

Bits + Bytes : A Miscellany of Technology

NEWS

ScaleUp partners Technology Park to build stronger start-up ecosystem

ScaleUp Malaysia and Technology Park Malaysia (TPM) have entered into a memorandum of cooperation (MoC) to provide mentorship, training, market access and capital to technology start-ups, allowing them to strengthen their capacity for regional expansion and foreign direct investment.

Through the partnership, they will provide start-ups with better access to the government's resources, including labs, infrastructure and other facilities, as well as regulatory facilitation to advance innovation.

In April, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation announced the setting up of a technology commercialisation accelerator (TCA) and the consolidation of TPM and the Malaysian Global Innovation & Creativity Centre (MaGIC) to create opportunities for entrepreneurs, scientists and researchers as well as start-ups to accelerate commercialisation of technology and innovation.

Cold chain logistics expert GoLog offers franchise opportunities

Intelligent cold chain logistics platform GoLog is calling on those aspiring to start a business to own a delivery service franchise. For those wishing to capitalise on the burgeoning logistics and delivery market, the platform is offering the opportunity to become franchise owners of "Cold Hubs" — a cold storage facility to enable the delivery of cold items.

GoLog's Cold Hubs franchise is limited to 13 applicants for now, with one hub in every city in Peninsular Malaysia. The cost to start a franchise is RM275,000, and includes a 1.1% shareholding in GoLog's parent company, on a first-come, first-served basis.

Franchise owners will receive one 20ft or 40ft frozen container cold room, which is capable of fitting up to 1,000 cold boxes, access to the GoLog dealer digital solution and a store signboard. Japanese dessert chain Mykori Dessert Café, which sells premium shaved ice desserts in Ipoh, is one of GoLog's franchisees.

MMU and Vynn Capital team up to explore entrepreneurial prospects

Multimedia University (MMU) and venture capital firm Vynn Capital are collaborating to strengthen the start-up ecosystem and enhance entrepreneurship development among students.

“At MMU, we have seen first-hand that the younger generation can be very adept at leveraging the start-up and entrepreneurship ecosystem. These are the essential parts in creating more jobs in society and eventually bolstering national economic development,” says MMU president Prof Datuk Dr Mazliham Mohd Su’ud.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) gives MMU and Vynn Capital the opportunity to explore areas of cooperation and business development as well as provide students and alumni with mentorship opportunities, prepare start-ups for investment and equity funding, and explore the development of the venture capital-related curriculum.

“As a venture capitalist, we think it’s only natural for us to be in the picture from the very beginning as we believe that the entrepreneurial culture can be nurtured through collaborative efforts between the education sector and the business world,” says Victor Chua, founder and managing partner of Vynn Capital.

The venture capital firm has invested in several well-known start-ups, including Southeast Asia’s largest used car marketplace Carsome and business-to-business e-commerce marketplace Dropee.

Facebook’s facial recognition software identifies black men as ‘primates’

Facebook has disabled its topic recommendation feature after it mistook black men for primates in a video. A Facebook spokesperson called it a “clearly unacceptable error” and said the recommendation software was taken offline, reported AFP.

Facial recognition software has come under scrutiny over accuracy issues, especially when it comes to identifying people who are not white.

According to AFP, Facebook users who watched a British tabloid video — White man calls cops on black men at marina, which featured black men — in June last year were shown an auto-generated prompt, asking if they would like to “keep seeing videos about primates”.

While humans are among the many species in the primate family, the video had nothing to do with monkeys, chimpanzees or gorillas, added the agency.

S.O.S

FreeMakan.com raises RM1.35 mil to support food bank initiative

Brickfields Asia College Education Group's (BAC) food bank, FreeMakan.com, has raised RM1.35 million in its endeavour to feed impoverished families and individuals by providing dry rations and cooked food.

The goal is to raise RM1.5 million to feed 30,000 families. According to a statement from BAC, it has witnessed more and more individuals falling into the B40 category (bottom 40% income group) every day since the Covid-19 outbreak.

To date, more than 20,000 families across the country have received food baskets from FreeMakan. This equates to more than two million meals for 85,000 people nationwide.

Many low-income urban families were already close to breaking point due to a prolonged pandemic. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, the number of poor households increased to 639,800 in 2020 from 405,400 in 2019.

To fund this initiative, visit <https://freemakan.com/campaigns/stop-hunger-help-feed-10000-b40-families/> or donate to the Make It Right Movement Sdn Bhd (RHB Bank A/C No 21219800040683). For bank transfers, kindly indicate "Stop Hunger" and send a proof of donation to donations@giveback.my or via WhatsApp (014) 2315 528.

The public is also welcome to donate food and goods. For more information, check out <https://freemakan.com/donate-food/#formid>.

COMPETITION

Alpha Startups Pre-Accelerator calling for start-ups to join Cohort 2

FWD Start-up Studio and 1337 Ventures are calling for entrepreneurs and start-ups to ideate, validate and fine-tune their business and go-to-market plans for financial technology (fintech), insurance technology (insurtech) and takaful technology (takatech) start-up ideas for its Cohort 2 of Alpha Startups Pre-Accelerator programme.

During the 12-week programme that starts in October, participants will be able to identify new opportunities to enhance the ecosystem and value chain.

The final day of the programme will culminate in a Demo Day, where top teams present their pitches to investors from across the region. The best teams will receive an investment of RM150,000 to kick-start their idea and have the potential for paid proof-of-concepts with FWD.

Registration is open from now until Oct 1. For more information, visit bit.ly/fwdcohort2.

Salesforce launches inaugural Asean Developer Challenge

Salesforce, the global leader in customer relationship management, is looking for developers to join its Asean Developer Challenge. The programme is open to anyone interested in building powerful enterprise apps on the Salesforce platform or becoming part of Salesforce's developer community, regardless of their skill or experience.

To help developers prepare for the challenge, the programme will guide them through a series of three online courses hosted on Trailhead — Salesforce's free online learning platform — covering topics such as Salesforce basics and business automation. Upon completion of the courses, the participants will be rewarded with a Salesforce certification voucher worth US\$200.

With the newly learnt skills, participants will then be challenged to build apps for the Salesforce platform. They will be allowed to present at a Demo Day in October, hosted by Salesforce and attended by Salesforce customers and partners. All developers who attend the Demo Day will receive an additional certification voucher worth US\$400 and have their achievements recognised on Salesforce's Developer Blog.

The challenge, which started on Sept 1, runs until Oct 27. More details on the Asean Developer Challenge can be found on the Salesforce Asia-Pacific Blog, <https://www.salesforce.com/ap/blog/2021/08/salesforce-asean-developer-ch...>

MDEC calls for submissions for Global Technology and #SMART Automation grants

Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) is accepting submissions for the Global Technology Grant (GTG) and #SMART Automation Grant (SAG) 2021.

GTG was launched to nurture global champions, drive investments and catalyse the digital innovation ecosystem. The grant will be used solely for technology innovation, development and commercialisation of innovative commercial-driven products or services. It is aimed at nurturing global champions and a digital innovation ecosystem by supporting R&D, empowering innovation and establishing centres of excellence.

There are two categories of GTG:

1. The first is for technology companies that are ready to scale to their first global market or expand their market presence. Malaysian-owned companies could receive up to 50% of the total project costs or RM2 million, whichever is lower. Foreign-owned companies stand the chance of winning 30% of the total project costs or RM2 million, whichever is lower.

2. The technology accelerator grant is for foreign technology companies to set up centres of excellence to conduct high-value technology innovation and R&D activities leading to the development and commercialisation of products and services, among others.

The closing date for submissions for the GTG is Sept 15. Interested applicants can find more information at <https://mdec.my/gtg/#>.

SAG is a matching grant for service companies to automate their business processes and move towards digitalisation. The grant is to be used solely to kick-start the development and implementation of a project using technology to automate business operations.

This matching grant is targeted at small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the service industry — primarily retail, wholesale, food and beverage — tourism and logistics to enhance and improve their businesses via digital tools.

The deadline for submission for SAG is Sept 25. For more information, visit <https://mdec.my/digital-economy-initiatives/for-the-industry/smart-autom....>

PEOPLE MOVES

Signify appoints Sukanto Aich as CEO

Sukanto Aich (pictured) is the new CEO of Signify Malaysia Sdn Bhd (formerly known as Philips Lighting Malaysia Sdn Bhd). Sukanto took over from Alok Ghose, who served as the lighting company's CEO for six years.

Sukanto will oversee the development of Signify's operations in Malaysia and broaden its offering of innovative connected lighting solutions to users. He joined Signify in India as the national sales manager in 2014 and four years later, he was appointed chief marketing officer of Signify India.

TGV Cinemas has a new CEO

Tan Lay Han has been appointed executive director and CEO of TGV Cinemas. Cinema veteran Tan joined Tanjong plc in 1994 where he was involved in the conception of TGV Cinemas and became its founding general manager.

He later joined Maxis in 1999, where he held leadership positions across sales and services, marketing, business planning and transformation, delivering innovative distribution and customer experience. Before this appointment at TGV Cinemas, Tan served as the chief sales and services officer at Maxis.

Salesforce gets a new line-up of leaders in Asean

Customer relationship management company Salesforce has announced three key additions to its Asean leadership team.

Bernard Solomon, who has over 30 years of IT experience, was appointed regional vice-president of Malaysia and Vietnam. He is responsible for driving growth for Salesforce in these key markets. Based in Singapore, his focus is on expanding local operations in the markets under his care and ensuring the success of local customers, partners and employees.

Kittipong Asawapichayon is the new managing director of Salesforce in Thailand. A veteran of the IT industry with more than 30 years of experience in companies such as IBM in Thailand, Asean and Asia-Pacific, he now oversees Salesforce's local operations.

Latika Minocha, who was appointed vice-president of alliances, partners and channels, is responsible for accelerating and scaling the growth of Salesforce across Asean. She brings nearly three decades of leadership experience and diverse expertise in alliances and channels, partner sales, consulting, sales excellence and business operations.

DIGITIONARY

Surveillance capitalism

The handling and use of personal data have been one of the most contentious topics of the year. As the term implies, surveillance capitalism is the commodification of personal data with the core purpose of profit-making.

The capture and production of this data rely on mass surveillance of the internet. This activity, which relies on big data, is often carried out by companies that provide us with free online services, such as search engines like Google, e-commerce platforms like Amazon and social media platforms like Facebook. The data collected is then used to send targeted ads or even sold to third-party data brokers to influence our decisions.

In 2018, Facebook and political data analytics firm Cambridge Analytica were implicated in a massive data breach where the data of more than 87 million Facebook users were improperly obtained and purportedly used to meddle in the US elections, where voters were targeted with political ads and other personalised posts based on their psychological profiles.

The incident exposed how internet companies survey online activity, extract that data and package users' data to create new markets for this commodity.

<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/bits-bytes-miscellany-technology-21>