

Honouring infocomm role models and leaders at the SCS IT Leader Awards 2009

Inspired whilst attending an overseas college technopreneurship programme run by the National University of Singapore (NUS), Ms Winne Soh started her own company Dream Axis to develop virtual spaces. Under her leadership, Dream Axis successfully deployed a virtual campus project which has attracted more than 9,000 users since its launch. Besides building her own company, Ms Soh has found time to organise a nationwide competition to promote IT awareness, as well as to evangelise for the Machinima movement in Asia.



Winners of the SCS IT Leader Awards 2009.

Such leadership qualities are what the Singapore Computer Society (SCS, www.scs.org.sg) recognises and hopes to cultivate with its annual IT Leader Awards 2009, which were presented at the SCS Gala Dinner on 27 February 2009. Ms Soh won the IT Youth Award along with Mr Loke Lup Peng, an active leader at Temasek Polytechnic where he has organised events aimed at upgrading IT skills amongst his peers. Mr Loke also collaborated with the Microsoft Innovation Centre in Singapore to develop the innovative Road Monitoring Gadget using Singapore Land Transport Authority's video camera streams. This gadget has been very popular, as evidenced by its more than 17,000 downloads.

For these young people, winning an SCS IT Leader Award means a leg up in terms of networking opportunities. "Young entrepreneurs lack ties with the IT business community, and we have no access to venture capital," said Ms Soh. "But by being a part of an IT professional body such as the SCS, we can find ample networking opportunities – which is critical as these contacts bring in invaluable business experience, and they can help us understand how to leverage and build on our funds."

The IT Leader Awards, which were inaugurated in 1997, give recognition to the significant contributions of outstanding IT personalities in Singapore. This year's Hall of Fame Award was presented to Mrs Pearleen Chan who, over the course of a distinguished 40-year career, has made impressive contributions to the Singapore IT scene.

Mrs Chan's key achievements include the setting up of Singapore Network Services (SNS) to operate TradeNet, and the promotion of the use of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) to improve the efficiency of the supply chain. She was also the Chairman of the EDI for Administration, Commerce and Trade Board (EDIFACT), responsible for the widespread use of EDI and EDIFACT standards in Asia.

The toughest role she has had, however, was in laying the foundation for Singapore's e-Government initiatives. When the National Computer Board of Singapore (NCB) was formed in 1981, Mrs Chan was asked to spearhead the Civil Service Computerisation Programme (CSCP) – a plan that encompassed 32 sites with more than 600 professionals managing the data centres and developing the 300-400 applications needed. She delivered it successfully in 1988.

"My most challenging role was the implementation of the CSCP because of its scope - it spanned all Government agencies and ministries - its complexity, diversity and the lack of resources and enabling infrastructure to get the work done."

The winner of the IT Leader of the Year Award this year is Mr Robert Chew, who won for his various roles such as chairman of the IT Standards Committee (ITSC) and chairman of Singapore IT Federation's (SiTF) Wireless Chapter. A strong advocate of IT standards, he said, "Other countries like

Chapter. A strong advocate of IT standards, he said, "Other countries like China have been very interested in international standards, and I believe that Singapore would lose out if we do not participate and lead in IT standards development."

Winner of Young Professional of the Year is Mr Rakesh Kumar Gupta who won for his innovative and entrepreneurial vision in the setting up of Heulab, a leading educational software solutions company.

SCS IT Leader Awards 2009

IT Leader of the Year

Mr Robert Chew

Hall of Fame

Mrs Pearleen Chan

Young Professional of the Year

Mr Rakesh Kumar Gupta

IT Youth

Mr Loke Lup Peng

Ms Winne Soh Siow Chei

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