Press Releases

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HKUST Plans to Introduce Java-based Open Platform Campus Smart Card

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) has announced a plan to launch what is believed to be the world's first Java-based, open-platform Smart Card for university users. The new smart card will be launched thanks to generous sponsorship from and partnership with the Bank of China and Sun Microsystems.

Over a year ago, in response to rapid developments in multi-application smart card technologies, the University formed a team to formulate strategies and identify partners to offer a multi-application smart card to members of the university community. The team selected Sun Microsystems's Java technology and the Java Card Open Platform to capitalize on its high security and interoperability as well for its flexibility to be upgraded with new functionalities without having to physically replace the card. The latest implementation of the Open Platform (Visa Open Platform 2.0) was adopted over other platform solutions available in the market because it provides enhanced security for multi-application smart card solutions in distributed environments such as the Internet. Among the many applications selected, Visa Cash will be supported as a payment method both within and outside the campus.

"The new Multi-Application Campus Smart Card will provide a high level of convenience for students, faculty and staff members in payment, identification, access control, and other associated transactions on campus. It will also streamline existing administrative processes, bringing with it an improvement in the overall quality and efficiency of the campus services rendered," said Philip Wong, project manager and HKUST's Director of Finance. "The card is expected to be available to HKUST users by the end of this year," he added.

"Unlike many existing smart card solutions, we have adopted state-of-the-art technologies for next-generation smart card applications. This flexible framework will allow the university to add functions to the card, such as public-key infrastructure (PKI) support, loyalty programs, and mobile commerce applications, to be followed immediately after our initial launch," said co-project manager Prof Dit Yan Yeung from the Department of Computer Science.

"Adopting Java Card smart card architecture together with the Open Platform is a strategic investment by HKUST," said Danny Tam, Hong Kong General Manager of Sun Microsystems. "The university administration has a clear grasp of the opportunities for internal process re-engineering and the benefits of mobile e-commerce that smart card applications present."

"Sun Microsystems is therefore wholeheartedly supporting this pioneering project. We believe the HKUST Campus Java Smart Card will set a trend for multi-function smart card applications in Hong Kong and across the region," he said.

"Since the launch of Visa Cash in Hong Kong in 1996, the Bank of China has gained significant experience with smart card technology" said a spokesman from the Bank of China. "The adoption of the Java Card and the Open Platform is a logical migration of the existing Visa Cash program and represents the continuous efforts by the Bank of China to provide the Hong Kong market with innovative smart card solutions for our business partners and cardholders."