

MICROSOFT HELPS TKU DEVELOP ITS SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITE

Microsoft, Taiwan agreed with TKU in a meeting last week to help the university to create its own social networking website (SNW) that is similar to Face-Book. This project, known as “Garden of Digital Life,” will allow staff, faculty members, and students to blog, to chat and share information more readily. When it is completed, TKU will join several universities such as National Taiwan University and National Chiao Tung University who have their own SNW (the former uses PTT, while the latter Wretch). Dr. Clement Chang, the Founder of TKU, would like this website to be up and running by this year’ s founding anniversary in November so as to mark as an important milestone for the university.

The preparation meeting was held on 4/9, chaired by Dr. Kao Po Yuan, the Vice President for Administrative Affairs. Several delegates who are in charge of web development tools at Microsoft were invited to speak with TKU representatives that included Dr. Huang Ming-da, the Director of Information Processing Center (IPC), and chairs as well as professors from related departments. Dr. Chen Kan Nan, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Keh Huan-chao, the Dean of Academic Affairs, and Chiang Ding-an, the Dean of Student Affairs were also present. Dr. Huang believes this cooperation with Microsoft will put TKU’ s web at the forefront of digital technologies in university campuses.

Dr. Huang also explained that the idea of cooperating with Microsoft originated in October last year when Dr. Clement Chang, TKU founder, spoke of optimizing alumni resources. From there, he approached Microsoft, who, as a result, promised to provide TKU with “silverlight” technology. For Microsoft, according to Liu Nien-zheng, who is the deputy manager in charge of web development tools of the company, it is crucial to cooperate closely with research institutes such as universities should they wish to

upgrade their technologies to the new web era. Working with people from IT, Communications, Educational Technology and Information Management of TKU, he points out, gives his company a great advantage. Similarly, TKU is excited about the prospect of learning about the operation of “silverlight” gratis. Liu Hui Ziuan, the Chair of Information and Communications, for instance, sees this as a wonderful opportunity for her students to build more web applications to practice what they have learned in theory. When this SNW is launched, she also hopes to attract talented alumni with IT background to help continue enhancing this web. This future SNW will be divided into three major groups which are Individuals, Student Associations, and Departments, Dr. Huang said.

Apart from TKU, Microsoft is also collaborating with Tung-Hai University in Taichung. Many universities in southern Taiwan, Microsoft points out, are keen on developing advanced web platforms that combine visuals and sound efficiently. In order to ensure that universities can keep up with the latest developments in technologies, Microsoft will help TKU set up courses to teach RIA (Rich Internet Applications) in the near future.

Dr. Clement Chang is upbeat about such a development. To be at the cutting edge of any development has always been his vision. He encourages his staff to embrace changes and work hard to bring them into reality. (~Ying-hsueh Hu)

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