

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

WITH PROF ADRIAN CHEOK

Meet the Human Pacman

net age. Although we are increasingly connected globally, we may also very often be physically distant from each other as loved ones may live in different countries," he said.

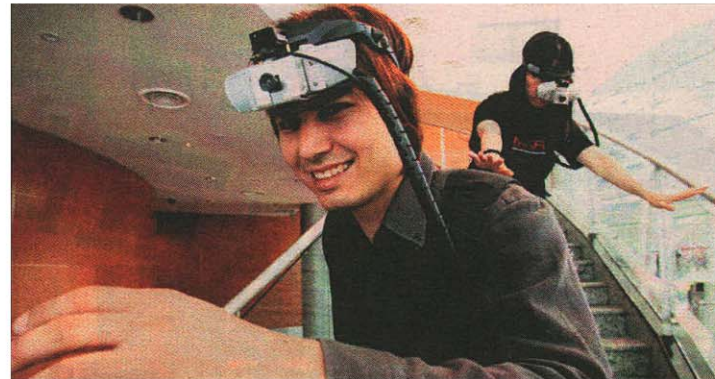
Prof Cheok is also the founder-director of NUS's Mixed Reality Lab and deputy director of research at NUS' Interactive and Digital Media Institute.

Mixed reality is a medium in which computer graphics, text, and video are used to support practical real world functions.

"Stress and unhappiness in society often come about when we fail to fully communicate our emotion with loved ones.

"What we need is more human-based technology, not just the next gadget," said Prof Cheok, 36, in a phone interview with *my paper* from Kyoto, Japan. He is now there for research.

The Australian, who is also a Singapore PR holder – is best known for creating Human Pac-



INVENTOR: Associate Professor Cheok with Pacman gear.

man, a virtual reality game in which participants can envision themselves in the maze. His inventions have received much coverage in international publications such as *Wired* magazine and the *Washington Post*.

For his efforts in the field, he was named a Young Global Leader by World Economic Forum (WEF) last Tuesday.

The only other award recipi-

The award came as a surprise, said Prof Cheok, who had never attended any of the WEF's annual meetings in Davos, Switzerland before.

"I've always thought that it was for the big politicians and business leaders, I'm just an engineer," he said. "It's heartwarming that our work at Mixed Reality is being recognised in the world today."

He hoped his award would help Singaporean inventions compete on the world stage against talented works by engineers from India and China.

Asked where he draws his inspiration from, the father of a one-year-old girl revealed with a laugh: "I always keep a pen and pad in the shower."

ent from Singapore is Mr Hur Saehong, 39, the deputy managing director of Korean petroleum refinery GS Caltex Corporation's Singapore branch. He declined to speak to the media.

The duo are among 245 leading executives, public figures and intellectuals – all aged 40 or younger – chosen from around the world by a panel of 31 media leaders, chaired by Queen Rania of Jordan.

BUSY parents, take note: You may soon be able to give your child a good-night hug, even if you are miles away from home.

All Mum and Dad has to do is stroke a handheld doll and Junior will receive the hug by wearing specially programmed pyjama-suit.

The new gadget, known as the Huggy Pyjama, is the brain-child of Adrian Cheok, an associate professor of engineering at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

"It's the paradox of the Inter-