

# Digital mapping services set to take off with govt grants

From tomorrow, it will be possible to tap your ez-link card against a reader to pay for food, drinks and gifts at the Food Hall in Basement 2 of the Takashimaya department store. Around 80 per cent of the Food Hall's 51 tenants have been persuaded to go cashless.

ST PHOTO:  
NG SOR LUAN

chief executive Suman will likely keep transactions now beyond 2011.

entrants, who will comment on Nets and Payment new merchants are telecommunications, and services.

Suman said most of the services to be deployed under this scheme except 90 per cent of all transactions are now in circulation, and the government is aiming for all card transactions eventually.

mark, EZ-Link and the Takashimaya's Basement 2, a day that eight out of 10 transactions for drinks and gifts there using ez-link cards from the government's transactions of more than \$6 million a transaction will earn more.

have tried contactless payments for its merits. Mr Toh Teow has a Village Vegetables Street 11 Food Cen-

quick and convenient, like taking the bus. One quick tap and you don't have to return

n Lee, 18, is also looking for items other than a cashlessly:

able to look for a cashier give you a lot of easier to just beep the my ez-link with me all

FOUR companies have been given a total of \$500,000 in government grants to pilot digital mapping services here.

Such maps can, for example, provide real-time navigation help to motorists.

The services will go live in a six-month trial by March, Acting Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts Lui Tuck Yew announced yesterday.

Known collectively as the Image of Singapore initiative, these new services will tap public data like maps of roads, gas pipelines and buildings owned by the Government, as well as user-generated information, like a civic-minded motorist who sees a car breakdown along a narrow road and reports it to Quantum Inventions' in-vehicle navigation systems traffic service.

Besides Quantum, the other services receiving grants are:

■ **ShowNearby:** Provides a PC-based online map which enables businesses to analyse a particular area for competitors and customers;

■ **MapKing:** Provides a mobile phone program which lets a user who signs up for it find out where a fellow user is and get in touch;

■ **Surround Networks:** Enables businesses to send customised advertisements to the mobile phones of potential customers in the area who have signed up for such alerts.

It is hoped that these services will jump-start interest in digital maps and generate "business opportunities for the infocomm industry as more innovative services are developed", said the Infocomm Development Authority (IDA) of Singapore.

It added: "With the opportunity for citizens to contribute content, it will foster greater community involvement and generate a greater sense of belonging."

Restaurant chain Apex-Pal's chief executive, Mr Douglas Foo, hailed the idea of a map-based business intelligence system.

His company, which runs the approximately 40 Sakae Sushi outlets here, now deploys staff to check where and how business rivals operate before setting up a new outlet. A map which offers business intelligence will thus cut down his staff's efforts considerably.

The IDA said it would consider awarding grants to firms with innovative plans next year.

CHUA HIAN HOU