Programme on AR tech use among new training schemes offered by Meta

Content creators in Singapore who are interested in the metaverse can now learn how to use augmented reality (AR) technology under a new initiative by Meta, which owns social media platform Facebook.

The Meta Immersive Learning Academy aims to offer educational programmes on extended reality technologies, such as AR and virtual reality.

It is among several new schemes that will be available under Meta's existing training initiative, revealed the company in an event at its Singapore office on Tuesday (June 14).

Now known as Upskill 2022, the initiative was launched in April last year and aims to impart relevant digital skills to students, job seekers, working professionals, educators and small business owners.

It involves a partnership between Meta and technology industry association SGTech, and is supported by the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), Enterprise Singapore and Digital Industry Singapore.

Digital Industry Singapore is the joint office of the Economic Development Board, Enterprise Singapore and IMDA that engages with the technology sector.

The existing four schemes under the initiative generally focus on teaching digital marketing skills to participants, with three of them awarding certificates upon completion.

The new schemes announced on Tuesday include learning programmes and scholarships for those seeking to learn software engineering, as well as a "job board" that aims to link Upskill 2022 graduates with interested employers.

On Tuesday, Meta's Singapore managing director Damian Kim said Upskill 2022 has benefited around 3,600 people and over 300 small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to date.

He also said talent for roles such as those for cyber security, cloud data infrastructure and software development are increasingly challenging to find even as they are in demand.

"And we think that need is actually only going to grow over the next few years... globally we think there is going to be around 150 million jobs over the next three or four years that are going to be in this space," he added.

Minister for Communications and Information Josephine Teo, who was present at the event, said the digital economy is expected to double in size between the end of last year and 2025, citing a joint report by consultancy Bain and Company, tech giant Google, as well as investment firm Temasek.

"Without the right skill sets, some workers will definitely lose their relevance and find themselves in a very difficult position," she said.

Ms Teo said that the Government has been working closely with its partners from academia and industry to sustain and grow the pipeline of tech talent, as well as ensure these professionals' skills are industry-relevant.

An example of such efforts would be IMDA's TechSkills Accelerator initiative, which has trained more than 160,000 people in new skills and domain knowledge, such as the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence.

She also stressed that the involvement of companies in growing tech talent is important, as the training content provided by the participants will be relevant and up to date with current needs of prospective employers.

The minister also participated in a panel discussion at Tuesday's event, which covered the topics of upskilling and digitalisation.

Speaking at the discussion too was Ms Aisyah Aman Aljunied, who completed one of Meta's training programmes on social media marketing while studying for a degree in marketing at Singapore Management University.

The 24-year-old encouraged others to take up the programme, saying that it has helped her find a job. She will be starting her role at a local SME in a few weeks' time.

"I think even when you do your school projects, just having this ability to approach problems from a different viewpoint and having... actionable tangible skills - I think it does set you apart (from others)," she added.