

## Two innovative platforms in consumer and social analytics launched

By Sharon See | Posted: 05 November 2012 2301 hrs

SINGAPORE : Two innovative platforms in consumer and social analytics - LiveLabs and SmartHub - were launched on Monday.

They aim to use data analysis to help companies refine their marketing strategies and product development.

Acting Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean said such innovations will allow local and global companies to use Singapore to test and launch their products and services.



Teo Chee Hean

Marketers may soon be able to track a person's shopping habits simply through their mobile phone.

Data such as Orchard Road's hot shopping spots and where shoppers are headed next are captured by Singapore telco StarHub.

It is then crunched by technology company QlikView to make sense of consumer shopping patterns.

Terry Smagh, vice president of sales (Southeast and North Asia), at QlikView, explained: "If your phone is continuously on, the radio towers, radio signals do pick up that. And we will be able to give you a directive, or StarHub will be able to pick at which level of accuracy, maybe plus minus 10 per cent.

"If (your)...location-based service...is on, on your mobile device, we will be able to give you more accuracy to exactly pinpoint that location.

"You can switch off your location-based service on your phone, so you have control on that. However, if your cell is on, it is circulating signals, StarHub will be able to pick those signals up."

Such data collection is not new and StarHub has been using the information internally to improve its mobile service.

But with 2.18 million mobile subscribers, it realises the potential use for such data is immense.

Mock Pak Lum, chief technology officer at StarHub, said: "The data exists in our customer database, in our network. It is already there. Internally, we use the data to try and enhance our customers' experience and also to improve the network.

"We want to find out in which areas there are more dropped calls, for example, then we figure out how are we able to put more base stations around the area to improve the mobile reception. That is how we are using the data.

"We realise that the data has value, particularly if we are able to combine our data with data from another service provider, whether it is the payment companies, transport companies, even government agencies, in an anonymised fashion. Then with that, we can create new value, have new insights that the current technology and infrastructure do not allow."

Through a tie-up, it can provide useful insights into shopping habits for retailers in Orchard Road.

The Orchard Road Business Association expects the project to go 'live' in a year's time. By capturing where certain groups of tourists or Singaporeans go along different parts of Orchard Road, the Association believes it will be able to better plan its marketing campaigns for certain groups of customers.

Mr Smagh said: "We are tracking details like country...in terms of where they are coming from and which particular malls they are spending their time at and what particular stretch, and timing is also very important, so very realistically, when we track the Asian tourists for example, they were all over the shops, and they only started shopping as early as 9am until 5pm.

"However, the Caucasian tourists only started shopping from 3pm to 9pm and at various other locations where the restaurants are and the bars are, so it gives you a very wide variety of the demographics throughout."

It is a snapshot of how marketers can reach out to consumers in the near future, even in other areas like transport and hospitality.

Acting Prime Minister Teo said: "There are several factors that make Singapore an ideal host for such innovation platforms. We have a well-educated and technology-savvy population.

"Our multicultural, cosmopolitan society helps in generating and understanding cultural insights. We have a robust intellectual property regime which promotes innovation. We are situated in the heart of Asia, the fastest growing region in the world."

Mr Teo added: "I am confident that the collaboration platforms being established today will help generate insights from big data that will help companies to refine their marketing strategies and product development."

"However, consumers are concerned about data privacy. Singapore recently enacted the Personal Data Protection Act which will come into force on 1 January 2013. Under this Act, companies must seek consent before collecting and using a person's private information.

"In addition, people who do not wish to be contacted by businesses for commercial purposes can register their phone numbers with a national 'Do Not Call' registry. This will



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be ready for public sign-up in early 2014.

"Such safeguards are necessary to facilitate big data analytics while providing assurance and confidence to consumers."

StarHub said it takes careful steps to protect data privacy, by scrambling personal information before providing the data to the QlikView.

Mr Mock said: "We ensure that the personal information about the individual is actually removed. So we are not going to use any of the individual data by itself or even in a small group for this particular testbed.

"So with bulk data, I think our customers should be quite reassured that there will be no intrusion of privacy.

"If there are cases where our partners say they want to offer certain recommendations or based on their preferences, then it has to be opt-in, it is very clear.

"So the customer can say, 'okay, I opt in based on my...preferences for viewing, please give me a list of recommended programmes I can watch on StarHub's pay TV platform'. Then it is very clear, it is opt-in. Otherwise, this testbed will only deal with bulk data."

Consumers will have the choice to opt out of such tracking services.

- CNA/ms