PHOTO: TED CHEN

Staying ahead of the digital curve

A Master of Technology in Intelligent Systems at NUS-ISS has helped Mr Tan Ren Jie gain a competitive edge in the growing digital space

Even before Covid-19, Singapore has been an advocate of digitalisation. Today, demand for the relevant tech capabilities has grown in tandem with this digital transformation.

The acceleration of Singapore's digital transformation has led to a demand for professionals like Mr Tan Ren Jie who are armed with the latest skills and knowledge to handle the changing digital needs and landscape.

Mr Tan, 29, enrolled in the Master of Technology in Intelligent Systems (MTech IS) postgraduate programme in 2019 as a part-time student. Offered by the Institute of Systems Science at the National University of Singapore (NUS-ISS), the programme is targeted at working professionals who want to design and build systems that utilise artificial intelligence and other smart systems techniques. It covers a wide application area, such as robotics and intelligent sensing systems – thus priming students with the knowledge and practical experience to provide effective business solutions.

Mr Tan completed the MTech IS programme last June and is now a data scientist at Shopee. He shares how the programme has helped advance his career in data science.

You graduated with a degree in physics. Why did you embark on this postgraduate programme?
I have always been interested in learning data science. I took up a few online courses and even joined a coding bootcamp. Eventually, I wanted to get formal qualifications in this area, and decided to enroll in MTech IS on a part-time basis.

What were some of the highlights of the MTech IS programme?
The scope of our projects were well-defined yet general enough to be applicable to different areas in our daily lives. For example, a project mate, who is an avid volunteer, mentioned how difficult it was to look for volunteering opportunities in Singapore. So we developed a working prototype called VMatch that was able to recommend suitable opportunities for interested volunteers based on attributes such as age and skill sets.

How has the course allowed you to do your job as a data scientist at Shopee better?
Many of the MTech IS courses are hands-on, cover a wide variety of technologies and techniques, and provide a comprehensive understanding of big data, data warehousing, Extract, Transform and Load (ETL) processes, and database design – all the skills that are essential to any data professional. These have helped me greatly during my time at Shopee, as I have to deal with millions of data on a daily basis.

For more information on NUS-ISS Master of Technology in Intelligent Systems, visit nus.edu/3wOUJPU

BY MARIANNE TAN