

## Two consumer analytics platforms launch in Singapore

**Summary:** *Building on government's push for analytics capabilities, the platforms from Singapore Management University and StarHub aim to help businesses create highly targeted campaigns.*



By [Jamie Yap](#) | November 6, 2012 -- 03:28 GMT (11:28 SGT)

SINGAPORE--Two different consumer analytics platforms from Singapore Management University (SMU) and StarHub respectively aim to provide insights into consumer behavior, so companies can develop and tailor initiatives that will be more relevant to and better received by customers.

Rajesh Balan, director of LiveLabs Urban Lifestyle Innovation Platform at SMU, said the platform will enable organizations to utilize [real-time insights](#), helping their campaigns go to market and assess the outcome faster. On the consumer end, it will turn what most users perceive as intrusive spam messages on their phones into something useful.

"If consumers get things like the incentives they want, where and when they want to see it, it is not spam. The goal of LiveLabs is everyone [on both sides] is happy," he told ZDNet Asia during a joint media event to officially unveil both platforms here Monday. Balan is also an assistant professor at the SMU School of Information Systems, where the platform was developed.

LiveLabs gathers information by having users voluntarily opt-in to allow data to be collected from their smartphones as they go about their daily activities at certain venues, one of which is the SMU campus itself, he said.

One app which LiveLabs has developed to do so is scheduling manager SmartCal, which helps SMU students schedule or reschedule meetings, taking into account in real-time the current location of various attendees and where they are heading next.

For example, if an attendee is delayed at a current meeting and his next appointment is at another location far away, his phone will detect the scheduling conflict and can send a notification to all other attendees to decide whether to cancel, reschedule or change the meeting venue.

Balan emphasized LiveLabs regards user privacy as very important and all participant data would have identifiable information such as names and IC numbers "anonymized".

As such, LiveLabs will always vet any requests for specific data sets by external parties for their campaign projects. For example when a retailer asks only for female business students under the age of 30, it will consider this request on both availability and ethical grounds.

"Ethics sets a higher bar than legal. It is not illegal to tell a person's name to a company, but ethnically that may not be so. Besides the R&D expertise, universities are the best

option to do these [consumer data analytics] because at SMU, for example, we have an ethics committee. Companies, on the other hand, have legal counsel."

According to Balan, three other venues are in the pipeline to testbed LiveLabs as partners by next year--CapitaMalls' Plaza Singapura shopping mall, Changi Airport, and Sentosa Island--to explore data analytic projects for the retail and hospitality and tourism sectors.

StarHub's analytics platform service SmartHub is similarly looking at these sectors for a start. The telco will leverage real-time data from [mobile subscribers](#), which its various partners will then [analyze](#) to produce insights for different clients, said Mock Pak Lum, CTO, network engineering and information services at StarHub. Eventually, data from StarHub's other main services of broadband, fixed telephony and pay TV will be included as well. The strategic partnerships will help broaden SmartHub's capabilities and reach, because while the telco has its own in-house team to analyze data, it is not sufficient manpower, Mock explained.

One customer currently trialing SmartHub is the Orchard Road Business Association (ORBA).

Steven Goh, ORBA's executive director, said real-time consumer analytics is increasingly important in providing detailed and accurate understanding of the assorted visitor profile along the Orchard Road shopping belt, compared with "unrefined ways such as installing more cameras and measuring footfall".

Goh said the collaboration with SmartHub was timely. Even if ORBA used analytics software, it would be analyzing data that was collected from the likes of cameras and footfall sensors.

With this partnership, rich, contextual data garnered from mobile phones can be broken down into parameters such as locals and country of origin for tourists, and where the tourists tended to crowd around, such as certain duty-free shops, boutiques and cafes, he noted.

With "more intelligent analyses", ORBA can plan its events, advertising and promotions according to particular demographics, both for local and foreign visitors to attract them to various parts of Orchard Road, Goh said, noting the competition with other retail hotspots in Singapore such as the two integrated resorts.

The creation of both LiveLabs and SmartHub were partially funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF) of Singapore, and a total of S\$50 million (US\$40.8 million) had been invested by all parties involved. Both SMU and StarHub declined to give a breakdown of their individual investments.

Speaking at the launch, the guest of honor, Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean, said both platforms will strength the country's standing as the preferred place for interactive digital media (IDM) innovation and research for analytics. Teo is also the NRF chairman.