



Winners of the various competitions at the #mydigitalmaker Fair 2017.

Preparing the young for digital careers

Fair a showcase of students' creativity and provides insight into different elements of technology

MALAYSIA'S first-ever science and technology fair – #mydigitalmaker Fair 2017 – was a major success with more than 20,000 visitors turning up to view and experience digital projects created by students.

The two-day youth-engagement event organised by Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) took place at Hall 6 of the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. It was held in conjunction with the Petrosains Science Festival 2017.

The event focused on creating awareness among students and parents on how technology will play a huge part in the future job landscape.

It also celebrated the ingenious creations and achievements of top young digital makers and further inculcated their passion in digital making.

Supported by the Communication and Multimedia and Education ministries, #mydigitalmaker Fair 2017's aim was ultimately about shaping tomorrow's digital leaders of Malaysia and further accelerating Malaysia's digital economy.

In line with these themes, MDEC's #mydigitalmaker Fair featured plenty of creative and innovative digital projects from young Malaysian students who utilised many recyclable elements to build their technologies.

Additionally, there were multiple pitching sessions and project demos that featured globally recognised and award-winning teams who represented their respective schools at the highest level of competition.

Among the sharing sessions, the highlight of the weekend was the "Battle of the Digital Ninjas" segment which had student teams who trained under the Digital Ninja Programme taking the stage to pitch their ideas to a panel of judges.

The students, having undergone a series of digital upskilling and leadership courses with world-renowned technology companies as well as experiencing educational and experiential trips to Silicon Valley, stole the show as they presented their ideas on solving real-life problems during the "Shark Tank" like segment.

The judging panel featured MDEC chief executive officer Datuk Yasmin Mahmood, Fusionex managing director Datuk Seri Ivan Teh, Economic Planning Unit (EPU) deputy director-general Johan Mahmood Merican, Nano Malaysia Bhd chief executive officer Dr Rezal Khairi Ahmad, MDT Innovations chief operating officer Sim Hon Wai, Teak Capital Management managing director Chok Kwee Bee and Microsoft Malaysia Legal, Government and Corporate director

Jasmine Begum.

The first prize went to Team Unmei for its idea to encourage people in urban areas to plant more greens through its Cloud Farm app. The team consisted of Putera Faizal, Vinishwaran, Nurina Huda and Ain Sofena from Sekolah Tun Fatimah and SMK Taman Megah Ria, Johor.

"I didn't expect to win the first prize and now that my team has won, I am more confident and motivated to pursue digital technology courses in the future and become a successful software engineer.

"We were inspired by the popular game FarmVille, and thought of coming up with something that can protect the environment," said Team Unmei leader Ain Sofena.

Team Unmei won RM1,275 during its pitch. In an unscripted moment, Teh generously added RM10,000 more to support the team's ideation.

"Technology is growing rapidly and we are constantly surprised with new findings and innovative achievements. In the future, many jobs will require digital competency and this is the best time for us to start educating our children and their parents about technology and its impact to the country's digital economy.

"Through #mydigitalmaker Fair, we get to highlight the many career options in store for these bright young minds and we allow them to experiment with many elements of technology such as coding, robotics, animation and many others, so they can choose what they want to be in the future," said Yasmin.

Parents and students who visited the fair also had the chance to understand further that careers in the digital technology industry are as important and in demand as conventional choices.

They also quickly discovered how there are ample resources and initiatives that the Government and private institutions have developed in their effort to nurture more digital creatives and innovators. These include Robotics, 3D printing, Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR) and Data Analytics sectors.

The #mydigitalmaker Fair 2017 also saw many educational activities, career talks with key industry players Streamline Studios, Les 'Copaque, and IBM, a "brain-picking" session called "CEOs and Kids" with guest CEOs from local digital technology companies such as The Lorry, Kitamen, YouthsToday.com, TudiduT Studio and Kurechii. The latter had the CEOs share their thoughts on what future careers would be.