

Alibaba Cloud partners NUS, EZ-Link to boost data capabilities

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ALIBABA Cloud, the cloud computing arm of Jack Ma-founded Alibaba Group, is deepening its commitment in Singapore, its headquarters for international business.

On Monday, it signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the National University of Singapore (NUS) and EZ-Link to drive cloud computing and data-driven capabilities in the Republic, and better serve enterprises and merchants here.

The Business Times understands that the timeframe for the MOU is two years, under which Alibaba Cloud will contribute S\$500,000 in cloud credits towards the use of its cloud platform and data centres by NUS students and researchers for academic purposes.

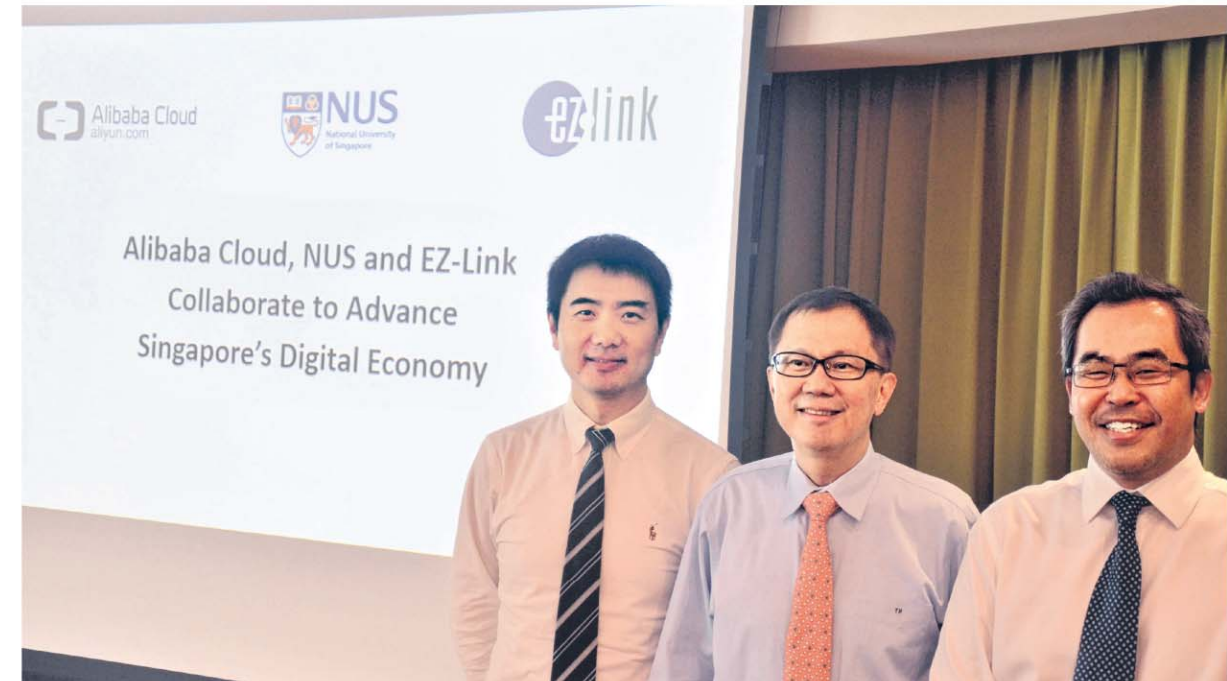
Already, Alibaba Cloud and NUS are working with EZ-Link to analyse card usage patterns across the vari-

ous EZ-Link card schemes, service touchpoints and customer segments. This seeks to improve customer experience and create better services.

Ethan Yu, vice-president of Alibaba and general manager of Alibaba Cloud Global, told BT: "For merchants, this project will help improve market segmentation and create more effective, value-added incentive programmes with EZ-Link, by knowing when, where and how a customer uses the EZ-Link card."

Ho Teck Hua, NUS deputy president of research and tech, said that the partnership pointed to the close collaboration between academia and industry in solving real-world problems, and will help contribute towards a future cashless Singapore.

Nicholas Lee, chief executive of EZ-Link, said as much: "It will provide a robust framework to convert usage pattern data into actionable intelligence. It will move our customers into an era where they will be served according to their behaviour, interests and needs."



(From left) Ethan Yu, VP of Alibaba Group and GM of Alibaba Cloud Global, Prof Ho Teck Hua, NUS deputy president (Research & Technology) and EZ-Link CEO Nicholas Lee at the MOU signing.

Alibaba's Mr Yu noted that Singapore is an important market and a natural springboard into the Asia-Pacific region, not only for the company, but for its target customers.

He said: "Our long-term collaboration with NUS and EZ-Link demonstrates our ongoing commitment to drive tech innovation in Singapore. Other than the primary business focus of continuing to grow our customer pool and enhancing product offerings here, we are committed to enabling the local ecosystem."

Asked if there are more of such col-

laborations in the pipeline, Mr Yu said that Alibaba Cloud is in talks with more local educational institutes in Singapore and South-east Asia.

Alibaba Cloud, whose other headquarters is in Hangzhou (where Alibaba is based), is said to be China's largest cloud computing provider with over 2.3 million customers worldwide, and the "only international cloud that grows from the east". Other global players include Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Azure.