

THE SECRETARIAT ROADMAP 2008

(FORMERLY THE SECRETARIAT REVAMP ROADMAP)

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ROLE AND OBJECTIVES

INTERDEPENDENCY, NOT REDUNDANCY.

It was a frustrating fact that some schoolmates were unable to recognize the work of the Secretariat. They considered it as redundant and suggested a dismissal. Confusion also emerged as the dividing line between the roles of the Secretariat and the Clubs Coordinating Board (CCB) was unclear.

The new Secretariat will be responsible for the R&D and marketing of all SA-branded products, as well as the maintenance of all web assets. The Secretariat will also act as the co-host of all functions to be held by the Student Association, in charge of all creative work, promotion and technical assistance.

In this way, we expect to unleash the full potential of the talents in the Secretariat, without compromising the healthy, balanced interdependency among different boards in the Student Association.

THE T-I-E TIE-UP.

To build up schoolmates' confidence in the new Secretariat, we have established three explicit development objectives - Innovation, Technology and Environment. The measures proposed in this Roadmap clearly demonstrate the convergence and interplay of these three elements.

INNOVATION

Innovations begin with big dreams. We are enthusiastic about exploring groundbreaking ideas that go beyond others' imagination. These ideas may sound more like fantasies at first, but they often turn out to be the source of advancements.

TECHNOLOGY

We are pushing hard to bring about campus-wide adoption of technologies, through a cloud-based collaboration infrastructure, an overhaul to the lscsa.com site and an electronic payment system.

ENVIRONMENT

Like every major companies, we are aware of the severeness of global warming, and are devoted to environmental protection.

The further adoption of the digital distribution model for publications and multimedia affirms our long-term commitment to environmental-friendliness, by eliminating the consumption of paper and ink. Not to mention our dedication to phase out the use of non-recyclable materials.

STRUCTURE AND RECRUITMENT

TEAMWORK.

In order to better utilize the diverse talents of different schoolmates, the new Secretariat will consist of three divisions, namely the Industrial Design Team, the Marketing Team and the Web Experience Team.

THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGN TEAM

The Industrial Design Team will be responsible for the research and development of all SA-branded products.

THE MARKETING TEAM

The Marketing Team will study the market demand and adjust production plans accordingly. The Team will also take care of the promotion for various products and functions.

THE WEB EXPERIENCE TEAM

The Web Experience Team is a crew of web developers in charge of the new lscsa.com website and a web-based infrastructure set up for streamlined internal collaboration.

Each team will be led by an EVP (Executive Vice President), who will report directly to the Secretariat General. Also introduced is the Creative Director, who will act as the sole consultant on creative design.

THE CREAM OF THE CROP.

To facilitate the complete structure overhaul, the new Secretariat will introduce new strategies to help pick outstanding schoolmates to join our big family.

Schoolmates who are interested in joining the Secretariat will have to state their experiences and abilities in creative design upon application. Applicants will then be arranged into the three divisions according to their fields of expertise before proceeding to face-to-face interviews for further assessment.

Speaking of the interview, on-site design assessment (either hand-drawn or computer graphics) will

completely replace the usual practice of prepared design submission.

ADMINISTRATION

SENSE OF BELONGING.

In a team, the cultivation of members' sense of belonging is crucial to the promotion of smooth and harmonious internal cooperation.

This may sound challenging. As a matter of fact, the key can be summarized into a basic principle: Every working member deserves respect for their dedication and acknowledgement of their hard work.

The internal scoring system will be abandoned. Its disappointing efficacy reflected that the high administrative costs involved were superfluous. More importantly, we insist that the system violates our principle of mutual respect. We believe it is not a good idea to highlight lowly-scored members publicly on notice boards. Sometimes, warnings may be necessary, but never in a way that results in embarrassment.

THE ARTISTS' COLLECTIONS SCHEME

Products will be gathered into collections named after the leading designer(s). We hope to encourage designers to submit designs voluntarily. Schoolmates' recognition of their work gives designers the driving force for improvements.

THE EIGHTY-PERCENT PROMISE

The new Secretariat promises not to change more than 20% of the adopted design. Any other changes will be made with the artists' consent.

THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.

As part of the revamp plan, the Secretariat hopes to address its shortcomings in every possible aspect.

The following are some other measures regarding managerial refinement and resources allocation.

- Working members of the Secretariat will receive clear written guidelines on handling routine duties.
- The new Secretariat will hold bimonthly evaluation meetings in which every member will be invited to participate.

- Resources (in terms of both manpower and funding) will be reallocated to cope with the increased effort in the promotion of products. In addition to print advertisements, we will be broadcasting video commercials on the Campus TV.

BOYS OF CARING.

The Student Association understands wholeheartedly the need of helping the unfortunates.

As the role model to all schoolmates, the new Secretariat hopes to take the initiative by donating 10% of its sales profit to charities.

COPY, ONLY IN THE RIGHT WAY.

The new Secretariat seriously respects the copyright on all media assets reserved by their respective owners.

We pledge that all our designs will be original, and we will never use unauthorized artwork (for example, images stolen from the web) in any way that constitutes copyright infringement.

Also, we shall seek permissions from record labels to use their songs under license in the Talent Quest.

PRODUCTS

WE ARE NOT STANDING STILL.

"To create a new standard, it takes something that's not just a little bit different; it takes something that's really new and really captures people's imagination..." said Bill Gates at a conference in 1984, where he expressed his appreciation of the legendary Macintosh.

Schoolmates are tired of products with mere cosmetic changes over the years. The new Secretariat aims at bringing new products of their own classes; meanwhile, raising the bar on existing products by introducing true practicality into future revisions.

Particularly, the stationary discount plan will be discontinued, so that we can focus on unique products that can be found nowhere else.

DESIGN IS HOW IT WORKS.

"Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works." suggested Steve Jobs, co-

founder and CEO of Apple, who has successfully promoted his brand as the global icon of innovation.

Our philosophy of industrial design stresses on more than just the good look of a product. The IDSA (Industrial Design Society of America) defines industrial design as a professional service of creating and developing concepts and specifications that optimize the function, value and appearance of products and systems for the mutual benefit of both user and manufacturer.

NO DETAIL IS TOO MINOR.

To achieve our goal of bringing truly practical products, we pay unwavering attention to every single detail right on the drawing board.

From physical dimensions, ergonomics and choice of materials, to the positioning of every element, we take all of them into consideration.

Moreover, we insist on carrying out extensive real-life testings and evaluations prior to any product debut.

RESPONSIBLE MANUFACTURING.

Our commitment to environmental-friendliness is observed at every production stage, from planning to after-sales recycling.

The new Secretariat will begin introducing more recyclable materials, at the same time retaining reasonable production costs, ensuring that the final products remain affordable.

We also expect to minimize the packaging mass and volume, in order to get rid of packaging wastes resulted from shipments.

Finally, the Secretariat will arrange routine recycling programs, possibly on a monthly basis.

STREAMLINED TRANSACTIONS, FINALLY.

After extensive evaluation, the idea of offering a full online transaction platform as proposed in the Secretariat Revamp Roadmap Draft v1.8 was found impractical in our school.

The regional restriction of Google Checkout¹ (as well as bad reputation of its alternatives like Paypal) and parents' concern about potential security threats are

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major obstacles to the implementation of online payment.

The new Secretariat will observe a new product release cycle which will last 6 weeks (approximately 1.5 months). New products will be introduced at the beginning of every cycle, followed by the ordering period which will be extended twofold to two weeks. Products will be ready for collection at the end of each cycle.

As soon as the Storefront at lscsa.com is launched, schoolmates can check out in-depth specifications and daily-updated stock statuses of all SA-branded products.

The online Storefront will also be the exclusive place where schoolmates can place their orders, using the simple Google Docs form linked to our Google Apps infrastructure. By eliminating the time-consuming process of distributing and collecting circulars, we hope to reduce the Class Representatives' workload significantly. Besides, since our database of ordering records will be stored and password-protected in a remote server, all data will be portable and secure. We do not have to worry about missing circulars and the associated privacy risks.

Afterwards, schoolmates can complete their payment at the Student Association Office. In order to improve the overall efficiency, we suggest them to use the newly-installed Octopus electronic payment system.² The entire process is fast, and will only take a few seconds. It also helps prevent theft and careless pecuniary loss because schoolmates no longer have to carry large sums of cash to school. Holders of individual Octopus Cards can even deactivate their cards in case they lost it. It should be noted that orders will only be recognized after payment.

To encourage the use of the Octopus payment system, schoolmates will enjoy a 5% discount for all purchases settled with Octopus cards.

When the products are ready, Class Representatives will receive an order list officially issued by the Secretariat, then they can help distribute them to their classmates accordingly.

In the future, we will continue to consider the feasibility of other online transaction solutions.

TODAY'S CONCEPT, TOMORROW'S REALITY.

We just cannot stop ourselves from brainstorming new, unique products.

Here are what we have come up with in our product pipeline so far:

- To tie in with our new Octopus payment system, the Secretariat will launch Special (Mini) Octopus Cards,³ which will have our custom design printed on the card face.
- The Secretariat may partner with the Music Club to make selected musical compositions and performances from schoolmates available on the web and/or CDs.
- Digital copies of the publication "The Lasallian" (published by the Publications Board) will be available for free subscription. Apart from being beneficial to the environment, this also helps save printing costs for R&D.
- The Secretariat will assist the Campus TV Team in offering an online show archive. Schoolmates will be able to download past programs through podcast subscriptions or as individual downloads in 7 school days.
- The Secretariat will introduce flag-labels specifically designed for the Bible, with symbols of different topics preprinted on them. These will be particularly useful for Form 4 and 5 schoolmates, saving them hours of time.

THE TALENT QUEST

BACK TO BASIC.

Acoustic performance and visual effects are keys to an outstanding live experience, and they are always our top priority in the Talent Quest.

To achieve solid improvements in these two fields, we have come up with the following measures:

- To stay away from the disturbing ambient noise, the Talent Quest Heats will only be held in the school hall instead of the open garden.
- The new Secretariat promises breakthroughs in lighting and stage design. We have already begun working on an initial blueprint.

- Video projection will be a more flexible and environmentally friendly alternative to suspended stage backdrops. Dynamic backgrounds and animated captions will be possible.
- Seats will be arranged along arcs, so that all audiences can see the centre of the stage comfortably from their seats. Also, more seats can be packed into the school hall. We intend to minimize the adverse yet subtle impact of such arrangement on sound imaging.

HIGH DEFINITION. HIGH FIDELITY.

*Unfortunately, the school hall can only accommodate a few hundreds of schoolmates, so many others will not be able to join us in this much-anticipated production. No worries. We hope to reproduce an equally engrossing experience for all with the *tqncore* family.*

The entire event will be shot in the gorgeous Full HD (1080p/i) format, which provides crystal clear video quality and more flexibility in post-production. If the budget allows, the Secretariat may hire a professional crew to take care of on-location recording and post-production.

TQNCORE PODCAST

Performances from the Talent Quest Heats will be distributed online as a video podcast at HD resolution (720p), in the emerging H.264 codec. The decision to abandon on-demand Flash video delivery is based upon the annoyance caused by frequent buffers during the playback of streaming media.

After subscribing to the feed in iTunes,⁴ Miro or other podcast-compliant applications, new episodes will be delivered to your disk automatically. (You will still have the option to get individual episodes manually.)

For those who do not demand the highest image quality, there will also be a separate feed for the SD (480p) variants. Those clips take up less disk space, take shorter to download, and are less processor-demanding.

TQNCORE LOSSLESS

Audio recordings of Final performances will be available online at no charge. The Secretariat will offer them in a compressed yet lossless format, without embedded DRM (Digital Rights Management)

software. The open-source FLAC (Free Lossless Audio Codec)⁵ is one of the capable candidates.

TQNCORE DVD

The Talent Quest Final will be offered on DVDs, in place of the obsolete VCD format. Without doubt, the DVD format is technically more advanced, and enjoys a far wider user base. Most importantly, they have significant advantage over VCDs in terms of image quality.

TQNCORE HD

Flash drives, the widely-adopted NAND-based storage media, have attained a good capacity-to-price ratio as they become more mature over the years.

Unlike memory cards which require separate card readers, the built-in USB (Universal Serial Bus) ports on flash drives offer plug-and-play convenience thanks to the hot-pluggable nature of the interface. In addition, the high data rate of USB connections make them a reliable and cost-effective medium for the distribution of high quality video contents.

High Definition (at least 720p, also in H.264) copies of the Talent Quest Final will be preloaded onto Flash Drives. These copies are easily-transferable, which means schoolmates may reserve the drives for other purposes.

We acknowledge the superior capacity offered by the next-generation optical media - Blu-ray Discs. Initially, we planned to introduce *tqncore* based on this format in limited quantity. Unfortunately, high production cost, insufficient demand as well as technical restrictions make this option unrealistic.

Both *tqncore DVD* and *tqncore HD* will come with more recyclable cases. To be precise, paper will be the material of choice, but not plastic. Besides, guests' interviews and the "Making Of" will potentially be included as bonus features.

TQNCORE ON THE GO

If there is sufficient demand, the Secretariat may offer iPods preloaded with the Talent Quest Final. The logo and the theme will be laser-engraved on the back of the iPods. The included video files will be encoded at the highest possible resolution supported by the devices (currently 480p).

LSCSA.COM

FROM INSIDE AND OUT.

The new lscsa.com is arguably the most ambitious project to be directed by the Secretariat. It represents a major milestone as we take our giant step into the Internet-driven era.

Internally, lscsa.com is a domain with a solid collaboration infrastructure under the hood. For the rest of us, it is a suite of online services built on top of leading-edge web technologies.

COLLABORATION LIKE GOOGLE.

Efficient collaboration requires a well-built infrastructure that just works. Deployed internally by Google themselves,⁶ Google Apps⁷ combines the powerful web applications essential for collaboration anytime, anywhere.

The implementation of the Google Apps infrastructure will not be limited to the Secretariat. Every working member in the Student Association will receive a custom account - *studentID@lscsa.com*.

Developed with businesses, organizations and educational institutes in mind, Google Apps brings together the internet giant's market-leading online services, ranging from communication to productivity.

Thanks to the seamless integration between these services, working members can access and share their documents and meeting schedules wherever Internet connection is available, with a single account.

With all our data and applications sitting on Google's fleet of reliable servers renowned for their rare downtime records, plus Google's promise to take care of all maintenance work, we can concentrate on our innovations and enjoy an unprecedented level of streamlined collaboration.

See how we are going to put the bunch of web applications into action:

GMAIL

A widely-acclaimed email service featuring a great spam filtering mechanism and an intelligent labeling architecture, accessible from virtually all third-party clients using POP3 or IMAP⁸

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GOOGLE TALK

An instant messaging platform based on the open source Jabber/XMPP protocol, compatible with thousands of third-party clients across all platforms.⁹

GOOGLE CALENDAR

Members can arrange meetings and events easily, and store their schedules up in the cloud. Also, automatic email notifications to all participants is a great time-saving feature. A shared calendar will be open to all schoolmates, viewable at lscsa.com (more details to follow in the next section), subscribe-able in most calendar applications.

GOOGLE DOCS

An online office suite which enables real-time sharing and editing of documents, spreadsheets and presentations. It is also one of the first web applications to receive Gears support for offline editing.

GOOGLE SITES

The guided customization tools and WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) editor featured in Google Sites allow clubs and societies to create and update their own websites easily, without requiring any web publishing experiences.

WEB TECHNOLOGIES MEET NO BOUNDARIES.

The rising popularity of social-networking sites, blogs and sophisticated web applications has led us to the new internet era dubbed "Web 2.0".

Millions of web developers worldwide have contributed to the pool by introducing new web technologies and frameworks which make development of RIAs (Rich Internet Applications) easier than ever. Now we are bringing them to the campus.

Rebuilt from the ground up, the new lscsa.com will comprise a collection of web services. On top of them will be a clean, intuitive and highly-interactive user interface that rivals many desktop applications.

We avoid employing proprietary platforms like Adobe Flash and Microsoft Silverlight, so that no installation of plugins is required. These plugins are known to be processor-intensive, resulted in ridiculously-high system requirements just to get them run smoothly.

Our applications are in full compliance with industry standards by design, which is essential for avoiding compatibility issues (usually misaligned text, images and form objects). This allows a uniform browsing experience across all modern browsers, regardless of the operating system used.

The Secretariat expects to have the following sections ready at launch:

THE CABINET

An introduction of the SA cabinet just like what you may have expected.

STOREFRONT

A product showcase with detailed specifications and stock statuses. For the first time ever, schoolmates can place orders at home right in their browsers, using the simple Google Docs form.

REVIEWS

A library of comprehensive reviews of third-party revision notes and exercises issued by the Publications Board. Schoolmates can find out where to purchase them at a glance (thanks to the Google Maps API), and even submit their own ratings.

CALENDAR

An embedded version of the public calendar directly from our Google-based "intranet", where schoolmates can check out up-to-date event schedules.

GALLERY

An AJAX-based gallery which gathers photos from major events held by the Student Association. Schoolmates can view and download the photos in their full-size glory.

We will work on support for the popular browser extension Cooliris (formerly known as PicLens).¹⁰ Cooliris presents photos in an impressive, three-dimensional interface, under the "3D Wall" moniker. The extension works in major browsers including Windows Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox and Apple Safari.

ADS

All schoolmates are welcome to post ads on lscsa.com at a nominal monthly fee. Every application entry will

be carefully censored. Contents that present any form of menace, eroticism, personal attack, privacy infringement or racial and religious discrimination are strictly prohibited. We only accept text and static images, but not distracting animations such as animated GIFs, Flash and Silverlight contents.

In the near future, we plan to incorporate social-networking features with data interoperability platforms such as Google Friend Connect¹¹ and Facebook Connect.¹² Both platforms promise to make user data more portable, but are still far from general availability. As soon as they become mature, we shall start rolling out experimental builds of some exciting new features.

Visit the early prototype of lscsa.com. (Design and features are subject to change without prior notice.)

FLICK, TAP, SCROLL.

In 2007, Apple struck the mobile phone industry with its revolutionary iPhone, which unearthed the amazing potential of the Internet on mobile devices. Now that the iPhone 3G has arrived Hong Kong, we are introducing our first iPhone web application — a lightweight, compact portal of lscsa.com designed specifically for Apple's iPhone and iPod touch.

To take advantage of the innovative touch gestures on the iPhone and iPod touch,¹³ our iPhone web application fits nicely into the huge, gorgeous screen on the devices, so that you do not have to zoom in and out. We study the iPhone Human Interface Guidelines¹⁴ posted by Apple, which suggests design principles and tips on building touch-friendly web applications.

The full-featured Safari web browser¹⁵ in the iPhone OS borrows the exact underlying rendering engine from its desktop brother - the open source WebKit.¹⁶ Mainstream media has proved Safari as the fastest browser on market, outscoring even Mozilla's award-winning Firefox, not to mention that WebKit is one of the first rendering engines to score 100/100 in the Acid3 web compliance test.¹⁷ The upcoming SquirrelFish Javascript interpreter¹⁸ introduces significant improvement to the already-impressive Javascript performance, making WebKit the ideal environment for mobile web applications.

¹ Google Checkout is only available in the United States and the United Kingdom as of this writing. Learn more about Google Checkout at <http://www.google.com/checkout/>.

² Learn more about Octopus in School Campuses at <http://www.octopuscards.com/corporate/application/other/en/campuses.jsp>.

³ Learn more about the Special Octopus Cards at <http://www.octopuscards.com/corporate/application/product/en/special.jsp>.

⁴ Learn more about podcasts in iTunes at <http://www.apple.com/itunes/store/podcasts.html>.

⁵ Learn more about the Free Lossless Audio Codec at <http://flac.sourceforge.net/>.

⁶ Learn more about "Google Eats its Own Dogfood, Adopts Google Apps Internally" at http://www.google.com/a/help/intl/en/admins/case_studies/dogfood.html.

⁷ Learn more about Google Apps at <http://www.google.com/apps/>.

⁸ Learn more about how to configure your client at (POP3) <http://mail.google.com/support/bin/topic.py?topic=12805> or (IMAP) <http://mail.google.com/support/bin/topic.py?topic=12806>.

⁹ Learn more about "Client Choice with Google Talk" at <http://www.google.com/talk/otherclients.html>.

¹⁰ Learn more about Cooliris at <http://www.cooliris.com/>.

¹¹ Learn more about Google Friend Connect at <http://www.google.com/friendconnect/>.

¹² Learn more about Facebook Connect at <http://developers.facebook.com/fbconnect.php>.

¹³ Learn more about Multi-Touch on iPhone at <http://www.apple.com/iphone/features/multitouch.html>.

¹⁴ Learn more about the iPhone Human Interface Guidelines at https://developer.apple.com/webapps/docs/documentation/UserExperience/Conceptual/MobileHIG/introduction/chapter_1_section_1.html.

¹⁵ Learn more about Safari on iPhone at <http://www.apple.com/iphone/features/safari.html>.

¹⁶ Learn more about the WebKit Open Source Project at <http://www.webkit.org/>.

¹⁷ Learn more about the Acid3 Test at <http://acid3.acidtests.org/>.

¹⁸ Learn more about "Announcing SquirrelFish" from the Surlin' Safari Blog at <http://webkit.org/blog/189/announcing-squirrelfish/>.