

# Data protection training gets boost with tie-up

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The local pipeline for data protection officers is set to get a boost under a new collaboration that aims to train businesses and workers in the sector.

Singapore-based data protection software firm Straits Interactive has teamed up with SMU Academy, the professional training arm of Singapore Management University, to form the Data Protection Excellence Network.

It will provide small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with resources to train data protection officers through hands-on training and professional certification courses.

NTUC assistant secretary-general Melvin Yong, who announced the initiative yesterday, said Singapore faces an urgent shortage of skilled data protection officers due to the growing introduction of data protection legislation worldwide and a step-up in enforcement by an increasing number of countries.

"In Singapore, we project that our industry will require more than 10,000 data protection professionals within the next three years," said Mr Yong.

It is mandatory for companies here to have at least one data protection officer overlooking data-related issues, such as drafting policies for handling personal data and ensuring data is not leaked.

Straits Interactive chief execu-

tive Kevin Shepherdson said the motivation to start the data protection network was the need to increase data protection competencies in the Asean region, where data protection laws are relatively new.

Training under the network will cover topics such as data legislation and information privacy. Classes will be held not only in Singapore, but also in other countries in the region, such as the Philippines.

Part of the collaboration includes two new advanced certificates in data protection offered by SMU Academy. In a first for the region, the certificates will lead to an advanced diploma in the same topic.

The new network includes universities, certification bodies, law firms and data protection experts, such as the International Association of Privacy Professionals, legal publishing company Lexxion and Philippine law firm Follocco Morales & Herce.

Mr Yong also announced the launch of a new Professional Conversion Programme in data protection, which is supported by Workforce Singapore and SkillsFuture Singapore.

This programme will train professionals and mid-career switchers to convert their skills into becoming data protection officers.

"These initiatives will help professionalise the role of the data protection officer," said Mr Yong.

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