TP gives you wings

By: Denis Edward

Ng Wei Liang always knew that he would fly an aeroplane one day, but he never expected it to be so soon.

The second-year Aviation Management and Services (AMS) student, who dreams of becoming a pilot, will be among the first batch of Temasek Polytechnic students to take flying lessons at the Singapore Youth Flying Club (SYFC) after TP signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the club.

Wei Liang, 19, and his coursemates who chose the Aeronautical Science option for their third-year of studies, to earn a Private Pilot Licence (PPL). This is an unprecedented tie-up for a diploma programme in Singapore.

Wei Liang said: “I am extremely happy to be given this opportunity to fly and earn a PPL. I didn’t expect to gain a chance to fly a real aeroplane before graduating so this comes as a shock. But I am very excited!”

Apart from obtaining their licence to fly, students will gain knowledge in air navigation, meteorological science and flight planning.

“This will pave the way for an easy transition to a piloting career in the military or commercial airlines,” said a TP spokesperson.

The selection process was not easy. Candidates had to go through a series of physical, psychometric and medical tests before they were selected for the six-month programme, which takes off in April.

They are also required to maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 and keep a clean discipline record.

“I didn’t think that I did well during the selection process,” said Wei Liang.

“I also found out that I was slightly colour blind during the medical test, so I thought my chance was gone. But I received an email from my lecturer telling me that I made it into the course. It was the best day of my life!”

The former Riverside Secondary School student, who is a TP cheerleader, added that the good news was made even better when he learnt that his good friend and coursemate John Paul was also selected.

“Going through the programme with John will be great. We know that the programme will be tough but we can support each other along the way.”

John, 19, added: “I am really looking forward to this programme. It will be a great experience!”

Students from the Diploma in Aerospace Engineering and Aerospace Electronics, who are keen to be pilots, will also be invited to participate in the programme.

Aviation lecturer Mr Farid Yusof, 41, said: “The fact that TP offers you a chance to take your PPL as a subject certainly has its advantages. Other students who sign up to take their pilot licence with SYFC as a CCA may only be able to go for lessons over the weekends.”

“If you take your licence through the programme we offer, there is better consistency because you do it as part of your curriculum. It certainly works better this way.”

Recruitment executive officer for SYFC Mr Jason Ong, 50, says that students could pay up to $25,000 to obtain their pilot licence privately.

He added: “Students really have to make the best of this course. They have to be determined and organised. They should also be doing well in their studies.”

By: Monica Tan

KoolWerkz, Temasek Polytechnic’s own brand of ice-cream has opened its first stall outside of campus.

The public can now get a taste of KoolWerkz frozen dessert at Suntec City Mall.

The stall set up on the third level is a collaboration between the School of Applied Science, School of Business and TP Entrepreneurship Centre.

Flavours of the KoolWerkz frozen dessert include chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, and a rather unique flavour—green tea.

The stall currently generates a profit of about $300 each month.

An alumnus of TP and a frequent patron of KoolWerkz ice cream, Lee Kok Bin, 25, noted that the stall is located conveniently in the city area.

He said more Singaporeans will be able to try the frozen dessert produced by TP.

Current student Gary Chew, 19, who manages the Suntec KoolWerkz stall, explained that apart from creating awareness of KoolWerkz ice cream, the stall is also set up for a good cause.

“Part of the profit that we make from the sale of the ice cream goes to the CCN (Campus Care Network) Fund to help the needy students in school monthly.”

The rest of the profit, minus the cost price of the ice cream, will then be split among the three partners.

The three students in charge, operate the stall everyday, except Thursday, from 12 pm to 8 pm.

“When we close on Thursday, our customers assume that that’s our day off, but actually, we report to school, to our lecturer in-charge, about KoolWerkz’s business.”

Gary says having a KoolWerkz stall in Suntec is beneficial for aspiring entrepreneurs.

“They will have the opportunity to really manage this stall like their own, feel the ups and downs.

“At the same time, it will also be quite cool to know that TP’s self-produced ice cream is actually available in the town area, and is making a profit.”
**Smoke-free campus**

**Quit smoking with the right motivation**

*By: Eden Tay*

Bryan Phua, 20, picked up smoking at the age of 14 as he grew up around family and friends who smoke.

Although Bryan was not pressured into smoking, the third year marketing student says constant exposure to the addictive elements of tobacco got him hooked.

At his peak, Bryan smoked up to 20 cigarettes (one pack) a day. So how did the student go from being what most would call a heavy smoker to a non-smoker?

According to Bryan, the key to his successful change was not achieved overnight.

The ex-smoker started cutting down the habit at the beginning of September last year. He went from smoking seven packs of cigarettes a week to two packs a week.

This change was not easy as well as it took an arduous two months. Then he went cold turkey in November.

This drastic cut in tobacco was not without its side effects. Bryan experienced chills, sinus, flu and mood swings.

When asked if anyone noticed his behavioural changes, the ex-smoker said: “People did notice (the change). Some of my friends told me I had a black cloud over my head!”

Bryan’s 19-year-old girlfriend, Catherine Yeo who has supported Bryan through the tobacco ban, said: “He would get angry over insignificant matters, and was easily agitated and annoyed.”

The ex-smoker shares that when one stops smoking, he or she can reduce the urge to smoke by chewing gum as it “keeps the mouth busy.”

Bryan added: “I would go out with my girlfriend to take my mind off smoking and keep myself distracted.”

Currently, Bryan leads a happy, tobacco-free life. The proud student said: “I feel healthier, happier, and that my life is not tied down by cigarettes.

“I’m less breathless when I exercise. People also say that I smell better. It’s definitely a positive change. I’m not used to my fingers not smelling of cigarettes anymore.”

The successful ex-smoker has this to say to those who are trying to quit: “It might seem tough at first, but I think it’s important to find a motivation to quit smoking.”

Some find it in family or external factors, but as long as you have a reason to quit you should hold on to it as a form of encouragement.”

**TP takes hard stance on smoking**

Temasek Polytechnic has upped the ante in its efforts to keep its campus smoke-free.

New deterrent measures have been put in place to discourage smokers from breaking school rules and smoking in and around campus.

Measures include putting up prominent “No Smoking” signs at hotspots which also warn that smokers’ parents will be informed if they are caught.

Email reminders have been sent out to warn students that “the Polytechnic will take stern action against students found smoking within the TP campus and its external perimeter along Tampines Avenue 1 and Bedok reservoir.”

Individual schools in TP have also stepped up their own anti-smoking efforts.

“The management of the School of Business, including the Director and Course Managers would be helping to patrol the school,” said Mr Looi Kwock Peng, CM-in-charge of Discipline.

*Helios Bajwa*

**TP launches online food ordering service**

You can now order food on campus with just a click and beat the queue.

Last December, TP launched a trial online food ordering system together with Flavours Canteen (the air-conditioned canteen at IIT School).

Collaborating with the Computer and Information Systems and Estates & the Facilities Management Departments, the canteen came up with an online menu and the ordering site - Online Flavours.

A second trial was held in January this year.

“It’s designed to help ease the overcrowding during lunch time peak hours,” said Estates Officer Betty Tan.

The advantage of this online food ordering system is that there is no queuing time required during the food preparation at food court. It is just pick and go. It’s convenient.”

The staff and students can order food from any of the stalls in Flavours with menu prices ranging from $2.50 to $6.

On the particular day in January when Stop Press checked, there were almost 130 orders received from 50 people.

The customers log on to http://www.onlineflavours.com/ to select their choice of food from the comprehensive menu. For those who have special requests for their order, they may indicate this in the “Special Requests” tab at the bottom of the page.

It will take approximately 30 mins for the food to be ready for collection at the Flavours Western Food counter.

Unfortunately, if you have ordered something on impulse and wish to cancel it, this system forbids you from doing so. A full penalty will be imposed on food items not collected.

A first-year Engineering student Sze Min who tried the system said: “Ordering online is much easier because one doesn’t have to worry about language barrier or not being able to hear and understand the other person and messing up the order.”

A second-year Design student Joshua Tan wanted the system to go a step further.

He said: “I hope they can include a delivery service in future.”

Ms Tan explained that a delivery service is not viable given the varied locations on campus.

She added: “The online food ordering is to ease the sitting space in the canteen. Staff and students could take their food to any location to consume.”

If the response is good, can TP staff and students expect quick food ordering services at other canteens on campus?

“It is possible that the system will be implemented in other canteens in TP,” said Ms Tan.

*Betty Tan, Estates Officer*
Mobile apps for the blind

The idea for the applications originally came about from a wish list that was compiled by the members of SAVH. “We had several meetings with numerous members of SAVH in the pre-development stage of the project,” says Carina Hu, 22, a member of the team that developed The 3rd Eye, an application that recognises Singapore currency. “It gave us a deeper understanding of the specific needs of a visually handicapped person. They made a wish list of what they hoped to be able to do. The inspiration for our mobile applications stemmed from that.” Members of SAVH were also on hand during the launch to try out the applications.

“The applications were really well done. It was a good idea. I especially like the application that recognises Singapore currency,” said Mr Edwin, 35, who was born blind. “It informs me of which note I’m holding when I need to pay for things. It is very useful because tasks like this require the assistance of other people. The application bypasses the need for that.”

Another SAVH member, Mr Wai Yee, 39 said: “It was a good effort from students but it takes time to get comfortable and familiarised with the functions of the applications.”

Currently, the top three applications for the visually impaired on iOS and Android platforms are LookTell Money Identifier, Android platforms are LookTell Money Identifier, and VH Newspaper Reader.

Another SAVH member, Mr Wai Yee, 39 said: “It was a good effort from students but it takes time to get comfortable and familiarised with the functions of the applications.”

The applications capitalise on the camera function on phones and are operated based on a combination of finger movements and audio cues to process visual information. “Our objective is to enrich a visually handicapped person’s life by decreasing the limitations the individual goes through in his or her daily life,” says Melissa Ho, 20.

Melissa is part of the 10-member team which developed the iphone app VH Newspaper Reader. The application reads written text and converts it to audio for its visually impaired users. “Our application allows the visually handicapped to read newspapers and other materials. This will greatly benefit them in education,” she said.

Besides reading, the other applications allow a blind person to do tasks such as recognising Singapore currency, telling the time, checking weather conditions and navigating their Android phone.

TP bags challenge trophy in accounting competition

By: Raquel Yeo

A team of final-year students from Temasek Polytechnic’s Diploma in Accounting and Finance (A&F) bagged the challenge trophy for the Audit and Accounting Challenge 2012.

The competition, organised by the Nanyang Technological University’s (NTU) Nanyang Business School’s Auditing and Assurance team, attracted 54 teams from the local universities and polytechnics.

The aim of the competition was to give the students an opportunity to showcase their auditing and accounting knowledge.

“During the competition, participants needed to analyse the questions, and be fast enough to click on the buzzer so as to answer the questions,” said Wong Hui Qin, 21, the leader of the winning team. The other members of the team were Tan Yang Khai, Low Hui Ting, Tan Qing Ting Annis, all 19.

The TP team outclassed the teams from the other polytechnics in Round 1. Then in Round 2, it went on to beat NTU, the winner among the universities.

TP eventually emerged as the overall winning institution for the challenge trophy in the final round.

To prepare themselves for the contest, the team did past years’ papers and revision questions prepared by their mentor, Mrs Christine Cheong, who was also the team’s audit lecturer and tutor. Hui Qin said: “Mrs Cheong held a briefing session where she revised the questions with all participants.”

The TP team said taking on NTU in the final round was daunting. “They were quick-witted and were able to react fast to the questions,” said Hui Qin.

“They also had an added pressure on us, given that they were university students.”

Looking back, the team found time management very challenging.

The champions feel that this competition was rewarding and will help them in their future endeavours. “I believe the competition would help us with our soft skills, like teamwork and communicating with one another more effectively,” said Yang Khai.

“It also will help us to work under pressure especially when in the real working life, where not every time it would be smooth sailing.”

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Dedicated centre for BIA Diploma

S tudents from the newly launched Diploma in Business Intelligence & Analytics (BIA) will benefit from a dedicated training Centre from April.

The centre, which replaces a computer lab previously used by Cyber & Digital Security students, will also allow the industry player to engage BIA students to work on solutions using SAS technologies.

Mr Eric Tay, course coordinator for the new diploma, said: “The centre gives a platform for students to learn how to apply their statistical knowledge. They will also use it to complete their assignments and final-year projects.”

Mr Tay, who previously taught Financial Business Informatics students, added that SAS will run other relevant programmes for BIA students there.

The BIA diploma, which starts in April, is designed to meet the growing demand from the industry for capable business analysts.

“We will need to come up with more partnerships with industry players to create more projects for students,” said Mr Tay.

“Having several industry partners will expose our students to many more types of business analytical problems.”

Graduates of BIA can look forward to jobs such as business intelligence analysts and customer service analysts. “Students will also find that logistics, manufacturing and even government departments want to hire them for their in-demand skills,” said Mr Tay.

Nanyang Polytechnic is also launching a BIA diploma in April, but the Ang Mo Kio-based polytechnic is not equipped with a BIA centre.
Thinking beyond self

By: Tay Jiaqi

Keith Lim Ming Yeow is one of the few young adults out there who believes in the importance of giving back to society and helping people who are in need.

After his O levels, this mature teenager did some self-reflection and realised that there are more to life apart from pursuing good results.

“I realised that pursuing good grades and all the stuff I have been aiming for and doing are pretty much just for me. And that is a little bit egocentric. I decided that since I am entering polytechnic, I should do something that will allow me to give back to society.

“I decided to take up Psychology as I want to join other welfare organisations and help needy people when I graduate. This is one of the reasons why I decided to join Community Services Club (CSC) as my Co-curriculum Activity,” said Keith.

The third-year student in Diploma in Psychology sees his course as closely related to community service.

Keith used his internship at NTUC Elder Care to illustrate his point.

I realised pursuing good grades and all the stuff I have been aiming for and doing are pretty much just for me. And that is a little bit egocentric.

“I interned as a social worker. Generally, I coordinate support services for the needy elderly staying in one-room apartments. We help these elderly install support bars in the bathrooms, place anti-slip mats for them, send them meals and many more.

“This is where what I learnt in Psychology came in handy. This is because the counselling techniques I learnt could be applied during my internship period. Hence psychology and community service sector actually complement each other and are congruent,” explained Keith.

Keith who took on the roles of the President of CSC, admitted that it is quite difficult to handle studies and his duties.

“I have to actually learn to set time aside to reply emails. In addition to that, as a President I would have to do a lot of planning and decide what some of the upcoming projects we should do are,” said Keith.

But being heavily involved in CSC did not affect Keith’s studies. In fact, he has chalked up a cumulative GPA of 3.93 and has even been granted an early admission to Nanyang Technological University.

“I believe once you put in effort, you would be able to do well,” said Keith.

This high achiever hopes to continue doing community service and become a relief-aid worker in the future.

“I hope to go to those civil war-torn countries and set up a clinic there and help the people, especially the children,” said Keith.

Once a week, Keith likes to keep himself active by playing soccer with his peers and lecturers. Once in a while, he also goes fishing with his friends.

“My friends and I would go to the Pasir Ris Park to fish. Perhaps it’s the sense of exhilaration I get when there is a fish that takes the bait that makes me enjoy fishing,” shared Keith. This soft-hearted angler who always releases his catch at the end of the session, has taken to heart a quote shared by his CSC predecessor.

Asked how he sees himself in 10 years time, Benjamin showed his quirky side. “Growing facial hair, exercising more regularly and owning a border collie whom I’ll name Wolfgang,” he said.


**Yo-yo champion deals with ups and downs**

**By: Denis Edward**

Life is like a yo-yo for Iskandar Shah Sulaiman. It is always full of ups and downs. But, just like a yo-yo, the Mechatronics Engineering student will always try to string his way back up.

Iskandar Shah Sulaiman, 24, who is a former Asian Yo-Yo champion, said: “There were several times in my life where I could have done better in my studies and yo-yo competitions, but I kept on going with the thought that tomorrow is a brand new day.”

His positive outlook on life has led him to overcome several obstacles. For instance, he was quick to pick himself up after scoring a humble 28 points in five subjects for his O-Level exams.

The former Siglap Secondary School student said: “I was really sad at the time to train. I usually train up to eight hours a day. But if you believe in yourself and keep on going, you can do anything!”

But Iskandar, who plays with a double-diced yo-yo called Sparkle, remains humble.

He said: “I didn’t expect to win the Asian championships because I was only 18-years-old and I had only tried playing in this competition for two years prior to winning it. So it came as a big surprise to bring back the title to Singapore.”

Iskandar will challenge for the top yo-yo title in the world against other skilful pros in Florida, US, in August.

This was made possible when Spring Singapore – a government agency responsible for growing enterprises – decided to sponsor his cause.

Iskandar said: “Spring Singapore liked my business idea to start an academy here. So they also decided to sponsor my trip to Florida to compete because it is a good way to raise awareness of my company.”

Iskandar, who is dubbed Singapore’s “Yo-Yo king”, dreams of eventually setting up a yo-yo academy to reach out to every primary school and secondary school in Singapore to groom and identify yo-yo professionals of the future.

But how does he juggle running a business, a heavy training schedule and a full-time diploma course?

“It’s not easy,” said Iskandar. “During the semester, I don’t have much time to train. I usually train up to eight hours a day just before competitions. But I can’t do that now because I’m working on my final-year project.”

Still, the professional yo-yo player believes that his positive attitude can help him achieve all his goals.

He said: “No one said that life is going to be easy. But if you believe in yourself and keep on going, you can do anything!”

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**App-ceptional aspirations**

**By: Stefanie Lee**

While planning ahead certainly helps us work towards our ambitions, not all of us will have a clear idea of what we aspire to be.

That was the case with Bevin Seetho, 20, who only found what he wanted in life after entering Temasek Polytechnic.

The third-year Diploma in Mobile & Network Services (MNS) student said that “the course had chosen him”. And it was there that he discovered his calling for software programming.

“My GCE O Level results were kind of lousy; I had an L1R4 of 20. But I just studied and began to develop an interest in it (Programming),” he explained.

Bevin is currently at the top of his cohort with a Grade Point Average of 3.79.

True enough, his efforts have paid off, as the school acknowledges his exceptional skills. For his Final Year Project (FYP), he and another course mate were handpicked to develop a mobile app for the National Climate Change Secretariat (NCSS) to extend the reach of its climate change messages, especially to technology savvy audiences such as students and young professionals.

The development process of the app called Green Climate was not without challenge.

Bevin said: “Because we were learning about android in semester 3.1, we were only developing apps for android all the while. However, this FYP was for iOS so it was totally new to us. We had to learn how to use the software from scratch until we finished developing.”

For the future, having set his sights on big companies such as Google and Apple, Bevin hopes to enter a university and eventually become a software programmer.

Living with the motto “Just put in effort”, Bevin hopes to work towards developing his dream gaming app one day.
It was an event of spectacular performances and informative tours. The Open House 2012, held from Jan 5 to 7, attracted thousands of prospective students to visit TP’s campus.

With a total of 53 diploma courses on show in six schools, coupled with rocking entertainment, visitors found the annual event enticing.

The Open House concluded to the tunes of popular local band the Goodfellas. They performed to an energetic crowd of prospective and current students, making it an event to remember.

(Above from left)
- Engineering school students doing the TP’s signature “Chicky dance”.
- Two students from the School of Humanities bringing some comic relief.
- A lucky student who won a HTC Sensation XL in one of the competitions happening at centre stage.

(Right)
- Wayne Ang, a second-year Interactive Media Design student, leading a student tour.
- TP’s own DivoDiva charmed the crowd with a medley of songs.

A live broadcast of the Open House was also done by DJ Charmaine Yee from Radio 91.3.

While the Goodfellas played, TP students took turns ‘performing’ on stage to get their moments of fame.

A fashion show put on by the students of Apparel Design & Merchandising.

Photos: Edward Porter, CCD. Layout by Edward Porter
Stop Press :: March 2012

By: Sean Shagaran

I read a report recently about children as young as four who own the latest gadgets, such as iPad 2s and Blackberries, which got me thinking.

Have we become a world so fixated on keeping ourselves relevant that we have lost sight of the simple things in life?

Has the hardware that we glue our eyes to so often conquered mankind, its very creator?

Have simple activities like going for picnics or laughing with your family around the breakfast table lost their importance in our lives?

I have lost sight of the simple things in life.

when a giant meteorite might strike us again.

It is important to detach ourselves from technology once in a while to recharge our human senses.

What I will do if the world ends in 2012

By: Rachel Chia

Somewhere in South-eastern Mexico, the Mayans are already well into their execution for a yeafong celebration – all in preparation for the end of the world on Dec 21 this year. Or so they say.

Ever since the release of the apocalypse movie of the same name in 2009, many have been scoffing at the speculation of Mother Earth’s end, while others have been blatantly questioning whether it might be an actual cause for worry. Now that 2012 is finally here, is pondering over the question and ‘what ifs’ really still the main issue?

Interestingly, in a recent APEL (Applied Principles of Effective Learning) class, the topic of world’s end was brought up again, and we were questioned on what we would do if this truly were our last year to live - enough cajoling to get me thinking about the topic again.

The truth is no one really knows when a giant meteorite might strike us all and cease the existence of civilisation. In today’s society, many are so caught up with their own personal commitments as well as the hectic deadlines of work and school that we hardly slow down to appreciate the things and people around us.

Much less give any thought as to what we will do if we wake up one day knowing it is the last day we are ever going to live.

All talk about a supposed doomsday aside and cliché as it might sound, I am a strong believer that we ought to live each day to the fullest. In Secondary 1, I used to scribble the Latin phrase ‘carpe diem’ in every imaginable notebook, after spotting it in a book. It translates to ‘seize the day’ and is part of a longer phrase ‘Carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero’. ‘Seize the day, putting as little trust as possible in the future’. I believe that the code is something we ought to all live by, as it deems the future unforeseen and that we need to embrace living for what it is, today.

When it comes down to deciding what I want to do before I perish with the rest of mankind for good, I hope to be able to travel with my family to a holiday destination that we all can finally agree on instead of constantly shelving it for “when we all are free”, and spend more time with my grandmother.

The latter is one person that I truly appreciate and look up to for her unconditional love and care, but hardly devote any time to due to my inability to slow down my pace of everyday life. I guess it would also be a good time to dig out the bucket list that I stowed away after penning down things I never dreamt I would actually attempt accomplishing so soon – wish to become an official United Nations interpreter, anyone?

Like it or not, it is hard to deny that we are a society with many gadgets, and a lot of us are a rather nippicky bunch. We also tend to complain a little too much about everything – the weather being too hot, the rainfall being too heavy, the MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) being likely to malfunction again when it momentarily stops for about two seconds. The list is endless, and not to mention time-consuming. Something we definitely need to rethink - spending so much of our lives whining over things.

The main point I want to bring across: While we still can, we really should take a step back and look at the bigger picture. Invest our time and energy into our friends and family instead of constantly finding reasons to pick on things that are not even important. Forget grudges and feelings of ill-naturedness, and stop holding back and go ahead and tell that someone just how much they mean to you.

Sometimes, it is sad to know that it takes something as major as a possible wipe-out of humanity on a specified date to jolt some sense back into us, when we are not even able to guarantee what tomorrow brings. Therefore, stop just merely breathing – and start living.

So I ask, in the words of American poet Mary Oliver: “Tell me what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

Take a break from technology

These questions made me want to put away my laptop and mobile phone, and I did for one whole day. During that day, I noticed things about the world that I never noticed before, such as the new seats on bus number 15. I would never have noticed if my eyes were glued on my mobile phone, as they usually are every time I take the bus.

I also did not send text messages at the dinner table that night, which came as a surprise to my mother who asked: “Boy, where is your phone?” Her question shocked me because it made me realise that I could not recall the last time I put my mobile phone aside at the dinner table. On top of that, my mother didn’t even expect any better of me – it was as if she had long given in to the fact that technology should impair communication during dinner.

My conclusion at the end of that interesting day was that there is more to life than flickering pixels and online avatars. More than status updates and Google alerts. It is important to detach ourselves from technology once in a while to recharge our human senses.

Embrace inspiration from other sources instead, such as by reading a book or taking a walk along the beach. Our entire lives are already set to be full of technology-engaging experiences. Therefore, it is important for us to dedicate time and energy for other activities.

Still, don’t get me wrong. I am a big fan of the benefits of technology. When my brother travelled to another country for a long time, it was Skype that connected us.

When I travelled overseas for a holiday, it was a simple text message that kept my worries mother informed of my whereabouts. But it is still important to prevent technology from controlling you.

A family friend, who works as a primary school counsellor, said that she has students who suffer from mild depression when their mobile phones are confiscated.

This is a frightening scenario that I hope no one else faces, but the reality is that we may be like these children if our gadgets were confiscated from us.

To avoid facing that situation, we should not give our gadgets more importance than they actually deserve.

We can do this by participating in activities that do not require our iTouch or iPad. Draw or just have a long, meaningful conversation with someone dear to you.

Spend some time without your mobile phone next to you. Yes, it will be difficult to detach yourself from technology in our wired tech-hub of a country, but making a conscious effort to control the technology before it controls you will surely improve your life as it improved mine.

So make that effort to break away from the clutches of technology!
Students tap Kindle for leisure and learning

It delivers clear, crisp text and images that can be read even under bright sunlight. The perfect combination? Lying down by the beach to sun-tan and read my favourite e-books!” said Kimberly Wong, 20, a Design School student. “There is no glare from the Kindle and it really feels like I’m reading from an actual book without the heavy weight. Can you think of any other gadget with such quality?”

The device’s six-inch display has five hard keys and a cursor pad, but there is no touch screen feature. Experimental web browsing on Kindle is also available through wi-fi.

“If you like to read in bed but hate it when your arm starts to hurt from holding the book too long, Kindle is the solution,” said Laurence Goh, 21, a Design School student who purchased a Kindle 4 in January. “You flip the pages by clicking the two buttons at the side so you can rest your arms.” Kindle users can purchase e-books on the hardware itself through Amazon, and purchases will remain for ever or until it is deleted.

E-books typically cost much less than a paperback copy and there are lots of free books available as well. The Kindle also has a one-month battery life if used for 30 minutes a day.

“With its high-contrast e-Ink display, it can be read even under bright sunlight,” added Laurence. “I love to read but carrying a storybook around is not ideal because my bag is already so heavy.”

“I could highlight certain parts of my notes and when I want to look up the definition of a particular word, I just have to scroll to that word and the definition will show at the bottom of the screen.”

“There are also many dictionary languages available on Kindle – from English to French to Spanish. I have to say that this is the best gadget I own.”

By: Kenzi Ong

By: Helios Bajwa

If you are familiar with the phrases “Me Gusta” to the knee”, “Friendzone” and “Me Gusta”, you have probably lost your “soul” to 9Gag.com.

“Losing your soul” is the phrase most popularly used to describe the effects of 9Gag.com according to fans of the increasingly popular funny image-hosting website.

First set-up in 2008, it has only recently achieved mainstream recognition in Singapore, and is a huge hit amongst Temasek Polytechnic students.

“It’s extremely addictive. I can spend hours a day on the site,” said 9Gagger Wayne Ang, a second-year student from the Diploma in Interactive Media Design.

“Once you start, it really is hard to stop. It really does steal your ‘soul’!”

Users can scroll through thousands of pages of funny pictures uploaded by other users, with hundreds of new images being uploaded daily. Users can also create an account to vote and comment on their favourites, and upload their own funny images.

Voters can give images either a positive or negative vote.

Most posts are based on memes (pronounced as “meems”) – which are images, videos, phrases or other content that achieve popularity through widespread use on the Internet. Rage comics (short amateur comics that almost always incorporate memes) also feature prominently, although cute animals, cool places and general hilarious content do attract their fair share of viewers.

This all seems like a simple concept. But why does it make 9Gag so popular and addictive?

“We love the memes, and since Putin through all the jokes made on Russia’s 2011 elections by President Putin, 9Gag has become quite a large force in the搞笑 world.”

But 9Gag is not all about fun and games. The site has been used to spread the word on various social causes.

One such post came from local user “elliecopter”, who created an image promoting a petition for the ban of the sale of shark’s fin in Singapore.

Her post received 58,871 positive votes and 1,499 comments.

Christian Sng, 21, a first-year student from the Diploma in Law and Management, said: “9Gag lets you know about things that are happening all around the world.”

“I found out about the fixing of Russia’s 2011 elections by President Putin through all the jokes made on 9Gag.”

Both adductively funny and entertainingly informative, 9Gag seems set to remain a hit among youth for a long time to come.

We even use the phrases from 9Gag in everyday conversations!”

By: Jared Yap

It was a cyber battle of epic proportion at the grand finals of the fifth annual Temasek Polytechnic Cyber Games (TPCG) on Jan 17.

The event, held at the plaza and organised by the Informatics & IT Studies Club (ITISC), saw four teams pitted against each other in a five-a-side Defence of the Ancients (DOTA) challenge.

The four teams outplayed 39 others during the qualifying stage in December to make it to the grand finals.

In the end, 5 Little Donkeys team emerged the victors, snapping up the top prize of $1,000 worth of computer hardware.

Daren Tiang, 20, a Chemical Engineering student and leader of the victorious quartet, said: “We have won quite a number of DOTA competitions.

“This is the second year that we won TPCG. We won last year’s inter-school competition too. I really enjoy these competitions.”

Organiser and second-year Cyber Digital Security student Jared Lee said the event went smoothly despite facing obstacles along the way.

“We did encounter a little skipping and had to move the laptops because of the rain,” said the 18-year-old.

“However, it was well planned out and a great success nonetheless.”

Playworks Magazine, Gunnar, Singapore Computer Society and Garena and Dragon Quest, who sponsored the prizes, also played a large role in ensuring the success of this year’s TPCG.

Daren said: “On top of that, our very own TP student Rina Teo created posters to advertise the event while she was doing her Overseas Student Internship Programme (OSIP).

Rina, 19, a Diploma in Interactive Media Informatics student, said: “We communicated thoroughly email a lot. I did it to help the organisers, and it was all worth it in the end.”
Max Payne 3: More realistic, more cinematic

By: Shaun Lin

The Max Payne series continues with its third instalment in Max Payne 3. The game’s titular protagonist returns as the tormented New York City cop that we have come to know so well over the past two editions.

Scheduled for release in late May this year, Max Payne 3 promises to retain many of the features of the past games that have become hallmarks of this franchise.

And Max Payne fans will be purring for its release. After all, it has almost been a decade since we last saw Max, and three years since it was first slated for release.

Max Payne 3 returns with its signature “run-and-gun shooting”, as well as featuring over-the-shoulder zoom aiming and cover mechanics.

Max Payne 3 will also see the return of bullet-time in action sequences, a fan-favourite for sure. Max will also be able to stay grounded after a dive, which enables him to shoot 360 degrees around.

Rockstar has blended physics and animation, so that when Max dives around, he does so appropriately according to his surroundings.

Through advanced utilisation of the Euphoria physics engine, shooting and killing enemies in Max Payne 3 will look noticeably more realistic than in any preceding Rockstar games as well.

Also new to the series are cinematic action movements, essentially interactive cut-scenes. But enough of the game’s mechanics. Fans of the franchise should be prepared to see a completely different Max from when we last saw him.

Also, this latest instalment bids farewell to the Big Apple and heads over to sunny São Paulo in Brazil. Needless to say, he is no longer a detective with the New York Police Department.

The game is also set eight years after the events in Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne.

We are told that Max Payne now works as an executive protection for a wealthy Rodrigo Branco in the hopes of escaping the memories of his troubled past.

However, when a street gang kidnaps Rodrigo’s wife, Max is pulled into a conspiracy of shadowy, warring factions threading every aspect of São Paulo society in a deadly web that threatens to engulf everyone and everything around him.

Fans will be happy to acknowledge that James McCaffrey will return as the voice of Max Payne, and will also be given a full acting role with motion capture. All in all, a lot is set to change with Max Payne 3, and it is definitely a title to look out for.

Last year was a fine year for gaming with the release of many AAA titles which probably burned a hole in your pockets. Many of you likely felt the brunt towards the end of the year which saw the release of Skyrim and Saints Row: The Third, and finally culminated in the arrival of the highly anticipated MMORPG: Star Wars The Old Republic.

But this year, we can expect to leak cash faster than an oil spill with many exciting games poised to hit the shelves. Bryan Lim picks the top three titles.

Dragons, myths, action!

Guild Wars 2/Release: TBA 2012/Website: www.guildwars2.com

Dubbed the “Highly Anticipated MMO of 2012” and in fact, clinching that title on many polls on various gaming websites, this AAA subscription-free MMORPG has been slated for release later this year.

What makes this game a potential hit is its revolutionary mechanics and the willingness of the developers to bring innovation to the stagnating MMO genre. With a tactical and action-oriented combat, fighting will never be static again. More focus is placed on story as the game provides an overarching storyline as well as a personal storyline of your character.

Finally, gone are the days of walls of quest text asking you to kill 10 rats which has no impact on your gameplay as well as the predetermined path of progression. Players are also allowed to travel to places in the modern-day world; Egypt, London, Seoul, New York and even visit legendary locations like Stonehenge in player versus player battles.

While a definitive release date hasn’t been set, the game is undergoing beta testing.

The Secret World/Release: April 2012/Website: www.thesecretworld.com

Set in a modern-day setting, this latest MMORPG by Funcom tackles the issue of ‘what if’. What if every myth, conspiracy theory and urban legend was true? Signals disrupt our thoughts; there is a city on the moon, 11 days are missing; Solomon’s key unleashes hell, the Tower of Babel never fell… have you never wondered about these?

And that’s what TSW is setting out to do; integrate pieces of ancient mythologies, real and false history, urban legends, and pop culture; within a modern-day real world and tie them into an original back-story.

And they are doing this with the promise of an unrestricted playstyle, with the freedom of progression and customisation. There are no classes and levels; and you can choose from hundreds of weapons and powers, thus eliminating the need to follow a set path of progression. Players are also allowed to travel to places in the modern-day world; Egypt, London, Seoul, New York and even visit legendary locations like Stonehenge in player versus player battles.

TERA/Release: May 1 (North America)/Website: www.tera-online.com

An upcoming Korean MMORPG from En Masse Entertainment, TERA Online drew attention to itself by touting its real-time combat system and boasting high-end Unreal-powered graphics. What sets it apart is its non-targeting battle system. Targeting is manual, which means you can’t click or tab to an opponent, you need to manually target them with a crosshair. It’s a game mechanic that hasn’t yet found its way into many MMOs but it’s pretty refreshing and welcomed. Players must also actively dodge enemy attacks.

The game comes with classic MMO features such as quests, crafting and player versus player battles. But it has gone a step further to introduce an in-depth political system which players can participate in. Political campaigns can even be conducted across social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube!

The first true action MMORPG, TERA has already launched in South Korea with positive feedback and it looks set to join the ranks of other best action MMORPGs like Dragon Nest.
Volleyball team wins bronze in IVP Games

By: Muhammad Sha’ari

Temasek Polytechnic’s volleyball girls emerged second runner-up in the Institute-Varsity-Polytechnic (IVP) Games after they defeated Republic Polytechnic (RP) in a three-set thriller.

The hosts were determined to secure a medal in the IVP Games after a disappointing loss to Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in the semi-final round. They started the game in great style by dominating the opening set.

TP showed great zeal with almost continuous scoring that saw the first set ending 25 – 11.

TP’s captain, Jane Tan, 21, said: “The whole team did a great job. We really wanted to win the game and our game plan was to keep a high tempo running throughout. The team did exactly that.”

However, a combination of nerves and errors by the end of the first set as they had difficulty coping with the energy levels of the TP team.

There was a definite sense of an impending victory for TP and it looked as if the girls were headed for an easy celebration.

However, a combination of nerves and errors by the TP team in the opening round of the second set allowed RP to gain a decisive lead. Nevertheless, the girls showed great energy in recovering from their initial setback and engaged RP in a close competition.

“TP has better skills but we need to keep our composure. We were too nervous and that adversely affected our performance,” said Jane.

“We allowed RP back into the game and they capitalised on it.”

They managed to narrow the score to a small margin but RP proved to be too tenacious and won the second set 23 – 25. TP looked much steadier when they started the third set. They kept their energy levels high and kept their calm.

RP was resolute in defence initially, but TP’s sustained salvo of volleys proved too strong.

“RP did a great job and we are proud of our performance,” said RP’s captain, Ting Yui, 20.

“We know that TP is stronger than us and we didn’t expect to win at all. Claiming the second set was a great achievement for us.”

TP clinched the game by winning the third set 25 – 13.

“We will not be complacent with this victory and we are determine to do better in the next Games,” said Jane.

“Our objective is to claim champion status and make TP proud.”

Hands up for Handball CCA

By: Helios Bajwa

A handball Interest Group is active on campus and is hoping to get the sport accepted as an official CCA.

“We decided to request for handball to be an official CCA in TP because it is an exciting, increasingly popular sport in Singapore,” explains Kashif Khan, a member of the group and a student from the Electrical and Electronic Engineering Course.

The 20-year-old is a member of Singapore’s Men’s Youth Handball Team.

“When I enrolled in TP in 2011, I met other players and we started it from there,” he said.

Most other polytechnics and ITE have handball as CCAs, and handball is part of the POL-ITE Games competition.

Attempts to make the sport an official CCA have been unsuccessful, but Kashif and friends are not discouraged.

“Since we managed to get second place at the POL-ITE Games, we might stand a chance now,” he says.

Kashif and group took part in the Games as an independent team. “They allowed us to take part even though we are not an official CCA. We were able to meet their terms and were allowed to play.

“Our team name was just TP, because we were not able to use the full name or logo. But thanks to a sponsor, we had the proper attire!”

“We suffered an unfortunate match-up with the strongest team, but it was a close match and we are proud of ourselves.”

The Handball Interest Group has a fairly strong membership, with 49 members showing their support on the group’s Facebook page.

There are currently 15 handball players representing the Interest Group. The team makes good use of the online platform to contact members and organise training sessions.

But Kashif insists that training sessions would be much easier to conduct if they had the polytechnic’s support.

He said: “Our love for the game itself keeps us motivated. “All of us first met as strangers and bonded well over time. Now we are like a family, and that will always keep us going.

“We are looking forward to more competitions ahead of us, and we will claim that championship trophy!”
Breaking boundaries with CCA choices

By: Nurul Farah

In TP, there are CCAs that are rooted in a specific culture such as the Indian Dance, TP Dikir Barat and Chinese Orchestra.

However, the thought of joining a CCA that is not within your own culture may have never crossed your mind. But it did cross the mind of Chong Jia Lin.

“I’m actually a girl who cares a lot about what others would think and say about me. Well, this made me hesitant for quite a while before I really decided to join Indian Dance. Furthermore, I was afraid – afraid that I would not fit in well with them,” admitted Jia Lin.

It was an unfounded fear because now she often looks forward to learning new dance steps and dancing together with the rest of the dancers.

Another teenager who broke through the boundaries and wanted to try something new is Lam Yiting.

She said: “In the start, I felt a little awkward. But after getting to know each other, race did not define our differences. Characters and personalities are what makes us different from one another. I like the fact that after joining Indian Dance, I was exposed to more elements of their culture.”

What she loves most about Indian Dance is the music and how the dancers use their eyes to express a specific feeling of a particular verse in a song.

Yiting represented TP as part of the dance group in a competition called Dhool, organised by Vasantham Central.

They trained it to the finals, emerging as top five out of 16 groups.

Muhammad Zulhilmi Ishnin, a freshman from the Diploma in Aviation Management and Services, is another individual who is bold enough to step out of his comfort zone.

“I was in symphonic band for six years before joining TP. Therefore, I wanted a different perspective in music and I wanted to challenge myself to learn something new in TP. I have some background in classical flute so I decided to learn the Dizi,” he explained.

He has been interested in playing instruments since young.

His parents are very supportive of his choice of CCA and even bought him a Dizi so that he can practise at home.

But what about the language barrier?

“Mr Tan, our Chinese Orchestra conductor, mostly gives out instructions or advice on the music pieces in Mandarin. There was once he spoke to me in Mandarin and I thought he was scolding me for not playing the music piece properly. Turns out, he was just explaining the techniques that I can use to play my Dizi better,” Zulhimi shared with a chuckle.

Voutre Couleur a major hit

By: Ting Lee

This year’s Dinner and Dance (D&D) event, themed and titled Voutre Couleur or “What’s your colour”, in English, has broken the school’s annual records of having its 300 tickets sold out in just two weeks after their release.

From planning, budgeting, logistics and operations, the much-anticipated March 22 event at the InterContinental Hotel has proven to be a successful feat for the organising committee.

“At this year’s D&D, attendees will be able to come in any single colour that they feel can represent themselves,” said Gene Christian Lee who heads the organising committee for this year’s D&D event.

Gene, 19, is a second-year Hospitality and Tourism Management student and also the Social Secretary for the TP Students’ Union (TPSU). His committee has been working on the event since last November.

When asked about how this year’s theme was decided upon, Gene shared that it was inspired by a quote from artist Pablo Picasso who said: “Colours, like features, follow the changes of emotions”.

Together with his organising committee, Gene then developed the idea to have students attend the D&D dressed as a colour that best represents them.

“We hope that through the theme, attendees can use interesting colours to speak a thousand words about themselves. In contrast to last year’s D&D, which required attendees to be costumed as their favourite celebrities, we want people this year to dress their best for themselves,” added Gene.

It is undeniably an event that most students to show their “true colours”.

And it will be an event for the poly students to show their “true colours”. Students are definitely looking forward to the D&D.

Grace Goh, 20, a final year student from Gerontological Management Studies who is also the Vice-President of the TPSU, said: “I look forward to being clad in silver for the dinner because it is unique and does not need any other colours to complement it. This is my chosen representation of my character.”
Radio Invasion

98.7FM's Muttons raise awareness of the radio industry in annual event

By: Kenzi Ong

Popular radio DJs, Vernon Anthonisz and Justin Ang from 98.7FM turned up in person on Jan 19 to entertain TP students and staff. The Muttons, as they call themselves, visit TP annually for the Radio Invasion event organised by the Business Studies and IIT Studies Clubs.

This time again, they brought laughter to the large audience as they shared their deejaying experiences.

During the hour-long event, the Muttons cracked jokes and spilled off-air secrets that happen in their studio located in 'Scape'.

Vernon said: "I think the students here are really fun. It was nice being invited here in the first place and we actually really enjoy coming here every year."

His partner-in-crime Justin Ang agreed: "TP is great because, for one, the campus looks very modern. We have never seen this view (from the plaza looking out to the entrance of TP) before because we usually host indoors. It's so nice; it's like a park. I love it. And if I remember correctly, the food is not bad."

At the end of the session, the students flocked to take pictures with the two witty radio personalities and asked for their deejaying experiences.

The 19-year-old, who listens to their show every night, said: "They really sound the same as they do on radio. I was really glad to meet them and ask about the radio industry and what goes on behind the scenes. It was a great event!"

Cecilia Edward, 18, a Business School student, agreed with Andrew. She said: "It’s not every day we can meet a real deejay. So it was really nice to see them here in TP."

Vernon and Justin interviewing a TP student. During the event they also spilled off-air secrets.

When Stop Press asked Vernon to sum up his life as a radio deejay "in a nutshell", he cheekily replied to tease his partner: "Well obviously a nutshell cannot hold this guy (Justin)!

He added: "But it’s fun, we really enjoy what we do. It’s not all that glamorous and like ‘oh you’re glitzy and gold’, we have very long days. We do shows like this (Radio Invasion), we do productions, we meet clients, we prepare for our shows, we go on everyday for long hours. It’s a lot of hard work but we are passionate to be in radio so it really pays off!"

Justin joked: "You know, no one else is going to pay you to talk unless you are a lawyer. But we’re not smart enough."

Since the emergence of SPH radio 91.3FM, their MediaCorp radio station has been facing tough competition.

"Having competitors boosts our creativity and forces us to think out of the box and work harder," said Justin. "I suppose when there’s no competition you’re just lulling. So, I hope that more competitors emerge!"

Vernon said that he hopes more aspiring radio deejays will try to enter the industry. Last year, a Diploma in Communications and Media Management student, Rustidy Abdul Rahman, emerged in the top five of "So You Wanna Be A DJ" radio competition.

"He was brilliant," Vernon said. "If you want to be a DJ, we’re going to hold a competition to search for a deejay during the second half of this year. You should try it out if you have the passion for it."

K-pop fever high in TP

By: Edward Porter

Korean pop, or K-pop, has driven millions of fans all over the world into a frenzied yｚ. Bands such as SNSD and Big Bang are worshipped by young girls around the world, who dream of taking to the stage with their idols.

The craze is also huge here, with the JYP & Alpha K-pop auditions attracting over 2,100 aspirants for a chance to be the next K-pop superstar.

JYP Entertainment manages big bands such as Wonder Girls and 2PM, while Alpha K formerly managed SNSD.

But has this trend been a hit with Temasek Polytechnic students?

Melissa Lim (middle), a Diploma in Leisure & Resort Management student Melissa Lim, 20, a big K-pop fan, said: “I think K-pop is pretty popular in TP. You can usually spot a handful of laptop screens playing music videos of K-pop stars such as 2NE1 and Big Bang.”

The final-year student has capitalised on K-pop’s popularity by teaching its dance moves, after picking them up years ago.

She said: “Many people think that K-pop is lame and cheesy, but it’s not. It requires a lot of interaction with people and charisma to pull off.”

Melissa, who changes a small cost for teaching the dance, added: “I know that K-pop is still popular because there is actually a demand for K-pop dance classes. I have taught people including students, teachers and even housewives.”

Dancing isn’t the only thing popular with K-pop fans.

Eileen Kwa, 24, a former Interior Architecture & Design student, who recently travelled to Malaysia to catch her favourite K-pop group BEAST, said she prefers to enter K-pop singing competitions instead.

Eileen said: “It’s really difficult to win because there are so many people fighting for the top prize.”

Kenneth Bay, a second-year student from the Diploma in Leisure & Resort Management who is also a K-pop dancer, said that K-pop should not be seen as a trend for girls.

He said: “Some people think that guys shouldn’t be listening to K-pop, but what’s wrong? There are good-looking girls and the music is catchy.”

K-pop’s popularity is set to grow in Singapore as more auditions to find the megastars are expected to be held here in the coming years. The first K-pop auditions held in 2010 saw 100 hopefuls putting their talents against each other.

The K-pop concept was created by Korean entrepreneur Lee Soo Man, in 1995. Lee, who owned S.M. Entertainment, managed the first girl and boy bands in several stage performances.