Driven To Protect Our Cyberspace

Armed with technical and computing knowledge, Smart Nation scholarship recipient Leong Jun Wen shoots for a career in cyber security

BY CHEW HUI LING

To say that 2020 was a year of disruption would be an understatement. But if there is one silver lining that has emerged from the Covid-19 crisis, it is technology, says Mr Leong Jun Wen, 24.

"The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of technology in an unexpected way, but it has also opened up opportunities to leverage technology to benefit the masses in these difficult times," he adds, citing how businesses are going digital to keep providing services while reducing physical interactions, and how employers are using applications to facilitate working from home.

"I believe this will fuel greater creativity as businesses and individuals embrace technology to improve lives."

Mr Leong, a data science and analytics undergraduate at the National University of Singapore (NUS), believes technology will become increasingly relevant and critical to Singapore's future. He stresses that is why it is all the more important to keep up with the latest technological advancements, as technology is a field that is constantly evolving.

Man of many interests

Interestingly, pursuing a degree in information and communications technology (ICT) was not foremost on Mr Leong's mind. Before entering university, he had diverse interests – law, political science and even aeronautical engineering were just some of the options he had considered.

It was his national service stint that encouraged him to pursue technology as a career. While in the army, he was part of a unit that made use of artificial intelligence and data analytics.

He says: "I was intrigued by data science and analytics, which provided a different approach to problem-solving. That was when I became interested in ICT."

Mr Leong credits his degree course at NUS for equipping him with the technical grounding in mathematics and statistics, as well as the computing knowledge needed to apply data science and analytics, which are vital skills in the field of cyber security.

A more secure Singapore

As a recipient of the Smart Nation Scholarship, offered jointly by the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore (CSA), Government Technology Agency (GovTech) and Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), Mr Leong will soon undergo training as part of CSA's Cybersecurity Development Programme. He will be assigned to the technical and operational divisions, where he will gain hands-on experience in areas such as digital forensics, threat intelligence and cyber security incident response.

Eventually, he hopes to find a career in cyber security and be at the forefront of Singapore's digitalisation efforts in building a globally recognised Smart Nation.

"Cyber security will grow in importance, as the use of digital technology continues to expose us to cyberthreats," he says. "I would like to contribute to the national efforts to further strengthen our cyberspace, and to be able to work on projects to secure Singapore's technological infrastructure."

■ Visit https://smartnation. gov.sg/scholarship for more information.

Mr Leong Jun Wen hopes to find a career in cyber security and be at the forefront of Singapore's digitalisation efforts in building a globally recognised Smart Nation. PHOTO: MAX CHAN

"The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of technology in an unexpected way, but it has also opened up opportunities to leverage technology to benefit the masses in these difficult times."

Mr Leong Jun Wen, Smart Nation Scholarship recipient

GETTING HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

With a passion for technology, Mr Leong Jun Wen continues to seek ways to expand his skills and knowledge

- **Data science**

  Mr Leong gained two years of data science experience while working in the defence sector during national service.

- **Maritime tech**

  Mr Leong was a data science intern at a tech start-up in the maritime technology sector, under the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore Global Internship Award programme.

- **Cyber security**

  He will participate in an internship at the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore to gain greater insights into Singapore's cyber security strategy.