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Hackathons one way of solving future problems: Vivian Balakrishnan

Such events allow the creation of a Singapore where everyone can participate in generating solutions for the country with much higher levels of trust, says the Minister-in-Charge of the Smart Nation Programme Office.

By Loke Kok Fai
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Minister-in-Charge of the Smart Nation Programme Office Dr Vivian Balakrishnan with Hackathon winners. (Photo: Loke Kok Fai)

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SINGAPORE: Hackathons are one way of solving Singapore's future problems and should be adopted as a norm, said Minister-in-Charge of the Smart Nation Programme Office, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan on Friday (Jul 31).

Speaking at the award ceremony of Hackathon@SG 2015, which is the largest in Singapore to date, Dr Balakrishnan said: "This concept of sharing, empowering and allowing people to use their imagination to give us real solutions, innovative solutions to real problems - if it works, we'll buy it.

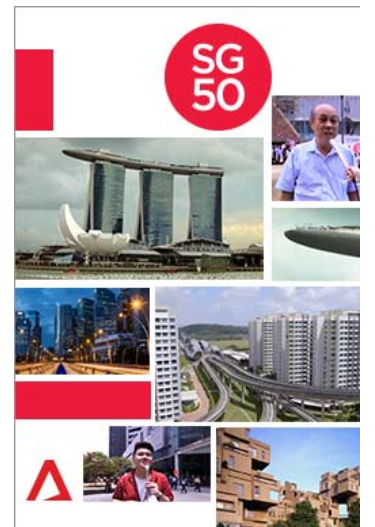
"We'll upscale it, we'll nationalise it in a sense. It allows us to create a Singapore in the future where many, many people, in fact everyone or anyone, can participate in generating solutions."

The event ran from Jul 25 to 26 and aimed at promoting creative and fresh perspectives on the use of Government data in developing apps, as well as to inspire the community to pick up programming skills and knowledge of IT standards. The event challenged its 1,100 participants from all walks of life to devise solutions in areas such as City Planning, Healthcare, Safety and Security, and Urban Living.

Calling the hackathon a "key inflection point" of the Smart Nation

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Initiative, Dr Balakrishnan said such events allow the creation of a Singapore where everyone can participate in generating solutions for the country with much higher levels of trust due to the sharing of data freely, openly and in real time.

Hackathon@SG 2015 involved 18 Government ministries and agencies, of which 12 offered more than 11,000 Government datasets to participating students, programmers, designers and entrepreneurs for the development of apps.

Dr Balakrishnan said many of the resulting apps developed also allow for more interaction between the Government, public and companies.

- CNA/xk

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