[Pangyo Interview] PCNC Innovates Reading Habits with Socratic AI Conversations and 10,000 Books

PCNC's TOAPING uses AI-powered recommendations and Socratic conversations to build self-directed reading habits, serving 23,000 students across 250 schools.


CEO Duckki Kim of PCNC

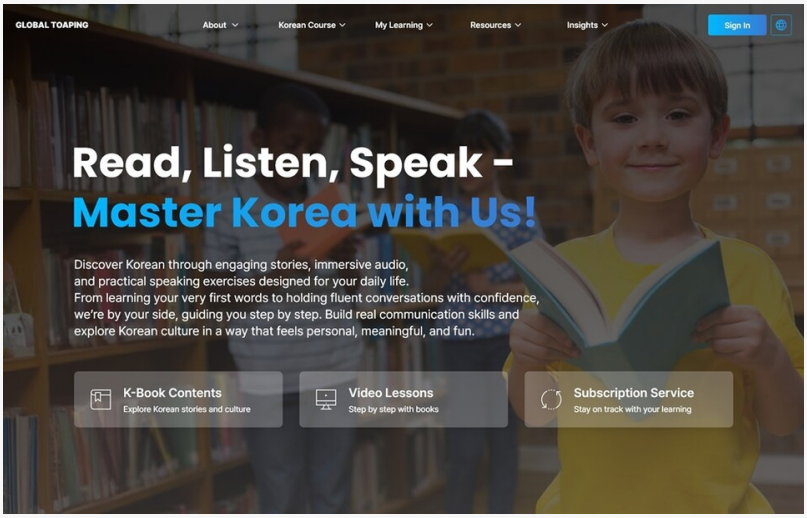
PANGYO, GYEONGGI-DO, SOUTH KOREA, September 15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- EdTech enterprise PCNC (CEO Duckki Kim) is drawing significant attention across domestic and international education markets through a customized reading solution integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and big data technologies. TOAPING—an acronym for 'Technical Oriented, Attractive, Personal, Interest Network Gateway'—developed by PCNC provides personalized Korean reading and learning services tailored to learners' specific proficiency levels and personal interests.

> "TOAPING" stands for Technical Oriented, Attractive, Personal, Interest Network Gateway. We focus heavily on two key factors: a student's personal interest and their reading level."
>
> *Duckki Kim, CEO of PCNC*

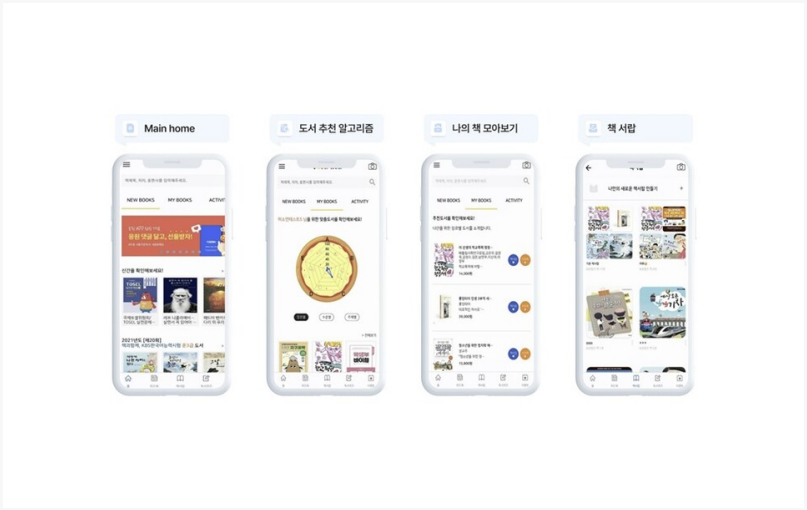
Duckki Kim, CEO of PCNC, holds a Ph.D. in Computer Engineering and built his career as an elementary school teacher, university professor, and executive at major IT enterprises. During his time as an elementary school teacher, he witnessed systemic issues in education where students became immersed in short-term rote learning without voluntary interest or lost interest in reading altogether due to mandatory reading programs. As a result, many students suffered significant learning gaps after entering middle and high school from a lack of foundational reading habits. To resolve these issues, leveraging experiences from two successful corporate exits, he established PCNC as an EdTech enterprise to innovatively support public

education environments.

The core differentiator of the TOAPING service lies in proprietary technologies and methodologies that foster self-directed learning. Based on SQ3R—a proven reading education methodology—the platform provides Korean books, traditional fairy tales, and cultural classics. At the same time, its hybrid machine learning-based AI recommendation engine analyzes individual user interests to recommend up to 20 real-time curated book selections aligned with each learner's focus. In particular, unlike conventional AI tools that merely provide fast answers to user questions, TOAPING's AI service implements a 'Socratic AI service' that poses guiding counter-questions to learners—akin to the question-and-answer method of philosopher Socrates—forcing them to think independently and arrive at solutions themselves. Furthermore, to motivate learning, it features a goal achievement support system combining milestone setting with digital rewards, functioning as a virtual library by securing approximately 10,000 Korean e-book content titles.



Main page of the website introducing TOAPING | Image courtesy of PCNC



Mobile user interface of TOAPING. Featuring a vast library, reading or saving lists is effortless, and its book recommendation algorithm suggests suitable books. | Image courtesy of PCNC

As of late 2024, PCNC has achieved strong growth by securing over 23,000 student members across 250 schools in South Korea. Its business model operates on a subscription-based structure, providing annual institutional subscriptions to schools and libraries, while offering monthly subscriptions to private educational institutions and individual learners. Steps toward global market expansion are accelerating as well. The company signed a TOAPING reading service contract with the elementary division of Tokyo Korean School in Japan, executed master distribution contracts for Japan and Germany to conduct local Proof of Concept (PoC) testing, and established a local entity in Germany. Having identified a shortage of quality Korean educational reading content at York University in Canada in 2019, CEO Kim reinforced content to build a stepping stone for global entry, actively promoting partnerships with overseas universities offering Korean language departments, Korean heritage language schools, churches,

and private educational institutions targeting future entry into the US market.

PCNC plans to unveil 'TOAPING Version 3' this year, a next-generation solution where conversational AI leads learning situations by integrating generative LLM, RAG, and multi-vector embedding AI agents. Additionally, the company accelerates technological refinement to leap into a global HabitTech enterprise by expanding its reading service domain into all academic curriculum subjects and introducing multilingual services. PCNC plans to broaden its global recognition further by scheduling participation in CES 2027.

Pangyo TV met with PCNC CEO Duckki Kim at the Startup Campus in Pangyo Techno Valley to discuss their Socratic AI engine, digital library ecosystem, and global HabitTech expansion strategy. Reporter Thomas Frederiksen conducted the interview.

Q1. Thomas Frederiksen, Reporter: Hello everyone, and thank you for joining us here today at the Pangyo Techno Valley Startup Campus. My next guest is the CEO of PCNC, Mr. Duckki Kim. Welcome! Could you tell me a little bit about your company, PCNC?

A. Duckki Kim, CEO of PCNC: At PCNC, as an edtech company, we want everyone to be able to study according to their individual level and personal interests. To make that possible, we developed our core technologies using AI, big data, and blockchain.

Q2. What problem did you observe in the field that inspired you to start this company, and what was the primary problem you set out to solve?

A. Duckki Kim: When I was teaching, I noticed that students and parents always want to study hard, but students often prioritize short-term fun over building core habits. By the time students transition to middle or high school, parents and students are often surprised to find they lack proper reading habits and foundational literacy skills. My primary goal was to create a solution to solve that specific problem.

Q3. What exactly is TOAPING, and how does it help students build focused reading habits?

A. Duckki Kim: "TOAPING" stands for Technically Oriented, Attractive, Personal, Interest Network Gateway. We focus heavily on two key factors: a student's personal interest and their reading level. We want every student to enjoy reading, so we promote "focused reading"—known in Korea as Pond Reading (immersing oneself deeply in a topic). By doing this, a student's area of interest and concern expands naturally as they read.

Q4. How do you integrate artificial intelligence into this recommendation service?

A. Duckki Kim: Since 2022, we have been researching and developing a machine learning-based AI recommendation engine. We created a hybrid recommendation approach that analyzes student interests to recommend real-time, curated book selections—offering up to 20 tailored

books per user.

Q5. Standard AI tools typically give direct answers, but your platform uses AI to enhance a student's critical thinking. Could you explain how your Socratic AI service works?

A. Duckki Kim: Normally, AI services are used to find quick answers or results. However, in the learning process, simply answering doesn't help the student grow. We designed an AI agent that asks guiding questions. When a student answers, the AI agent evaluates their response and asks the next logical question, forcing the student to think deeply for themselves rather than relying on easy answers. It operates on the Socratic method to guide learning through targeted questioning.

Mobile user interface of TOAPING. Featuring a vast library, reading or saving lists is effortless, and its book recommendation algorithm suggests suitable books.

Q6. Is this platform exclusively for native Korean speakers, or can it also be used by international students learning Korean?

A. Duckki Kim: Ultimately, our vision is to expand globally. While we started in Korea, literacy is a universal need for children worldwide. Currently, we serve two primary markets: K–9 reading habit development for school students, and a Korean digital library service for global users learning Korean as a foreign language.

Q7. Do you already have experience expanding into international markets outside of Korea?

A. Duckki Kim: Yes! Back in 2019, York University in Canada used our early service for students studying Korean. At the time, we were still early in development and realized global learners faced a major shortage of quality Korean reading content. That led us to fully integrate our TOAPING reading platform with an extensive digital content library. Last year, Tokyo Korean School in Japan adopted our service as well.

Q8. What are your future expansion plans for the platform in terms of academic subjects, language support, and entry into the US market?

A. Duckki Kim: We are expanding our reading and Korean language services globally while actively conducting R&D to broaden our scope beyond reading into all academic school subjects. Furthermore, we are developing multi-language support beyond Korean. Later this year or early next year, we plan to introduce TOAPING Version 3.0, which features an upgraded questioning AI agent that can interactively guide complete learning scenarios across various subjects. For the US market, we plan to introduce our service to US universities—specifically targeting Korean language departments—as well as Korean language heritage schools, church-affiliated education programs, and community study groups. Subscribing to TOAPING grants unlimited access to our entire virtual library of over 10,000 Korean e-books anytime, anywhere.

Q9. Finally, operating out of Pangyo Techno Valley, what makes this location attractive for an edtech startup like PCNC?

A. Duckki Kim: People often refer to Pangyo as Korea’s Silicon Valley. The area brings together a high concentration of leading IT, software, and AI companies. Being located here among industry peers provides fantastic cooperation and has proven to be a great strategic decision for our growth.

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