

Gaming passion sets graduate on IT career path

Amelia Teng
Education Correspondent

When Mr Alex Ng received his first desktop computer from his parents as a present in Primary 3, all he cared about was playing video games such as MapleStory and Counter-Strike.

Today, he is part of a team at the Government Technology Agency (GovTech), which was set up in 2016 to drive digital change in the public sector. One of his projects is the Work Pass Integrated System, which simplifies online services such as applying for and renewing the permits of maids.

The 26-year-old graduated from the Singapore Management University (SMU) last year, and the course

he read – information systems – is among those whose graduates saw the biggest starting pay jumps.

Last year's IT cohort took home a median gross salary of \$4,000 each month, \$400 more than their seniors, according to a joint graduate employment survey whose results were released yesterday.

Mr Ng scored a grade point average of more than 3.8 out of 4, and was awarded summa cum laude, or the highest distinction.

He had job offers from GovTech and a bank a few months before finishing school in May last year. "I chose GovTech because I wanted to be exposed to different kinds of technologies besides banking," said the only child of an odd-job worker and seamstress. He had also done a four-month internship at the

agency in 2015, when he worked on a business grant portal for small and medium-sized enterprises.

"Initially, I didn't know anything about job prospects. But I started seeing the change in my four years at SMU. In recent years, everyone is moving towards digitisation."

Mr Ng, who had studied information technology at Temasek Polytechnic, said that while his interest in the field started mainly because of video gaming, he became interested in how technology could help people and solve problems.

For instance, at a student competition on innovative technologies, his team was tasked to translate doctors' handwriting – sometimes illegible – into proper text.

ateng@sph.com.sg



PHOTO: COURTESY OF ALEX NG

CHANGING WORKPLACE

Initially, I didn't know anything about job prospects. But I started seeing the change in my four years at SMU. In recent years, everyone is moving towards digitisation.



MR ALEX NG (left), who graduated last year from Singapore Management University.

Source: The Straits Times @ Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Permission required for reproduction