

**SPEECH BY SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION
DR JANIL PUTHUCHEARY AT YELLOW RIBBON SINGAPORE'S GRADUATION
CEREMONY FOR 1ST BATCH OF MEDIA GRADUATES (6 OCT)**

Ms Shie Yong Lee, Commissioner, Singapore Prison Service,
Mr Phillip Tan, Chairman, Yellow Ribbon Singapore,
Ms Tham Loke Kheng, CEO, Mediacorp Pte Ltd
Graduating participants, most importantly your friends and families,
Ladies and gentlemen,

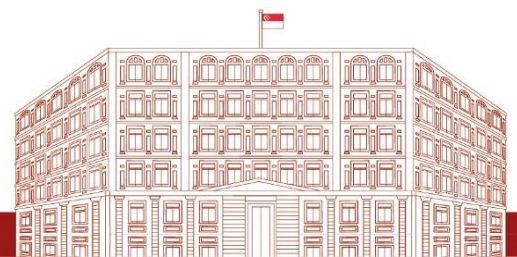
1. Good afternoon. I am honoured to join you today to celebrate the completion of the inaugural programmes, the Diploma in Social Media Marketing and Online Content Creation programme and the Diploma in Media (Content Production and Management).

Social Media

2. Social media has become more prevalent in Singapore over the past few years. If we examine the statistics, we have almost 5 million social media users or about 85% of our total population. I suspect it undercounts. Many people I know, certainly I, even have more than one social media account.
3. It is hard to imagine how we ever got by without being online, and being online connected to people through social media. We also use it to get the latest news, do our shopping and be entertained. On average, Singaporeans spend two hours and 20 minutes per day on social media. I suspect that also is an undercount, sometimes it feels like I spent the whole day looking at my phone.

Singapore's Video Consumption and Online Viewing Habits

4. Video consumption has reached an all-time high, it's not just social media, we are watching more content. Singaporeans are avid movie goers, with one of the highest per capita cinema attendances in the world. It is something we have to pay attention to as this is an important area for us to develop skills and capability here in Singapore. Our viewing habits have also evolved to include online viewing and the consumption of over-the-top (OTT) video services such as Netflix and Disney+, not just YouTube and other social media platforms.
5. Media giants such as Netflix and HBO Asia have established their regional headquarters here in Singapore. While they grow their content operations in Asia, they also provide opportunities for local content creators such as Singapore-based Infinite Studios and other filmmaking talents to develop original content for global audiences. These are



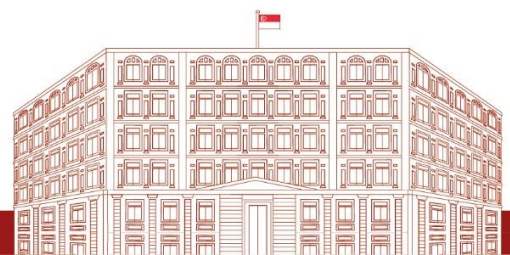
exciting times, with lots of opportunity and for the people who have been through the programme, opportunities will continue.

The Media Industry

6. This expansion of the media industry, jobs that are available, is not just an idea, but you can measure it and put a number to it. The growth has been more than 12%, from 20,700 in 2017 to 23,300 in 2018.
7. The demand for media professionals was 24,600 in 2018. That's about 1,300 media job vacancies.
8. The creative media industry, which is online content creation for production is 50%, half of the total demand for media professionals. Enterprises have projected the demand for creative media-related roles to grow by another 4,500 between 2019 and 2021. So there is quite a lot of opportunity being created.

Collaboration Between Yellow Ribbon Singapore and Mediacorp Pte Ltd

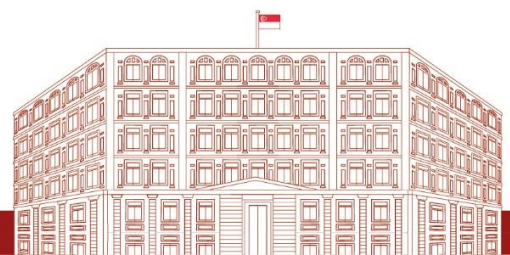
9. It is timely that Yellow Ribbon Singapore and Mediacorp Pte Ltd have collaborated to train and place you and your colleagues, inmates in the media industry.
10. The training academy was equipped with industry grade equipment, set up in Institution TM1 in November 2020 to drive and conduct of these two media courses. Training was conducted by media industry practitioners from Mediacorp's Singapore Media Academy (SMA).
11. The course that was run was exactly the same course for their public run. Upon completion of the training, inmates will attain full qualifications that are aligned to the Skills Framework for Media, jointly developed by the Infocomm Media Development Authority, SkillsFuture Singapore and Workforce Singapore.
12. Every Singaporean graduate from the programme in the public will be able to deepen their skills while building a career, participating in national level initiatives to improve their career mobility and resilience.
13. The assistance of the Yellow Ribbon Singapore movement does not end upon graduation. Plans are already underway for YRSG and Mediacorp to work on job placement opportunities within Mediacorp and media production houses for the graduates.



14. There has been a virtual engagement session held in March to generate awareness and acceptance of ex-offenders for employers in the media industry. 15 industry partners and employers attended the session. Some of them, such as BDA Creative, had expressed interest to hire the graduates, give them purpose, and provide a foundation to build a positive future for themselves and their families. Some of them are present here today to witness the graduation ceremony. Thank you for your involvement and participation.
15. Indeed, employment is key tool to reduce reoffending and recidivism. Based on a study undertaken by NUS Professor Sumit Agarwal, suggested that YRSG's employment assistance had reduced recidivism rates by about 3 percentage points and improved the employment rate of ex-offenders by about 7 percentage points.

Reintegration and Acceptance

16. For ex-offenders, being offered a job is that second chance they need, for them to rebuild their lives and win back the love and trust of their families and friends.
17. Afterwards, you will hear from some of our graduates. One expanded his creative skills while in prison. As a graphic designer and photographer who had worked with various interior design firms, he was grateful that the time spent behind bars allowed him to progress professionally and continue honing his creative design skills. He has emerged as the top student in the class, and felt encouraged as several employers expressed interest to hire ex-offenders like him at the employer engagement session. This gave him the confidence that there are indeed those around him and in the community willing to give him a second chance to restart his life.
18. Another graduate, a colleague of his, a second gentleman who is working in the entertainment industry as an audio and visual technician in clubs. He is no stranger to videography, music and lighting. When the opportunity arose for him to learn film production within prison, he took it up as movies had always been something that fascinated him. Through his testimonial, you will hear how the course had broadened his horizons and contributes to his hopes of being a responsible father, providing for his family.
19. To all the graduates here today, I extend my heartiest congratulations to all of you. Your seeking spirit and drive to learn are commendable. While the learning curve in this programme might have been steep for some of you, as some of you are coming into this for the first time without any media industry background, but I am sure the skills and knowledge gained will prove useful in time.



20. Now that you have completed the diploma programme, your journey starts when you step out of prison. I hope that you take this opportunity to remain focused, take charge of your rehabilitation and steer clear of drugs and crime. You have come very far. I am confident that you can do well and be successfully reintegrated and give back to society.

21. I would like to thank Yellow Ribbon Singapore, the Singapore Prison Service, the officers that run the Singapore Prison Services, Mediacorp, Singapore Media Academy and especially the trainers for their efforts in walking this journey with you.

22. Congratulations. Thank you very much for inviting me to join you here today.

