



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Straits Interactive, SMU Academy and Certification Partners launch DPEX (Data Protection Excellence) Network to enhance data protection competencies in the ASEAN region**

*Singapore, 16 July 2018 (Monday)* – Straits Interactive and Singapore Management University (SMU) Academy today jointly announced the Data Protection Excellence (DPEX) Network, a virtual network for data protection excellence where organisations and certification bodies come together to help enhance data protection in the ASEAN region.

The objectives of the Network are to assist organisations and individuals who are new to data protection laws by providing hands-on training and professional certification courses, promote sharing of best practices and research in data protection and operational compliance, and to offer a resource of Data Protection Officer (DPO) expertise, advisory, solutions and technologies in data privacy/protection.

Kevin Shepherdson, CEO of Straits Interactive, said, “The motivation to start the DPEX Network was to address the need to enhance data protection competencies in the ASEAN region, where data protection laws are relatively new and amid the new General Data Protection Regulation which went into force in the EU. Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines are already enforcing their local laws while Indonesia and Thailand are about to introduce theirs by the end of the year. By partnering tertiary institutions such as the Singapore Management University and certification bodies such as the International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP), EXIN in the Netherlands, and the Open Compliance Ethic Group (OCEG), we hope to help organisations operationally comply with new data protection laws and to professionalise the role of the Data Protection Officer.”

Dr Lim Lai Cheng, Executive Director, SMU Academy, said, “As an institution of higher learning providing continuous adult learning education, our Academy is privileged to lead this network with Straits Interactive and other partners to address the need for skills upgrading in this emerging area of data privacy and protection. We are pleased to offer our Advanced Certificates in data protection leading to an Advanced Diploma with digital credentials. This is a first in the region, and is part of our contribution to help address the shortage of Data Protection Officers and expertise both locally and in the region.”

The IAPP estimates that more than 28,000 data protection officers will be needed in the EU and as many as 75,000 around the globe as a result of GDPR. With data protection officers being a mandatory requirement in Singapore and in the Philippines, research done by Straits Interactive forecasts that more than 10,000 data protection professionals will be needed in Singapore alone in the next three years.

Said Trevor Hughes, President and CEO of the International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP), “Due to new data protection laws in the ASEAN region, we expect to see a higher demand for data protection training and certifications. We look forward to reaching more privacy

professionals and are pleased our certification courses will be offered through the DPEX network via our official regional training partner, Straits Interactive.”

Another certification body, Exin, headquartered in the Netherlands, will be offering privacy and information security courses via the DPEX Network. “We are pleased to be one of the partners in the DPEX Network to help certify IT professionals in the ASEAN region with the relevant data privacy and information security competencies. There is a growing need for expertise on the subject of Privacy and Data Protection as a result of the GDPR and digitization of traditional industry. EXIN plays a pivotal role in enabling professionals with the essential knowledge they need to succeed.”, said Robert-Jan Willemsen, Chief Commercial Officer, EXIN Holding B.V.

Besides offering certification courses, and hands-on training to organisations and individuals in the ASEAN region, the DPEX Network partnership will also promote research in data protection and privacy, in collaboration with local universities and international institutions.

“Through the DPEX Network, we will be making our professional journals on various specialised legal topics including data protection available to both the legal and research community. We hope to connect ASEAN researchers, practitioners and students specialising in data protection with experts in the EU to form an EU-ASEAN research network,” said Nelly Stratieva, Head of the Editorial Department at Lexxion Publisher (Berlin) and Executive Editor of the European Data Protection Law Review (EDPL).

Masters/PhD students doing research in data privacy and protection are invited to apply for study awards from the DPEX network which provides job opportunities, sponsored for hands-on training, internship opportunities, and research collaboration.

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For more information on the DPEX network, visit [www.DPEXnetwork.com](http://www.DPEXnetwork.com)

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### **About the DPEX Network**

The DPEX Network is a collaboration of partnerships comprising certification bodies, law firms, universities and organisations providing professional services and technologies relating to data privacy. These organisations have come together to help enhance data protection in the ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian) region. The members include Straits Interactive, Singapore Management University, Islamic University of Malaysia, IAPP, EXIN, OCEG, Lexxion, European Institute of Technology Science Centre Foundation (EITSC), Lyn Boxall LLC, Follosco Morallos & Herce (FMH Law) and Xynexis International.

### **About Singapore Management University**

Established in 2000, Singapore Management University (SMU) emphasises rigorous, high-impact multi- and inter-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance, and for its innovations in experiential learning. With over 10,000 students, SMU offers bachelors, masters and PhD degree programmes in Accountancy, Business, Economics, Information Systems, Law and Social Sciences, and executive development programmes. Through its city campus, SMU enjoys strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community in Singapore and beyond. [www.smu.edu.sg](http://www.smu.edu.sg)

### **About SMU Academy**

Since its inception, Singapore Management University (SMU) has built a strong reputation as an innovative and progressive management university with a well-established interactive pedagogy incorporating business cases and strong links with business and industry. The Academy, with its pillars of Financial Services, Human Capital Management & Leadership, Technology & Intelligent

Systems, and Service, Operations & Business Improvement, leverages SMU's reputation and linkages to prepare our workforce with the competencies, skills upgrading and career resilience required for the future economy. <http://academy.smu.edu.sg/>

### **About Straits Interactive**

Straits Interactive delivers end-to-end governance, risk and compliance solutions that enable trusted business and responsible marketing, especially in the area of data privacy and protection. Recently voted one of the Top 25 Compliance Solutions Providers in the Asia Pacific by Asia Pacific CIO Outlook magazine, we help businesses achieve operational compliance and manage risks through a combination of cloud technology and professional services. Our software-as-a-service solutions include the Data Protection Management System (DPMS), Governance, Risk & Compliance System (GRACIAS) and the SpiderGate Do-Not-Call Management System, all of which are supported by professional services that include advisory services, audits, and training. More information about the company can be found on [www.straitsinteractive.com](http://www.straitsinteractive.com).

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