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# KnowledgeGRID Malaysia gears up

[ BY KARAMJIT SINGH ]

**A KEY SATELLITE EVENT** during the World Congress in Information Technology week was the hosting of a high-powered two-day grid computing conference with the theme "The Grid Powering Up Your Enterprise". Most Malaysians are not aware of what grid computing is (a simple definition would be: Using the resources of several separate computers connected by a network, usually the Internet, to solve large-scale computation problems). And Mimos Bhd is the government research agency tasked with leading the national grid initiative called KnowledgeGRID Malaysia. Datuk Abdul Wahab, president and CEO of Mimos, shares with us some of the highlights of the conference and where Malaysia stands in terms of grid adoption.

## What were the main outcomes of the grid computing conference?

We had overwhelming response. The two-day event attracted more than 300 local and international delegates. The Grid Computing Conference (GCC), the first to be held in Malaysia, was designed to take Malaysia's grid adoption to the next level and to foster closer collaboration between local and international grid players and experts through the sharing of experience on grid projects such as animationGRID, automotiveGRID, bioGRID, and Malaysian Digital Islamic Resource Centre (MyDIRECT).

The GCC highlighted KnowledgeGRID Malaysia (formerly known as National Grid Computing) initiatives and how it can enhance local industries and enterprises; market trends; and grid computing in private and public sector across Asia. The conference also discussed how grid computing can bridge the digital divide, improve national productivity and societal well-being in Asia.

## How does Malaysia benefit from having such a conference here?

GCC was the key platform to advance grid computing in Malaysia and to promote efforts that will help bring grid technologies "from lab to industry" to leverage grids for greater innovation and growth. The ultimate aim is to move our key economic sectors and enterprises towards pervasive grid adoption.

With grid computing, industries will not only become more agile and competitive but will also be able to keep research and development costs down.

KnowledgeGRID Malaysia, a Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation initiative developed by Mimos, meets all computing needs and as such industries will be able to utilise the bulk of their IT budgets for other aspects of product development.

## What is the state of the Malaysian grid today in terms of its connectivity/infrastructure and types of collaboration, local and international?

Malaysia is already playing a key part in the global grid effort. KnowledgeGRID Malaysia is now part of the European Grid Network. KnowledgeGRID Malaysia was certified (in April 2008) by the European Commission's Enabling Grid for E-Science (EGEE)



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for meeting the production requirements. This is testament that KnowledgeGRID Malaysia is on par with the rest of the world.

Mimos is already working with industry players like Oracle, Altair Engineering, IBM and SGI to provide affordable tools and resources for local researchers and industry players to jump-start into the K-economy. We continue to invite technology and solution providers to join us in making KnowledgeGRID Malaysia's vision of becoming the fifth utility for the nation a reality.

## How can Malaysian universities and research institutes take advantage of the grid infrastructure in Malaysia and can you provide two examples where using the grid for its computing power and collaborative nature had successful outcomes?

KnowledgeGRID Malaysia is essentially Malaysia's K-infrastructure (that consists of hardware, software and services) that provides access to unprecedented computing power, services and data.

KnowledgeGRID Malaysia will be the knowledge collaboration platform that brings super computing power to everyone and anyone, including academic institutions, small-and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), government and private sector, and is aimed at increasing Malaysia's economic and technological competitiveness.

In our effort to become the global preferred partner of choice in frontier technologies, Mimos has forged research collaborations with 13 local universities who serve as Mimos' virtual research centres complementing our applied research in frontier technologies to build technology competencies. This is in line with our mission to create globally competitive indigenous industries.

A number of pilots are currently being powered by KnowledgeGRID Malaysia. These include local production house Les' Copaque which is using KnowledgeGRID Malaysia's render-

ing services, while Proton uses KnowledgeGRID Malaysia to conduct its crash test simulation. We will soon be opening the floodgates to all industry players who want to tap into KnowledgeGRID Malaysia's power.

## How can the private sector take advantage of the grid and what is holding them back?

KnowledgeGRID Malaysia will be the knowledge collaboration platform that brings super computing power to all sectors nationwide including industrial, government, agriculture, international community, education, research, financial and business and enterprise segments.

Specifically, KnowledgeGRID Malaysia will provide computing resources and data capabilities to the nation's weather modelling, earthquake simulation and protein folding, DNA, and drug design research. This will accelerate Malaysia's advancement in biotechnology, forecasting of natural disasters and animation content initiatives at significantly lower costs.

For example, biotechnologists can use compute-intensive tools and applications to carry out advanced research like DNA research, and drug design in the chemical database. Grid Computing will provide the electronics industry with access to design and simulation tools at high-end centralised design centres thereby lowering the cost of ownership and enabling the electronic industries to move up the value chain. Manufacturing industries can improve product quality and reduce time to market through process and statistical tools; while the animation content industry will benefit from sharing costly game development software centralised in specific locations.

KnowledgeGRID Malaysia will put Malaysia on a higher pedestal on the world map, especially in the ICT arena, in line with more advanced countries.