Synergy at Work

Norman Lau of IED, ST Elect, led the Travel Information System architectural design team, with participation from CET. Electronics Review (ER) talks to Norman and James Ng of CET on their trials and tribulation for working on this project and the synergy across subsidiaries.

ER: How did it all start?
Norman: It all started with the conceptualisation of a Market Requirement Specification (MRS) for a Travel Information System in January 2000. From there, the system architecture was conceived with prototype development began in February 2000. Coincidentally, a tender was called by the LTA in April 2000 to retrofit the RTS lines with such a system. We decided to take part in the tender as an opportunity to apply our innovative solution to fulfill the requirements.

ER: What are the other challenges?
James: The ruggedisation process to make the equipment suitable for use on a moving train proved to be quite a challenge. We had to be very determined and mobilise whatever resources we have to get the job done.

ER: What support did you get from ST Elect’s group of companies?
Norman: We had great support from CET, EPS, EMC, PDMD and POD which contributed in terms of hardware, software, service and testing etc. In particular, good project management was critical in order to galvanise the various teams involved in this undertaking, and POD did a great job.

ER: What is the long-term implication of this project?
Norman: For the start, we designed the system not just with this current project in mind, but also to ensure that the system architect can be applied in similar projects locally and internationally. This has been the basic guiding design philosophy.

The system will be ST Elect’s solution for rail-based Travel Information System to be marketed worldwide. It currently supports Chinese, Tamil, Malay and English but it can also support any language since Unicode is one of the foundation building blocks. This multi-lingual capability opens up a wide market for the product.

James: As ST Elect moves towards globalisation in its business undertakings, it is important to find synergy within the Group and leverage to each other’s strengths. This project sets a good example on how ST Elect companies can mobilise resources and expertise to provide in-house solution for future projects in Singapore and beyond.