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A Nanyang Technological University,
Wee Kim Wee School
of Communication and Information
Alumni Newsletter

CONNEXSCIONS



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Photo by Johnathan Loh

Yang Huiwen, 23, works the ground in Kampong Angke, one of Jakarta's biggest railway communities.

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CONNEXSCIONS is written and produced entirely by students. Send us your news to include in the next issue at connexscions@ntu.edu.sg.

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CHAIR'S MESSAGE

By the time you receive this, you probably would have heard the news about the 15th anniversary dinner party we had on September 21 — it was a blast.

We had an overflow crowd — 430 persons turned up. More than 100 who did not meet the RSVP deadline were turned away. We could have been more forgiving of the missed deadline but the hotel room was simply filled to capacity. An overflow room had to be booked.

The event marked the 10th anniversary of the graduation of the pioneer batch of 1997. It was also an opportunity to thank five companies who have offered the School internship positions from the start. Those who have helped deserve credit for contributing to the success of the School.

The lessons learnt? CS alum do want to meet and catch up. We had an alumna who was overseas (ok, Malaysia) and came just for the occasion. And they want to talk (it was a loud party — but can we expect anything less from CS grads?) Interestingly, the older the group, the noisier they were. Some were surprised that their business associates or superiors in the company were CS alumni. Which shows that our CS grads had quite a bit of weight to throw around — figuratively if not literally.

Those who had lost touch wanted to know the progress of the School: we



Photo by Tan Jinli

Dr Ang Peng Hua.

have added a floor to the building; the CI Club has a room at the top floor; there is small reference collection of media materials at the ACRC (Asian Communication Resource Centre); and of course we continue to attract good, with-it students.

For many of you who missed the event, see pages 4-5 in this issue of *connexscions*. We will also be putting some photos and videos taken at the dinner online; and there is a book to mark the developments of the School. This book is very well put together. In CS tradition, praise and compliments were not all unadulterated in the book. For many, SCS then and WKWSC now has given them some of their best memories.

Memories are part of our identity. And so we are all a part of each other. I wished I could have met more of you. Perhaps in the next big bash.

Ang Peng Hwa



Chair Ang Peng Hwa toasts to 15 years of excellence.

15 YEARS AND A PARTY

Stepping into the air-conditioned coldness of the Mandarin Oriental Singapore, we did not really know what to expect from such a grand occasion.

There were local celebrities and media professionals, excitedly waving across the room to former professors, buddies and classmates. Within minutes of the start of the reception, the entire area was heaving with activity – any outsiders who walked by must have been wondering what this celebration was all about. It was, of course, the dinner to commemorate the School's 15th anniversary, held on September 21.

The 400 guests included Founding Dean Professor Eddie Kuo, current and former faculty and staff, alumni and industry partners. From what we overheard as we spied on conversations, it seems the hottest topics for the night included everything from new-found jobs to recounting antics from school days. Mr Tan Tin Wee (1997) told us with a laugh about some of his fondest SCI memories. "My significant moments are the really embarrassing ones, like standing in front of class during Speech Communication and forgetting your lines."

The evening's official activities kicked off with Chair Dr Ang Peng Hwa's light-hearted opening address, which he claimed was "presented in headline news format, without the good looking news reader." In his speech, he highlighted the School's accomplishments and provided updates on the Wee Kim Wee Legacy Fund. Dr Ang also acknowledged the successes of alumni who have made a name for themselves in the industry. "As alumni, many of you have proven yourselves to be wonderful role models."

After the speech, the School's 15th anniversary commemorative book, *Coming of Age 92:07*, was unveiled. In recognition of their contributions, Dr Kuo and Dr Ang were each presented with a copy by the book's editor, former student Ms Nicolette Ho (1997). Associate Professor Dr Lee Chun Wah noted, "I'm very moved that we are honouring Founding Dean Professor Eddie Kuo. He played such a critical role in establishing the School and we are so grateful to him."

On behalf of the pioneer batch of 1997 students, "unconventional" former student, Mr Rodney Koh addressed



Class of 2006.

the guests. The self-proclaimed "guy who finished at the bottom of the class" is now the producer of Bamboo Pictures, a video production house. He expressed his appreciation toward the faculty for their encouragement and trust through the years, "even though we sometimes didn't even believe in ourselves." It was this encouragement, he jokingly said, that enabled him to stay true to his interests rather than become a doctor or lawyer.

Rodney's speech definitely seemed to evoke a great deal of nostalgia among alumni and longstanding faculty as he recounted memories of yester-year. Even though we were not students then, it was fascinating to hear from him about time spent in the Nanyang Heritage building, and how the pioneer batch had the privilege of choosing the colour of their graduation robes. A video presentation of the School's history aroused cheers from the audience as they spotted familiar faces. Former student Ms Joanne Peh (2005) exclaimed, "I didn't really realise that we had so many seniors before us! It feels good to know that I am part of this young family that is slowly growing."

Appreciation awards for participation in the Professional Internship Programme were given out to five industry partners which have supported the School for more than 10 years: Edelman Public Relations Worldwide, Huntington Communications, MediaCorp, MTV Asia LDC and Singapore Press Holdings. Huntington Communications' representative Ms Cindy Ng said, "I am quite happy with the students from NTU; they are very efficient and mature."

It had been a lot of hard work to pull everything together, but, as Head of the Organising Committee Dr Brenda Chan commented, "There was no doubt about the effort being worthwhile when we felt the warmth and camaraderie in the room."

The evening ended on a high note with stand-up comedienne Ms Selena Tan entertaining the audience with song. She enlivened the audience with her funny antics and anecdotes about hostel living. Perhaps the highlight of the evening was when Vice-Dean



92:07 – A walk down memory lane.



Reminiscing the good old times.

A proud member of the WKW SCI family.

Dr Hao Xiaoming gentlemanly accepted a dance with the Dim Sum Dolly, proving that he knew how to enjoy life outside academia.

Like a proud father, Dr Ang summed up the essence of what the 15th anniversary dinner was about. "It's always good to see smart, young people doing well," he said. "We are both a part of each other's lives in our memories of each other."

Writers
Geraldine Yeo
Nadia bte Mohd Ismail

AWARDS & RECOGNITION



Photos by Tan Jini

© The legacy of Mr Wee Kim Wee lives on for the Wee Family and the School.

© Mrs Wee enjoying the Chronicle.

AN AFTERNOON WITH THE WEE FAMILY

The air was thick with anticipation and excitement as we awaited the arrival of distinguished guests, Mrs Wee Kim Wee and family. Tension broke into smiles as the car approached the lobby. Mrs Wee was all smiles as she alighted from the car, ever-so-ready for the camera.

Mrs Wee and her daughters were impressed by the School's facilities. At the Asian Communication Resource Centre(ACRC), the family signed an autograph book, extending well wishes to the GO-FAR team of 2007.

I had the pleasure of having a chat with Ms Wee Eng Hwa, daughter of Dr Wee. The family first visited WKWSCI after the launch of the Wee Kim Wee Legacy Fund during the December vacation last year.

After that visit, she said, "One day I'd like to bring my mother here while school is in session to have a feel of what the school is like."

When asked about her impressions of the School and students, Ms Wee said, "People here are very warm, and we do not regret allowing the name Wee Kim Wee to be associated with this school."

Mrs Wee was full of thanks when the session ended. Ms Wee Eng Hwa said, "My mother really enjoyed it. She was smiling a lot."

After they left, Mrs Wee's endearing smile still remained deeply engraved in our minds.

Writer
Charlene Ho

BIG BOOST IN LEGACY FUND

Leong Khay Huay Kuan's \$100,000 donation is likely to go towards the funding of more school-related initiatives like GO-FAR (Going Overseas For Advanced Reporting), launch innovative programmes, support scholarships for needy and deserving students, and create new opportunities for students to enrich their education.

Shinnyo-en Buddhist Organisation's \$250,000 donation will be used to establish the Shinnyo-en Singapore WKWSCI Scholarships, which will be worth \$8,000 annually. Apart from scholarships, the donation will also be used to fund school activities.

Writer
Jared Lai

CREATIVITY KNOWS NO BOUNDS

One year ago, Mr Adrian Yeap Shiqiang (2007) and Ms Esian Quek Yi Xian (2007) took home several prizes from the Crowbar Awards 2006. This year, Ms Cherie Tan Weilin (2007) joined Adrian and Esian as they each took home trophies from this ever-more-popular advertising awards event.

Adrian and Esian clinched one of the biggest awards of the evening, the "Best of Advertising" award. The two former Public and Promotional Communication (PPC) division students also went home with three Gold and two Silver awards. Individually, Adrian won a Silver award, while Esian walked away with one Gold, one Silver and one Bronze awards in various categories. The third prize recipient, Cherie, also a recent graduate from the PPC division, received a Bronze award.

The Crowbar Awards, inaugurated in 2001, is organised by the Association of Accredited Advertising Agents (4As) to recognise and celebrate young talents in creative communications and design. Winning an award from this competition is considered an important honour, as Esian aptly said: "Finding a job in advertising is tough. The Crowbar Award actually helps in breaking in."

The competition attracted 1,136 entries from several countries in various categories this year. Dr May Lwin, acting head of the PPC division said, "In the Advertising Section, WKWSCI won the top awards (Best of Advertising and Gold), as well as a number of other awards, although we had a relatively small number of participants this year."

Adrian felt encouraged knowing that he is "more or less swimming with the big sharks" now that he is working at Leo Burnett as a junior copywriter. Currently working at J. Walter Thompson, Esian said: "There is no end to learning. In the advertising industry, one still has to learn on the job as there is a lot of stuff that we do not learn in such depth in school."



Photo by Daphne Chui

© From left to right: Esian, Adrian and Cherie at The Crowbar Awards 2007.

Cherie, who had never heard of the Crowbar Awards until the one fateful day last year when she went down to support Adrian, was inspired by that experience to enter her works this year. This time, she left the awards show feeling "very thankful" as she knew that "there are plenty of very good people out there to compete with."

Adrian added, "I believe this is a very good example of university students being able to break into advertising." When asked to give some good advice to aspiring future copywriters and people who wish to work in the advertising industry, he replied, "When you work hard enough, you can achieve anything."

Writer
Daphne Chui

NATIONAL DAY AWARDS



Photo by Tan Jirili

© Dr Schubert Foo and Dr Ang Peng Hwa

WKWSCl is proud that two faculty members received Singapore National Day Awards this year.

Dr Ang Peng Hwa

Associate Professor Dr Ang Peng Hwa, Chair of WKWSCl, said it was a surprise to find out he had been selected. He received the Public Service Medal for his work with the Consumer Association of Singapore (CASE) and the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI). Dr Ang is a vice-president of CASE and a legal advisor of the Advertising Standards Authority of Singapore (ASAS). He co-chaired the MTI committee charged with revising the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (CPFTA), in particular, the list of unfair practices.

He commented, "Traders can be very creative in circumventing the law." He added his work with the MTI was interesting because of the "robust debates" between representatives from the MTI and CASE.

His research and work in Internet law and policy also proved useful when amendments to the CPFTA were discussed. He said, "For the most part, both the CPFTA and the Internet are regulated by citizens who band together to enforce the law. So my research has helped inform what can and cannot be done under the CPFTA." Recommended changes to the CPFTA are currently under consideration by the Minister of Trade and Industry, and will be in effect once approval is given.

Dr Schubert Foo

Being selected to receive a National Day Award came as a surprise to Dr Schubert Foo too. He received the Public Administration Medal (Silver), a high award given in recognition of his work in WKWSCl.

Dr Foo, the associate chair of WKWSCl, has been with the School since 2002 and has seen it grow in many ways such as the significant increase in research activities and the introduction of overseas study initiatives. The fondest memories Dr Foo has of the School involve his students. He said, "There is satisfaction in seeing them do well in their workplaces."

Dr Foo is well-liked by his colleagues, and known for creating a light-hearted working environment. Dr Ang Peng Hwa commented, "His jovial disposition helps make meetings seem less long."

Other faculty members praised Dr Foo for his administration capabilities that can make seemingly impossible tasks possible, according to Assistant Professor Dr Foo Tee Tuan.

Outside school, Dr Foo is the chairman of the National Library Advisory Committee, one of the many roles he plays in "shaping the information and heritage landscape of the nation". Doctoral Candidate Ms Intan Azura binte Mokhtar expressed, "He is extremely passionate about the Library and Information Sciences."

In late August, Dr Foo was appointed to be Associate Dean (Academic) of the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences. Such is testament to his standing in the academic community.

Dr Ang said, "Schubert is the natural choice for a senior administration role. I have no doubt that the College as a whole will benefit from his appointment."

In his new position, Dr Foo will be involved in ensuring the College continues to provide quality education and produce quality students. Former students have no doubt about his ability to do so. Ms Song Wenwen (2007) described him as a dedicated educator, who was always willing to give up his spare time for consultation, even if it meant going home at 11p.m.

Regardless of the recent appointment, Dr Foo will continue to be a part of WKWSCl. His latest book, *Knowledge Management Tools and Technique*, is featured on page 13.

Writer
Charlene Ho

PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS

24 PURE TALENTS

Some say the best way to learn is when you are able to apply what you have learnt to a real life context. Last semester, 24 WKWSCl students got to do just that when they helped conceptualise and organise the launch of *PURE* – the first lifestyle magazine that revolves around water – as part of a class project for an events management course.

PURE is a free street magazine produced by the Public Utilities Board (PUB), the national water agency, and aims to reach out to students and young working adults. The magazine was launched on 22 March in conjunction with World Water Day.

The students were directly involved in organising the launch every step of the way, from creating the ideas for the teaser advertisement and invitation card, down to choosing the fanfare music to be played with the arrival of the guest-of-honour, Dr Amy Khor, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources.

The students were organised into four groups overseeing different aspects of event management: Programme, Public Relations and On-ground Branding, Media and Evaluation. Each team had a PUB representative mentoring them, with Assistant Professor (Adj) Dr Vivien Chiong guiding them.

As part of the event, the students faced the challenge of making cold calls to the media, trying to pitch different news angles to them. They also had a hand in drafting the media releases and staging the photograph opportunities.

Ms Chan Huiyi said, "We drafted the media release, a list of frequently asked questions and planned the photo opportunities. This experience gave us an opportunity to put theory into practice."

Mr Yap Kheng Guan, PUB's Director of 3P Network Department, said, "The students have done really well with this event. Many of their ideas are very refreshing. We want



Photo courtesy of Dr Vivien Chiong

© The 24 *PURE* talents with Dr Amy Khor at the magazine's launch.

to connect with Singaporeans, especially the young, and get everyone interested in water. By working with these young talents, we get to tap their ideas. I think they have also learnt a lot about water too through this event."

Even when the day's activities ended, the students were not done as they had to do a post-event evaluation, where they analysed the media coverage of the event and the feedback from guests. Only then did they heave a sigh of relief.

Through the course, they also learnt something else. Angeline Yap said, "We also learnt that water can be enjoyed in various ways and that we should value our waterways and keep them clean. We definitely won't be taking water for granted again!"

Writer
Hashirin Nurin

IAMCR CONFERENCE



Photo courtesy of Lin Weirong

© The students (seen here with Assistant Professor Dr Stella Chia and Assistant Chair Professor Dr Mark Cenite) at the conference held from July 23-25.

Three groups of final-year Communication Studies (CS) students were selected to present their research papers at the prestigious International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) conference held in Paris in July.

Presented at the Emerging Scholars Network session of the conference, the three papers were the students' research projects for the Audience Research Methods course conducted by Assistant Professor Dr Stella Chia. The topics explored the online habits and attitudes of individuals towards news-reading, gaming and dating.

Despite previous experience presenting in class, presenting to an audience of mostly graduate students and academics was challenging. Ms Chong Wai Yin, who presented her group's paper "Exploring online news reading patterns among college students in Singapore" said, "It was nerve-wracking." Other members of her project group were Ms Cheong Poh Kwan, Ms Grace Kwan Chi En and Ms Kym Yeo Yun Ling.

Mr Lin Weirong noted, "They thought we were Masters students because they didn't expect undergraduates to be presenting. Overall, we had a fun networking experience." His group's paper, "Why do they play? A uses and gratifications

approach for examining MMORPG players" was written together with Mr Stanley Lim Chern Fong and Mr Ng Kong Yong.

The conference also exposed the students to an array of stimulating research and lively debates. "It's very nice that we got to be there physically and be exposed to these interesting research ideas from Europe," Poh Kwan noted.

Ms Deborah Ng, who worked with Mr Chew Changhui and Ms Sophie Koh for their paper "Romance Online: An examination on predictors of online dating" said, "The participants were very motivated to voice their views. Before presentations had finished, there were already people raising their hands to counter or provide a new perspective." The passionate speakers even led Deborah to consider being an academic. She said, "You look at them and you think, 'Maybe I can do that, too!'"

Now into its 50th year, the IAMCR is an international professional organisation for media and communication research which aims to promote global inclusiveness and excellence in critical research for this field.

Writer
Idayu Suparto

ICA CONFERENCE

WKWSCl students made their presence felt yet again at the International Communication Association (ICA) conference held in San Francisco in May this year. The Final Year Projects (FYP) of Ms Clarice Sim (2007), the group comprising Ms Koh Gui Qing, Mr Lim Mun Pong, Mr Mohammed Jaleesudeen Jalal and Mr Teh Joo Lin (all 2006) and another comprising Ms Liew Mei Yan, Mr Mervin Tay and Ms Patricia Wei Ling Yap (all 2006) were selected for presentation.

Continuing the long tradition of WKWSCl undergraduates presenting at international conferences, Clarice presented her paper while Mun Pong represented his group. Associate Professor Dr Hao Xiaoming presented on behalf of Mei Yan, Mervin and Patricia.

Clarice, who is now a graduate student at WKWSCl, said: "I am very proud to represent the School. Not many student authors get to present at international conferences, so I am very honoured to be one of them. I think the School is proud of the work that students do and so very enthusiastic to share it. It is only with this kind of enthusiasm that we get to achieve the things we do."

Mun Pong, who is now working with the Government of Singapore said, "I felt that this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to sample life as an academic."

FYPS GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

OLFACTION IN ADVERTISING

Most Final Year Projects (FYP) are undertaken with a specific specialisation in mind. "Olfaction in Advertising" broke the mould as it was the first FYP approved with a hybrid option of combining the areas of advertising and public communication with research. Ms Grace Chiang (2007), one of the project group members, explained, "We decided to take on this challenge to set a precedent for future FYP groups to learn from."

The group produced an advertising research paper on how the use of scent in advertising can affect the recall of brand attributes such as price, product design or the feel of the product. The response to the research was good, as many participants were curious about its purpose, not least because they had to smell a variety of different scents.

The students said limited experience in research challenged them to learn about the technicalities of research, while simultaneously working on the project. Mr Adrian Yeap (2007), another group member, noted they also had to learn to "handle the delicate balance between friendship and work amongst groupmates."

Their supervisor, Assistant Professor Dr May Lwin gave them invaluable advice and guidance throughout the project. Grace added, "It was exhausting. But when we finally completed our study, finished writing the paper, and presented our work, a sense of relief and achievement overwhelmed all of us."

Both Clarice and Mun Pong felt that one of the most enriching experiences at the conference was getting to meet the authors of the textbooks that they read and to actually meet them in real life was a pleasant surprise. Clarice likened this to "almost like meeting a superstar."

The ICA is an academic association with a history spanning over 50 years and with more than 4,200 members in 70 countries. Its area of concern includes the study, teaching and application of all aspects of human and mediated communication. It has been officially associated with the United Nations as a non-governmental organisation.

Associate Professor Dr Hao Xiaoming said, "We use conference participation as a yardstick to test our education, to see how good we are. We are very proud to see our students can compete at this level, where even faculty sometimes finds it not easy because there is so much competition to get papers in."

To WKWSCl students, Dr Hao said, "I hope that every paper they have to write, no matter individual or group paper, is aimed at the highest standards, at least good enough to be submitted to an international conference. The truth is that they are good enough. The important thing is they need to focus to ensure they want to reach high standards, rather than simply fulfilling the requirements of the course."

Writer
Hashirin Nurin

SUICIDE SYMPHONY

"Suicide Symphony", directed by Mr Deng Kaile (2007), is a short comedy film FYP featuring a fat man and a pretty lady who decided to commit suicide on the same day. The film was shown during the 4th Singapore Shortcuts at the National Museum in August this year, and during WKWSCl's Singaplural festival.

During a year of pre-shoots, actual shoot and post production, the team faced many obstacles. "We had no money and couldn't find the right actors at first," said Kaile, adding that they also had problems getting the equipment and the editing suite.

Eventually, they roped in their own family members to help in the process of props making and location maintenance. Midway through their production, they received a grant from The Singapore Film Commission.



Photo courtesy of Deng Kaile

© A scene from *Suicide Symphony*.

Articles continue on next page

TWO DOLLARS, THANK YOU

“Two Dollars, Thank You” is a Mandarin-language short film that explores the social dangers of living in a busy, modern city, and not appreciating people close to you. The main character, Xiaohui, is an introvert who sticks to a strict routine each day and is reluctant to socialise with other people.

“Xiaohui represents the isolated beings amongst us,” said Ms Lam XinYing (2007), the editor of the FYP team that made the film. “We hope that by using this character to personify the issue of urban isolation, more people will realise how disconnected many of us are.”

Recently shortlisted for the Tadgells’ Bluebell Honour Award for Best Film made by Adults about Youths in the 10th Auburn International Film Festival, the group was hoping for a good response at the Sydney festival in September. “We are very glad that someone outside Asia has paid attention to our work,” said Mr Ng Tse Wei (2007), the film’s director.

Operating on a tight budget made casting difficult, as few professional actors would work on the shoestring budget. Nonetheless, the group pulled through and when the film was screened at Theatreworks, they were relieved it was over, yet proud to have achieved something worthwhile.

GLOW WITH WINGS

Like many countries, Singapore faces the challenges brought by a greying population. In their Final-Year Project (FYP), Ms Charlene Han, Ms Cecilia Ang, Ms Delia Wu and Ms Rena Wong (2007) drew attention towards an often-forgotten group: women in their forties and beyond.

The project, “Glow with WINGS”, brought the Women’s Initiative for Ageing Successfully (WINGS), a voluntary welfare organisation, to greater heights and helped to change the stereotype of ageing amongst women. The campaign aimed to empower older women by educating them on how to look after their health and finances, remain independent and active, and stay connected to their community.

The group co-organised The Senior’s Fair (TSF) 2007 with WINGS. They took charge of media relations and publicity efforts and generated extensive media coverage. TSF 2007 created a buzz at Toa Payoh HDB Hub with almost 10,000 visitors. With exciting activities such as chair yoga, belly dancing, and health and finance talks, the year-long project received an excellence response from the public. Besides raising awareness about the organisation and ageing issues, the FYP group roped in 780 new members for WINGS.

Group leader Charlene described the experience as stressful, but added, “It brought a great sense of satisfaction and achievement

ONLINE FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH BLOGGING

Blogging, a revolution that has taken the masses by storm, is a unique form of communication into which few researchers have yet ventured. For their FYP, Ms Mindawati (Minda) Wijaya and Ms Goh Huiyi (both 2007) decided to research how online friendships are created and developed through blogs. “Blogs contain a lot more self-disclosure compared to other computer-mediated communication tools like Instant Messengers or emails,” said Minda.

Under the supervision of Associate Professor Dr Benjamin Detenber, their project, entitled “Blogging and online friendship: The role of self-disclosure and perceived reciprocity”, invited 8,000 bloggers to participate in an online survey. They had expected 1,000 respondents, and got 416 valid responses from over 20 different countries.

They found out that bloggers with a higher need for affiliation tend to allow for more self-disclosure. The more intimate and honest the self-disclosure, the more honest the perceived reciprocity. This will lead to higher degrees of intimacy and trust in online friendships, with the amount of online friendships linked to the amount of perceived reciprocity.

“Dr Detenber really helped and encouraged us a lot,” said Minda. “We’re happy and proud that we could do such research.”

that money cannot buy.” Their project supervisor, Dr Alfred Choi expressed pride in the work done by the group, who called themselves “Incandescence”. He said, “I felt like a proud uncle when Dr Soen and Dr Mary Ann (founders of WINGS) expressed their gratitude to me for the superb job done.”



© The team with their project supervisor, Dr Alfred Choi.

Writers
Justin Chai
Fahimah Thalib

Photo courtesy of Dr Alfred Choi

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT NOW IN SECOND EDITION

Professor Dr Schubert Foo, Associate Professor Dr Ravi Sharma and Assistant Professor Dr Alton Chua launched the second edition of their book titled *Knowledge Management (KM): Tools and Techniques* in August.

The book’s first edition was published primarily for use as a textbook for an eponymously-named graduate course that all three professors were then co-teaching. At that time, Dr Foo invited his longtime friend and colleague, Dr Sharma, to share the writing of the book. Dr Chua joined the project when he began co-teaching the graduate course alongside Dr Foo and Dr Sharma.

However, they have all since ceased teaching the very course that brought them together. Dr Sharma quipped, “It’s like the Beatles. We have to break up.”

Prior to launching the second edition of the book, the writers sought feedback from their students on how the book could be improved. Some of the suggestions implemented in the new edition include the addition of more graphics and images, a glossary and an index. The writers also incorporated three student contributions. Dr Sharma said, “It was just good work that I saw fit to share with other students of the future.”

The authors included Asian success stories they gained from their regional travels. The authors believe KM must be “applied uniformly in an international context.” Dr Sharma added the book was not written for a Singapore-specific audience.

Indeed, the book’s appeal and relevance is international. It is being used in the SP Jain Institute in Dubai and is being considered for use in Institut Teknologi Bandung (Indonesia) as well as in the University of Mauritius.

The authors will be contributing all royalties from the sale of the book to the Wee Kim Wee Legacy Fund.

Writer
Nadia bte Mohd Ismail



Photo by Tan Jimli

© The second edition features more graphics and images.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON METADATA APPLICATIONS

The 2007 Dublin Core and Metadata Applications conference was held in Singapore in August. Some 300 leading metadata researchers and professionals from around the world came together to share their experience in metadata development and application, and to deliberate on theoretical issues. The event was co-hosted by the National Library Board of Singapore (NLB) and WKWSC. Guest of Honour was Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports and Second Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan.

Metadata is data about data. Such meta-level approach to data has become an important development in cutting edge knowledge and information management in the Internet globalised world where the tools and concepts such as the Semantic Web, Social Tagging, Taxonomies, Resource Description and Access (RDF) and other related technologies are discussed and deployed.

Writer
Abdul Halim Abdul Karim



WHEN THE CHILDREN CRY

Their voices often go unheard, drowned out by the hurried modernisation going on around them. While investors are furiously pouring dollars and cents into the ASEAN economies, these children are sometimes reduced to mere government statistics and figures.

For Ms Jean Loo, Ms Yang Huiwen and Ms Melanie Lee (2007), their Final Year Project (FYP) titled "Changing Phases", aimed to give these youths a voice. Through their stories, they wanted to show how the children adapt to changes in their environments. Referencing the tourism, education reforms and technological advancements bombarding the region, Jean explained, "While the children represent the next wave of leadership and innovation in Southeast Asia, many of them are victims of this rapid progress and end up living like invisible citizens."

Over a span of six months, the trio journeyed throughout

Southeast Asia to capture "stories of resilience, diversity and courage". Beginning in September 2006, their adventures started in Cambodia and ended home in Singapore. In between, they also travelled to the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia.

When children sing, let the new world begin.

Be it sitting in an English class full of rowdy inquisitive seven-year-old child monks in Yangon or hiking through paddy fields in Sapa in North Vietnam working on a tourism story, their travels were definitely the highlight of their year.

While the obstacles they faced were endless and pushed the limits of their sanity, Jean aptly describes the experience gained from this work trip: "Priceless."

Writer
Fahimah Thalib

⦿ Clockwise from top left: Burmese children settle down on the hall floor for a compulsory nap after lunch.

A young Kampong Ayer resident smiles for the camera. The water village is Southeast Asia's most famous and largest water settlement and houses around 30,000 Bruneians.

From hard bargaining to soft sweet smiles, these girls from Sapa try their best to charm a tourist into buying a handsewn cloth bag.

Burmese boys living in a monastery in Yangon assemble after lunch. They are dressed in clothes and longyis, which are traditional Burmese cloth skirts.

Each boy owns a pair of slippers which is paid for by donations from wealthy Burmese or foreign non-governmental organisations. The slippers are not allowed into the dining halls or study pavilions as it is a sign of disrespect.

Feature stories and pictures from "Changing Phases" are currently being compiled into a book for ASEAN's 40th anniversary celebrations in Singapore in November.

Photos by Jean Loo, Yang Huiwen and Melanie Lee





C Clockwise from top left: Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge: Laotians crossing the Mekong from Savannakhet to Mukdahan to shop and sell their commodities there.

Fair Game: food, drink and prizes bring children flocking to a night bazaar in Savannakhet.

Bountiful Supply: A woman selling her catch in front of the 'Singapore Market', a four-storey building owned by a Singaporean.

Life at Home: A typical setting in Laos, where the living room doubles as a bedroom for the family.

Street Level: A boy plays on a side road in Vientiane while his father, who owns a store nearby, is oblivious to the danger. The fatality rate resulting from car accidents in Laos is three times higher than Singapore's.

Bottoms Up: children as young as eight learn break-dancing with Laobangfay, the first and only break-dance community in Laos.



C Just after dawn, a man draws in the night's catch. Tucked away in a backwater of the Mekong is a fishing village.

A LAND LAOS IN TIME

“For nine years, 24 hours a day, they just kept bombing.”

Although the bombings have stopped, Laos is still stuck in its stupor. There is a rare calmness in the way Laotians live their lives, unlike the fast-paced lifestyle most Singaporeans are used to.

This year, armed with their cameras and pens, 14 journalism students embarked on the journey of their lives under the GO-FAR (Going Overseas For Advanced Reporting) project. They captured and captivated us with stories from the Land of a Million Elephants over two week-long trips in July and September.

Unlike previous years when GO-FAR teams visited people in societies coping with natural and manmade disasters, this year's project focused on development issues in Laos. Under the guidance of Assistant Professor Shyam Tekwani, GO-FAR is far from being a school excursion.

“It is an assignment that replicates as closely as possible the challenges facing professional correspondents working overseas,” he explained. “Through such intense experiential learning, students develop their cultural sensitivity, creative thinking – and patience.”

From the capital of Laos, Vientiane, to the southern province of Savannakhet, the students documented the lives of Laotians in the beautiful naturalistic setting of their mother land -- home to six million inhabitants.

Many participants were amazed by this land, untouched by the hands of time, yet scarred by its historic past. For Mr Alphonsus Chern, it was most interesting to cover the issue of unexploded ordnance (UXO) in Laos. The photojournalist recalled, “We were in this field where the UXO Lao team had found a mortar shell.

There was this constant fear that it would explode.”

The threat of the unexploded ordnance is very real. Another member on the team, Ms Sophia Huang, said, “At the back of my mind, death is always a possibility because you never know what can happen.”

The whole experience was definitely an eye-opener for both of them. They reminisced over how calm and polite the Lao people were. Being in an unfamiliar environment challenged their senses. Alphonsus added, “It pushes you out of your comfort zone. I would recommend everyone in WKWSC I should experience something like this.”

But he warned, “No slackers allowed.”

Writer
Fahimah Thalib



Photos by Goh Shi Ting, Sophia Huang, Margaret Astaman and Alphonsus Chern

BIG GRANTS – MOBILE TAGGING

DIS Associate Professor Dr Dion Goh and Associate Professor Dr Theng Yin Leng have secured the first-ever grant from A*STAR to WKWSCI. In May, the duo received \$650,000 for a three-year project to develop mobile tagging applications.

The project is a collaboration between professors from three schools: WKWSCI, School of Computer Engineering (SCE) and the National Institute of Education (NIE). Dr Goh is the principal investigator, responsible for overseeing the project. Dr Theng, one of the co-investigators, deals with the usability techniques of mobile tagging. The other collaborators from SCE and NIE are looking into the technical and pedagogical aspects of the project respectively.

On having received the grant from A*STAR, Dr Theng felt that the project was funded because it has potential, being “in the right place, at the right time”. Indeed, as new media makes its way into our lives, the aid of technology helps make things more efficient.

One primary research focus looks at how mobile tagging can be used for geography education in secondary schools. The team is also working on utilising the technology in the tourism industry. However, making a profit is not their main priority. “I think it opens up new possibilities to information sharing that have not existed before, like education,” said Dr Goh on the cutting-edge technology.

What is mobile tagging?

Mobile tagging deals with user-generated content and its delivery to the right people, at the right time, and in the right context. It is the process of creating tags using gadgets with 3G capabilities, such as PDA phones. Tags are one-word labels specifically used to describe an object commonly identified by people.

What’s in it for me?

Anyone with 3G gadgets can create tags as and when they like. Suppose you were to watch a movie. You could post a tag after the show to rate and review it, so others can decide whether to watch it based on your comments. This constant update via mobile tagging allows consumers to access first hand information about the physical environment.

In the mobile world, it can capture locations, information on the environments and people in your surroundings. For instance, if you are looking at dining recommendations, you might not want to choose an alfresco restaurant if it is raining.

Where does the money lie in mobile tagging?

Businesses can better target content or services with the ability to know what consumers want, and cater to their needs. The database created by mobile tagging will provide such information by capturing personal preferences voluntarily supplied by users from its context awareness capabilities (similar to Amazon.com where preferences are detected by consumer habits).

Writers
Lee Chaang Ru
Shallyn Leow

THE CHAIR’S INSTRUCTOR

Professor Ronald E. Rice was Wee Kim Wee Professor for the month of August. He used to be an instructor for a Master’s programme at the University of Southern California during the early 1980s, and one of his students was Chair Dr Ang Peng Hwa.

The purpose of Dr Rice’s visit was to help extend WKWSCI’s professional and academic networks. He provided advice, led discussions on academic projects and graduate student careers, presented to several classes and gave a public lecture on principles of successful communication campaigns. In addition, Dr Rice embarked on a little research pertaining to dysfunctional organisational feedback loops and revised two papers for submission to journals.

When asked what he liked about WKWSCI, Dr Rice said, “You have very good resources, good money, good faculty, good students and a beautiful building; what’s not to like?”

Dr Rice and his wife’s love for nature has taken them beyond the usual attractions in Singapore – such as the Zoological Gardens, the Botanical Gardens and the Jurong Bird Park – to other attractions in the region, such as the Butterfly Garden in Phuket. He was amazed by the beautiful scenery and wide variety of birds in the Jurong Bird Park.

Apart from nature, Dr Rice and his wife are avid movie goers, watching two to three movies each week. In Singapore, they caught and enjoyed acclaimed director



Dr Ronald E. Rice.

Photo by Tan Jini

Royston Tan’s “881”, although they had to depend on the English subtitles, as they were not able to understand the movie’s primary languages of Mandarin and Hokkien.

Writer
Jared Lai

NEW EBM FACULTY

Assistant Professor Dr Trisha Tsui-Chuan lin

Assistant Professor Trisha Tsui-Chuan Lin, who joined WKWSCI in 2007, recently graduated with a Doctorate degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Born and bred in Taiwan, Dr Lin’s previous extensive experience in the industry includes working as a producer, host, reporter and anchor for various television and radio current affairs and feature programmes. One of her TV programmes was nominated as the best social-cultural programme in the 34th Taiwan’s Golden Bell Award.

Dr Lin’s current research includes telecommunication policies and development in Asia as well as the impact of new technologies on the broadcasting industry and society. She is now teaching the Broadcast Journalism course. She said, “I really like teaching and I feel fulfilled when I see my students become successful.”



Assistant Professor Trisha Tsui-Chuan Lin.

Photo by Tan Jini

Writer
Daphne Chui

Mr James Mairata

Many of us have grown up watching the likes of “Triple Nine”, “Growing Up” and in recent times, “Heartlanders”. Little did we know that the person who directed several episodes of the former two shows, and who was executive producer and director of the latter show, recently joined WKWSCI.

Mr James Mairata, who hails from Perth, Australia, has been in Singapore for the past 11 years, accompanied by his wife, Neena, a news presenter with Channel NewsAsia and their two children. He joins us this semester to

teach Image and Sound Production and heads the Television Broadcast Practicum to produce programmes for the Nanyang Spectrum, WKWSCI’s own television channel.

Mr Mairata, an avid movie-goer, has taught at Murdoch University in Australia and Ngee Ann Polytechnic and helped start the Film and Video Production course in Nanyang Polytechnic.

Writer
Daphne Chui



Mr James Mairata

Photo by Tan Jinli

NEW PPC FACULTY

Assistant Professor Dr Yeoh Kok Cheow



Dr Yeoh Kok Cheow

Photo by Tan Jinli

Walking into Dr Yeoh’s office, one is awestruck at how simply and tastefully decorated it is. From the floor to ceiling shelves filled with design books and *The Adventures of Tintin* memorabilia, to the tin robots lining the shelves, and the two computer screens on his table with one unconventionally placed in a vertical orientation; you feel somehow you immediately have a sense of who Dr Yeoh is.

Dr Yeoh previously taught at NTU’s School of Art, Design and Media before joining WKWSCI in May. He is teaching Advertising Creativity and Copywriting and the design aspects of the Newsletter Practicum. According to him, design is not just about aesthetics but also a means to creative solutions to problems. He said, “Design involves a lot of things. Most importantly it has to have a purpose, you have to design it for something or somebody.

There has to be a message behind it or it has to represent something. Design is not natural, it is created to address an issue; if you successfully address the issue, then it is well designed.”

When asked for his thoughts on WKWSCI students, Dr Yeoh said, “They are very proud to be WKWSCI students. They relate closely to the School; they feel part of this community so have a strong sense of belonging.”

Even Dr Yeoh’s leisure activities are linked to design. He has been a fan of *The Adventures of Tintin* (the story of a little boy reporter with his companion travelling the world) since he was young. He said, “I am intrigued by how simple lines and strong colours can create effective storytelling. In some ways I think I am living vicariously through this character.”

Assistant Professor Dr Augustine Pang



Dr Augustine Pang

Photo by Tan Jinli

Dr Pang joined (then) SCI’s Division of Journalism and Publishing in 1999 as a lecturer. He taught Newswriting and Reporting and also supervised production of *The Nanyang Chronicle*. In July 2003, he left to pursue a PhD from Missouri School of Journalism, the world’s oldest journalism school at University of Missouri.

Dr Pang returned to WKWSCI in July. He said, “This is really an exciting place right now because we are transforming into a research intensive university and the Chair, Dr Ang Peng Hwa has put in place a lot of support for people who want to do research; I think it is a vision that I share.”

Now with the Division of Public and Promotional Communication, Dr Pang is teaching Crisis Management and in the MMC programme, Conflict Management. His area of research is crisis management and crisis communication.

When asked for his thoughts on the School’s students, Dr Pang said, “I have always known them to be very good. It was an impression formed during my first time here. They are very hardworking, very diligent and very intelligent.” He also enjoys interacting with students and engaging them in intellectual conversations. He said, “It’s a two-way street. They teach me things as well.”

In his leisure time, Dr Pang works out at the gym regularly and until recently, he played the drums. Something that he finds has become such an instinctual activity is reading. The book he is currently reading is *Banker to the Poor* by Muhammed Yunus, the man who won a Nobel Prize for creating the first micro-lending project to benefit the poor, the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh.

Assistant Professor Dr Arul Chib



Dr Arul Chib

Photo by Tan Jinli

The Asian tsunami brought Dr Chib to Singapore. He came to Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC) as a research assistant for six months in 2005/2006, to work with a non-governmental organisation to develop communications projects for communities affected by the tsunami.

After working with the Chair, Dr Ang Peng Hwa and the other faculty at that time, he found them extremely smart, efficient and supportive of his area of research. He said, “I decided WKWSCI would be a good place for me to pursue a career, so that was what brought me back here.” Dr Chib’s research area is information communication technologies and their usage in marginalised communities, as well as social network analysis – how the social networks of people both affect the adoption of technology and how that technology is created and modified for the usage.

He is currently teaching Brand Management and students can tap his experience as Brand Manager at Procter & Gamble in India and Thailand from 1995 to 1998.

Dr Chib commented that WKWSCI students bring a high level of knowledge and enthusiasm to their projects. “They are very hardworking and proactive; this tells you these are people who want to succeed. I am glad to have students like this.”

In his leisure time, Dr Chib loves to travel. He said, “Singapore provides easy access to all of Southeast Asia, so I hope to travel to many places in this region that I hear are extremely beautiful.” He also has a penchant for motor biking and has biked around Vietnam, China, Peru, India and the United States already.

Writer
Hashirin Nurin

FIVE NEW THINGS ABOUT ACRC

Asian Communication Resource Centre (ACRC) was set up in 2003 as a result of the merger between the SCI Resource Centre and the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) Documentation Unit. In 2005, it became part of the NTU Library network, which also includes Lee Wee Nam Library, Library 2, Media Resource Library, Humanities and Social Sciences Library and Art, Design & Media Library.

Since the ACRC grew from a resource centre into a fully-fledged library this year, it has been seeing a lot of interesting changes. Here are five developments you may not yet know about this interesting facility.

1. Library education in new curriculum

Students' studies are benefiting from the changes. Librarians have been increasingly involved in conducting library workshops, instructional programmes and talks for students of various courses. Ms Wendy Ong, Head of ACRC said, "Through this, we hope students will be equipped with effective literature searching skills that they can use when researching for their coursework."

2. Activities by ACRC

In line with the library's orientation programmes for freshmen, the ACRC also conducted talks to brief freshmen on the library network and its rich resources. Most recently, the ACRC played host to an exhibition of works produced by a team of CS students from the GO-FAR expedition in Laos this year. The GO-FAR exhibition was also showcased at the Lee Wee Nam Library.

3. New automated processes

The synergy with other libraries also allows for resource sharing, as the ACRC can now obtain materials housed in the other libraries. The move also provides a great boost of logistical support, shifting the manual processing of loans – where students' matriculation cards were kept by the centre for the duration of their loan – to an automated system.

4. New ACRC administration services

ACRC has also been provided with specialised and professional support through subject librarians brought in to liaise with the academic staff on the acquisition of required coursework materials and new resources.



Photo by Tan Jinli

From left to right: Ms Wendy Ong Ms Phoebe Lim Ms Chen Peishan.

5. New staff

MS WENDY ONG

Senior Assistant Director and Head of ACRC

Subject librarian for Library & Information Science

Ms Ong has been in this profession for more than 10 years, starting as a trainee librarian. She likes travelling and her self-drive holidays were most memorable.

MS PHOEBE LIM

Senior Librarian (Library Promotion)

Subject librarian Advertising, Public Relations, Broadcast and Film

The determination to work in the library field was apparent in Ms Lim's university days, when she saw her flair for it. Ms Lim is currently attracted to the social networking website Facebook, as it helps her reconnect with old friends.

MS CHEN PEISHAN

Librarian (Information Services)

Subject librarian for Communication Research and Journalism

Having pursued an MA degree in Information Services Management at London Metropolitan University, Ms Chen gathered library work experiences in a non-government organisation and law firm before joining ACRC.

Writers
Idayu Suparto
Wee Li Lin

THE RESEARCHER, THE FAMILY MAN



Photo courtesy of Dr Wei Ran

Dr Wei Ran

help his children appreciate speaking Mandarin more. His decision was also influenced by having friends and former colleagues in WKWSC, including Associate Professor Dr Ang Peng Hwa and (then) SCI's former Dean, Professor Dr Eddie Kuo. Dr Wei said, "I don't feel that I have come to a place where I know nobody. I know quite a lot of the staff here, having met some others in conferences too."

Dr Wei's research interest lies in advertising research and the social impacts of mass communication with emphasis on

Having taught at both Western and Asian universities, Dr Wei Ran, an Associate Professor from the University of South Carolina, decided to visit Singapore for a year as he feels it is "more family-friendly compared to other places".

Another reason why he chose to come Singapore is the multi-lingual culture here, which he hopes will

new media technology. The China-born professor is currently teaching undergraduate and postgraduate classes in the Public and Promotional Communication Division.

He started out in the media industry as a news reporter and producer for China Central Television in the mid 1980s, before moving on to graduate school and changing his focus to advertising. When asked about the switch, Dr Wei told *connexscions* that he found asking questions about the mass media process more fascinating than news reporting.

Being a book-lover, Dr Wei often reads books on advertising – he is currently reading *The Online Advertising Playbook*. When he is looking for something more entertaining, the professor picks up Chinese *gong fu* novels and books on Chinese history.

During his leisure time, Dr Wei enjoys spending quality time with his children, helping them with homework and playing with them. Apart from the usual movies and toys, he is trying to get them interested in playing tennis.

Writer
Shallyn Leow

PROF ZHOU SHU HUA IS MR VERSATILE



Photo by Tan Jinli

Dr Zhou Shu Hua.

When asked about the reasons he came to Singapore, he told *connexscions* that he has long had contacts with Founding Dean, Professor Eddie Kuo, who interviewed him in 1998 in Chicago. His acquaintances with Associate Professors Dr Ang Peng Hwa, Dr Hao Xiaoming and Dr Benjamin Detenber also provided him the chance to visit Singapore.

Currently, Dr Zhou, together with another visiting professor, Dr Wei Ran, is researching how stories on "bird flu" affect people's

Things have been working out quite well for him. Visiting professor Dr Zhou Shu Hua has been blessed with opportunities that he has grasped firmly with both hands. It is even difficult not to think that he had it all planned out beforehand. "It's really that opportunities have come along and I have been ready for them," he said.

perception of the epidemic itself. He is also involved in a global study which looks at how television newscasts employ sensational approaches to present news stories. Furthermore, he is set to write a book on research methods and television news analysis. He added, "I have too much time, too little to do."

Being a language-lover, Dr Zhou not only articulates well in English and Mandarin, but can also speak a little French, Spanish and German.

Dr Zhou also loves to play soccer. "I used to have an encyclopedia knowledge of soccer and was a pretty good player but I haven't played for 15 years," he said. He also enjoys playing tennis, badminton and American football. However, he noted that academic life does not allow him much time for leisure. "Going into academia is no breeze. You sometimes have to make sacrifices," he continued. Well, work hard, play hard, isn't it?

Writer
Thong Wai Mun

NEW STAFF

Ms Fu Ji Lang, Manager (Administration)

The “add drop” period is the most hectic time for her as Ms Fu is in charge of the administrative matters of the students. She was previously a secondary teacher in English and Mathematics for six years. She said, “Teaching has always been my passion but I wanted to have a change of working environment in a similar setting.” Ms Fu recognises that WKWSCI has a mutually respectful working environment.

She has a two-year-old toddler who brings joy and life to the family. Ms Fu is also thankful that her loved ones and friends are always around her whenever she needs them.



Photo by Ng Heng Chee

Mr Yap Han Boon, IT Executive

Mr Yap’s fresh face may get him mistaken for a student. This is his first job after completing National Service. He expressed, “If there is one thing that I am proud of, that will be what I am doing now.” Mr Yap finds his job challenging and interesting because it exposes him to many things. However, he recognises that he still has a lot of things to learn.



Photo by Ng Heng Chee

Ms Tay Boon Hiang Samantha, Manager (Graduate Programmes)

Before joining the School, Ms Tay helped students define their career goals and prepared them to secure a place in internships in various companies. She likes working at WKWSCI because she feels that it has a very collegial working environment.

Ms Tay is a sociable person with varied interests. She delights in journaling, experimenting with cooking Indian dishes, watching movies and listening to music. She commented, “I’m pretty gregarious and I enjoy the company of people, especially friends.”



Photo by Ng Heng Chee

Mrs Angeline Sim, Manager (Student Affairs)

[Photo not available at press time]

Mrs Sim oversees a variety of student-related programmes which include Student Exchange, Professional Internship, Final Year Projects, Career Guidance, Alumni Affairs and Ad-hoc Publicity Events for Undergraduates.

Prior to joining WKWSCI, Mrs Sim was a secondary English and Literature teacher. In the time she has been with WKWSCI, Mrs Sim has built rapport with the students and staff and has gained confidence in her job. She said, “The collegial, encouraging spirit at WKWSCI is a great motivator to give my best to the School.”

Mrs Sim and her husband love to travel and their most recent trip was to Eastern Europe last year, where they witnessed the World Cup frenzy on the streets of Prague and Berlin.

Writer
Wee Li Lin

STOP PRESS: SINGAPORE STANDARD TIME

Going beyond home shores, “Singapore Standard Time” was recently screened at Bite the Mango Film Festival, United Kingdom. It was screened together with other acclaimed features, short films and documentaries from around the world. On top of that, the local documentary was also screened in October at The Asian Film Archive’s Southeast Asian Digital Cinema. The event showcased works by five filmmaking groups from Southeast Asian countries.

STUDENT LIFE

MULTI-FACETED GRADUATE STUDENT

Juggling the roles of a PhD student, newsreader, mother and wife, Ms Rita Zahara still has the time and energy for an occasional rock-climbing session with her family, despite her packed schedule.

Prior to pursuing a PhD in the field of Electronic and Broadcast Media, Rita was working at Channel NewsAsia (CNA) as a news reporter. During her tenure at CNA, she also concurrently pursued a Masters in Mass Communication from (then) SCI for one and half years.

Her research interest includes crisis, media and terrorism under the supervision of SCI’s co-chair, Associate Professor Hao Xiaoming. Rita studies key terrorism-related events post September 11th such as the 2002 Bali bombing. Prompted by the fact that the Internet allows public to view information deemed inappropriate by the authorities (for example, the banned Al Jazeera videos in America), Rita’s research also focuses on the presence of new media as an alternative platform for public discourse and content information.

The collaboration with Dr Kumar Ramakrishna requires her to shuttle back and forth from WKWSCI to the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. “Dr Hao and I cannot simply pick and choose the events, because I’m a media researcher. Dr Kumar is a terrorism researcher and expert in the field, so he helped determine what I should focus on,” she explained.

Rita’s interest in crisis-related issues possibly stemmed from her previous job. A crime, court and National Defence beat leader at CNA, she covered major stories like the Nicoll Highway collapse, the Asian tsunami and the gruesome murder of eight-year old Chinese national, Huang Na. She also devised crisis contingency planning and recovery for the 2005 and 2006 National Day Parade news coverage and the 2006 IMF World Bank meetings as a Crisis Incident Manager.

Speaking of her contribution to CNA, she said, “Every newsroom should plan for the unthinkable. We handle big and small crisis everyday.” She added that it was the adrenalin from working on crisis-related issues that keeps her going.



Photo by Ian Jimli

C Rita prepares the rope for the belay.

Prior to joining the news industry, Rita started out in the music scene as a percussionist when she was eight, and moved on to theatre production before joining the television entertainment scene as an actress, host, scriptwriter and subsequently producer and director for Malay programmes. She even bagged several awards despite having no formal training in that aspect – she was an architect by training and holds a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Architecture from the University of Manchester, UK

Although she has less time for the news industry now, Rita still watches Malay language news during the weekends on Mediacorp’s Suria television channel. The outdoor sports-lover devotes her free time to her family and tries to synergise outdoor time with her two children by involving them in her activities. Not forgetting her background in architecture, Rita still continues to paint during her free time. Speaking about her decision to pursue a PhD, she told *connexscions* that it “fits in very well into the life puzzle.”

Writer
Shallyn Leow



PRESSPEDIA—THE NEW WIKIPEDIA

Most of us have surfed Wikipedia but not questioned its origin. *Wiki* means ‘quick’ in Hawaiian. This describes the very nature of Wikipedia – a quick channel used to post and share information on the internet. On a *wiki*, anyone can be a writer or editor, which some people claim makes it unreliable.

However, the open nature of *wikis* means that anyone has the power to correct and improve an entry. Through open collaboration, knowledge can be built up quickly. Assistant Professor Cherian George’s newly-created website, Presspedia, does just that.

Dr George founded this *wiki* as part of his collaboration with WKWSCl’s Undergraduate Research Experience on Campus (URECA) programme. Presspedia is only one part of his host website, www.journalism.sg. Other sections include Perspectives, Research and Education; all revolving around the role of news media in Singapore.

Dr George said, “This is a one-stop site for anyone interested in the news media in Singapore, whether a practising journalist, researcher, student, concerned citizen, media activist or policy maker.”

He added, “It may be even better than having a textbook, because it is a *wiki* that can be endlessly edited and updated by its users. Articles and links published are deliberately diverse to facilitate dialogue.”

Driven by the appeal of the project, undergraduate Mr Lin Junjie took on the role of assistant editor in his second year. He shares, “Dr George told me of his plan to eventually migrate Presspedia to a central resource. I thought that would make a perfect vacation job

– being able to work on something I’m interested in.”

He elaborates, “The *wiki* provides a central location where anyone can make contributions right away with very little technical knowledge on web design. Furthermore, *wikis* store a copy of every revision made and that helps tremendously if anyone needs to revert to their original article in the event of vandalism or inappropriate editing.”

Junjie will be choosing his study major in his third year. When asked whether this project will impact his decision, he answered, “The research on the history of Singapore’s press has definitely instilled within me respect and admiration for journalism and its practitioners. Perhaps the only concern left is whether I’m willing and able to handle the actual demands of the profession.”

Junjie is not the only WKWSCl student involved in this website. Mr Justin Zhuang, a third-year journalism major, has written articles for the website. He shares, “I see www.journalism.sg as an important site towards making sense of journalism’s place in Singapore.”

What started out as a URECA project for top-scoring undergraduates ended up reaching out to more than WKWSCl students like Junjie and Justin. Anyone who wants to add to people’s understanding of the journalism scene in Singapore has the liberty to contribute their knowledge to Presspedia.

Writer
Carene Chew

MY WORD! STUDENTS DREAM BIG AND WIN BIG

When four Year Three students entered the national Singtel My Word! video competition in March to gain experience, they did not expect too much. But despite their humble aspirations, the team came out tops with their video, “half-”.

The students – Mr Ang Guangzheng, Mr Darren Tan, Mr Gao Rongjun and Mr Wang Junjie – got wind of the competition through the School and since it coincided with the term break, they decided to take part. They chose youth apathy as the theme out of a list of pre-

determined topics, as they felt it was something they could relate to.

The director, Junjie, said he found his theatre background put to good use as he could incorporate some theatre elements into the film. Darren, Guangzheng and Rongjun cited cooperation, teamwork and mutual understanding as important components to their successful collaboration. Having signed up just five days before the submission deadline, they had to go all out to get the work finished. Rongjun, the producer, said, “We had to shoot for

STUDENTS GET PROFESSIONAL

Current students in WKWSCl have been striking it out on their own, pursuing their individual passions in their free time. For some, the results have been remarkable.

Using the School as their springboard, they are jump-starting their careers and exploring prospects open to them. From moonlighting as designers and writers to starting journalism websites, these students make things happen by going beyond the classroom on their own initiatives.

Second-year student Mr Kester Tay used the last school break to realise his zeal for journalism. After interning for lifestyle magazine *I-S*, he further challenged himself by taking on Nepal. From May to June this year, he travelled there to work as a journalist for their local English daily, *The Kathmandu Post*. He believes, “The best way to learn is to get out there and find your footing.”

Like Kester, many others are taking up part-time jobs with various companies relevant to the media industry, ahead of their industrial attachments in their third year. The companies they work with include publications, public relations companies, as well as advertising and television production houses.

Apart from working, groups of students have also embarked on various other initiatives and projects. Some have teamed up to produce short films independently. What started out as a little bit of fun has gone on to win top slots in local competitions such as the Fly-By-Night Challenge and the recent National Day Video Competition.

According to Mr Liew Shi Xiong, he always had a penchant for telling stories, and producing short films was right up his alley. The second-year student has been making short films with his friends since his days in National Service, and believes that coming to WKWSCl has added fuel to his fire.

His knowledge of cinematic storytelling has grown by leaps



Students at the Canon DV Triathlon Competition. From left: Lin Jun Jie, Low Ting Yi, Liew Shi Xiong and Lim Chee Harn.

Photo courtesy of Liew Shi Xiong

and bounds with the many challenging classes offered in the course and also working with fellow students who share similar passions. Shi Xiong has just completed his eighth short film, one of many that are quickly capturing the School’s attention.

Hungry to improve his storytelling skills, Shi Xiong says, “What I can do from now is to keep doing, keep learning and keep watching. There’s no end to this.”

Honed talents and professional work attitudes are expected to emerge from this trend that is spreading within the WKWSCl student community. With all the prior training and drive to work in the industry, these passionate and dedicated students are slowly but steadily changing the image of our School.

Writer
Sabina Lim

three consecutive days and then edit for the remaining two days.” But the “mad rush” paid off with their win.

The experience had mixed outcomes on the team’s career aspirations. Guangzheng, who managed the film’s audio aspects, said, “This win fortified my resolve to pursue a career in film production.” Rongjun, however, felt differently, saying he realised through this project that film production was probably not the best career choice for him. Meanwhile, Darren, who manned the cameras during the filming, said, “Joining the competition gave me confidence to try new things and explore other areas of interest.”

Looking back on the experience, the four encourage other

students to take the challenge to join competitions as the experience builds confidence in one’s abilities, as well as developing work skills and experience. The competitions may also be stepping stones to significant career choices and greater successes in the future.

And if those aren’t reasons enough for students to test their work in competitions, perhaps the prize money might sway them. The “Singtel My Word!” team walked away with the grand prize of \$1,500. How’s that for a motivation?

Writer
Nadia Bte Md Ismail

MS SERENE LOO



Photo by Daphne Chui

Preparing to present the nightly news.

Ms Serene Loo (1999) is a familiar face to many; television viewers who follow MediaCorp's Channel 8 weekend primetime news bulletin would recognise this news presenter.

Serene's passion for broadcast journalism has been the driving force behind her success as a news presenter and news reporter.

She enjoys "meeting new people, covering breaking news events and overcoming new challenges."

Currently alternating between news presenting and news reporting, Serene enjoys the new and exciting challenges that her job constantly presents. Her most unforgettable experience

as a news reporter was being "on the field" at the site of the tsunami back in 2004.

She remembers how there were decomposing bloated bodies all over the temples in Khao Lak, and how overwhelming it was to see fellow Singaporeans searching frantically for their loved ones in the hope that they were still alive. She said, "You could feel their emotions, the pain, the loss and the sense of helplessness when they were there."

Upon graduation, Serene had a month-long stint as a freelance producer for a current affairs programme for MediaCorp's Channel 5, before being offered a full-time job as a news producer for Channel 8. She began presenting news for Channel U in early 2005, and later moved to Channel 8. Serene currently reads for the Channel 8 evening 6:30pm and 10:00pm news bulletins.

She has covered many breaking and major events, including the Nicoll Highway Collapse in 2004. She was nominated for Best Chinese News and Current Affairs Presenter in the 2005 and 2006 Star Awards organised by MediaCorp.

When asked what her best achievement was, she said, "I could not say, and I hope I have not achieved my best achievement yet, because there is still a long way to go."

Writer
Daphne Chui

MS DONNA WONG

After graduating with an MSc in Mass Communication, Donna Wong (2000) has since gone on to University of Edinburgh, School of Education to pursue a PhD in Education. Her research is in the area of sport and new media leisure technology where she investigates the effects of new media on sport and physical activity participation among youth. This combines the two disciplines she is interested in - mass communication and sports. Apart from studying full time, Donna is a social researcher with the Scottish Government in the Justice Analytical Department, where she

conducts research for the Scottish Parliament and Ministers.

Donna is enjoying her life in Scotland, where she appreciates the four seasons, and the scenic Scottish landscape. She hopes to stay in academia, and is hoping to pursue either a post-doctorate qualification or a lectureship in the future.

She said, "I like the academic environment and I've always wanted to pursue my PhD. I am living my dream now."

Writer
Daphne Chui

DOUGLAS HENDRY, THE UNCONVENTIONAL GRADUATE

We recently met with Mr Douglas Hendry, a WKWSCI graduate from the Division of Information Studies (DIS) who hails from Scotland. However, it was his label as an "unconventional" graduate, cited by several professors, that made us curious. This is what we found out about him.



Photo courtesy of Mr Douglas Hendry

What did you do before joining WKWSCI?

I was a freelance consultant working for my own contracting company in Europe and the US. I've been in the software development industry for 24 years but never attained any professional qualifications.

Professor Schubert Foo, your former advisor, told us you worked on a new visualisation project. What exactly is this about?

Searching becomes harder and harder as we accumulate more and more files on our computers. A simple search can return (too) many documents. I wanted to explore new ways of reviewing the results from a search using more graphical views to present the results. These pictorial views would be more useful than a simple list of results and could help the user find what they were looking for quicker and easier. In the end I created five different views that looked at the results in different ways in order to support the user in different searching tasks.

Could you tell us more about your experience working with Dr Foo?

I have never undertaken pure research before embarking on my research project and a thesis was new territory for me. Although I had ideas about what I wanted to do, I was not familiar with the proper processes and procedures for undertaking a research project like this.

Dr Foo was invaluable in steering me in the right direction and guiding me in terms of the best way to do things and the

levels of detail required for my work. I enjoyed exchanging ideas with him and debating issues around my topic - this helped me to develop my ideas and execute the project.

An essential part of my research was to evaluate how people found the new search views, and if they actually helped them in searching. For this, I needed volunteers. I got over 90 evaluators to try my search engine and this helped to make the results useful - I couldn't have managed that without Dr Foo's help.

We heard that you are now involved in a state-of-the-art image retrieval system. Can you tell us more about it?

When I was finishing my studies I was very fortunate to get introduced to a locally-based entrepreneur. He was looking for someone to help launch his new business. I was actually recommended by a fellow student at WKWSCI. I met with this entrepreneur several times. We also discussed his plans to develop a locally-based stock photography business specialising in Asian images and content. While there are many large stock photo agencies in existence worldwide, their content is mainly European and American.

With the growth of Asian economies and interest in Asia generally we feel there is a great unmet demand for Asian content. Therefore, we launched Fotografik (<http://www.fotografik.com>) for photographers to start contributing images. The response has been enthusiastic and we have enrolled many active members.

You were being described as an "unconventional" graduate. Any ideas why?

Well maybe I am a little more mature than most other students! Also being *ang moh* (Caucasian) and, from what I gather, one of the first to study in DIS, makes me a little different. I really enjoyed the international and local mix of students at WKWSCI - I think the diversity of backgrounds certainly makes it a much more interesting place to study and I hope that I brought a little something to that equation.

Writers
Thong Wai Mun
Carene Chew

ALUMNI UPDATES

After graduating, **Mr Dennis Ng** (2000) spent time working with MediaCorp and Singapore International Airlines (SIA). However, he has since found his true calling as a freelance producer for local television stations Channel 5 and Channel NewsAsia. Amongst the many shows he has produced are "Secrets of Sun Zi", "Youth Decode", "Career Blueprint" and "Of Rites and Rituals 2". "My job gives me the freedom and opportunity to try out various TV formats and contents," Dennis said. "I especially enjoy the overseas shoots. Work may be tough, but I get the chance to experience different cultures and visit 'non-touristy' places."

Ms Koh Gui Qing (2006), a journalism major, is working with Reuters (Singapore) as a reporter for general and financial news. Gui Qing feels that good journalism is about contacts, context and initiative. "At Reuters, journalists are always reminded about the principles of accuracy and speed," she said. "But accuracy comes before speed — there is no point being first if it means being wrong."

EBM major **Mr Yeo Hock Chuan** (2007) is working on Singapore Press Holdings' latest website project, omy.sg as its online producer and journalist. Catering to the Chinese-inclined bilingual Singaporeans, the website contains sections covering news, entertainment, lifestyle, as well as user-generated content such as citizen journalism. Hock Chuan finds his job a challenge as he is more inclined towards audio media than visual. However, he added, "It's not often you get a chance to be involved in a product launch. It's an honour and a timely opportunity as well to be involved in this."

After graduation, **Mrs Laimei Lundstrom** (2002) started work in the field of sales operations, although she continued to hope for a communication-related career. After living and working in Shanghai for more than a year, she is now happily married to a Swede, and is currently residing in Stockholm, Sweden.

"Settling down in a European country is quite a big challenge," she said, adding that the language barrier was the first thing to overcome. She is currently studying Swedish and Japanese, and has also developed a serious interest in cooking.

After graduating from (then) SCI, **Mr. Jeremy Fernando** (2004) spent some time in European Graduate School, Switzerland, pursuing a Masters Degree in Media and Communication. He was invited to continue with their PhD programme and has now received an ABD (all but dissertation) from the university.

As the school works on the German university model, Jeremy spends an intensive month of seminars in Switzerland, and is

given the freedom to research and complete his dissertation the rest of the year.

Now that he is back in Singapore, he is tutoring the Introduction to the Study of Literature course in NTU's School of Humanities and Social Sciences. He feels that by teaching there, he is able to gain a "change in registers of thinking" from the field of communication.

Jeremy chose to do graduate studies instead of joining the advertising industry, and will be completing his PhD in 2009. He wishes to pursue a career in teaching as he "enjoys thinking with his fellow colleagues in class".

Ms Lee Hwee Chin (1998) did her Masters degree in biblical studies at the Singapore Bible College after her graduation from (then) SCI and is currently working at Wesley Methodist Church for the children's ministry.

Although her main passion in life wasn't to work with children, her love for this challenge has "grown exponentially" over the nine years she has worked in the ministry.

Her past work experience in the public relations and advertising industry has clearly proven to be a critical asset to the church, where she communicates messages, liaises with ministries overseas for volunteer management and builds teaching structures for the 1,000 children attending the ministry's Sunday school.

"You should enjoy what you're learning more when you know why you're doing it," said Hwee Chin, advising students to explore how their knowledge may be applied outside in the real world.

Ms Winnie Koh (2004) is working with National Geographic Channel Asia, partnering regional clients to produce advertising campaigns for broadcast, print and the Internet.

In the advertising sales and integrated marketing department, overseeing the execution of the campaigns means working closely with many renowned "NatGeo Explorers and Photographers", personalities fronting the campaigns.

"I'm often awed by the great work they do," said Winnie. "The nature of each campaign is different, and there's no limit to creative ways in which we can offer media solutions for clients." She credits (then) SCI for giving her the professionalism to handle clients and for helping to jumpstart her career into the advertising world.

Writers
Geraldine Yeo
Daphne Chui
Sabina Lim
Tan Jinli
Justin Chai



Brewerkz

On the first Thursday of every month, from 7-9pm, SCI alumni and lecturers gather at Brewerkz bar in Riverside Point to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. Come join us!



Photos by Tan Jinli