

NTU, WAN-IFRA to establish Newsplex for 21st century newsrooms

SINGAPORE: Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) have unveiled plans for a new centre dedicated to creative innovation, training and research for newsrooms of the future.



Newsplex Asia, which will be operationally ready in September 2012, will be located in NTU's Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI), the only full-fledged communication school in Singapore which has trained students in journalism for the last 20 years. The centre, which is WAN-IFRA's first Newsplex in Asia, spans over 160 square metres of space within the WKWSCI building at NTU's Yunnan Garden campus.

Newsplex Asia will have a prototype newsroom of the future, where new techniques and technologies can be tested and new organisations can come to train. It aims to mirror editorial operations in some of the leading news organisations in the world where the rapidly changing media landscape is inspiring innovative multimedia newsroom development.

MOU signed

The announcement was made during the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between NTU and WAN-IFRA, respectively represented by NTU Provost, Professor Freddy Boey, and Thomas Jacob, deputy chief executive officer of WAN-IFRA yesterday. Patrick Daniel, editor-in-chief of the English & Malay Newspapers Division of Singapore Press Holdings and Walter Fernandez, editor of *TODAY* and managing director of MediaCorp Press were among the distinguished guests who attended the signing ceremony.

Under the agreement, NTU will provide the resources and space needed to create a new, cutting-edge learning environment that will enable students and media professionals to develop their digital media and journalism skills in fresh and exciting ways. The collaboration will also provide WKWSCI professors and researchers access to WAN-IFRA's wide array of newspaper and news publishing conferences, training, seminars and research reports, as well as WAN-IFRA's global network of more than 18 000 publications, 15 000 online sites and over 3000 companies in more than 120 countries.

Commenting on the significance of the collaboration, Professor Freddy Boey, NTU Provost and Deputy President, said, "Newsplex Asia reflects NTU's firm commitment to excellence in training the next generation of digital-savvy journalists, while advancing Singapore's position as a global media hub in the heart of Asia. It will leverage NTU's strengths in communication studies, science and technology, and bring best practices in new media teaching and learning to the students. This is a timely and welcome development in an era when news consumption is rapidly changing and increasingly defined by new technologies, as more and more people use the Internet and social networks as their primary sources of news and information."

Helping media to adapt to changing consumer needs

WAN-IFRA Deputy CEO Thomas Jacob said, "News consumers are changing. Not only do they want to choose how and when they will access news and information, they also want to decide for themselves what is relevant to their world. Newsplex Asia will help newspapers and media companies to understand and manage these changes through training, coaching, and research services. It will draw on many sources, both global and regional, to provide the latest tools and techniques to Asian media professionals. Newsplex Asia will be a centre for innovation for the region's news publishers, aided by the professional experience of WAN-IFRA's worldwide network of media companies. We're delighted to be partnering with NTU in this initiative."

The Newsplex Asia at NTU will be the fourth centre of its kind in the world. WAN-IFRA set up its first Newsplex at the University of South Carolina, USA in November 2002. This was soon followed by Newsplex Europe, which opened in September 2005 at WAN-IFRA headquarters in Darmstadt, Germany, and the International Media Centre in Saint-Etienne France that will be ready by April 2012.

"We warmly welcome WAN-IFRA to our campus and we are pleased that they chose to have their first Newsplex in Asia at NTU. We have always worked closely with top industry partners across the different colleges. Such strategic partnerships give our students exposure to the best industry practices and add to their well-rounded education, internships and overseas opportunities," said Prof Boey.

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