

Youth fair uncovers next-gen workforce talents

BY HANNA SHEIKH MOKHTAR

IN ORDER to encourage STEM education and provide a platform for the next generation to show their talents and learn from each other, Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) with support from the Ministry of Communication and Multimedia Malaysia (MCMC) and Ministry of Education (MOE) organised the #mydigitalmaker Fair recently.

The event, held in conjunction with the Petrosains Science Festival, focused on creating awareness amongst 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 maker talents as it further inculcated their passion in digital making.

The two-day youth engagement event successfully attracted more than 20,000 visitors to experience the very best from school going youths who worked hard on their digital projects in various competitions such as Battle of the Digital Ninjas, Level Up @ Schools, Land Rover's 4x4 in School, Computational Thinking Cup 2017, Digital Maker Club and the Young Innovators Challenge.

The youngsters who took part in these challenges utilised many recyclable elements to build their technologies, in line with #mydigitalmaker Fair 2017's themes of promoting science and sustainable living through innovation.

In the Level Up @ Schools segment, 35 teams went through a series of workshops and then had to come up with their own computer games. The winning team from Sekolah Menengah Sains Tengku

Ahmad Faris Petra, Kelantan built a 3D game called SeCo-FiCo — Search, Collect, Fight and Converge. The team was made up of Muhamad Shakir Aiman Mohd Shakri who was in charge of sound, Ahmad Iqbal Che Shamsudin, in charge of graphics, Luqman Hakim Ismail who took care of game design and Muhammad Hafizuddin Mohd Norwawi who did the programming.

According to their teacher Chu Jenn Kuin, the team managed to use whatever was taught to them and further improved their game by learning 3D modelling instead of the required 2D modelling. "The boys have immense talent in building games and they are constantly improving it as they go along," she said.

When asked what they plan to do with their game after this, Luqman said: "Of course we hope to be able to commercialise it, but we know that there's still a lot we need to do to improve it before that happens. One of the things we plan on improving is to have the player be able to power up, such as get better weapons or get more lives."

The game itself has a very simple design; to teach players about computer parts, players move using specific keys on the keyboard and pick up the computer parts. Should they encounter enemies, they need to shoot to eliminate them. The graphics in SeCo-FiCo is similar to Sim City and the game movement is quite smooth.

Another team from Kelantan is SMK (A) Falaiah. The all-girls team came up with a game called Prince Charming, an adaptation from the



Visitors at #mydigitalmaker Fair 2017 in KLCC trying out robotic games.
NSTP/SAIFULLIZAN TAMADI.

fairy tale, The Princess and The Frog. Comprising Nur Shakila Fatin Abdul Sani who was in charge of programming, Nurul Awatif Abidin who did art and animation, Wan Nurul Ain Wan Ahmad, graphics, and Nur Fatin Liyana Ab Salam Arif who took care of the audio—the team took two weeks to build the game and one week to test it.

When asked what they found challenging while creating the game, Nur Shakila Fatin said: "Whenever there was an error or coding problem, it set us back. However, we didn't let that stop us. It is merely a way for us to learn and overcome the error."

Her teammate Nurul Awatif concurred, saying:

"In future we want to create even more games. We have learnt that just because we're girls, it does not mean we cannot do coding and come up with our own games."

Hasnul Hadi Samsudin, vice president of the Creative Content & Technologies Division, MDEC hopes to look for more partners to help grow the Level Up @ Schools Programme. "We want to expand, do a website and give more tools to students so they will be able to work on their innovations better. We are committed to help in talent building for game development as there is a big future for Malaysians in the gaming industry," he said.