# IBM Malaysia, MDEC collaborate to nurture future Digital Makers

By Digital News Asia | Aug 09, 2017

- ***IBM Malaysia organised the workshop with students from SMK Kompleks KLIA***
- ***Students learned coding and AI while assembling TJBots with the help of IBM Malaysia volunteers***


*IBM Asia Pacific and Greater China Group Corporate Citizenship lead David Raper and MDEC Talent & Digital Entrepreneurship Division VP Sumitra Nair with the students and volunteers holding successfully assembled TJBots at the end of the workshop*

IN AN initiative to transform young Malaysians from digital consumers into digital makers, Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) and IBM Malaysia recently co-hosted the IBM Watson Maker Workshop for SMK Kompleks KLIA.

This workshop's objective is to enable students to acquire beginner's maker and coding skills, and to learn about artificial intelligence in a fun way.

Volunteers from IBM Malaysia guided 30 students in building and assembling 'TJBots' from laser-printed cardboards and Raspberry Pi 3 boards before connecting them to Watson Speech to Text application programming interface (API) service available on IBM Bluemix.

Through this initiative, IBM and MDEC aim to strengthen the students' problem-solving skills and expand their level of creativity.

"It is gratifying to see students team build their own robots while learning and exploring technology. Technology is all about keeping experiments going and coming up with something truly life-changing for the world and the community. By exposing students to coding, robotics and artificial intelligence, we are preparing them for the future where digital technology is disrupting businesses.

"It was great to see the commitment from MDEC towards the #mydigitalmaker initiative to skill up youth in the ecosystem.," said IBM Asia Pacific and Greater China Group Corporate Citizenship lead David Raper.

Raper dropped by at the workshop to join in the fun and at the end of it, delivered a rousing speech urging the students to continue their experiential journey with technology.

The IBM TJBot is an open-source project and a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) kit that allows anyone to build their own programmable cardboard robots powered by Watson. The cardboard cut-out can be 3D printed or laser cut, fitted with Raspberry Pi boards and a variety of add-ons such as RGB LED light, a microphone, a servo motor, and a camera.

To bring TJ Bots to life, students referred to a number of 'recipes'; which are step-by-step instructions to help them connect the TJBots to Watson services. Watson will then interpret and process the voice commands received via the microphone before prompting the robots to perform the commands.

The recipes are designed to work on a Raspberry Pi and makers are encouraged to try and create their own recipes based on their ideas and creativity.


*MDEC Talent & Digital Entrepreneurship Division VP Sumitra Nair (left) with IBM Asia Pacific and Greater China Group Corporate Citizenship lead David Raper*

"Technology as we know it today is a part of everyone's life and it is time we educate students, teachers as well as parents in unfolding its depths and potential. The #mydigitalmaker team are committed in coaching the younger generation and teachers with the correct education plans and effective workshops so that they can embrace technology as a skillset and be digital-ready in this digital economic future.

"This will help empower our younger generation to be trained problem solvers and their ideas soon will benefit the society and fuel the nation's digital economy. The MDEC and IBM Watson Maker Workshop is definitely a good start and we are hoping to organise similar workshops this year for students from other schools to keep the momentum going, especially with the much anticipated #mydigitalmaker Fair 2017 inching closer," said MDEC Talent & Digital Entrepreneurship Division vice president Sumitra Nair.

The IBM Watson Maker Workshop is one of several IBM's corporate social responsibility efforts in support of #mydigitalmaker movement to transform Malaysian youth from digital users to producers in the digital economy.

This includes skills such as coding, app development, 3D printing, robotics, embedded programming and data analytics; all of which will ultimately help to strengthen problem solving and creativity amongst our future generation.

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**Keyword(s):**
MDeC,IBM,IBM Watson Maker Workshop,SMK Kompleks KLIA,TJBots,David Raper,Raspberry Pi,Sumitra Nair

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