



NANYANG
TECHNOLOGICAL
UNIVERSITY
SINGAPORE

Centre for Information
Integrity and the Internet
Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information

What's IN-cubating?

APRIL – JUNE 2026



Prof Edson C. Tandoc Jr.
Director, IN-cube

Thank you for reading this edition of What's IN-cubating, the official newsletter of the Center for Information Integrity and the Internet (IN-cube).

The last quarter has been a busy and highly productive one for us. As IN-cube enters its fifth year, we are celebrating by revisiting our semi-annual survey, the **State of the Media and the Internet in Singapore (STIMS)**. This year, we launched a more comprehensive questionnaire designed to track how Singaporeans are using artificial intelligence (AI), and we look forward to sharing our findings with you very soon. We also released the Singapore Digital News Report results last month. As the Singapore partner of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University, IN-cube is proud to continue tracking local news consumption, media trust, and digital platform trends as part of this major global study.

Our researchers have also been active on the international stage. We recently presented our research at the **International Communication Association (ICA)** conference in Cape Town, South Africa, where several of our team members received prestigious top paper awards. Closer to home, our experts remained highly engaged during the academic break, sharing insights with the public through media interviews and commentaries on timely issues, including the impact of AI on youth.

Finally, we are hard at work preparing for the 2026 edition of our flagship fellowship program, the **Influence for Impact in Southeast Asia (i-SEA)**. Supported this year by the Temasek Foundation and the NTU ASEAN-China-India Mobility Fund, we are expanding our reach. We are inviting student content creators to join us as fellows, not only from SE Asia but also from China and India, as part of our ongoing mission to promote information integrity. Applications are currently open and will close on August 30, 2026.

I hope you enjoy reading about our latest research and updates in this issue. If you have any ideas, suggestions, or are keen to collaborate with us, please email us.

OVERVIEW



ICA Conference 2026

IN-cube researchers presented their work at the International Communication Association Conference in Cape Town on June 4–7, 2026, joining more than 3,000 communication scholars from around the world.



New Publications

Read highlights from IN-cube's latest publications, featuring new research on trust, algorithms, digital harms, influencer advertising, misinformation, and political engagement.



Digital News Report Singapore 2026

This year's edition of the Digital News Report provides insights into how rapid global developments and digital media are driving changes in news consumption, audience engagement, and perceptions of journalism.



Influence for Impact in Southeast Asia (i-SEA) 2026

IN-cube is now accepting applications for the second run of its popular i-SEA fellowship program. This is a hybrid program to train young content creators to build skills and awareness in information integrity.



New IN-cubators

Asst Prof Andrew Yee and Nanyang Asst Prof Renwen Zhang lead IN-cube's new labs, The Chihiro Lab and SWEET Lab. They focus on the use of social media and digital technologies and their effects on well-being.



Media Interview

IN-cube researchers share with the media their insights on AI trends, misinformation, and the challenges of navigating today's digital information environment.

ICA CONFERENCE 2026



The 76th Annual International Communication Association (ICA) is one of the world's leading gatherings for communication scholars. Its annual conference brings together researchers, educators, and industry experts to exchange ideas, present cutting-edge research, and foster global collaboration. This year, it was held in South Africa, with strong representation from IN-cube's students and researchers.

Joining the WKWSCI contingent, IN-cube members presented studies spanning news media trust, digital communication, digital platforms and cultures, AI and communication, geopolitical discourse, health communication, and computational communication research.



IN-cube team members also clinched top paper awards at the conference. IN-cube Director Edson Tandoc and PhD student Sofia Contreas-Yap co-authored a paper that won a top faculty paper award at the Journalism Studies Division. PhD student Malviya Shruti also received the Most Promising Student Paper Award at the conference.

ICA CONFERENCE 2026

Featured top papers

Journalism Studies Division Top Papers Session:

Distinguishing News Media Trust, Skepticism, and Cynicism Through Elaboration: Toward a Global Typology of Distrustors, Mistrustors, Automatic Trustors, and Engaged Trustors



A research study co-authored by PhD student Sofia Contreras-Yap and Prof. Edson Tandoc Jr. was awarded the top faculty paper in the Journalism Studies Division.

InfoSys: Promising Student Papers:

Are You in Control of Your Meetings?

Autonomy Balancing Fatigue and Vigour in a Videoconferencing World



An academic paper authored by PhD student Malviya Shruti won promising student paper award in the Information Systems division

NEW PUBLICATIONS



Who benefits from the idea of screen time?

IIN-cube is proud to share a new publication by Asst. Prof. Andrew Yee and Assoc Prof Brendan Luyt. In examining digital technology use among families with preschoolers, the authors found that parents often spoke about device use in guilt-ridden, shameful ways. Titled “Who benefits from the idea of screen time?”, the article investigates the beneficiaries of the screen time concept, given that caregivers and children are not the ones who benefit from it.

In the research article, they identify three major groups that benefit from the perpetuation of the screen time concept: technology companies, governments, and researchers. They also argue that examining who benefits from screen time reveals underlying power relations in this discourse and suggest three alternative, more equitable approaches for researchers and policymakers addressing children’s digital media use.

This publication emphasized that the screen time concept is inevitable and highlighted the urge to recognize this open space for imagining and pursuing alternatives that better serve the flourishing of children and families in the digital age. Read the full publication [here](#).

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Are We Ready for AI?

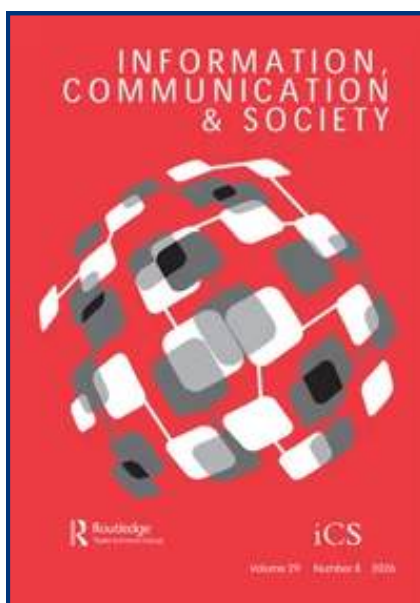
A Latent Profile Analysis Based on AI Readiness Among Singaporeans



Co-authored by PhD student Yang Tingting and IN-cube Assistant Director, Assoc. Prof. Kang Hyunjin, the study identified three subgroups among 512 Singaporean users by using latent profile analysis, showing distinct patterns in their AI-readiness. Also, the study discussed technology acceptance factors for AI-based applications that predicted users' likelihood of belonging to each subgroup. They also discovered that user profiles were associated with different levels of attitudinal and behavioral intentions. Both theoretical and practical implications are discussed in the publication. Read the full publication [here](#).

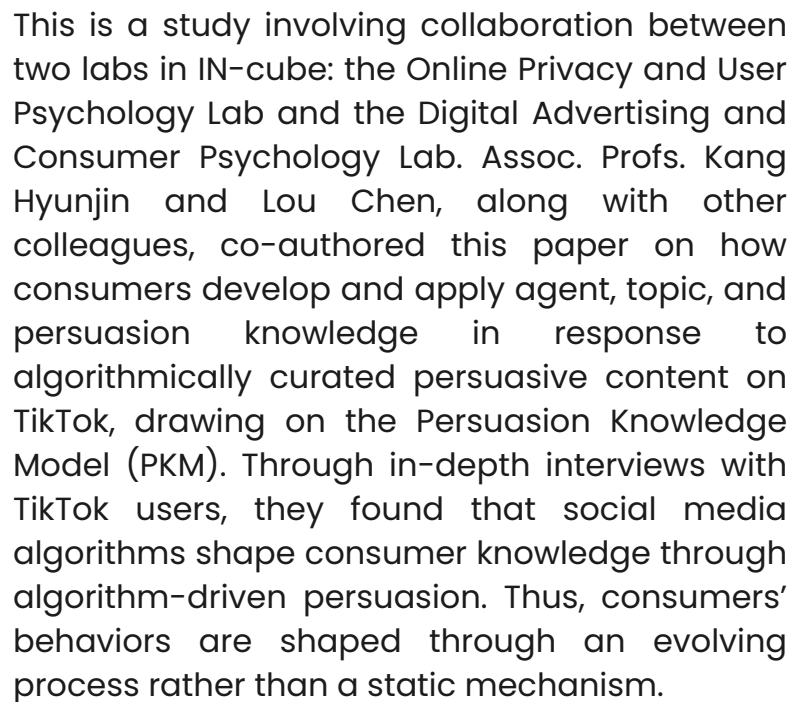
Emotional responses to privacy invasion on algorithmic social media:

Insights from in-depth interviews linking agency, emotions, and privacy



Led by Assoc. Prof. Kang Hyunjin, the study identifies primary emotional responses to privacy-invasive experiences on social media. Their findings show that two aspects of user agency are significant in explaining users' emotional experiences, and emotions can be linked to specific action tendencies. This study advances the understanding of how social media users experience and negotiate privacy-related power and control by examining their emotional responses to privacy-invasive practices on algorithmic social media platforms. This study also highlights meaningful cross-cultural differences in these responses. Read the full publication [here](#).

Persuasion knowledge in algorithmically curated advertising on social media: Insights from TikTok's For You page



The findings in this study provide practical guidance for advertisers seeking to leverage the algorithmic power of social media platforms to promote products or services in campaigns. Read the full publication [here](#).

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Political Identity Beyond Politics: The Messi-Ronaldo Preference Across 26 Countries

18 Pages • Posted: 29 May 2026 • Last revised: 20 May 2026

Saifuddin Ahmed

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Kokil Jaidka

National University of Singapore (NUS) - Department of Communications and New Media

Muhammad Ehab Rasul

National University of Singapore (NUS) - Centre for Trusted Internet and Community

Teresa Gil-López

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid - Department of Social Sciences; Universidad Carlos III de Madrid - Juan Linz Institute

Political Identity Beyond Politics:

The Messi-Ronaldo Preference Across 26 Countries

Led by Assoc. Prof. Saif Ahmed, head of the Social Media and Political Engagement Lab, the study surveyed 10,661 respondents across 26 countries to examine whether Messi vs Ronaldo preference is predicted by political ideology and related psychological variables.

Political identity increasingly organizes preferences far beyond politics, but nearly all evidence comes from the United States. Thus, in the study, they tested whether this reach is general using the Lionel Messi-Cristiano Ronaldo rivalry, a globally constant cultural stimulus that holds the object of evaluation fixed while the audience varies across institutional, cultural, and political contexts.

The study has been covered by nearly 460 verified media outlets across 72 countries in 47 languages. On social media, the findings generated over 15 million views on X/Twitter and over 20 million on TikTok. Fabrizio Romano — the world's most-followed football journalist — shared it on Facebook, garnering 285,000+ likes. Key press highlights include The New York Times, The Observer, Al Jazeera, L'Équipe, Marca, El Mundo, Gazzetta dello Sport, and Deutsche Welle.

A particularly notable milestone came on 23 June, when the study was cited in the Australian Parliament, where Opposition Whip Ben Small MP (Forrest, WA) delivered his entire adjournment speech around our findings, concluding that "it is no coincidence that our nation backs Ronaldo".

Read the full paper [here](#).

DIGITAL NEWS REPORT 2026

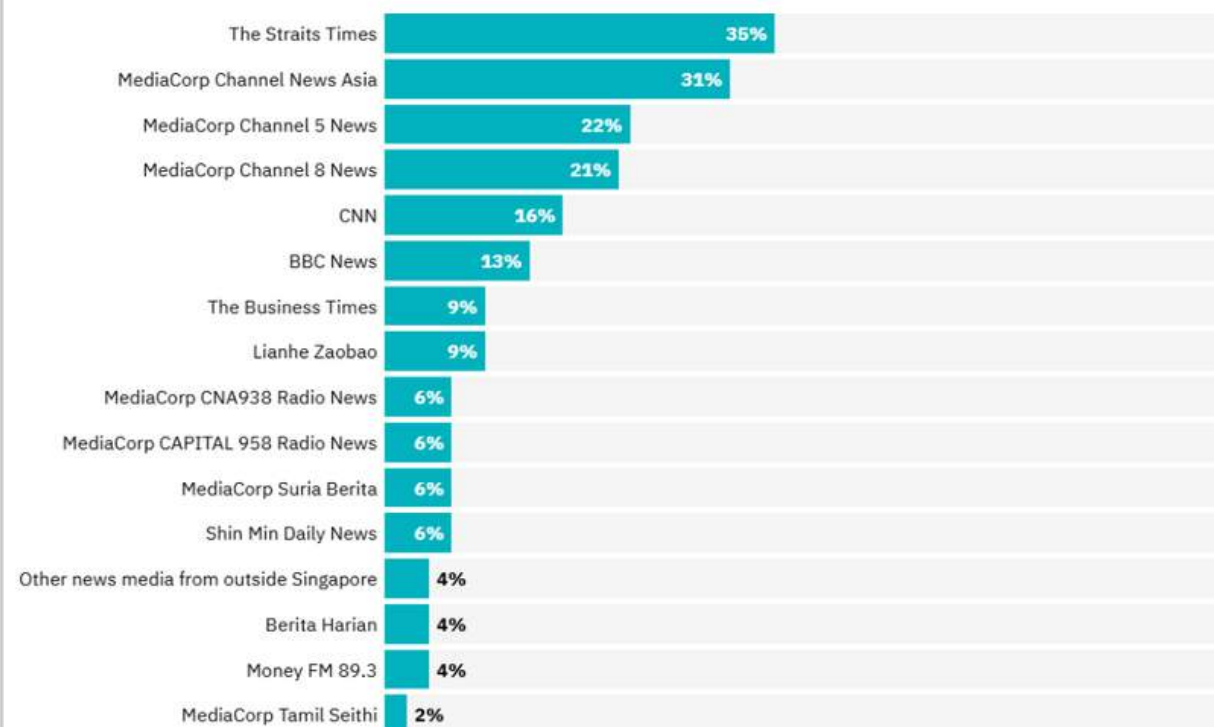
By Prof. Edson C. Tandoc Jr., Asst. Prof. Lydia Cheng, and Matthew Chew

Singapore's news landscape remains dominated by legacy news brands, which continue to command the highest audience use and trust within a tightly regulated market. However, significant shifts are underway behind this stability. As audience habits move steadily toward digital platforms, social media, and AI-mediated news consumption, media organisations are facing corporate restructuring, layoffs, and ownership changes.

Weekly reach offline

TV, RADIO, PRINT

Singapore



Source: [Digital News Report 2026](#)

[Get the data](#) • [Embed](#)

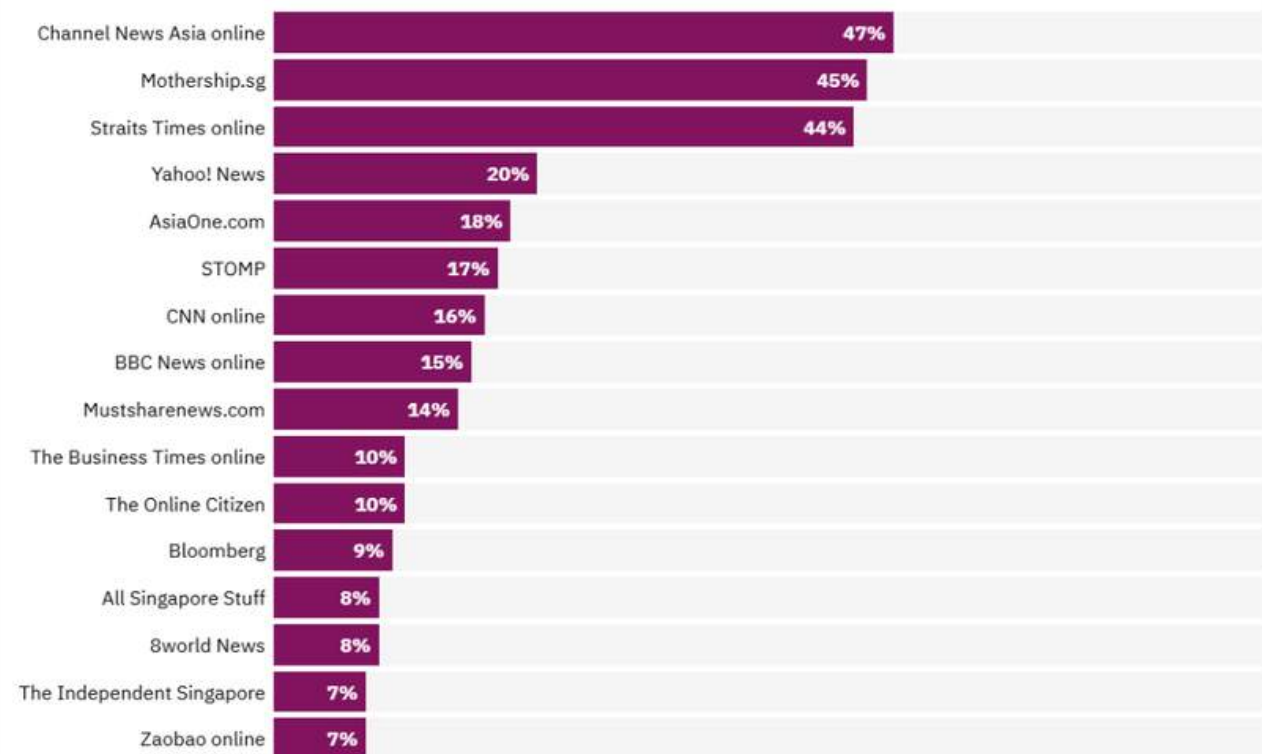


DIGITAL NEWS REPORT 2026

Weekly reach online

ONLINE

Singapore



Source: [Digital News Report 2026](#)

[Get the data](#) - [Embed](#)

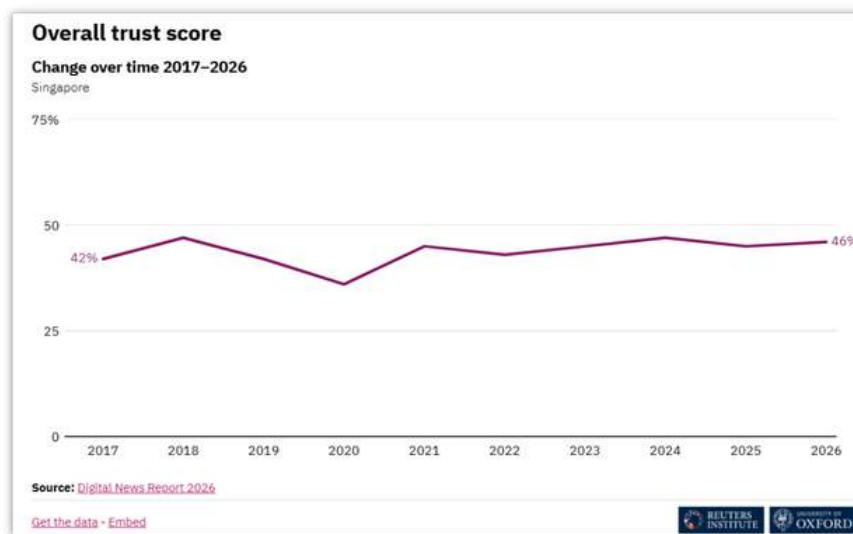


Channel News Asia (CNA) (47%) remains the most-used online news source in Singapore. Its portfolio includes the 24-hour news network CNA (used weekly by 31%), English-language Channel 5 (22%), and Mandarin-language Channel 8 (21%).

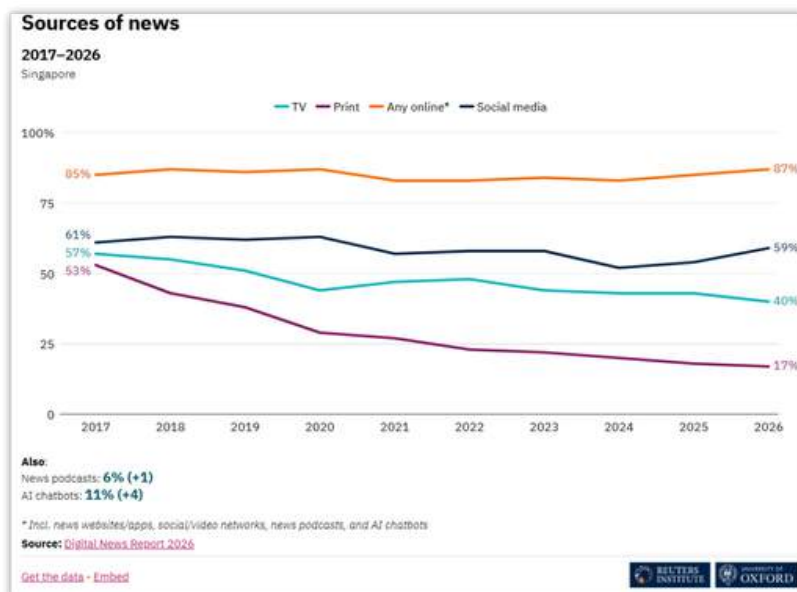
State-supported non-profit SPH Media Trust (SMT) publishes the country's newspaper of record, the English-language The Straits Times, whose website (44%) is the third most-used online news source in our data, behind digital-native Mothership.sg (45%).

DIGITAL NEWS REPORT 2026

Online (87%) and social media (59%) remain the most common ways to access news. Television (40%) and print (17%) have consistently declined in the past several years. Some also access news via AI chatbots (11%) and podcasts (6%). Most participants do not pay for news, with 17% saying they are willing to do so.



Overall trust in the news has been stable for the last three years. All major news brands recorded gains in brand trust. CNA (78%) and The Straits Times (77%) are the most trusted news brands in Singapore. The Online Citizen, which had been declared a DOL (Declared Online Location) since July 2023, also recorded a 3pp increase in its trust score (41%) from the previous year. Read the full report [here](#).



INFLUENCE FOR IMPACT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA 2026

**NANYANG
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Influence for Impact in Southeast Asia

I-SEA FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME 2026

Calling all student
Content Creators

Apply if you are:

- a content creator eager to advocate for information integrity in online spaces
- a higher education student from **Southeast Asia, China, or India**
- below 25 years old
- fluent or conversant in English

APPLY NOW

Applications close on **30 Aug 2026**

In partnership with:

TEMASEK
Foundation

NTU College of Humanities,
Arts and Social Sciences
ASEAN, China and India (ACI)
Mobility Fund



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFO

 iseafellowship.com

The Influence for Impact in Southeast Asia (i-SEA), IN-cube's flagship project, is back! Supported by TF and NTU ACI, the 2026 edition of the i-SEA program expands to students across Southeast Asia, China and India. The fellowship empowers participants to promote information integrity through expert-led training, cross cultural collaboration, and hands-on learning. Applications are now open until 30 August 2026. Click [here](#) to visit our website for more information or [apply](#) now.

THE CHIHIRO LAB



Asst. Prof. Andrew Yee is leading a new lab in WKWSCl. His research projects span three main areas: the effects of smartphones and social media on youth mental health, preschoolers' screen media experiences, and how video games shape identity and well-being.

The Chihiro Lab studies how children and young people engage with digital media, and how these experiences shape their development and well-being. Collectively, our work spans the motivations behind and effects of digital media use among young people, as well as the design systems, structures, and policies that mediate those effects. The goal is to understand how technology can be shaped to support healthier development. The lab takes its name from the protagonist of Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* where Chihiro is a child navigating an unfamiliar and overwhelming world with resilience - much like the young people at the center of our research.

SWEET LAB



SWEET

Social Well-being, Empathy, & Emerging Technology

Asst. Prof. Renwen Zhang heads the Social Well-being, Empathy, and Emerging Technologies Lab (SWEET). Her research examines how digital technologies mediate and impact well-being and social relationships. Her recent work focuses on the role of AI in mediating and augmenting interpersonal communication, as well as the processes and outcomes of human-AI relationships.

SWEET lab is dedicated to advancing human well-being and flourishing in the digital age. It investigates how digital technologies mediate and affect well-being and social relationships, and also designs technologies to promote social connection, empathy, and mental health. The team is dedicated to understanding the socio-emotional impact of emerging technology and developing responsible, human-centered AI systems that prioritize user safety and well-being.

IN THE NEWS

With IN-cube Assistant Director, Mr. Ian Tan



CNA interviewed IN-cube assistant director Mr. Ian Tan about his views on AI use in Singapore. He discussed whether educators, fresh graduates, and employers are aligned in preparing for an AI-enabled future in a recent CNA Deep Dive Podcast episode.

In the podcast, he noted that AI adoption varies across industries and companies. Also, he emphasized that AI shouldn't be blindly used in every class, and whether a fresh graduate is 'AI-savvy' depends on the industry and company they are entering. Furthermore, he shared his personal policy on the use of AI with his students. He highlighted that the AI literacy problem will naturally be fixed as technology advances. During the interview, he also introduced the concept of productive struggle. Click [here](#) to watch the full podcast.



Mr. Ian Tan also spoke to CNA about further analysis of how the skills needed to humanize AI use will impact the future of jobs. He discussed how judgment and creativity can be taught, the skills needed, and how the workforce can change accordingly to prepare workers for AI changes beyond schools.

He mentioned the importance of good judgment and creativity while using AI tools during the interview. Moreover, he advised using AI regularly at work to address real-world problems. He also emphasized the importance of being open-minded and flexible, and suggested that mastering one's own domain is key to making better AI judgments. Click [here](#) to watch the full interview.

IN THE NEWS

With IN-cube assistant director, Mr. Ian Tan

CNA938 Rewind - #TalkBack: how do you know your news wasn't written by AI?

CNA938 Rewind

AI is transforming newsrooms around the world - helping journalists process information more efficiently, from transcribing interviews and summarising documents to analysing large amounts of data. But as AI becomes more deeply embedded in the news process, how do you know the news you're reading hasn't been written by AI? Daniel Martin discusses with Ian Tan, Lecturer, Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, NTU.

▶ 20 min



Mr. Ian Tan was also interviewed by CNA938's Talkback and discussed how people can navigate an online environment increasingly filled with AI-generated content. Drawing on his background in both journalism and IT, he emphasized the importance of fact-checking and triangulation, a journalistic practice in which information is verified across multiple sources before being accepted as true. He noted that critical thinking and verification are the best ways to avoid being misled by AI-generated fake news that looks convincing. The discussion also highlighted how professional news organizations undergo editorial and fact-checking processes to ensure the news they publish is accurate. Click [here](#) to listen to the original audio and [here](#) to read the full transcript.

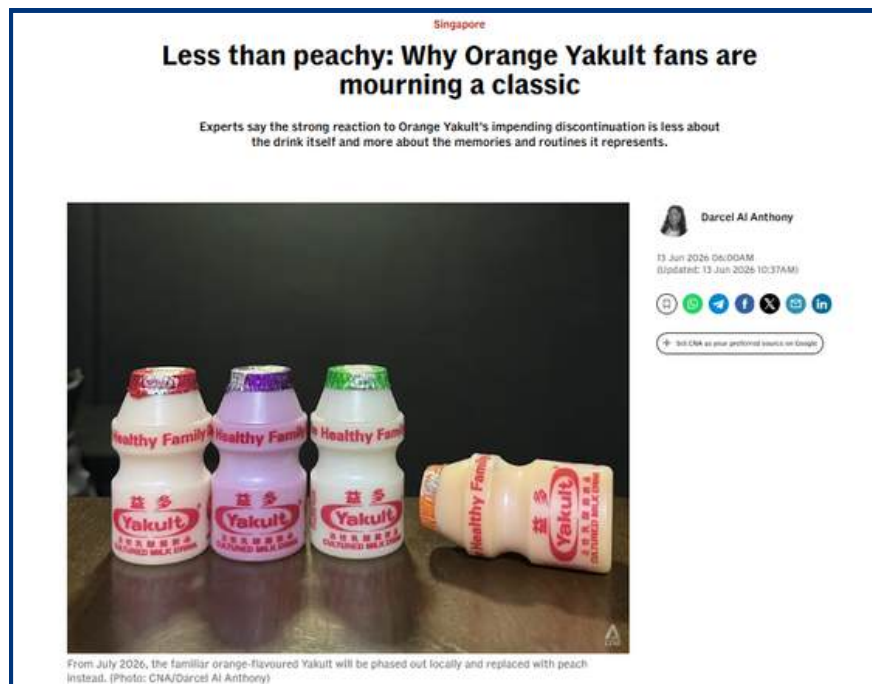


In a recent interview on MoneyFM 89.3's Reset with Lynlee, Mr. Ian Tan also discussed the growing role of AI in both education and the workplace. He highlighted that, even though many organizations encourage the adoption of AI, some employees remain hesitant to openly share their use of these tools because they worry it may lead to higher expectations for work or an additional workload.

He also emphasised that coding skills are not necessary to use AI tools effectively. Instead, AI literacy is about understanding AI's limitations, recognizing AI's capabilities, and learning to use AI tools practically and responsibly. Moreover, he encourages his students to apply AI tools to their studies to support learning. He noted that students should use AI to explore ideas, deepen their understanding, and improve their thinking skills, rather than relying entirely on AI tools for their assignments. Throughout the interview, he emphasized the importance of using AI thoughtfully and making it a tool that enhances one's own learning and decision-making. Click [here](#) to listen to the original audio and [here](#) to read the full transcript.

IN THE NEWS

By Assoc Prof. Chen Lou



In a recent CNA article, Assoc Prof. Lou explores the intense online reaction upon Yakult Singapore's decision to discontinue its classic orange-flavored drink. The announcement introduces a new peach variant to replace the original line-up and has left many consumers mourning the loss of a beloved childhood staple. Some experts highlight that such strong emotional responses are more about the power of nostalgia, personal memories, and a natural resistance to routine disruption.

Drawing on consumer psychology, she explains that products can take on greater value in consumers' minds once their availability is threatened. Phasing out a well-loved item transforms it into a widely shared story, sparking consumer interest and media coverage that outshines traditional advertising. While Yakult attributed the transition to factory production constraints and rising consumer demand for peach, industry experts caution that companies must navigate such shifts carefully.

While engineered scarcity can generate powerful publicity, such as iconic discontinuations like Coca-Cola's New Coke or McDonald's seasonal items, brand trust relies on authentic engagement to ensure consumers do not feel alienated by the loss of their favorite nostalgic treats. Click [here](#) to read the full news article.

IN THE NEWS

By Asst Prof. Andrew Z. H. Yee



Recently, Asst. Prof. Andrew Yee published an op-ed about 'How about a social media ban for adults instead?' in The Straits Times. In his article, he took a creative approach to the debate over social media, suggesting that governments should ban adults from social media platforms rather than teenagers. He argues that most of the biggest online harms, such as scams, disinformation, toxic behavior, and exploitation, are driven by adults rather than children. Instead of focusing on blanket bans, he believes that policymakers should address the design of social media platforms, which often prioritise engagement over users' well-being.

He also argues that children should be treated as active users who can benefit from online communities. Lastly, he noted that the solution lies in creating safer, better-designed digital spaces rather than simply removing children from them. Click [here](#) to read the full article.

Through these interviews, IN-cube's team shared their research to help the public understand how our modern digital world is changing. In essence, they are showing how digital trends, AI technologies, and misinformation are shaping our daily lives, schools, and workplaces.

About IN-cube

IN-cube stands for Centre for Information Integrity and the Internet, a research centre at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. It aims to contribute to promoting information integrity in online spaces, especially in an era of misinformation and disinformation, through timely, rigorous, and relevant research that links academics, policymakers, industry players, and the public. Learn more about IN-cube [on our site](#).