



Media Release

SMU Academy collaborates with Straits Interactive to offer two Advanced Certificates and a Professional Conversion Programme (PCP) to Data Protection Officers (DPO)

Initiatives aimed at enhancing data protection competencies in Singapore and at filling the shortage of DPOs in Singapore

Singapore, 16 July 2018 (Monday) – As part of the launch of a Data Protection Excellence (DPEX) Network, SMU Academy and Straits Interactive today announced two initiatives aimed at enhancing data protection competencies in Singapore, namely two Advanced Certificates leading to an Advanced Diploma in Data Protection and a Professional Conversion Programme (PCP) for Data Protection Officers (DPO).

The Advanced Certificates, which cover data protection principles and operational requirements of data protection laws in the ASEAN region, Greater China and the European Union, can be accumulated via a credit system, leading to an Advanced Diploma in Data Protection and Operational Excellence. This practice-based and application-oriented curriculum is the first in the ASEAN region. It is targeted at non-legal professionals interested in data privacy and protection.

The PCP for Data Protection Officers, supported by Workforce Singapore and SkillsFuture Singapore, provides skills conversion to place and train PMETs in the role of a data protection officer. The PCP will leverage on SMU's existing SkillsFuture Series in Data Analytics, Cybersecurity and Tech-Enabled Services, and will be delivered jointly by SMU and Straits Interactive. The PCP aims to develop a pool of pre-qualified candidates for data protection officer roles. Participants will undergo an initial DPO hands-on training course, before being matched with employers participating in the PCP. This initiative will benefit SMEs by lowering the cost of hiring staff with data protection skills to develop and implement safeguards around processing personal data – the PCP will help SMEs acquire their own data protection expertise.

Dr Lim Lai Cheng, Executive Director, SMU Academy, said, "SMU Academy is proud to partner Straits Interactive, a specialist in data protection expertise and technologies. This is in line with our efforts in partnering the industry and tuning in to the needs of various sectors and areas, such as data protection. We see a big potential here, having successfully trained close to 500 undergraduates and individuals in our hands-on data protection officer course thus far, as part of our professional continuing education programmes. We look forward to providing these individuals with a roadmap to further enhance their career opportunities."

Kevin Shepherdson, Chief Executive Officer, Straits Interactive, said, "Together with SMU Academy and our partners in the Data Protection Excellence Network, we hope to position Singapore as an ASEAN regional hub for data protection expertise, while sharing good data protection practices and resources with other countries in ASEAN new to data protection laws. We envisage these initiatives helping to professionalise the role of the data protection officer, training individuals to attain international certification standards and making a concrete contribution to meeting the demand for data protection expertise in Singapore as well as in the ASEAN region generally."

The International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP) has estimated that there is a worldwide shortage of 75,000 data protection officers, DPOs, because of the new General Data Protection Regulation in the EU. With the PDPA mandating the role of a DPO in Singapore, a research study conducted in February 2017 estimated that there is a need for 10,000 DPOs in Singapore within the three years to February 2020, potentially providing job opportunities for individuals to double-hat as a DPO, or to take dedicated regional DPO roles.

Besides PMETs and displaced workers with knowledge of business processes, the joint collaboration will reach out to retired or retiring police officers and other civil servants in Singapore with investigatory, governance, compliance and other similar experience that they can use in a full-time or part-time 'retirement career' as a DPO.

"As a retired police officer who has undergone data protection training, I see a huge potential for both retired and retiring officers to be re-skilled as DPOs. Investigating and preventing potential data breaches require skillsets and operational know-how that we are familiar with and have developed in our careers. We can certainly add value in this area," said Mr Goh Liang Kwang, Executive Advisor to Straits Interactive (and former deputy commissioner of the Singapore Police Force). "Combining our law enforcement experience with good data protection training and the PCP scheme, gives our retired and retiring officers with the opportunity to contribute to Singapore by doing data protection, governance and compliance work."

Mr Yeong Zee Kin, Deputy Commissioner of the Personal Data Protection Commission of Singapore said, "We welcome this industry-led effort to professionalise the role of data protection officers. Data protection is more than just check-list compliance with the law. Organisations need to demonstrate accountability, which is their promise to customers that their personal data will be handled properly, both in terms of compliance with the law and in recognising the rights of individuals. Data protection officers therefore need to equip themselves with the right competencies. The initiatives announced today by SMU Academy and Straits Interactive help complement the Commission's extensive awareness and education efforts directed at SMEs in Singapore."

Individuals and participating employers interested in the Advanced Certificates as well as the PCP will be eligible for SkillsFuture funding support. Interested mid-career Singaporeans and PRs who have graduated from tertiary institutions or completed National Service may apply for the PCP. Successful candidates hired by participating employers will have to undergo the 6-month PCP training programme..

The courses are available immediately and more information can be found at www.dpexnetwork.org.

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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

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.

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