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## **New innovation modules for lawyers to launch next month**



SINGAPORE - It is no longer enough for lawyers and legal professionals to be just well-versed in the law, as there is an increasing need for them to think like tech entrepreneurs and use the skill to find new solutions to problems they encounter in their practice.

To help them get started on this, the Future Law Innovation Programme (FLIP) and the Singapore Management University Academy will launch two new modules on design thinking and entrepreneurial ideation from February.

In entrepreneurial ideation, lawyers learn how to look for business opportunities and creatively generate new ideas.

These courses, which are not available in law school, will provide the foundation for lawyers here to kick-start their own innovation, said Mr Paul Neo, executive director of Singapore Academy of Law Ventures, which runs FLIP.

"Not all lawyers are business management-trained, and we have to teach them the basis of business strategy in order for them to think of innovation," said Mr Neo, who spoke to the media on Thursday (Jan 31) during FLIP's first anniversary.

Modules are open to working legal professionals with classes thrice a week. Course fees start from \$193.60 for Singaporeans, and students can finish both modules in four weeks.

The new modules are just one of a string of new initiatives that FLIP will launch this year, in a bid to bring about more innovation and change to the legal sector.

FLIP is a two-year pilot programme launched in January last year by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon to prepare the legal sector for technology disruption.

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The programme brings together lawyers, technopreneurs, investors, academics, and regulators to help develop the model for the delivery of legal services in the future economy.

FLIP is already helping to groom a new breed of professionals known as "legal technologists", to modernise the delivery of legal services in Singapore.

Since its launch, 52 law firms, legal departments and legal technology companies have participated in the programme, said Mr Neo.

While some have leveraged FLIP initiatives to boost back-end operations and increase efficiency in their businesses, others have set up dedicated legal tech arms to explore new ways to do their work.

This year, FLIP will also launch its own start-up accelerator.

Mr Neo said the accelerator will groom and mentor promising start-ups in the legal technology sector.

Unlike generic accelerator programmes, the FLIP bespoke accelerator programme would suit the specific needs of the legal tech start-ups, said Mr Neo.

"We don't want a cookie-cutter approach, the feedback we've gotten is that start-ups want something more bespoke that can meet their unique needs," said Mr Neo.

"Some have taken part in generic accelerators, but the investors don't understand the solutions they're trying to sell or market, because it's quite specific."

"And coming from the legal sector, we believe law tech is quite a unique area."

The accelerator will be launched with the support of business professionals familiar with the start-up accelerator scene, such as Mr Ash Singh, Adjunct Professor of entrepreneurship at Insead business school, and Mr Peter Dingle, HSBC's head of business model innovation.

Mr Jerrold Soh, a Singapore Management University lecturer and legal tech start-up founder, said the accelerator is a particularly promising new initiative.

He is involved in another new FLIP initiative to produce an annual report on legal innovation in the region.

The former law and economics student noted that the FLIP accelerator could help legal tech entrepreneurs get business leads easier, and network with like-minded people working on similar issues and problems.

"Hopefully this could help to shorten the trial and error experimentation stage that accompanies every start up in its early days," said Mr Soh.