Developing key capabilities is key to staying relevant

As the Smart Nation initiative enters its third year, Minister-in-charge Dr Vivian Balakrishnan discusses its progress, the ongoing challenges, and the role universities and institutions of higher learning can play in this national strategy.

Written by Gao Cheah

Technical expertise in the civil service is being built by developing new tools and standards, but this is hampered by a lack of technical capability in the policy-making arena.

Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan says this effect adds another layer of capability development needed to drive these new initiatives. He adds: “People are essentially doing two jobs at once, which is not sustainable.”

One of the key initiatives is networking. Smart Nation activities are linked as a strategic approach to streamlining projects that are not feasible alone. The Government is very conscious that networking will be the key link between all stakeholders.

Dr Balakrishnan is in charge of six key departments, which are responsible for investing, training, and developing key capabilities. The initiative is essentially dealing with a new set of problems, but there are also new skills that need to be mastered.

The Government is also working with independent software developers through a scheme like Sygic, whose project seeks to develop a real-time information technology solution to the world’s largest mining companies.

NUS Infrastructure Technology

Source: The Straits Times, pB5

Date: 13 November 2015

Singapore's digital infrastructure

Household internet access: 48% (2014)
Fixed fibre penetration: 5.1 million subscriptions
Mobile phone penetration: 148% (2016)
Wireless subscriptions: 15.6 million
Total international Internet capacity: 2.95 million Mbit/s (2014)

The success of Smart Nation is when technology becomes the background

Dr Balakrishnan

Smart Nation launch

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong launched the Smart Nation initiative in 2014, a mission to create a digital-first nation. The aim is to find new ways of doing things that will make people’s lives better, from how we work and what we eat to how we are able to do service delivery.

One of the key goals of the initiative is to reduce the number of people in the civil service by 2020. The Government is working on a strategy to reduce the number of civil servants by 10% by 2020. The Government is also working on a strategy to reduce the number of civil servants by 10% by 2020.

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Get ready for the challenges of the digital economy

In an ever-evolving world, technology is changing rapidly, and industries and jobs are changing with it. The Smart Nation initiative is a crucial step in ensuring that Singapore is well-prepared for the future.

The success of Smart Nation is when technology becomes the background. In the future, we will see a world where technology is almost invisible, where people can access information and services without even realizing it.

Upgrading skills the bite-sized way

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