



## LAUNCH OF BANGUNAN WAWASAN

Wawasan Open University (WOU) seeks to build a creative digital ecosystem in the George Town heritage precinct

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The world is changing, driven by technological innovations that mark the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0). In tandem with this, the very nature of work is being transformed. Multiple skills and jobs are becoming obsolete while new skills, especially those related to digitalisation, are becoming valued and sought after.

People's lives and norms are also being disrupted due to the Covid-19 pandemic which has accelerated the pace of digital transformation, both at the workplace and in society. Faced with these circumstances, it is imperative that WOU, as an education provider, responds promptly and smartly to the challenges. In effect, we must recognise that businesses which fail to embed digitalisation into their corporate plans are essentially planning to fail.

To its credit, WOU has risen to the challenges and opportunities presented by this double disruption. The University has established the School of Digital Technology (DiGiT) housed in Bangunan Wawasan, which is strategically located in the hub of the Creative Digital District of George Town. With its proximity to enterprising companies like Facebook, Digital Penang, Think City and Penang Science Cluster, DiGiT is primed to spur an exciting entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem in the state of Penang.

Its faculty has introduced two degree programmes - on digital business and software engineering - and there are students already enrolled for the unique study journey offered. They will acquire professional skills and be mentored by industry experts, paving the way for them to undergo paid apprenticeship during their studies and graduate with work experience. Meanwhile, WOU continues to partner with esteemed IT-related companies like Lithan Academy and Chamrun Digital to further improve its content and delivery, as well as educate and inform students, society and the public alike.

On the flip side, the online work and learning environment has led to unhealthy trends. For example, we have seen an increase in online scams while extended social isolation has impacted significantly on many people's mental wellbeing. As part of its social responsibility, WOU has organised various initiatives to raise awareness and provide psychological support. It has rolled out a psychological first aid (PFA) course for frontliners and anyone interested in supporting those facing mental distress.

Last but not least, WOU hosted a strongly attended webinar on Covid-19 that offered sound advice and easy-to-follow steps on the all-important issue of curbing the spread of the virus at the workplace and other confined spaces with effective air purification.

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# PREPARING FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: AN INDUSTRY CAPTAIN SPEAKS

In an interview, Mr. Glenn De Padua, Director, Consumer & Small Business (CSB), Sales Operations, Dell Technologies, sheds light on issues related to trajectory, talents and overcoming barriers in the quest to reap optimum benefits from the digital era.



## Q: Can you share your pointers for a clear roadmap to make digital transformation a reality at workplaces?

A: There are four key areas that organisations should consider as they make plans to ensure digital transformation success at the workplace:

- **Provide access to the right technology.**  
Employees must be equipped with PC solutions that are built with intelligence that anticipates what users need, help them be more productive, and be better in the things they need to get done. Also, build a multi-cloud environment and put in place other virtualisation initiatives, allowing employees to access internal company resources quickly and without having to increase the number of IT support staff.
- **Prioritise security and data protection.**  
Organisations must not compromise security for ease-of-use. Work data should be kept on work devices, and this includes not only company-issued laptops but also other storage devices that should be encrypted if storing confidential information.
- **Have consistent communication to and between employees.**  
Employers must create a system for employees to stay up to date on work policies, information about working from home, considerations for events and meetings, and tips for keeping healthy. Leaders of remote teams also need to prioritise transparency, setting performance expectations and ensuring that employees feel connected and included.
- **Embrace the new working culture.**  
Share best practices in the form of tips and tricks for employees to bring them up to speed quickly on what they need to know about working in a hybrid environment.

## Q: What do you consider or identify as the skills gap among the nations' workforce for the future of work?

A: Digital skills alone will not bring about the transformation and creativity that organisations need. Equally as important are soft skills – in particular, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

- a) Critical thinking is when one can see faults in existing systems and will ask questions, probe, challenge the status quo and do things in a better, faster, more efficient way.
- b) A problem-solving mindset complements the critical thinker. We do not need people who come to work every day expecting to do the same thing. Employers seek people who are ready to fix problems: people who seek out problems, find ways to fix the problem and to ultimately solve the problem.

On a broader note, the pandemic has really accelerated the pace of innovation and as a result, more talent is needed to fill those gaps.

## Q: What do you see as barriers to digital transformation and what measures are needed by employers to overcome them?

A: The Dell Technologies 2020 Digital Transformation Index which surveyed 4,300 business leaders globally has given us an indication of what those barriers are and where investments need to be made:

### Top 3 barriers to digital transformation success in Asia Pacific and Japan

1. Data privacy and cybersecurity concerns
2. Lack of budget and resources
3. Unable to extract insights from data and/or information overload

### Top 3 technology investments in Asia Pacific and Japan

1. Cybersecurity
2. Data management tools
3. Artificial intelligence algorithms

Leaders need to equip themselves with the vision and understanding of the emerging technologies that are charting the course of the world around them. They need to be able to navigate conversations around AI, machine learning, data science and continuously upskill and reskill their employees.

# OPENING NEW POSSIBILITIES IN THE DIGITAL WORLD WITH BDBS

The highly anticipated Bachelor of Digital Business (Honours) [BDBS] programme offered by WOU's School of Digital Technology (DiGIT) welcomed its first batch of students in May 2021 following its accreditation with the Malaysian Qualifications Authority (MQA).

The programme has rightfully generated a buzz of expectation in the market due to the knowledge and credentials it provides for industries today, such as on Google Analytics, digital marketing, business analytics, website development, and social media marketing.

Two students from the pioneer batch share their aspirations with WawasanLink.



## FROM A SIMPLE WEBSITE TO DREAMS OF A BUSINESS

It was during her three-month internship at an engineering firm that **Shasmitha Seb Sebastian** derived an enthusiasm for developing websites. The 22-year-old from Bayan Lepas had completed her studies for a Diploma in Computer Graphics Design at a private college in September 2020.

While pursuing the required internship, she was tasked with creating the company's website. It launched her on a journey to explore the awesome possibilities of the digital world, culminating in her taking up the BDBS programme.

"I faced many difficulties in creating the website because I wasn't good at performing coding using HTML and CSS," she recalled. "At the end of my internship, I managed to learn the basics." This led to her wanting to master the art of coding and designing for a well-functioning website.

As she was looking to further her studies, she got drawn to WOU's website and its information on the BDBS. "WOU offers great courses under the programme, each with its own benefits," she said.

Shasmitha finds that fresh graduates tend to lack work experience when applying for jobs. "With BDBS, I will have three years of working experience when I graduate," she stressed. "That's why this programme is perfect for me."

Her heart is now set on opening her own online business one day. "I will be more confident in setting up my business after I acquire the needed skills from the programme," she said.



## HOMEMAKER YEARNS TO REIGNITE CAREER, STEP UP CHARITY

She is a full-time homemaker with two young children, and has been away from the professional world for the last 10 years.

Despite having settled comfortably in domestic life, **Lai Yee Lian**, 41, enrolled in BDBS through Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), using her

work experience and SPM results. The move is likely to revive her career with newfound gusto and success. About a decade back, Lai had worked as a marketing executive for a popular lingerie brand in Petaling Jaya.

"I was in marketing previously, and I find that BDBS is somewhat related," she said. "With the push towards globalisation, most industries are transforming to online operations and hiring digital marketing staff."

Lai, who now lives in Sungai Ara in Penang, hopes to enhance her understanding of online branding, website designing and social media marketing, as well as improve her talent in customer service in the digital era. "Everything is going digital and online. I must learn how to conduct business online," she remarked.

Another factor behind her motivation to study website design and digital business is her passion for charity work. She has been involved with a charitable organisation for many years.

She aspires to set up an e-commerce website for fundraising and for selling handmade items once she picks up the necessary digital skills. "I want to create websites and I want to learn about e-commerce for the sake of my profession and to contribute to society," she shared.

# BDSE: TOWARDS A PROMISING CAREER IN SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

In September 2021, WOU welcomed the first batch of students for its Bachelor in Software Engineering (Honours) (Application Development) [BDSE] programme, offered by the School of Digital Technology (DiGiT).

A significant feature of this programme is that students undergo intensive professional training in Year 1 itself. They then apply the skills learnt to a full-time paid internship in the industry from Year 2 while studying part-time through open distance learning (ODL). Its courses include Programming Foundations, UI Frameworks, Web Development Foundations, Database Design and Implementation, System Security, and Software Project Management. The electives include Data and AI Essentials, Statistics for Data Science and AI, R Programming, Machine Learning, Deep Learning, and Reinforcement Learning.

Two pioneer students share their thoughts on their aspirations in pursuing the BDSE.



## EQUIPPING FOR A PROFESSION IN DEMAND

**Cheah Ee-Lynn** of Bayan Lepas, Penang, has had a deep interest in software engineering and technology since young. Desiring to equip herself with the right knowledge and qualification, she recently opted for the BDSE.

"This is my first step towards that journey," she said.

"I thought it was really amazing how a software engineer could design and develop computer software by using a bunch of codes."

Cheah, 27, enrolled through APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) with her SPM qualifications and work experience. She had been a supply chain order management administrator at Keysight Technologies for six years until June 2021.

She described herself as a goal-oriented person who likes to set deadlines to achieve her degree and other targets. In this regard she is thankful for the work experience to be gained through the programme.

"Once I complete my degree, I would already have three years of experience as a software engineer instead of being a fresh graduate. This will make a difference in my salary.

"Software engineering is one of the in-demand professions now and the skills from BDSE are needed in almost every industry," she shared.



## A DEGREE LADEN WITH OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIENCE

**Kenneth Chong Yee Hang**, 22, believes that the hard skills he will acquire from the BDSE programme will never become obsolete, but will remain relevant and helpful for work in the future.

"With BDSE, I can improve myself professionally. I will learn not only technical

skills but communication and presentation skills as well," said the lad from Sungai Bakap, Penang.

Chong enrolled in BDSE through regular entry, thanks to his Skilled Vocational Diploma from Synergy College, Perai, which he obtained in December 2019.

He then underwent an internship for his diploma at a holiday accommodation agency in Bukit Mertajam, and subsequently upon graduation worked for his father in the family business.

He found WOU to be convenient, especially since he could remain in Penang. He was also drawn to the various courses under BDSE. He plans to explore work opportunities abroad and gain valuable experience.

"I can learn a lot of new things which will help improve my coding and communication skills," he said. "I will work hard and enhance my career so that I can help my family achieve a better future and repay them for all their support."



# DESIGN THINKING

## A REAL-WORLD APPLICATION TO SOLVE PEOPLE'S PROBLEMS



▲ Syafie shared on the real-life benefits of design thinking.

When the National Registration Department (NRD) implemented a drive-in counter in Putrajaya, it wanted to ensure that people who came there to collect their identity documents or make applications went through a smooth and comfortable process. So, in order to brighten the public's experience, the Malaysian Global Innovation & Creativity Centre (MaGIC) studied various factors, including things like the parking spaces available there and the disembarkation point for public transport commuters.

The outcome of this creative effort to enhance the NRD's service was the result of what is known as "design thinking".

According to Syafie Mustafa, Senior UI/UX Designer at MaGIC, design thinking can be applied in the real-world environment to find human-centric solutions to issues, thus improving user experience.

Syafie was speaking at an online talk on *Introduction to Design Thinking* on 21 August 2021, organised by WOU's School of Digital Technology (DiGiT) and MaGIC.

Among the insights that he shared were on the stages of design thinking - empathise, define, ideate, prototype and test. "Have conversations with the users and dig deeper into their frustrations when using a service or product, to understand their experiences and to empathise," he said in offering tips on the process.

"Listen to key points, observe facial expressions when they give feedback, ask what makes them frustrated. Get an empathic understanding of the issue you wish to solve," he said. Empathy allows designers to set aside their assumptions and gain insights into the users' needs and problems, he explained.

The 'define' stage involves reframing the perceived problem based on what users say, do, think about and feel during the

empathy-mapping. Designers use the insights gained from talking to users to turn the problem statements into "how might we" questions. "The 'how might we' would help your brain to start thinking of solutions and ideas," Syafie said.

Take for example the problem of getting teenagers to wake up early in the morning. This can be reframed thus: "How might we encourage early wake-up for teenagers so that they could be more productive on a day-to-day basis?"

The 'ideation' stage needs teamwork, such as brainstorming and post-it voting, to come up with various ideas or perspectives to find the most rational and delightful solution, or even the most longshot.

After this, the 'prototype' stage entails creating a physical, digital or experience prototype. As low-fidelity prototyping is mostly done on paper, he recommended high-fidelity prototyping (such as on Miro, an online whiteboard), which is interactive, for better insights. The solutions derived are then implemented in the prototypes. By the end of this stage the design team would have a clearer view of how real users would behave, think, and feel when using a product or service.

Finally, for the 'testing' stage, the design team runs through the prototype with real users to gauge its desirability (to humans), technical feasibility and business viability.

To a question, Syafie replied that the simplest way of doing design thinking is to use the "soul-searching" module and the "lightning decision" module, which take just a day.

"In the soul-searching module, you map out things like your 20-year plan, top three values, top three audiences and the competitor landscape, to know what to prioritise day-to-day," he said. One can then decide on actions that bring the highest impact with the lowest effort so as not to burn out the team.



# E-COMMERCE AND DIGITAL MARKETING: SO MUCH TO OFFER, SO MUCH TO LEARN



▲ Mr Anand Shankar from Lithan Academy, Singapore.

Very likely, you have heard terms like “crowdfunding” and “subscription” in the world of digital marketing. But have you ever heard of “dropshipping”?

Dropshipping is apparently one of the most cost-effective ways to source a product online. “You just put the product on your website, sell it first, secure the money from customers and then place the order from the wholesaler or manufacturer,” explained Anand Shankar.

This was among some insightful gems that the digital instructor from Lithan Academy, Singapore, offered during his talk on setting up an online store and how to sell products across different marketing channels. The online presentation titled *Introduction to E-commerce and Digital Marketing* was organised by the School of Digital Technology (DiGiT) on 30 July 2021.

Anand cited other examples of e-commerce wares, including physical products, digital products and services.

Crowdfunding, he explained, involves pitching ideas on websites like kickstarter.com to raise capital, while popular subscription-based models are Netflix and Spotify. Physical products include those on platforms like Amazon.

Meanwhile, examples of digital products are ebooks, software or anything downloadable. People can also sell their professional services (such as writing or editing) through websites like Fiverr.

## THREE STEPS FOR NEW ONLINE BUSINESSES

Choose a product, conduct research and set up your business. These are three steps Anand cited for launching an online store.

In determining product opportunities, he suggested “keyword research to find out what people are typing in search engines”. Other things you can do to identify the product are to try solving a problem in your vicinity or just follow your passion.

You can evaluate your product by looking at potential market size, competitor landscape and target customers, he said, along with the potential selling price, size and weight, and unique value proposition too.

Research is important as it reveals what consumers want and what competitors are providing. One needs to identify the top 3 sellers using marketplace intelligence tools that also tell their volume, selling price, selling trends across different marketplaces, and customer reviews.

And when you set up an online store, you must choose a trendy name, design a striking logo, and understand digital marketing well – before deciding on how to market your products.

## MORE ONLINE PLATFORMS FOR MARKETING

There are also other popular channels for digital marketing channels, such as email marketing, pay-per-click (PPC) advertising and search engine optimisation (SEO), Anand added.

Email marketing can provide excellent return of investment if the email has a captivating subject line, right story-telling elements, is segmented, and sends out the right message. PPC is advertising on search engines, where you pay when the visitor clicks on your ad and comes to your website.

On SEO, Anand pointed out that it may take 4 to 6 months before a website achieves better rankings in search result pages. “Google will show your website higher in the search engine rankings if end users spend more time on your website, especially if the content is structured properly, loading well and optimised for mobile,” he added.

Yet other effective channels are social media marketing, display advertising (e.g. banners on websites/social media), video advertising, content marketing, and mobile marketing (with SMSs sent to potential customers).

Instead of building your own website, sellers can now spend just a few hours to have a good online store running with Shopify, he informed.

# CHARMING AND FUNCTIONAL HERITAGE CAMPUS TO HOUSE SCHOOL OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

▲ Upper floor corridor.



▲ The ground floor: a year ago.



▲ The ground floor: as it is now, with refurbishment in progress.





▲ External view.

True to its motto of 'Think Tomorrow', WOU aims to keep pace with evolving technological advancements and address the skills gap among the workforce brought on by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0).

With this in mind, the University has taken over the charming Bangunan Wawasan at 7 China Street Ghaut in George Town's heritage precinct to support the digital hub in the Creative Digital District (CD<sup>2</sup>). The new School of Digital Technology (DiGiT) will operate from this vantage point, drawing inspiration from the rich legacy of the past to meet the boundless promise of the future.

The focus of the School is to produce graduates with functional hard skills as well as required soft skills so as to produce future-ready talents for the nation's workforce. There are plans to collaborate with many organisations and institutions to bring optimum benefit to students.

DiGiT is set to offer a range of programmes in the fields of technology, cutting across multiple disciplines – from business to computing technology to the creative industry. It has started to offer two degree programmes in the fields of Digital Business (BDBS) and Software Engineering (BDSE).

Students will undergo intensive skills-centric learning in the first year via on-campus learning and be mentored by industry experts. They will then be placed with industry partners to start working full-time from the second year onwards while they complete their degree through open distance learning.

The courses under the BDBS and BDSE programmes are delivered in a modular format; students complete each course in a 3-week time frame before moving on to another.

DiGiT also provides opportunities for students to start up their own businesses, including entrepreneurial, mentoring and investment support.



▲ Seminar room.

The programmes under DiGiT equip learners to survive and thrive in the digitally transformed work environment, thus leading to great employment opportunities and bright career prospects.

As employers adapt their operations and services to move online or operate remotely, there is an increasing use of social media platforms, corporate websites, software applications and other online channels. All these warrant digital knowledge and skills – and that is precisely what DiGiT is all about.



▲ Fixtures add to the building design.

# INTERNATIONALISM A KEY DRIVER FOR INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Among the highly pertinent factors that can truly drive innovation and enhance the potential of higher education in Asia-Pacific countries is the process of internationalisation. The benefits are possible through various ways, such as by allowing access to global experts, sharing educational contents, and incorporating work-relevant skills into curricula.

Five higher education industry leaders from the region conferred on this imperative topic during a session on *Internationalism and Innovation: Unlocking Asia-Pacific's Potential with Digital Leadership* on 6 July 2021. It was held during a half-day virtual event titled *Unbounded Universities: Asia-Pacific* organised by Times Higher Education, London, in partnership with Coursera.

The panel speakers were Prof Dr Lily Chan, Chief Executive and Vice Chancellor of Wawasan Open University; Dr Prakash Gopalan, Director of Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, India; Mr Raghav Gupta, Coursera's Managing Director for India and APAC; Dr Peter Laurel, President of Lyceum of the Philippines University; and Dr Aseem Chauhan, Chairman of Amity University, Lucknow Campus, India.



**Prof Chan** stressed that internationalisation exposes people to different cultures and thinking, leading to innovation across borders. For example, countries without well-developed higher education systems can access quality higher education in other countries.

She said that the content for online learning must be organised for easy digestion by students. "Coursera has provided a platform for us to understand what is the latest, what is the trend, and that feeds back into innovation across all regions, not just APAC," she said.

She called for collaboration among universities to deliver micro-credentials by packaging courses over a period and stacking them for a degree. She also opined that governments tend to forget "the last mile" when considering infrastructure investments to improve digital delivery.

On digital leaders, Prof Chan remarked: "They must be able to assess risks and ask the right questions. We must impart these values to our students, across cultures, on what is cyber security, what is ethics, what is integrity, as we move into the digital world."

While agreeing on the importance of sharing resources, **Dr Prakash Gopalan** cautioned against relying too much on external teachers or courses lest the institution lose its branding.

He also questioned if today's graduates are ready for industry. "Are they able to speak or understand the language that the professionals speak once they find themselves in the industry?" he asked

He also touched on problems related to low bandwidth and broad digital divide across India.

## TAPPING ON TALENT POOL FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

**Raghav Gupta** told that learners on the Coursera platform hail from over 100 countries. "Internationalisation is happening," he declared.

He added that he expects many companies to operate remotely even after the pandemic, opening them up to a vast pool of international talent. "A student in Asia could learn from an instructor from anywhere in the world who might be the best in that particular field," he noted.

In light of this, as businesses increasingly employ digitalisation, new graduates need to learn the related skills. Indeed, the need for innovation in higher education is underscored by the "double disruption" brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the pandemic, he said.

Gupta also pointed out that in 2020 millions of people focussed on four domains of skills – technology, data science, business and human skills. "The number one skill that people spent time learning on our platform last year – that's 80 million learners around the world – was written communication," he revealed. Other top skills included mindfulness, gratitude, kindness and listening.

Besides learning technology and functional skills, it is also equally important to attain human skills for jobs of the future, he added.

Gupta also stressed on the importance of reliable internet connectivity for live online teaching on platforms like Coursera. Two other crucial factors in this regard are content and device.

In fact, most online learning on Coursera happens on mobile devices. Due to this, the platform's operators are working to optimise its courses and projects for mobile learning. "To overcome the problem of poor internet connection for live classes, Coursera has reduced the bandwidth needed for downloading a class," he said.

Dr Prakash Gopalan ►



◄ Dr Peter Laurel



Mr Raghav Gupta ►



◄ Dr Aseem Chauhan



"Going forward, every faculty member should be able to teach online," he said. Coursera has launched the Live2Coursera app for Zoom so that instructors can record their live classes. "The recorded session sits on the Coursera platform for students to watch later when they have connectivity and to take it when they are offline as well," he explained.

He also mentioned plans in India to develop affordable smartphones to improve student access to devices, and also to provide fully online degrees to double the capacity of students in higher education.

### COLLABORATION, MICRO-BADGING, AND FORESIGHT

**Dr Peter Laurel** reasoned that it is vital to promote adoption of international standards as universities rush to adopt technology because of the pandemic. Collaborations for faculty exchange, for recruiting of talented educators from across the world, and for online learning are made easier with technology. "The university is no longer the sole repository of knowledge; there are so many possibilities available for all of us," he said.

Dr Laurel urged higher education players to take advantage of opportunities arising from the pandemic to innovate. "The idea of micro-badging in an industry-driven setting is incredibly attractive," he remarked.

"We also need to embed life skills modules in the curricula, like mindfulness, relationship management, emotional

well-being, resilience, and mental health issues," he said. A curriculum should be flexible so that students can curate their own learning and do macro-badging of courses for higher engagement.

Meanwhile, **Dr Aseem Chauhan** believed the pandemic has opened opportunities for innovation through digital platforms and online education. "Sharing ideas across borders is a great driver of innovation," he said. He pointed to universities coming together online and Coursera's offerings as examples of how collaboration drives growth in education.

He shared the need to develop digital leaders with foresight to see what is coming. "So, some level of basic technology competency is required, and they must continuously upgrade themselves," he said. "Digital leaders must be able to manage workforces across international borders and those teams working remotely."

He also stressed on the importance of proper bandwidth and devices. "We need to invest in content wherever a more localised content and pedagogy is required to reach the population."

Dr Chauhan summed up: "The pandemic has catalysed trends and opportunities going into the future, such as models of education that are more blended and hybrid in nature. And collaboration is important. If you work together, we can do much more and this will surely elevate a lot of universities from the Asia-Pacific region to be global universities."



# GROW YOUR BUSINESS BY ADVERTISING ON FACEBOOK



▲ Sina Rahati of Chamrun.

Not many people who run businesses realise the advantage offered by Facebook in marketing of products and services. Companies can use different types of advertisement features available to target their audiences and expand their sales.

In fact, Facebook is equipped to monitor users' behaviour on social media, synchronising all their messages and activities on

its own platform as well as on Instagram, explained Sina Rahati, Digital Director of Chamrun Digital, Australia.

He was speaking at an online talk on *How to Grow Your Business with Facebook Advertising* on 24 July 2021. The event was organised by WOU's School of Digital Technology (DiGiT).

Besides Instagram and Facebook itself, parent company Facebook Inc also owns WhatsApp, the popular mobile messaging service.

"They have a pattern of your behaviour, what phone you use, where you go, what content you like, the kind of people you communicate with," Rahati said. "Based on the information you share, and the people you share with on Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, Facebook has created a segment that advertisers can use for business growth."

He gave some examples of Facebook's advertisement campaigns - brand awareness, reach, traffic, leads generation and conversions.

Brand awareness - used mainly by big businesses - employs Facebook's algorithm that makes the advertisement appear as much as possible in front of audiences. The reach campaign - good for a small business in a locality to inform people that it exists - allows audiences to see an advertisement but they may not take further action.

Traffic advertising focuses on audiences who come to your website or landing page. "Make sure all information is correct and presented in a way that audiences will understand your business when they get to your page," he said. "Maximise your website pages with a video or a text content to capture the audience's attention immediately and get them to stay inside your page as long as possible."

The advertiser can also divert traffic to an app, Facebook event or Messenger conversation. You can have an app installed to be connected to your advertisement. However, video views have poor return on investments and are more suitable for brand nurturing or remarketing.

Leads generation should only be used if one does not have a website or landing page, and is used to collect relevant information about the consumer. "If the number of fields for your audience to fill is very small, you will get a lot of leads, but of poor quality," Rahati said.

On Facebook messages and conversions, Rahati said: "Facebook allows access to conversions only after you have first run a traffic advertisement on Facebook. You pay based on the leads Facebook gets for you, and then you convert the leads to Facebook conversion."

Meanwhile, Messenger advertisement leads people to the advertiser's Messenger app, while WhatsApp advertisement allows users to contact businesses directly through WhatsApp.

Rahati also advised advertisers to modify the location setting, zooming in on where they want to run the advertisement and who the target audience is, according to their budget.

He stressed that detailed targeting - based on age, income, gender, language, preferences and other segments - is important in Facebook advertising. "You may want to run multiple advertisements with different types of audiences, to find out which advertisement or which segment will work for you," he said.



# BE ALERT FOR ONLINE SCAMMERS ON THE PROWL

contact or organisation. The victims' personal data is compromised when they open the attachment with malware or click on a link that directs them to a fake website.

In the Macau scam, the criminal pretends to be a person of authority who claims that the victim is involved in a crime. Upon imposing this fear, the victim is offered a means to settle the case.

Love scams usually see cybercriminals profiling victims who appear to be seeking companionship. "Once you are emotionally involved, they will ask for financial help by saying their business is down," said Dato' Mohd Anil, warning that victims who share compromising photos face the risk of blackmail.

The parcel scam involves a syndicate sending notifications that the recipient's parcel is stuck in the postal service or customs. The victim is then told to pay a cost to get it delivered. He revealed that syndicates sometimes purposely deliver a consignment to a wrong address and later collect it back as a ploy to push illegal items around and avoid detection.

There are also online shopping scams that tempt buyers with extremely cheap offers for high-end products which are actually counterfeit or inferior goods. And there are cases where vulnerable young people are lured by lucrative online job offers, but end up becoming sex or human trafficking victims.

Dato' Mohd Anil also explained a Ponzi scheme as an online investment ruse in which the syndicate collects money from thousands of people by promising fast gains and high interest rates. The investor must then generate downlines by recruiting family and friends. "When the scheme bursts, everybody loses except the syndicates. They even use glamour endorsements to lure you."

He warned against becoming money mules, where people are exploited by syndicates engaged in drug trafficking, human trafficking, or money laundering. Once a person allows his bank account to be used by a syndicate, the account is compromised.

He also cautioned of cryptocurrency scams that transact bitcoins on unsecure platforms. "Initially things work out but as more people invest and the customer base become bigger, the chain will break, and you lose your money," he said.



▲ Dato' Mohd Anil Shah.



◀ Cybercriminals may pose as a person of authority.



◀ Where you can lodge your complaint.

Though we keep hearing of cybercriminal activities, most of us do not realise how rampant and varied such threats are. The current pandemic has especially seen scams such as bogus companies selling safety products in bulk at low prices, fraudulently soliciting donations, peddling fake vaccines and immunisation certificates.

Criminals prey on the gullibility, greed, and generosity of victims. As more people work or conduct businesses from home, various syndicates lurk in their midst. Statistics show a 58.6% increase in cybercrime in Malaysia during the first six months of 2021 compared to last year.

Dato' Mohamad Anil Shah, Chairman of the Crime Consciousness and Public Safety Society, has advised netizens to exercise due diligence and be wary of schemes, offers or persons that are "too good to be true".

He was explaining how various kinds of scams operate during a public webinar titled *Avoid Becoming a Victim of Crime* on 3 July 2021. The event was organised by WOU's Centre for Foundation Studies (CFS).

Phishing is where cybercriminals send emails, with dubious attachments or links, from what appears to be a known

# TREAT INDOOR AIR WITH **PLASMACLUSTER IONISER** TO PREVENT COVID-19 SPREAD



▲ Dato' Dr Neoh explained about air purifiers.

With the threat of Covid-19 showing no sign of abating soon, there is genuine concern that workers in offices risk being infected within the enclosed environments. In this regard air treatment in such spaces is crucial to prevent new outbreaks.



Underscoring this problem, Health Ministry statistics have shown that 60% of new clusters are from the workplace.

According to industrialist Dato' Dr Neoh Soon Bin, the plasmacluster ioniser is the best option compared to Ultraviolet C (UVC) light and HEPA filters in ensuring that the air system is safe. Companies can treat their air-conditioning systems with the ioniser to effectively kill the coronavirus and curb its spread in their premises.

"The plasma tube produces a large amount of positive and negative ions, directly inactivating the virus in the room," he said. "It can immediately zap at least 99% of the virus to prevent everyone in the room from catching it."

Dato' Neoh, who is Managing Director of Soon Soon Group of Companies, was speaking at a webinar on *Effective Contact Tracing and Air-Con Treatment to Mitigate Covid-19 in Your Workplace* on 28 July 2021. The talk was jointly organised by WOU and the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM). It was attended by over 500 people.

He noted that the plasma tube is easy to install and of moderate cost. Small tubes are priced at about RM500 each while large ones cost up to about RM3,000.

The ioniser can be used inside or outside a room, and in the centralised or split air-con outlet. In comparison, UVC light inactivates up to 99.7% of the virus but only in the air-con system's return air duct, which means "the virus is not inactivated in the room", he said.

Touching on the HEPA filter, Dato' Neoh explained that it can trap more than 99.97% of the virus and be used as a standalone air cleaner or in the return air duct of the central air-con.

"However, the virus is only inactivated when sucked through the filter at certain locations or in the return air duct. The filter is difficult to install and expensive," he said. "If somebody who is Covid-19 positive is sitting in a room, the virus will migrate towards the return air duct or standalone HEPA filter, potentially affecting all the people along its path."

The plasmacluster ioniser is therefore the best solution, he stressed, citing research that shows it can destroy the virus in an enclosed space within minutes. The ioniser can be purchased from suppliers in China or the US, or directly from Alibaba.com, and installed in the central or split air-conditioning unit. Portable versions can be placed inside a room.

"High fresh air exchange coupled with plasmacluster ionisers, HEPA filters and UVC light can be deployed to minimise the risks of Covid-19 spreading through the air," he added. The HEPA filter and UVC light help prevent spread of the virus from room to room, while the ioniser is used to protect the people within the room.

Malaysia recorded more than 1.9 million Covid-19 infections by the middle of September 2021, despite the movement control order and heavy fines. Dato' Neoh attributed the spread to the highly infectious Delta variant, lack of proper close contact tracing, and improper management of air systems.





# WOU-ICCHP PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID COURSE TO HELP SOCIETY COPE WITH MENTAL DISTRESS

In collaboration with the International College of Clinical Hypnotherapy Practitioners (ICCHP) Asia, WOU is for the first time offering the Psychological First Aid (PFA) course to equip the community in providing help to those having mental distress.

Penang State Executive Councillor for Tourism and Creative Economy, YB Yeoh Soon Hin, officiated at the virtual launch of the WOU-ICCHP course on 6 August 2021. Some 300 people joined the event coordinated by StudyPENANG, including those from the healthcare, tourism, hospitality, manufacturing and education sectors.

In his speech, Yeoh said that the threat of Covid-19, and related hardships like unemployment risks, burnout, conflicting demands, business uncertainties and limited physical interactions have exposed society to significant mental suffering. "This warrants psychological intervention," he stressed. "The state government is moving quickly to address mental health care as an integral aspect of our pandemic recovery response."

As WOU and ICCHP are offering the course free to all elected legislative members, he encouraged fellow state assemblymen and MPs to participate. "Together, we can pave the way towards a safe space that our communities can reach out to, not only for tangible aid, but also for psychological help," he said.

He also urged frontliners, the private sector and anyone interested to join the PFA course as it provides the "knowledge, skills and confidence needed" to help those undergoing mental health crises and connect them to the right support systems. "This initiative will be effective in reducing the number of suicide cases we presently encounter in Penang," he asserted.

He cited Malaysian Police statistics that there were 468 recorded suicides in the first five months of 2021, compared to 631 in the whole of 2020 and 609 in 2019. The three main causes indicated were family problems, emotional pressure and financial issues.

WOU Chief Executive and Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Lily Chan said the course seeks to promote a healthy workplace so that workers can function effectively.



▲ Synthia Surin from ICCHP Asia.

▲ YB Yeoh speaking during the launch.

"With psychological first aid, one can immediately recognise, identify, understand and respond to signs of distress among colleagues, and help make workplaces healthier and safer spaces for all," she said. "Maintaining the mental well-being of workers can lead to good productivity and performance, and this benefits both the worker and the employer."

The 32-hour PFA course - which has since commenced on 28 August 2021 - will be offered over two weekends for a cost of RM1,500.

Responding to questions, ICCHP Asia Regional Director Synthia Surin said a certificate will be awarded by WOU and ICCHP upon completion. The course content is adopted from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and follows the international body's guidelines.

She said the course can be offered online, or face-to-face at the WOU main campus, or conducted on-site at the premises of companies upon request.

PFA trainer Dr Gayathri K Kumarasuriar said that PFA is recognised by WHO as a technique to help survivors of psychological trauma following a disaster. She informed that anyone above 18 years, and with a heart and commitment to helping others, can take the course, with no more than 25 learners per class.

# NURSING DIRECTOR PURSUES DBA TO IMPROVE HERSELF AND TO HELP OTHERS

Koon Lai Chew has headed the nursing operations at one of Johor's top private hospitals since December 2017. One may think that the veteran nurse who has been in the profession for 33 years would consider this the pinnacle of her life and career.

Koon must have surprised many when she decided to take on the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programme at WOU for the July 2019 intake. She graduated with a Commonwealth Executive MBA from WOU that same year.

The 56-year-old, who holds the position of Director of Nursing at Gleneagles Hospital Medini Johor, explained: "Taking my DBA is a continuous learning journey from my master's degree, through which I learnt about the business world, how an effective organisation works, and the role of staff towards its success."

"The DBA is designed for working adults, with a focus on practical experience, different from the PhD which is more academic-oriented," she said. "It can further improve my management skills and business administration knowledge. In the healthcare setting, I would be able to accurately frame the real problem, analyse, study, observe and find the solution to make the situation better."

Koon was previously Chief of Nursing Services at Columbia Asia Hospital, Iskandar Puteri, for eight years. Married with three kids, she holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from National Taiwan University.

She began her career as a staff nurse, developing a passion for nursing while "caring for the sick and critically ill patients, and accompanying the dying in their last journey in life".



▲ Koon oversees the nursing operations.

She is now responsible for the effective management and provision of excellent nursing services throughout Gleneagles Hospital Medini Johor.

She wants to apply what she learns from her DBA to enhance training, quality and coordination at the hospital. Her DBA dissertation titled *Servant Leadership: Impact to Employee Job Satisfaction and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour – A Case Study in a Healthcare Organisation* is designed to spot improvements and strengthen teamwork in the organisation.

The Covid-19 outbreak unleashed huge challenges for frontliners like her, especially since she had to balance the work of caring for the sick and educating the public, with her online studies. She is however determined to reach her goals in life. "Live your life to the fullest. Treasure every opportunity of learning to improve and to become a better person," she said.

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