

special Go Guide – Beyond Poly

MDIS rolls out initiatives to build skills for future automated and AI-driven workplaces

Preparing to ride the AI wave

The effects of automation and artificial intelligence (AI) on jobs cannot be underestimated.

According to a report in February last year by Citibank in partnership with the University of Oxford, it was predicted that automation would adversely affect 47 per cent of US jobs, 35 per cent of jobs in the UK, 77 per cent in China and an average of 57 per cent across the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries.

However, at the Milken Institute Asia Summit on Sept 15, Mrs Josephine Teo, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Manpower and Home Affairs, said: "There is no doubt that advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning will increase the prevalence of workplace automation... However, concerns about massive job losses may be overstated as most jobs are made up of many tasks, not all of which can be easily automated."

She referred to a recent OECD study that suggested that about 9 per cent of jobs stood a high chance of being substantially automated, far lower than previous estimates.

Mrs Teo added: "If the past is any guide to the future, technology has often resulted in a net creation of jobs... In more recent times, new job roles such as digital marketers and cyber security specialists have emerged. E-commerce may have displaced retail workers in bricks-and-mortar stores, but it also created many more jobs in supply-chain management.

"There is a catch, though. The net addition of jobs available is comforting only to the extent that displaced workers can find ways to access the new opportunities."

The Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS) has been aware of the possible impact of automation and AI on the employability and career progression of its graduates.

It recently launched 27 new courses that range from certificate level to bachelor's with emphasis on vocational skills training.

The private education institution (PEI) also aims to develop 100 new collaborative partnerships with industry partners to provide its students with a platform to build and enhance industry-relevant skills.

The MDIS programme cur-



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The MDIS School of Engineering has a complete progression pathway from diploma to master's. PHOTO: MDIS

riculum is also constantly reviewed and updated to ensure industry relevance.

MDIS has also collaborated with the EC-Council and will be launching a new EC-Council certified programme under its School of Technology.

EC-Council is a global leader in InfoSec (Information Security) Cyber Security certification programmes such as certified ethical hacker and computer

hacking forensic investigator.

The PEI has also partnered with new top ranking global universities like Teesside University, UK, to launch the Bachelor of Science (Honours) Information Technology programme.

The MDIS School of Technology has also launched the international diploma in information technology and international foundation diploma in information technology, both awarded

by MDIS.

The MDIS School of Engineering has a complete progression pathway from diploma to master's covering engineering, mechanical design engineering, mechanical engineering, electronics design engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, engineering management and project management.

The School of Engineering also recently launched an international foundation diploma in engineering, awarded by MDIS.

In a report in The Straits Times on Oct 16, advisory firm AlphaBet stated that Singapore takes the top spot in the Asia-Pacific region as a digital nation, one that plays an active role in steering its digital economy.

But Education Minister (Higher Education and Skills) Ong Ye Kung added in the report that there were still "unacceptable numbers" of Singaporeans who harboured fears about technology and did not regard it as a "friend" capable of uplifting their jobs and personal lives.

He added that with the aim of moving everyone forward into the digital economy, the SkillsFuture for Digital Workplace was initiated.

He said that SkillsFuture for Digital Workplace seeks to demystify emerging technologies, help individuals to develop a positive view of technological disruptions and assist workers to take advantage of new opportunities.

Administrative supervisor Annie Khoo, 35, is aware of how rapidly automation and AI are transforming her workplace.

She said: "Many jobs that used to be done by teams of workers such as payroll processing and generation of financial reports are now being done faster and more cheaply by software and automation.

"The software can work round the clock and there is never any worry about people going on medical leave just when an important report is due."

Miss Khoo said she will be taking courses related to automation to ensure her job security.

She said: "Many aspects of my work can be automated, so I need to build a portfolio of new and more relevant skills to prepare for any sudden changes.

"It has been some time since I was in school, but the earlier I start studying, the better my employability chances will be."