Showtime! S’pore game is 1st
Local team beats close to 350 rivals in international Microsoft contest

IT’s a national achievement to crow about: A Singapore team have beaten nearly 350 other groups in a global video-game development contest to come out tops.

Team Gambit scored the highest marks for fun, innovation and production quality for their wacky circus-themed game called CareynVale: Showtime.

The seven-member team, comprising students from various tertiary institutions, developed the game from June to September.

Their entry trounced submissions from 100 countries in the second Dream-Build-Play contest, which was organised by Microsoft for its Xbox 360 game console.

A Venezuelan team came in second, while a United States group was third. Of the 7,800 participants, over 400 were from Asia and the Middle East.

The Singapore team received a US$40,000 ($859,000) prize from Microsoft yesterday at its One Marina Boulevard office. Their game could be made available on Microsoft’s Xbox Live online game portal.

The game’s lead programmer, Mr Bruce Chia, 24, said the team’s goal was to create a game with very simple controls.

Most of the game involves pressing a button to control the game environment to propel an acrobatic clown through a ring of fire, among other tasks.

“We were inspired by pinball and tried to add elements from games like Sonic the Hedgehog,” said Mr Chia, a computer science undergraduate at the National University of Singapore.

Mr Alan Chou, regional marketing manager for the Xbox 360 in South-east Asia, praised Team Gambit for overcoming “tough global competition to produce a game that met the high standards of the judging panel.”

Ms Teo Chor Guan, programme director for Gambit Game Lab, said: “People have wondered if Singapore can develop an internationally-recognised game. But we managed to do it.”

Team Gambit is from Gambit Game Lab, a Media Development Authority initiative that does video-games research.

Microsoft’s marketing communications and partnership manager Ian Tan said the contest judges were wowed by one feature of the winning game.

“They were impressed that Team Gambit included an editing function, which allows players to customise the game.”
本地青少年设计的电玩作品国际夺奖，证明新加坡推动游戏设计的努力有成。

本地电玩游戏夺下大奖，有望首次站上Microsoft Xbox舞台，同全球超过14 million Xbox Live会员玩家见面。

由本地团队Team Gambit设计的“CarnyVale: Showtime”游戏昨晚击败来自100个国家的350个参赛作品，夺下Microsoft Corp.举办的Dream-Build-Play电玩游戏设计比赛冠军。

得奖作品可能被Microsoft商品化，“CarnyVale: Showtime”或将是第一个进军game console（游戏机）平台的本地电玩游戏，象征本地console games设计工业的一大突破。

“CarnyVale: Showtime”在趣味性、创新度和制作水准三方面，一致获得最高评分，正式推出市场的机会浓厚。

去年Dream-Build-Play比赛的三甲作品都被Microsoft相中，如今正在商品化的开发阶段，日后玩家可通过Xbox Live Arcade购买下载。

媒体发展管理局（MDA）近几年大力推动本地电玩游戏业发展，但在console games方面并未取得显著进展。

MDA行业处处长助理CEO司徒乐然指出，本地游戏设计业处于萌芽阶段，AAA级blockbuster console games至少需要US $20 million开发，本地业者难以投入，所以目前将注意力摆在制作费较低及较早推出市场的casual games。

“Team Gambit的胜利证明新加坡年轻人才具备实力。希望这成功能鼓励本地游戏设计师继续制作高水平、具创意和可推向全球市场的作品。”
本地设计电玩有望进军Xbox

游戏特点是只用controller的一个按键和joystick，但不削弱游戏趣味。

Team Gambit设计的“CarnyVale: Showtime”将接受微软专家团队评估，以确定是否适合商品化。

即使它最终成功推出市场，还得同在线上售卖的超过150个Xbox 360游戏竞争，抢夺玩家的视线，证明这个游戏的受欢迎程度。

Team Gambit的lead programmer谢万域（24岁，NUS电脑系四年级学生）相当有信心。“我们在开始设计之前做了市场调查和分析，相信游戏会深得玩家喜爱。”

“CarnyVale: Showtime”一反玩家控制主角的做法，主角是一个静态的rag doll，玩家必须借助游戏中各种配备的力量过关。Rag doll飞来飞去，就像在做杂技演出。

游戏的特点是只须controller的一个按键和joystick操作，却又不削弱游戏趣味。

Team Gambit花了短短四个月，从零开始设计出20关（stages）的“CarnyVale: Showtime”游戏，商品化计划确定后，它打算再改进游戏。

团队成员有6男1女，年龄介于18到27岁，他们都曾在Gambit游戏实验室实习。

Gambit游戏实验室由MDA同麻省理工学院（MIT）前年10月合作成立，目的是让新加坡成为国际电玩游戏业的重要枢纽。

Gambit游戏实验室司长张楚源透露，US$40,000冠军奖金将用于加强游戏实验室的实习计划，让更多学生受益，以进一步推动本地电玩游戏设计业的发展。

记者试玩心得：就像看杂技表演

由于是线上下载的电玩游戏，file size不能太大，Xbox Live Arcade售卖的都是玩法不复杂、格局不大的casual games，而不是“Grand Auto Theft”（简称GTA）那种花长时间、动用大批人力设计及制作的blockbuster。

但别以为“CarnyVale: Showtime”就没什么。记者试玩后发现，这个游戏容易上手，但很熟练、零失误过关并不容易，高段的关卡尤其具挑战性，让玩家沉侵于过关斩将的乐趣中。

配乐和音效最讨喜，游戏画面也相当细致，玩游戏时会产生一种看杂技表演的感觉，视觉享受丰富。另一个卖点是map功能，让玩家自行设计关卡，挑战极限。