Salesforce opens landmark AI research hub in Singapore

Becomes first AI research centre outside of the vendor's US-based R&D hub

Salesforce has opened its first artificial intelligence (AI) research centre outside of the US, located in Singapore with the promise to train up to 100 postgraduate students over a three year period.

This is just the latest investment in AI capability Singapore has seen recently, with significant investments from from Alibaba, Huawei, NEC, and local universities.

The first batch of students to be admitted into this centre for training will begin from August 2019, and will be pooled from three local universities, namely, Singapore Management University (SMU), National University of Singapore (NUS), and Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

Training will primarily focus on key areas of interest for the software vendor, including deep learning, machine learning, and natural language processing (NLP).

Furthermore, the centre is expected to focus on important areas of research specific to this region, such as language-based capabilities in chatbots, for instance.

The new centre, which will be located at Salesforce's Singapore office at Suntec City, will be run by Steven Hoi, the managing director of research asia for Salesforce.

"Singapore is a natural choice to set up an AI research hub with its diversity of talent and its world-class universities," said Richard Socher, chief scientist at Salesforce.

The Singapore government has been investing heavily in digital technology and in particular AI, as well as setting up an ethics council to monitor the development of the technology.

A recent investment of $300 million was put into research and development of important technology for Singapore's competitive around digital technology, but in particular the development of AI. This brings Singapore's total investment into research and development to $660 million.

The city-state is fast becoming a technological powerhouse, widely considered an international hub for important societal changing technologies such as blockchain technology, and with AI and cyber security experts flocking to its shores, its international influence will grow even further.