

Toku launches Makimoto: open-source conversational AI built for Asia-Pacific data residency

A composable architecture that keeps customer data in-country from day one and outlasts the components inside it.



Singapore, 27 April 2026 – Toku, a Singapore Exchange (SGX) Catalist-listed AI-powered customer experience platform, today launched **Makimoto**, its open-source initiative for conversational AI in Asia-Pacific. The first release, **Makimoto Kawa (“Kawa”)**, will be available from 1 July 2026 as a managed transcription API¹ service hosted in Singapore. Additional country-specific APIs and a containerised, self-hostable release will follow, enabling deployment in the customer’s cloud, data centre, or jurisdiction of choice. The waiting list for early access opens today at makimoto.ai. Alongside the waiting list, Toku is opening ten Singapore-based roles on the Makimoto team for recent graduates.

“In an era where AI capabilities evolve on a weekly cycle, the biggest risk of any technology decision is creating tomorrow’s legacy today. Makimoto is our response: a composable



architecture where every component can be swapped as the field evolves.” said Thomas Laboulle, Founder and CEO at Toku.

A response to a fragmenting regulatory landscape

Data-processing regulations across Asia-Pacific are tightening and diverging. Indonesia’s Personal Data Protection Law, Vietnam’s Personal Data Protection Law, and recent updates to Singapore’s PDPA have all raised the weight that enterprises place on where audio, transcripts, and customer conversations are processed. For teams building voice and chat automation across the region, the primary engineering question is no longer which model is most accurate: it is which deployment satisfies each regulator while scaling across markets.

Makimoto is designed to answer that question on day one, and to keep answering it as requirements evolve. Kawa’s first release runs exclusively in Singapore, keeping customer audio and transcripts within the country and supporting in-country processing for customers subject to Singapore’s PDPA and regulated-sector guidelines, including those issued by the Monetary Authority of Singapore.

Makimoto gives teams optionality for markets such as Indonesia and Vietnam, which enforce among the strictest in-country data-processing mandates on real-time communications and transcription services, frequently requiring local servers for critical or personal data.

“With Kawa, customer data is processed in country, not just stored there. Every stage of the pipeline runs within a single jurisdiction, so our customers always know exactly where their data is going.” said Thomas Laboulle.

Orchestration-first: composable by design

Makimoto Kawa is an open-source orchestration framework that assembles, configures, and runs multiple open-source components as a production-grade transcription pipeline. What Toku open-sources under the MIT licence² is the orchestration layer itself: the glue code, configuration, and APIs that allow every component in the pipeline to be swapped without rewriting the surrounding system.

Kawa will be offered through two APIs at launch: one for real-time transcription, which developers can use to build live voice agent experiences, live captioning, or in-conversation analytics; and one for post-conversation transcription, suited for recorded calls, voicemail, and batch analytics of archived conversations. Under the surface, both APIs run the same five-stage modular pipeline: audio resampling, noise filtering and audio enhancement, voice activity detection with speaker diarisation, speech-to-text inference, and post-processing for normalisation, temporal ordering, speaker labelling, and structured output. Operators



can swap or tune any individual stage to optimise for a given language, domain, or deployment environment.

Makimoto is a natural extension of the composable customer engagement approach recognised by Gartner in its Cool Vendor research.

“We are obsessed with the orchestration layer, because models and components turn over every few months, but the layer that keeps them swappable is what makes the whole stack durable.” said Thomas Laboulle.

A progressive path to full transparency

At launch, Makimoto opens the orchestration layer of Kawa as MIT-licensed source code, while its internal components, including voice activity detection, diarisation, noise handling, the speech-to-text model, and post-processing, remain managed by Toku. Over subsequent releases, Toku will progressively open additional layers of the pipeline, working towards full transparency and community modifiability of every component. This phased approach lets the Makimoto community review, contribute to, and eventually replace each part of the stack while Toku maintains production stability for early-access users.

Makimoto is operated through **Makimoto Technology Pte Ltd**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Toku Group, established to preserve community trust and transparent governance, and to maintain a clear distinction between the enterprise and community editions of Kawa. Toku believes this separation unlocks innovation in both: the community edition evolves under open governance and external contribution, while the enterprise edition stays focused on the reliability, security, and commercial support that regulated-sector customers require. Toku commits to keeping Makimoto’s open-source components permissively licensed, with no plans to adopt source-available or Business Source License-style terms. Over time, additional components of Toku’s technology stack will migrate into Makimoto, evolving the group’s architecture toward an open-core approach that reinforces the composability thesis at the heart of this initiative.

Developing future-ready talent

Alongside the early-access programme, Toku is opening ten Singapore-based positions on the Makimoto team, open to recent graduates of Singapore’s universities and polytechnics. The roles span engineering, developer relations, and community work. The hiring programme reflects Toku’s conviction that Asia-Pacific open-source infrastructure benefits from engineers and community builders rooted in the region, and that Makimoto should be a place where early-career talent joins a production-grade open-source initiative from the start. Applications open today at makimoto.ai.

A complement to the regional AI ecosystem



Makimoto is designed to complement, not replace, the broader Singapore and APAC AI ecosystem. Kawa is built to interoperate with open regional language models such as **SEA-LION** from AI Singapore and **MERaLiON** from A*STAR, which developers can plug in as reasoning or dialogue layers in applications that depend on accurate transcription of regional speech.

¹ API refers to Application Programming Interface - a way for software systems to communicate with each other, allowing developers to access functionality or data without building it from scratch.

² MIT licence is a widely-used open-source licence that allows anyone to use, modify, and distribute software with minimal restrictions, including for commercial purposes.

About Toku

Headquartered in Singapore, Toku Ltd. (SGX Catalist: TKU) is a cloud-native, AI-powered customer experience platform purpose-built for enterprises operating in complex, multi-national environments.

Trusted by leading enterprises and public-sector organisations, Toku helps organisations streamline operations, scale customer engagement and deliver consistent experiences in fragmented markets worldwide.

For more information about Toku, visit toku.co

About Makimoto

Makimoto is Toku's open-source initiative, operated through Makimoto Technology Pte Ltd, dedicated to building composable conversational AI infrastructure for Asia-Pacific. Its first release, Makimoto Kawa, is an MIT-licensed orchestration framework for production-grade transcription pipelines.

For more information about Makimoto, visit makimoto.ai

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements regarding Toku's expansion plans and business strategy. These statements are based on current expectations and assumptions and are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially. Toku undertakes no obligation to update these statements to reflect subsequent events or circumstances.

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