

Women possess skills to succeed in AI, cyber security: Josephine Teo

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Women possess the skills to succeed in the overlapping fields of artificial intelligence (AI) and cyber security that are in their nascent stage, said Minister for Communications and Information Josephine Teo on Saturday.

Speaking at the Ladies in Cyber Symposium organised by the Association of Information Security Professionals (AiSP) at Capital Tower, Mrs Teo said that while nefarious actors can use AI to break apart cyber-security measures, AI can also be applied in threat containment and identifying suspicious patterns of behaviour.

AI itself is also subject to cyber risk, as it can be tampered with and produce undesirable output, she added.

She said that how the fields of AI

and cyber security come together is an exciting area that currently does not have clear answers.

"Because everything is still at the developmental stage, there is really no reason why a person applying their minds and willing to invest time and effort to acquire the skills cannot over time become very, very well established.

"But it takes effort, there is no easy way of getting it done. It takes hard work. It takes perseverance. It also takes curiosity and a sense of adventure. To my mind, these are attributes that women can be well suited to."

Mrs Teo, who is also the Minister-in-charge of Cyber Security and the Smart Nation initiative, was speaking during a panel discussion that also featured Ensign InfoSecurity group chief executive Tammie Tham and Singapore Management University professor emeritus of finance (practice) An-



From left: Minister for Communications and Information Josephine Teo with Acronis' senior vice-president Aliona Geckler and corporate communication assistant Chia Seok Cheng during the Ladies in Cyber Symposium at Capital Tower on Saturday. Mrs Teo was taking a multitasking abilities test while on an exercise bike during her tour of the booth. ST PHOTO: GIN TAY

nie Koh.

Ms Sherin Lee, who is vice-president of the AiSP, moderated the session.

The theme for this year's Ladies in Cyber Symposium – which is in its second year – was "Pioneering AI And Cyber Security: Women Charting The Course".

Ms Tham highlighted how AI is used by the "bad guys", citing the example of how AI chatbot ChatGPT has been used to make phishing e-mails look more authentic.

But she also noted how AI, which has the ability to make sense of a vast amount of data, has the capability to tackle cyber attacks.

"Even though it is a mouse and cat race, it is very challenging and very interesting," she said.

Ms Tham also encouraged girls and women in the audience to join the cyber-security field.

"Imagine you are the virtual

cop... we are the good people in the cyberspace. We earn our keep, we keep the cyberspace safe not just for ourselves. It's for our family, it's for everybody.

"So it's kind of noble in that sense. It's a higher calling."

In her opening speech, Ms Lee said that in early 2022, the Ladies in Cyber Charter set a goal to empower and mentor 3,000 aspiring women cyber talents by end-2023.

She said: "Today, I am happy to announce that we have surpassed it, with more than 4,000 talented women now part of this initiative. Among them, many are pioneering the course of cyber AI, and in cyber security, charting the course for future generations.

"However, we will continue to strive towards our goal of encouraging more women to join this field."

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