



NUS president Tan Eng Chye (far left) with members of NUS' 5 Peas in a Pod – (from left) Mr Xavier Xie, 24, Ms Rebecca Tan, 25, Ms Victoria Teo, 22, Mr Vincent Leow, 24, and Mr Teo Kai Cheng, 26. The team, from the NUS School of Computing, was one of the winners of the Build On, Singapore 2019 Hackathon. ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

Students develop solutions for real-life issues in hackathon finals

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Young people tapped into their own real-life issues to win big at the finals of a cross-institution hackathon yesterday.

The ideas included an integrated solution that would not only direct a driver to a location but find him a parking space too, as well as a training platform for young people that would connect them with employers for part-time jobs.

The Build On, Singapore 2019 Hackathon, jointly organised by Amazon Web Services, the National University of Singapore

(NUS) and the Government Technology Agency, drew 51 entries from students of the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), junior colleges (JCs), polytechnics and universities.

The three-week programme challenged the teams to select and develop solutions using technology for six problems. These were based on everyday life, such as helping drivers find the best routes and cheapest places to park, or creating ways to improve school campuses.

Teams were whittled down to 38. They pitched their solutions to judges from different industry backgrounds, such as Mr Glen Francis, chief technology officer of Singa-

pore Press Holdings, and Mr Tommy Hor, chief information technology officer of NUS, at the final at Suntec convention centre.

The winners were:

- For Category A (university): NUS' team, 5 Peas in a Pod, who pitched a concept of integrating navigation and parking prices.
- For Category B (polytechnic): Meow from Singapore Polytechnic, who matched unemployed young people to jobs in a gamified way.
- For Category C (ITE and JC): CloudByters, a team from ITE College West, who proposed a facilities-booking system for

their own college.

Singapore Polytechnic's team was inspired by one of its members, a foreign student holding down multiple jobs to pay her tuition fees.

Nexus, a computer app the team created, requires users to carry out various quests to improve their skill sets, for which they are matched with potential employers for paid part-time jobs.

One NUS team created NoSqueeze, a mobile app that integrates a student's schedule with the bus schedule, creating a customised timetable to help the user avoid crowded buses or being late for school.

Said team member Sim Sheng Qin, 22: "I saw this old woman on a wheelchair who was struggling to get on a crowded bus. We thought that solving this issue in a school environment would be a good start."

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