LOCAL IPAD APP IS TOPS ON ITUNES
Two NUS students have developed a Facebook application for Apple’s iPads that became the top-seller in iTunes App Store only four months after its launch.

National University of Singapore (NUS) School of Computing students Jason Dinh Ba Thanh and Nguyen Huy Toan, like many other youths, spend hours on social networking site Facebook every day.

Both of Vietnamese descent, they were disappointed, when they bought their iPads last year, that there was no official Facebook application for iPads.

And while there were third-party Facebook apps, these had limited functions and were not user-friendly. To fix that problem, the duo decided to create their own version of a Facebook app for iPads.

And they did that in only one month.

Their application, called Pica, was launched in December 2010 and became the top-selling application in Apple’s iTunes App Store, beating even the popular Angry Birds.

Priced at US$1.99 (S$2.45), Pica has been downloaded about 150,000 times since its launch.

Pica lets users customise their Facebook page with various themes. It also has a chat function and users can download photos and save them on their iPads. Users with iPad2 can also take and upload photos to Facebook.

“We focused on areas that couldn’t be done via a browser such as uploading photos and checking-in on a location via Facebook. We also want to make it quick and easy for people to use,” said Mr Nguyen Huy Toan.

The budding entrepreneurs now plan to start their own company specialising in developing applications for iOS devices.

Mr Jason Dinh Ba Thanh will graduate this month from the NUS School of Computing with an honours degree in computing (information system) and Mr Nguyen Huy Toan will graduate in December.