

Nanyang Technological University, WAN-IFRA launch Newsplex Asia

A new facility that will revolutionise the training and operations of newsrooms officially has opened at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore. Jointly set up by NTU and the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), Newsplex Asia will be an inter-disciplinary news laboratory to train news professionals and journalists to work with emerging technologies.



Newsplex Asia, which opened on Saturday, is the third WAN-IFRA Newsplex facility and the first in Asia. Located in NTU's Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, the 160-square metre centre aims to provide digital media and journalism skills and techniques for integrating the complete news flow across print and digital media from planning to production. It features advanced facilities including workstations for print, online, tablet, radio and TV production, overhead screens for teaching and monitoring news channels, and a multi-purpose studio for digital broadcasts.

"The Wee Kim Wee School is proud to establish Newsplex Asia here at NTU. Having such premier teaching facilities will provide an unparalleled educational experience for our students - the reporters and editors of tomorrow - and continue to attract the best students, faculty and staff from all over the world to the School," said Associate Professor Benjamin Detenber, Chair of NTU's Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information.

"Newsplex will draw on the expertise of faculty not just from the Wee Kim Wee School, but also other schools and disciplines in NTU - from communication, the humanities, design, engineering, science and medicine. Together, we will create exciting ways of presenting news and information to the public over existing or new platforms yet to be invented. The Newsplex will also boost the government and industry's aim to grow the quality and quantity of well-trained media professionals in Singapore. As media professionals from Singapore and surrounding countries will also train in this facility that's strategically located in the heart of Asia, it will have many positive spill-over effects for the rest of the region," he said.

Faculty and researchers will have access

Through its collaboration with WAN-IFRA, the Wee Kim Wee School's faculty and researchers will also gain access to WAN-IFRA's wide array of newspaper and news publishing conferences, training, seminars and research reports. The centre will also tap WAN-IFRA's extensive international network of more than 18,000 publications, 15,000 online sites and over 3,000 companies in more than 120 countries.

"We are delighted to be collaborating on Newsplex Asia with Nanyang Technological University," said Thomas Jacob, Deputy CEO of WAN-IFRA and Managing Director of WAN-IFRA Asia Pacific. "Media companies and journalism are constantly evolving in the multimedia age. By bringing together both university and media industry expertise, we can help assure that both today's media professionals today, and those joining the profession, will develop the skills needed in the new media environment. Continuing education has become essential and WAN-IFRA and NTU are responding to industry needs with Newsplex Asia."

Professional training and workshops

Newsplex Asia will host professional training and workshops for the Asia Pacific media industry, focusing on media convergent journalism and the development and implementation of integrated newsroom strategies. The centre brings the various media platforms together in one convenient, collaborative space. Through carefully-considered planning and physical layout, it enables and empowers journalists, editors, designers and developers to create and communicate in the most efficient ways possible in order to deliver content speedily and seamlessly.

Among Newsplex Asia's first industry partners is Apple, which has made the Wee Kim Wee School its first tertiary-level education partner in Singapore with Apple Learning Environment status. Thomson Reuters has also come on board with its news wires, raw video footage and broadcast-ready packages from their Media Express service that is usually only available to clients.

Real-time breaking news updates

Singapore Press Holdings, the largest single employer of the school's graduates, has provided the news ticker panels at the entrance and along the glass frontage of the Newsplex training centre. These panels will carry real-time breaking news updates in English and Chinese round the clock. Straits Times editorial teams are exploring possible collaborations with NTU faculty to develop new methods of visual journalism and cutting-edge storytelling techniques.

Newsplex Asia comes ten years after WAN-IFRA set up its first Newsplex at the University of South Carolina, USA in November 2002. A second Newsplex in Europe opened in September 2005 at WAN-IFRA headquarters in Darmstadt, Germany. A fourth facility at the International Media Centre in Saint-Etienne, France will open later this month.

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