

# Mobile security set for shake-up

Local startup's prize-winning product promises to render lost or stolen phones useless

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HAVING peace of mind arguably comes from knowing that you are in control.

Local startup tenCube is assuring the frustrated many with lost or stolen mobile phones that control is indeed theirs.

Mr Darius Cheung, tenCube's chief executive officer and co-founder said that their award-winning mobile phone security product WaveSecure, which will be commercially launched later this year, allows users to remotely lock their mobile phones, thus rendering it useless by preventing unauthorised calls or blocking access to personal information.

WaveSecure can track new SIM cards inserted into stolen or lost phones and monitor sent or received messages.

Besides providing back-up, WaveSecure can also partially or completely erase data (see box).

"We discovered that business persons, such as executives, who badly need their contacts may lose thousands of dollars from having their phone lost or stolen," said Mr Cheung, a National University of Singapore (NUS) electrical and computer engineering graduate.

He noted that for others who store sensitive data on their phones, like members of the Singapore Police Force, it is more important to get rid of data than get the phone back.

The year-old company's roots actually stemmed from making the best out of a bad situation.

Co-founder Mr Varun Chatterji lost his mobile phone about two years ago.

Instead of simply filing a report and never hearing about the phone again, Mr Chatterji was inspired to develop anti-theft software.

Mr Chatterji, who was Mr Cheung's



**WINNING ENTREPRENEURS:** One-year-old startup tenCube receiving its grand prize of \$30,000 at the 7th Start-Up@Singapore finals. The cheque was presented by Mr Michael Ma, the Group CEO of the Indochine group of restaurants (far left) to tenCube's team comprising (from left) Mr Darius Cheung (CEO), Ms Sherene Sera Jose (intern), Mr Rishi Israni (chief technology officer), Mr Indradeep Biswas (COO), Mr Varun Chatterji (chief architect) and Mr Shivram Gopinath (intern).

housemate at the NUS Overseas College entrepreneurship programme in Silicon Valley, is now tenCube's chief architect.

Also from the NUS School of Computing are Mr Rishi Israni and Mr Indradeep Biswas, tenCube's chief technology officer and chief operating officer respectively, who completed the team.

They are all in their mid-20s.

The name tenCube was chosen to describe the founders' aim to make mobile phones a thousand times more useful.

When the company was incorporated June 2005, it simultaneously introduced WaveSecure as its key product, which is currently in its beta form.

Beyond primary market research among peers, the group also observed how industries such as healthcare or banking used mobile phones.

They researched PC security companies to glean insight into secure system technologies.

"We also drew on analogies from previous history like with personal digital assistant (PDA) companies," Mr Cheung said.

Along the way, tenCube secured the advice of Professor Wong Poh Kam, director of the NUS Entrepreneurship Centre and Mr Eric Tachibana, who sold his first Silicon Valley startup in 1998 and is managing director of media solutions company Intevol.

Their outstanding product, business focus, and perseverance helped tenCube take home the \$30,000 grand prize at the recent 7th Start-Up@Singapore (S@S) business competition finals.

Most of the founders are not new to S@S, having been past participants for other projects.

"One of the main things we learned is that by having a good product doesn't directly translate to a good business plan," said Mr Cheung, for whom the 7th S@S marks his fourth try.

"We had several good products before and even prototypes, but at the end of the day, we couldn't have a good, clear, convincing business plan."

## THE MAGIC OF WAVESECURE

In the event that a mobile phone is stolen or lost, WaveSecure users can remotely "lock" the phone over existing telecommunication networks. This prevents unauthorised calls or access to personal information saved on the phone.

Through this remote access, WaveSecure users can also track changes to the phone, such as if a stranger inserts a new SIM card into the phone, as well as monitor sent or received messages.

They can also back-up their data on a web-server. If highly-sensitive information is stored on the phone, WaveSecure users also have the choice to partially or completely wipe-out data.

WaveSecure can be installed and auto-configured after an online registration.

A list of WaveSecure-capable phones are available on the tenCube's website ([www.tencube.com](http://www.tencube.com)).

One lost phone and a million dollars in grants and investments later, tenCube is now poised to take over mobile phone securities with the commercial launch of WaveSecure in the fourth quarter of this year.

WaveSecure has been lauded as one of the Top 10 Wireless Innovations in Asia by business consulting firm Frost & Sullivan in February this year.

It also won the Levono Technological Invention Award at the 7th S@S.

"As we enter the new era of smart phones, particularly with the many phones that run Symbian or Windows operation system nowadays, it becomes possible for products like ours to be designed and implemented," said Mr Cheung.

"For example, PCs existed long before the Internet, but it's the power of the Internet that brought a whole new set of problems and solutions in security," he added.

Visit [www.tencube.com](http://www.tencube.com) to register for a soon-to-be-launched free trial of WaveSecure.

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