

TECHNOLOGY

TECHNOLOGY STARTUP

The KOOP approach to the life sciences

Providing the glue for the life sciences industry – that is what local technology company KooPrime is aiming to do through the application of knowledge and object oriented programming (KOOP).

KooPrime

Year founded: mid 2000

Startup capital: looking for first round funding of \$3 million

Founders: Lim Teck Sin, Anwar Chan, Goh Tong Nam and Gao Feng

Number of staff: 10

Value proposition: Its platform enables organisations to capture business and process knowledge in the form of bubbles and links. This process simplifies complex entries for users and allows them to interface with disparate hardware and software.



Providing the glue for the life sciences industry – that is what local technology company KooPrime is aiming to do through the application of knowledge and object oriented programming (KOOP).



The KOOP approach is developed to allow the integration, personalisation and automation of heterogeneous objects. Such objects are represented by components called "bubbles" and they include various forms of data sources and applications, said Lim Teck Sin (left), chief executive officer of **KooPrime**.

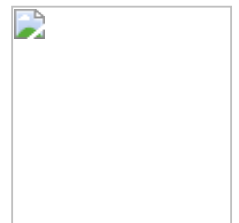
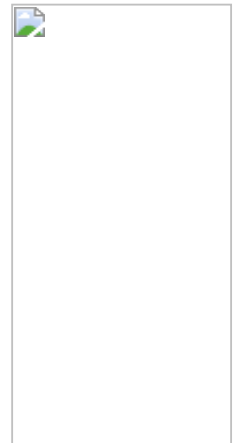
Founded in mid 2000, the startup provides a platform that enables organisations to organise data where business and process knowledge can be captured in the form of bubbles and links. This process simplifies complex entries for users and allows them to interface with disparate hardware and software. The various forms of data sources include:

- legacy databases and data generation equipment such as robotic arms and scanners,
- humanware such as email systems and handphones,
- advanced data collection and analytical systems, and
- Internet sites that provide services such as search engines and journal sites.

Therefore, the user is able to visually personalise parameters of each bubble so that it can be linked to other bubbles. The links in themselves represent a strongbox of implicit business or process knowledge.

Users of KOOP utilise a front-end (KOOPBox) to generate visual process templates. The bubble-like components involved in the process are selected and the parameters (such as machine, location, duration) to run these bubbles are set.

Links are used to integrate these bubbles into a personalised meta-application known as KOOPTemplate. This template is submitted to the KOOPServer, which executes the bubbles on disparate machines in different locations in an automated manner. The communication



between the KOOPServer and the "bubbles" are facilitated through KOOPDaemons which act as agents between the entities.

In this way, integration, personalisation and automation are achieved in one single step, said Lim.

The KOOPServer and platform act as a Business Logic Management System that can memorise the instructions of the user.

The KOOP platform traps the implicit knowledge involved in automation, captures explicit knowledge such as hyperlinks and documents and detects hidden knowledge using data mining tools. This knowledge can then be used for further evolution should the user so desire.

To put it simply, Lim said, "We provide a platform for treating each step of a complex series of activities a user carries out as a 'bubble'. By linking the output of one bubble to the input of the next 'bubble', we can assemble complex workflows of bubbles and links."

Technology aside, running a young company in these turbulent times is not easy. Since the biotech industry is a nascent one, it has been an uphill task getting customers especially in Singapore. Said Lim, "Most companies here are hesitant to engage the services of a local company. Often they want to engage companies with a proven track record so most adopt a 'wait-and-see how they do' approach."

"From the beginning we had to carve our niche and to make sure that we have a value proposition to offer to the industry," said Lim.

So, the company has gone outside of Singapore to market its products.

Currently, its business has grown beyond Singapore to include Malaysia, Australia, Korea, India and China. In this instance, being an iLIUP (Infocomm Local Industry Upgrading Programme) partner of Oracle and Hewlett-Packard helps.

"Having heavyweight companies such as Oracle and HP behind us enables us to gain a foothold in those countries through our partners. That way, we can expand our business without increasing our headcount."

The company, he said is already profitable and is now in the process of looking for its first round funding of \$3 million which will help fund its expansion into United States and Europe. The potential of these two markets is huge and gaining a foothold will enable us to catapult the business.

So far, the company has achieved a sales turnover of over \$1 million and is looking to double that in the next year or so," he said.

Already about 30 per cent of its sales turnover is funnelled back into research which is carried out by almost all of the company's ten staff. "This is important as research enables us to keep our edge over the competition."

"For this reason, when business picks up, we will have to manage our manpower very carefully," said Lim.

"To be sure, based on the current growth, we hope to go for an initial public offering in about three to five years' time." **KooPrime** is at <http://www.kooprime.com/>.

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