

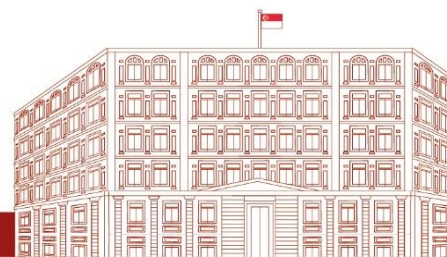
**SPEECH BY MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION
MR S ISWARAN, AT LAUNCH OF 'UPSKILL WITH FACEBOOK SINGAPORE'
(31 MAR 2021)**

Mr Dan Neary, Vice President of Asia Pacific, Facebook,
Fellow panellists,
Colleagues and students.

1. Good afternoon. I am happy to join you to launch your digital marketing initiative 'Upskill with Facebook Singapore'.
2. Today's launch, taking place virtually, demonstrates how far COVID-19 has accelerated the shift towards digital in every sphere of our lives: from staying in touch with our loved ones, to working from home, and doing business online. This transition will continue to gather pace, generating rich opportunities for businesses and workers who embrace a learning and adaptive mindset.
3. What we are trying to do here in Singapore is to seek to make the most of these opportunities by growing a strong and vibrant digital economy. In this regard, Facebook has been a trusted and valuable partner, developing game-changing products out of Singapore and growing our pool of talent for the ecosystem here. Facebook's Asia-Pacific Headquarters is sited in Singapore. In 2019, they established their first product engineering team in Asia here. Facebook Accelerator Singapore, an ongoing partnership with the Infocomm and Media Development Authority (IMDA) and Plug and Play Singapore, has also nurtured two batches of local startups to be more data-driven through an innovative 6-month programme.¹
4. 'Upskill with Facebook Singapore' is Facebook's latest initiative to boost Singaporeans' digital capabilities. It was developed in partnership with SGTech, with support from Digital Industry Singapore (DISG), Enterprise Singapore (ESG) and IMDA. So you've got the whole suite of government agencies working with you on this. As Dan and Damian will share in a few moments, participants can look forward to digital marketing programmes² which will equip them with training and advice from industry experts. There are a total of four programmes, customised for fresh graduates and those in transition, educators, professionals, and small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs).
5. Up to 3,000 individuals and 1,000 SMEs will benefit, and I am heartened by Facebook's significant commitment to develop our local talent. This is a key thrust in our efforts in building Singapore's digital economy.

¹ Facebook Accelerator Singapore is a 6-month program to support data-driven startups, with a view to establish a model of data innovation for Asia and the rest of the world. It is Facebook's second data-innovation startup program globally (after Paris) and the first in Asia..

² The programmes are: 'Facebook Social Media Marketing Certificate with Coursera' (for fresh graduates and transitioners), 'Facebook Blueprint Higher Education' (for educators), 'RISE' (for professionals), and 'Boost with Facebook' (for SMEs).



6. These initiatives are aligned with the Government's efforts to build a strong Singaporean core of tech professionals. We recently expanded our TechSkills Accelerator (TeSA) programme to train more than 5,000 locals in core and emerging roles, nurturing talent in areas like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and cybersecurity.
7. Facebook's upskilling programmes, in niche areas like digital marketing, will give more Singaporeans opportunities to advance their careers in tech. Indeed, partners like Facebook are best-placed to identify programmes that meet the industry's most relevant needs, and I look forward to more of such collaborations to uplift our tech ecosystem.
8. Finally, to our young participants who are here with us today, your willingness to learn will place Singapore in good stead to navigate the opportunities and challenges of a digital future. I hope to hear of the many great things you will accomplish with the skills gained through these programmes.
9. Once again, congratulations on the launch, and I wish you all a fruitful session this afternoon. This event epitomises the way we are going about our efforts in the digital economy to bring our partners in the private sector like Facebook and public sector partners like IMDA and ESG, together with the people sector, participants like you, so that we can work together to envision a bright, digital future for Singapore in which every one of us has a place and has opportunities to realise.
10. Thank you very much everyone.

