



30 September 2014

**Science, Technology and Education News from Taiwan
Number 09 — September 2014**

The Taiwanese company Himax Technologies Inc. is developing in collaboration with the French firm Optinvent SA the most technologically advanced smart glasses.

Taiwan's global competitiveness falls in terms of goods market efficiency, business sophistication and innovation. Due to the lack of competitiveness in innovation many talented people tend to seek opportunities abroad.

The next meeting of the triennial International Council for Science (ICSU) General Assembly (GA) shall take place in Taipei in 2017.

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1. Taiwan skilled in design, but has trouble keeping talent: professor

(The China Post, 20 08 2014)

Local students may manage to do well in prestigious design competitions like the Red Dot Award, but Taiwan's lack of competitiveness in innovation means those talented people tend to seek opportunities abroad, a design school head said.

Chiang Wei-hwa, dean of the College of Design under National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (NTUST), made the comments at a presentation of Red Dot-awarded works in Taipei, where he criticized the nation's industrial climate for lacking the innovation and vision of up and coming Taiwanese design students.

Chiang pointed to the NTUST students who won six Red Dot awards in communication design and 10 Red Dots in design concept this year. One big winner in particular, he noted, was a mobile app called "Hear Me" for vision-impaired smartphone users, which was named Best of the Best at the German awards.

But compared to neighbors, like trade rival South Korea, Taiwan's industrial sectors "do not perform well in innovation and design," he contended.

Tang Hsien-hui, an associate professor at NTUST's Department of Industrial and Commercial Design, said Taiwan lacks stages for local designers to show off their talent.

Moreover, "low wages and long work hours have frustrated many talented students, who would rather move overseas for work after graduation," Tang said, forecasting there will be an increasing brain drain to China because pay there is relatively higher than in Taiwan.

He urged Taiwan's industrial sectors to increase their competitiveness and invest more resources in innovation to keep talent at home.

Meanwhile, Lin Yi-tsen, a graduate student in industrial and commercial design at NTUST, and Tsai Yi-hsuan, a master's student in digital content at National Chengchi University, explained the creativity and innovation they put into "Hear Me," the award-winning app.

The app allows visually impaired users to easily record notes and mark key points by touch, and it can help record memos and diary entries or share recorded messages through social networking, Lin said.

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2014/08/20/415332/Taiwan-skilled.htm>

2. Ministry startups program leads to investment deal

(Taipei Times, 20 08 2014)

The Innovation & Startups incentive program, launched by the Ministry of Science and Technology, is looking forward to what is perhaps the most exciting development since its inception, as news about an investment deal between a major LED manufacturer and former program finalists surfaces.

A team of students from National Cheng Kung University won the startup award during the first stage of the program and received NT\$2 million (US\$67,000) from the organizers, as well as NT\$10 million from venture capitalists.

The team has been approached by an LED company to explore business opportunities involving soft mask lithography — their core technology — as the company is reportedly interested in the team's invention and has offered its members up to NT\$100 million to set up a factory.

National Applied Research Laboratories (NARL) Science and Technology Policy Research and Information Center director-general Joung Yuh-jzer said the outcome of the deal would be announced shortly.

Meanwhile, the second stage of the program began earlier this month, for which 41 teams qualified. The teams are eligible to receive prize money of between NT\$30,000 and NT\$550,000.

NARL president Lo Ching-hua said the program has helped establish 25 innovative companies, create 117 job opportunities and led to NT\$70 million in private-sector investment.

One of the highlights of the program is Daily View, a Web site created by a team comprising students from National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Soochow University and Dharma Drum Buddhist College.

Chen Wan-ting one of the creators of the Web site, said that the team recognizes the influence the Internet has on people. Therefore, it hopes to collate hundreds of millions of words and phrases from the Web on a daily basis through a technology which it terms a "semantic mood analyzer."

The technology assigns an "emotional value" to phrases used by netizens and scores a trending news story on a grading system accordingly, so that people can get a quick grasp of how Internet users generally feel about a certain issue, she said.

Ministry of Science and Technology Deputy Director-General Lin Yi-bing said there are three ways to spread innovative ideas — simplify complicated ideas; expound on simple ideas; and make deep ideas interesting — while Stan's Foundation president Stan Shih called on young people to stand up to challenges and to think outside the box, while always remaining optimistic, so as to boost their value in the job market.

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2014/08/20/2003597845>



3. ITRI announces revolutionary AMOLED display technologies at Touch Taiwan 2014

(The China Post, 28 08 2014)

The Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) on Wednesday announced a large number of active-matrix organic light-emitting diode (AMOLED) display technologies, including Taiwan's first foldable touch AMOLED module.

With the rise of the wearable smart devices, the ITRI will showcase many futuristic, wearable devices with interactive touch control functions at Touch Taiwan 2014 with the theme of "Smart Living, Keep in Touch."

Such devices include a wearable and foldable AMOLED wristband with interactive touch control and display functions. Another highlight of the showcased product is a gesture-controllable Smart Glass which can be used as a smartphone and camera. In addition, 30 items in materials, display panels and manufacturing processes for display and touch control devices will be displayed, aiming to create smarter living supported by instinct-driven devices.

According to Janglin Chen, vice president and general director of ITRI's Display Technology Center, because wearable devices require the characteristics of light weight, slimness, small size and flexibility, the ultra-slimness and flexibility of AMOLED are ideal properties for making wearable devices.

In order to build up the supply chain of AMOLED in Taiwan and enable Taiwan's manufacturers to cater to the international market, ITRI developed Foldable AMOLED with On-Cell Touch which can be folded 10,000 times over a curve formed with a 7.5-millimeter (mm) radius. The thickness of the module is less than 0.1 mm. The module is developed with the FlexUp™ technology which makes the display module flexible, difficult to break, water- and oxygen-resistant, super light and thin.

ITRI integrates touch control panels with display panels, and plans to apply "the active foldable organic light emitting display modules" for making innovative hand-held devices to realize the product concept — "when unfolded it is a tablet, and when folded it is a smartphone." The innovative product will create next-generation business opportunities for AMOLEDs

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan-business/2014/08/28/415915/ITRI-announces.htm>

4. Samsung and LG unveil upgraded smartwatches

(Taipei Times, 29 08 2014)

INNOVATION: The nation's Asustek is also set to enter the market with the planned launch of a smartwatch in September, which is to include voice recognition software

Asustek Computer Inc yesterday said that its upcoming smartwatch would come with a voice recognition feature, while South Korea's Samsung Electronics Co and LG Electronics Inc unveiled new smartwatches with upgraded functions and designs. The moves indicate handset makers have stepped up their drive to diversify from the saturated smartphone sector to other smart devices, as they aim to lead an increasingly competitive market for wearable devices.

At a media briefing in Taipei, Asustek chief executive Jerry Shen said that the company's ZenWatch smartwatch, which was due for launch on 3rd September in Germany ahead of the IFA electronics trade show, is set to pack English-enabled voice recognition when it goes on sale in October.

Chinese language support for the watch's voice control is expected by the end of this year, depending on Asustek's third-party developer of the feature, Shen said. The smartwatch is to cost less than US\$199 when it hits stores in the US and other selected markets beginning in October, he added.

Asustek aims to be the top smartphone maker in the local market for the rest of the year, after selling more than 550,000 of its ZenFone series handsets locally between June and this month.

Shen said the company's global smartphone shipments would beat its target of 2.6 million units for this quarter and continue to grow to 4 million units next quarter. Asustek chief financial officer David Chang said its smartphone business could turn profitable next month and into next quarter.

While Asustek's ZenWatch is reportedly designed to be used alone or paired with Android phones to enable more functions, Samsung's Gear S is its first smartwatch able to make stand-alone telephone calls with built-in 3G connectivity, alongside Bluetooth and Wi-Fi capabilities.

Users will be able to make and receive calls directly from their wrist, or get calls forwarded from their smartphones, the company said, adding that the Gear S is set to start selling in October. It did not give details on pricing or where it will be available.

Samsung, the world's biggest smartphone maker, has been pushing hard to develop the wearable devices market, as it looks to counter slowing earnings in its mobile division, which led to weaker-than-expected second-quarter earnings. Samsung is hardly alone in pushing wearables, which have yet to catch on with consumers. Rival Apple Inc is expected to launch a device this year and LG yesterday announced its new G Watch R smartwatch, with a circular plastic OLED screen, a stainless steel frame and leather strap. Prices are to be disclosed when the device hits key markets early in the fourth quarter, the company said.

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/biz/archives/2014/08/29/2003598492>



5. Acer and Asus unveil innovative new products in Berlin

(Left) Acer's Liquid Z500 smartphone is seen in this photo. During the IFA 2014 press conference in Berlin, yesterday, Acer unveiled its new smartphone that offers a focus on entertainment, and features front-facing speakers and an 8-megapixel autofocus camera with f/2.0 aperture.

(Right) This photo shows Asus' first Android Wear smartwatch, ZenWatch. The company yesterday revealed its newest gadget at the IFA 2014 in Berlin, yesterday, also announcing that the watch will be launched in Europe for 199 euros. The watch is equipped with a 1.63 AMOLED display at 320x320 resolution, a curved glass display and a watch band that can be easily taken off and changed if the owner wishes.

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan-business/2014/09/04/416418/Acer-seeking.htm>
<http://www.pocket-lint.com/news/130688-acer-announces-entertainment-focused-liquid-z500-smartphone>
<http://techcrunch.com/2014/09/03/asus-makes-its-zenwatch-an-droid-wear-smartwatch-official/>



Acer's Liquid Z500 smartphone



Asus' first Android Wear smartwatch, ZenWatch

(The China Post, 04 09 2014)

6. Himax to develop smart glasses

Himax Technologies Inc, which designs chips used in flat-panel displays, said on 2nd September its subsidiary would team up with French firm Optinvent SA to develop advanced smart glasses. Himax Display Inc, which supplies microdisplay panels to Google Inc, and Optinvent, a producer of the patented ORA smart glasses that feature a "see-through" display so as not to obstruct regular vision, will undertake the partnership to develop next-generation augmented reality glasses, Himax Technologies said in a statement. The new product is expected to be among the most technologically advanced products in the smart glass market when released, the company said.

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/biz/archives/2014/09/04/2003598944>

(Taipei Times, 04 09 2014)

7. Taiwan's competitiveness drops: WEF

Taiwan's global competitiveness fell two notches to 14th place this year, its worst showing since 2008, **because of lower rankings in terms of goods market efficiency, business sophistication and innovation**, a World Economic Forum (WEF) report said yesterday.

The report said Taiwan's "performance has been very stable over the past six years," noting that its strengths include a capacity to innovate, highly efficient goods markets, world-class infrastructure and solid higher education and training.

"In order to enhance its competitiveness, Taiwan will need to further strengthen its institutional framework, whose quality is undermined by some inefficiency within the government and various forms of corruption and will also need to address some inefficiencies and rigidities in its labor market," the Global Competitiveness Report 2014-2015 said.

As with other Asian countries, Taiwan can boost its competitiveness by encouraging and facilitating the participation of women in the workforce, the report said.

Taiwan's ranking in goods market efficiency dropped four places, from seventh last year to 11th this year, because buyers in the local goods market are considered to make their decisions based more on prices instead of "a sophisticated analysis of performance attributes," the report by the Geneva-based organization said.

Agricultural policy was also believed to be more of a burden to the efficiency of local goods market than a balance of interests among taxpayers, consumers and producers, the report said.

Taiwan dropped two places to 10th this year in innovation because domestic companies are believed to have spent less on research and development, and the government's spending is considered not to be conducive to innovation in the private sector, the report said.

It also fell two spots — to 17th — in business sophistication because domestic companies are believed to have less control over international distribution and marketing, the report said.

(Taipei Times, 04 09 2014)



Taiwan was ranked as the fourth-most competitive in Asia this year, behind Singapore, Japan and Hong Kong, the report said.

Switzerland placed first in the most competitive category, followed by Singapore, the US, Finland and Germany.

“The decline was partly because of recurring civil movements in Taiwan in recent years, which caused company managers who responded to the forum’s survey to have doubts about the nation’s prospects, economic condition and policy direction,” the National Development Council said in a news release yesterday.

“About 70 percent of the report is based on surveys. Hence, it is unavoidable that the civil movements in recent years will affect the results to a certain extent,” council analyst Hsieh Chung-tsung said in the news release.

The report was based on 30 returned questionnaires, and the survey was conducted from January through the middle of June, Hsieh said. To prevent the report from being distorted by short-term events, the forum ranks every nation based on weighted scores computed from surveys conducted this year and last year, Hsieh said.

Survey respondents are chosen at random and are management officials in Taiwan working for foreign and domestic firms, Hsieh said.

The report ranks 144 economies around the world based on 114 factors in 12 categories.

<http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2014/09/04/2003598962>

8. Press Releases by Department of Information Services, Executive Yuan

(Executive Yuan Press Releases, 15 09 2014)

Vice President Wu Den-yih, fourth from right, and Economics Minister Duh Tyzz-Jiun, fifth from left, pose for photos in an inauguration held for Central Taiwan Innovation & Research Park in Nantou county on 15 Sep.



According to the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the park’s base area in central Taiwan is 24,721 square meters, and its overall design is low-carbon, environmentally friendly, energy-saving and sustainable.

The Park will serve as a research and development cluster for next-generation smart devices and advanced greenhouse and botanical engineering in central Taiwan. The park aims to create 1,000 job opportunities in central Taiwan, to raise average added value for related industries 2 % by 2017 and add 5,000 jobs while increasing average added value 5 % by 2025.



http://www.ey.gov.tw/en/News_Content2.aspx?n=1C6028CA080A27B3&s=7ABC0FD3394E220D

<http://www.nownews.com/p/2014/09/15/1413779>

9. Taipei to host next ICSU General Assembly in 2017

(The China Post, 10 09 2014)

Taipei has been selected to host the next meeting of the triennial International Council for Science (ICSU) General Assembly (GA) in 2017, according to Taiwan's top research institution.

The participants at this year's meeting, held by the Royal Society of New Zealand in Auckland from Aug. 30 to Sept. 3, chose Taiwan to host the meeting after Academician Liu Shaw-chen touted the strength of Taiwan's academic community, Academia Sinica said in a statement.

Liu also highlighted Academia Sinica's facilities, the hospitality of Taiwan's people, and the country's rich cultural and tourism environment as making Taiwan an attractive venue for the next assembly.

During the meeting, national members and unions discussed future scientific directions and priorities, with this year's theme focusing on sustainability; natural disaster reduction and prevention; the cultivation of young scientists worldwide; and the encouragement of research for the benefit of mankind.

Founded in 1931, the ICSU is a non-governmental organization consisting of 121 national scientific bodies and 32 international scientific unions around the globe.

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/local/taipei/2014/09/10/416881/Taipei-to.htm>