

# Smart Nation scholars eager to help digitalisation effort

✔ **TATIANA MOHAMAD ROSLI**

He was only 11 when he learnt how to code and design his first computer game, a 2D car racing game, with a \$25 software called Game Maker 8.1.

Now 19, Mr Victor Loh will be joining the Government Technology Agency (GovTech) once he completes his studies at the National University of Singapore (NUS), where he is reading a double degree in computer science and statistics.

The national serviceman is one of 15 Smart Nation scholarship awardees this year - selected from a pool of 723 applicants, an increase from 614 applicants last year.

The scholarship is jointly offered by GovTech, the Cyber Security Agency and the Info-comm Media Development Authority.

Minister-in-charge of the Smart Nation initiative Vivian Balakrishnan addressed the 15 scholars at a virtual engagement session over videoconferencing app Zoom last Friday.

He said: "You can look forward to playing a critical role in shaping Singapore's infocomm media landscape by uniting tech and innovation to change our digital economy, and being at the forefront of Singapore's national digitalisation movement."

GovTech is the lead agency driving the country's Smart Nation initiative.

Upon graduation, Mr Loh will be joining the agency to help develop the fields of data science, application development and cyber security, among others.

He said: "Technology can simplify our daily processes but it



(From left) Mr Victor Loh and Mr Kevin Foong are among 15 Smart Nation scholars this year. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF VICTOR LOH, KEVIN FOONG

can also be misused. I hope to use my knowledge to be able to secure our online systems against cyber threats."

## INTERNSHIP

Another Smart Nation scholar joining GovTech is Mr Kevin Foong, 21, a Year 1 computer science student at NUS.

He became interested in artificial intelligence and cloud computing during his eight-month internship at a private software engineering company last year.

Mr Foong believes technology can solve problems and cited GovTech's SafeEntry digi-

tal check-in system, which aids in contact tracing efforts against Covid-19, as an example.

He said: "Technology can make a society more resilient, especially from what we have witnessed during this pandemic. Digital tools like automated temperature screeners, for example, have really helped the country to be more efficient, and I hope to put my passion in computing and software development to work on similar future projects with GovTech."

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