about three minutes. Users will be encouraged to submit their own heritage videos which can be uploaded to the portal.
- The new portal allows users to personalize their settings – tagging blogs that they can relate to
- It incorporates popular Web 2.0 functionalities including widgets, RSS feeds and links to Twitter and Facebook
- In 2009 we will be using yesterday.sg as a rallying platform from which registered users can sign up for special events as a trips to places of historical interest, special guided museum tours, talks and workshops.
- Online heritage games designed under Mission DarkStar will be hosted on the portal allowing another level of community engagement and interaction.
- Log onto www.yesterday.sg to explore the website.

FACTSHEET ON HERITAGE TV (HTV)

- Conceptualised in mid-2008, HTV is produced in-house by NHB's Corporate Communications team.
- The driving force behind HTV was to provide a different platform to interest the younger generation in our heritage. Given the popularity of vodcasts, it was felt that screening YouTube-like videos, deliberately edited in a similar raw, unpretentious manner, on heritage would appeal to this Net-savvy generation. This will in turn trigger their curiosity and intrigue the young to embark on their own journey to discover their heritage. It is also hoped that users will in time, contribute their own videos and in so doing, helping us to build a citizen-based video archives with snapshots of Singapore culture and heritage.
- HTV aims to cover interesting facets of our local heritage and the various activities happening in our museums round the island.
- From a survey done in July 2008, most of our readers are between ages of 18 and 34 and visit Yesterday.sg for school projects and research purposes. HTV will act as a learning tool to enhance their encounters with heritage.
- Each video will be uploaded together with an accompanying blog post, to further furnish the reader with details on the broadcasted topic
- First screened at the relaunch of Yesterday.sg on 6 February 2009, one new video, lasting an average of three minutes, will be broadcasted every fortnight.
- Users can view past episodes in our archives section
- Episodes showcased at the launch:
 - In the footsteps of our pioneer Armenians
 - Making of HTV
- Episodes in the pipeline include:
 - Rock of the Ages – the history of the Singapore Stone
 - Haw Par Villa revisited
 - Kampong Gal Irene Ang
 - Saving Lives – The history of Singapore's firefighters
 - Land of the Leopard
 - On the Historic Fort Canning trail
 - Of spices and heritage
 - Meet Singapore's Heritage Hawkers

FACTSHEET ON MISSION DARKSTAR

- *Mission Darkstar – Heritage Gaming Redefined* is National Heritage Board's first online game development competition to engage the web-savvy young to cherish Singapore's invaluable heritage. Through *Mission Darkstar*, NHB hopes to harness the collective creativity of web-savvy Singaporeans to raise the awareness and appreciation of Singapore's unique heritage and culture.
- The competition is targeted at the younger generation aged between 17 and 35 in Singapore. It will be the first museum- and heritage-based online game competition to be held in Singapore. By creating and developing games, it aims to harness the power of social media, the popularity of online gaming and the collective creativity of web savvy Singaporeans to raise the awareness and appreciation of Singapore's unique heritage and culture. This contest commenced in mid-December 2008 and scheduled to end in November 2009.
- The contest comprises the following stages:

Stage 1

- Call for heritage game proposals from the public. Participants to submit proposals along with sketches and other relevant supporting documents for web-based games with a social media and heritage elements

Stage 2

- Five teams will be chosen and each team will be awarded a seed fund of S\$ 4000 to develop an online prototype of a heritage game.
- Upon completion of the games, they will be publicly available online through social media platforms where the public can play the game and interact through comments and voting. The judging process will be two-pronged, with a panel of expert judges and public votes deciding the results. The winners will be selected based on the quality of the game and how it resonates with the intended users and its strong link to Singapore's history and heritage.

The competition aims to:

- Draw on the dynamism and creativity of Singaporeans and students to develop edutainment heritage-based gaming product.
- Cultivate an interest and appreciation amongst youths in the heritage and culture by appealing to their love for web gaming.
- Spur the creation of new online projects that can demonstrate that Singapore has a vibrant and sustainable creative gaming cluster. A whole new talent pool is available, ready and waiting to be tapped from the schools
- Instill a better sense of community, national identity and rootedness among the youths

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Visit www.missiondarstar.com for more information

YEAH! FACT SHEET

What is YEAH!?

YEAH! stands for Young Envoys for the Arts and Heritage. It is the National Heritage Board's young adult engagement programme which seeks to enlist advocates for heritage and help to spread the message to their respective communities, networks, family members and friends. The goal is to foster a self-sustaining museum-going and arts-loving culture in Singapore.

Who are the Young Envoys?

NHB will selectively recruit young adults between the ages of 18 and 29, especially those with a genuine interest in the arts, heritage, culture, and museums. These young adults will be invited to exclusive heritage, museum or art events and have the opportunity to meet organisations and individuals involved in the cultural and heritage fields.

One of the key considerations in the appointment of these young envoys is that they need to be either well-connected or be seen as a leader in their respective communities. They could either be active online (for example, well-regarded bloggers and social media users) or offline (civil society leaders, community leaders etc). We look out for young envoys who are natural chatters and enjoy sharing and involving their friends in their participation in art and heritage activities.

NHB aims to cultivate these young adults into Art and Heritage Envoys and will provide training and seed funding to help them develop their own initiatives. This will help promote the arts, heritage, and museums among their friends, family, communities, and interest groups. A positive Word Of Mouth (WOM) effect will then be sparked off, which can be sustainable over the longer term.

But why YEAH!?

NHB recognises that youths and young adults form an important part of our collective national identity. We also acknowledge the importance of their contributions towards making Singapore a vibrant cultural hub and a home to people who are rooted by their heritage.

An increasingly larger population of young adults depends on online and word-of-mouth sources for information, entertainment and interaction. NHB believes that engaging them across social media platforms - both online and offline - will encourage them to participate, experience, and interpret heritage in their own unique way. This creates a greater sense of ownership of our collective heritage.

So how do we YEAH!?

NHB will be working with online and offline communities of various special interests to promote the arts, museums and heritage as enriching, relevant, accessible, and enjoyable. We will organise exclusive heritage and cultural activities, and employ social media and WOM tools to spread the word and harness the collective power of social media networks.

Together with *Yesterday.sg*, NHB's heritage social media portal, and *Mission Darkstar*, Singapore's first museum and heritage-based online game development

competition, *YEAH!*'s envoy cultivation approach shows how NHB brings social media engagement to new heights.

Oh yeah? What if I'm not that into the arts and heritage

Don't worry. You can still enjoy the many exciting and fun programmes we have stored in line for you. NHB has been making the heritage, museums and the arts accessible and affordable to the average Singaporean by organising lifestyle-themed activities such as culinary sessions, flea market sales, and self-defence workshops amongst others.

Ok, I am interested. Now how do I *YEAH!*?

NHB wants to hear from anyone who has an interest in the arts, heritage, culture, or museums. Youth-oriented communities and organisations with collaborative ideas are also welcome to contact the *YEAH!* project team members below.

Contact us if you fit the following profile:

- ❖ Between the ages of 18 and 29
- ❖ Interested in the arts, culture, heritage, or museums
- ❖ Participates in community initiatives (online or offline)
- ❖ Web-savvy and familiar with social media networking tools

Don't worry if you do not fit the profile to a T – if you are interested enough to worry, then we absolutely must meet you!

We encourage you to pass our envoy recruitment message to your friends, colleagues, classmates, and family members and anyone you know who might be keen to join us as a Young Envoy for the Arts and Heritage.

For potential partnerships, collaboration opportunities, more information and/or recommendations for the Young Envoy programme, contact:

The Board is now talent scouting these envoys and invites interested parties to contact it by emailing NHB_YEAH@nhb.gov.sg.

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