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Students will be able to live-streaming tuition and see their tutor and classmates in real-time without stepping out of their home



Private tuition is a thriving business, globally.

Parents spend thousands of dollars every year to make sure their children get better education and score top marks in their exams. But most parents, particularly in Asia, are not fully satisfied with the quality of education provided by government schools, which are slow to adapt to a changing environment.

As a result, private tuition services, which offer better quality education, often leveraging new-age technologies, draw a lot of attention, especially in Asia.

Estimates show that in Singapore alone, parents spend S\$2,600 (US\$1974) per capita on each student to provide private tuition. In 2014, the industry accounted for S\$1.1 billion (US\$835 million) and it has since been growing rapidly, with more tuition centres cropping up and expanding fast.

This trend is not confined just to Singapore but is also prevalent across Southeast Asia. While private education has grown bigger and bigger, it has not really exploited cutting-edge technologies.

So, the opportunity is enormous.

“Despite having huge potential, the online tuition industry in Singapore has only scratched the surface and has not penetrated into the mass market,” says Alexander Lim, Co-founder of Cudy, an edtech startup aiming to make a change. “There are many companies in this space, but I am not sure if they can be called technology companies, because they are mainly acting as the subsidiaries of offline tuition agencies.”

Cudy was established in late 2017 by Lim and Sean Lam, both alumni of Singapore Management University (SMU). It all started from a personal problem of Lim when he was looking for tuition while in Junior College.

“The searching and the matchmaking process was inefficient and it is still the same even with online tuition agencies. The connecting is not transparent as students do not get to see all the available options. Location is also an issue; great tutors might be too far away and are often unwilling to travel long distance. This made me think of a solution and hence Cudy,” he said.

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Cudy — which means collaborative study — is focussed on providing synchronous learning in virtual classes, allowing multi-channel communications like in a physical classroom.

A C2C platform for online virtual classes (live streamed), Cudy allows tutors and students to match and immediately book a lesson. The virtual classes are conducted on the platform itself, featuring a learning management system for students to manage all their classes.

“We are primarily focussed on serving students aged 14 years and above, with the current target audience being students in junior colleges, as they are more capable of making their own education decisions and take greater ownership when it comes to their grades and learning,” Lim tells e27.

Students will be able to live stream tuition and see their tutor and classmates in real-time without stepping out of their homes. It also provides an online dashboard to give them a monthly overview of their classes and work, in addition to a cloud drive to store class-related learning materials.

Tutors from different specialisations can list their lessons on Cudy and decide on both the size and price of their classes. Cudy’s set of tools and features aim to give them more control and lesser issues stemming from common administrative matters such as payment, marketing and invoicing.

As easy as ABC



(L to R) Cudy Co-founders Alexander Lim (CEO) and Sean Lam (CTO)

A student/parent will first browse for a lesson programme, and then book a trial lesson. Students are entitled to one free trial lesson per hour on the platform, which would help them to assess if the tutor and/or the lesson structure is suitable for them, before deciding to commit to the class. This will help in finding a suitable tutor for their individual needs.

Once the student makes the trial booking, they can begin the live class on the platform in an upcoming session. If they like the class, they can immediately make payment to continue and enrol in the class and attend the subsequent lessons.

Cudy boasts of a multi-channel live-streaming function that is designed for classes up to 50 people, with intelligently designed back-end functions to ensure that the technical connection is smooth for most metropolitan cities in Southeast Asia, limited by the network infrastructure. The platform offers all STEM and language subjects in the core education syllabus, as well as test prep syllabus (PSLE, O-LEVEL, N-LEVEL, A-LEVEL, IB, GMAT, SAT, TOFEL).

Here, the tutors determine the fees for themselves. In Singapore, on an average, the fee can go from US\$10 and can stretch up to US\$90 per class, depending on the level/grade.

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“We aim to be the largest online tuition service provider in Southeast Asia as the market is still left untouched by larger players. We are developing the platform from the ground up. We use the latest ICT technologies as well as place paramount focus on delivering a better experience than other companies in other parts of Asia,” Lim shared.

Cracking a book



Cudy calls itself the Airbnb of private tuition as it doesn't have own tutors to provide tuition services. It sources recognised and popular tutors in the industry, and is also working with a few tuition centres on a pilot programme to explore potential B2C service models.

“We allow independent and contract tutors to sign up as tutors for free and offer their services, being the merchants on our marketplace. We are reaching out to schools via programmes on entrepreneurship to reach out to a wider audience within schools during invited talks,” he informed.

The company charges a 16 per cent service fee for booking of classes. It also offers value-added services to tutors to use Cudy for marketing and content distribution. It has a tiered cloud storage for online resource hosting.

Cudy also has B2C service packages, offering auxiliary services and equipment catered towards the needs of tuition establishments and special team accounts with management functions.

A few years down the line, Cudy plans to introduce augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technology to all of its users. It will be using the technology to make virtual classroom learning more interactive and realistic, which would further bridge the gap between physical and online learning.

A bootstrapped company, Cudy is currently in the process of raising a seed round and is looking to partner with early-stage VCs with an interest in marketplaces/tech/edtech/education in Southeast Asia. The firm has earlier received a grant from SMU.

“Being in the information age, we now live in a fast-paced society where the need for productivity is ever increasing. As an IT startup, we believe that by leveraging technology and the internet, we can bridge distances and transform the classroom environment to better suit the needs of the next generation of students. We aspire to establish a new standard of education online, as well as seed the next future community of educators and learners,” Lim concluded.