

my paper 叻報

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sph A SINGAPORE PRESS HOLDINGS PUBLICATION

SINGAPORE

Pick up PC skills from home

Two online courses will be offered under govt-backed programme to boost computer proficiency

TRAINING 1

SIA LING XIN

FROM January next year, busy Singaporeans can take up computer courses in the comfort of their homes.

This is part of a government-supported national computer-proficiency programme's bid to make learning more convenient, so as to encourage more Singaporeans to become computer-savvy.

The Singapore Computing Society (SCS) will offer two such courses under the National PC Proficiency Programme, which can be completed online.

Participants can also choose to attend lessons at any of the programme's 17 certified training centres. They will take a 90-minute examination at the end of the course.

The two courses teach students how to use Microsoft software. Advanced learners can also learn how to set up computer servers.

Each course costs about \$500, and is subsidised by the Government under the Skills De-



NO-FUSS LEARNING: Busy workers can now take up computer courses without leaving home. (PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO)

velopment Fund.

When the programme was launched 11 years ago, the society offered only the National PC Driving Test course, which taught students how to use common applications, such as Microsoft Word, and how to navigate the Internet.

SCS decided to revamp the programme last year, to better suit the needs of today's busy Singaporeans.

The society has trained about 70,000 under its first programme. It aims to train 50,000 people over the next three years.

Its president, Mr Alphonsus Pang, said: "In order to stay rele-

vant in today's competitive job market, it is essential for one to keep oneself informed about the latest competencies that employers seek, and the National PC Proficiency Programme certifies individuals who satisfy these standards."

A recent survey by technology research firm IDC found that 85 per cent of workplace supervisors preferred employees with Microsoft Office software skills certification as they were "more productive, credible and competent", he added.

Marketing executive Ashley Ho, 34, said: "The few hours I invest in picking up these PC

skills will allow me to be a lot more efficient in future.

"I will probably be taking up the online course as it offers me more flexibility."

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HELPDESK 我的字典

Proficiency: 精通 jīng tōng

Revamp: 更新 gēng xīn

Competencies: 技能 jì néng

Flexibility: 灵活性
líng huó xíng

New centre can train more media professionals

TRAINING 2

CHERYL LIM

SINGAPORE'S first continuing education and training centre for media professionals opened yesterday.

The \$6-million centre, run by the Singapore Media Academy, was built with funding from the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA).

The 1,161-sq m facility, housed in Riverside Point at Clarke Quay, is about twice the size of the previous training space used - the premises of broadcaster MediaCorp in Andrew Road - before the facility was ready.

So the centre will be able to offer more courses and train more people.

It offers 49 courses on subjects such as script-writing, video-editing and camera operation, and has trained 203 people since it started operating in November last year.

It will ramp up the number of courses to 80 by early next year, and will be able to train 2,400 people a year.

The centre offers Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) programmes under the Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (Spur) scheme.

This means that the fees for these courses are subsidised by WDA for citizens and permanent residents by up to 90 per cent, with the rest paid by the student or his employer.

The centre was set up to help realise the Government's long-term goal of doubling the media industry's contribution to Singapore's gross domestic product to 3 per cent in 10 years' time, said Mr Lee Yi Shyan, Minister of State for Manpower and Trade and Industry, who was the guest of honour at its opening ceremony yesterday.

Underscoring the importance of continual skills upgrading, Mr Lee said: "Employers must look long-term, upgrade workers' skills to up productivity as well as the overall quality of the industry and workforce."

Last month, 11,000 more workers signed up for Spur training, bringing the total number of workers to 244,000.

Ms Regine Lee, 30, signed

up for the WDA Train and Place Professional Conversion Programme, under which she would take up a job as an account manager with Singapore Press Holdings' SPH Search, which runs home-grown search engine rednano.sg

Under the programme, she will attend the centre's WSQ new-media sales course next month. She hopes to master e-marketing techniques.

Ms Lee, who used to be in the manufacturing industry, said: "The classes will definitely be helpful to those going through a mid-career switch like me, who may be very used to how our previous industries worked."

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