Unlocking a Passion for Cybersecurity

Growing up, Emil had a natural affinity for mathematics but struggled with other subjects. His interest in IT and cybersecurity was sparked by movies and TV shows about hackers and digital forensics. This passion led him to pursue a Diploma in Infocomm Security Management (DISM) at SP, a decision that profoundly shaped his future.

“My journey to DISM was driven by my organic foundational interests and strengths in maths and technology. It stood out because it seemed more forward-looking, especially as our lives are increasingly intertwined with technology.”

A Valuable Experience at SP

Emil recalls his time at SP as being filled with enriching experiences and invaluable mentorship. His lecturers provided crucial support and early industry exposure, including attending conferences, participating in competitions, and planning his educational path after SP.

“They were deeply invested in our growth, not just academically but also in terms of our careers and education beyond SP. This encouraged me to think about my future and career prospects.”

One of Emil’s most cherished memories was participating in Capture-the-Flag (CTF) competitions in Singapore and Malaysia. These experiences fostered a proactive and entrepreneurial mindset.

“We were exposed to various competitions that involved hacking and defending systems. We often competed against professionals, which was both challenging and exciting. The competitions taught me to seize opportunities and think beyond fixed curriculums.”

FYP: The Game Changer

Emil’s Final Year Project (FYP) was another significant milestone. He worked on a project related to Honeypots, which are systems designed to attract and study attackers’ behaviour to develop defensive countermeasures. This project, inspired by his internship at DISO National Labs, allowed him to transition from being a student to applying his knowledge in a practical setting.

“It was a humbling experience, but it taught me valuable project management and teamwork skills. Working on the FYP with my peers and supervisor was instrumental in shaping my approach to the industry.”

Higher Learning, Higher Achievements

After graduating from SP, Emil pursued further studies at Royal Holloway, University of London, where he obtained a BSc in Computer Science and an MSc in Information Security. SP’s practical curriculum had sparked his curiosity about the underlying maths and science powering technology, which prompted him to deepen his knowledge.

Emil’s time at Royal Holloway also nurtured his entrepreneurial spirit. He founded the university’s Computing Society, leading it to win several awards. His efforts were recognised when he was invited to meet Queen Elizabeth II.

“My university experience at Royal Holloway was probably some of the best years of my life. The academic environment expanded my mind about the underlying maths and science of computing. This, coupled with the technical skills, gave me a competitive edge in the job market.”

Giving Back, Looking Forward

Emil’s commitment to giving back is evident in his role as an adjunct lecturer at SP’s School of Computing. Sharing his experiences and knowledge, he aims to inspire and equip the next generation of cybersecurity professionals.

“The lecturers at SP had a profound impact on my personal and professional development. This is my way of giving back to the institution that played a pivotal role in my career.”

He also co-founded Cyber Youth Singapore (CYS) and other initiatives to foster a collaborative environment and drive industry innovation: “My proactive and entrepreneurial mindset, cultivated at SP, continues to guide my efforts.”

Tips for Tomorrow’s Tech Leaders

Emil advises future SP alumni to embrace continuous learning and adaptability, engage actively with the industry, and explore different facets of their field.

“Stay curious, be proactive, and remain adaptable. These qualities will prepare you for a dynamic and fulfilling career.”

For Emil, success is defined by the positive impact he has on others and his contributions to the broader community. Looking ahead, he hopes to continue contributing to the evolving cybersecurity landscape, seizing new opportunities, and driving positive change.

Emil Tan
Head Crew & Co-Founder, Division Zero (Div0)
Diploma in Infocomm Security Management (2009)
An SP Alumna’s Journey to Valedictorian

Fatin Nur Syaza Rosli’s fascination with the maritime sector began when she heard captivating stories from her senior at SP, which eventually led her to pursue SP’s Diploma in Maritime Business. Throughout her studies, Fatin consistently excelled academically, achieving the highest GPA and earning multiple awards. Among these accolades was recognition from the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), which honoured her as one of the top three students in her cohort. Recently, Fatin was awarded the prestigious Gold Medal by the MPA for her outstanding achievements. Her determination and dedication culminated in her selection as valedictorian at her graduation. Reflecting on her success, Fatin shared, “Every day I spend at least two hours reading my notes to remember what I learned in school.” She plans to further her studies at Plymouth University.

Fatin is among the more than 5,400 diploma, advanced diploma, and specialist diploma graduates from SP this year. With this cohort, SP’s alumni network has grown to over 235,000 former students, making it the largest among polytechnics in Singapore.

SP’s Maritime Students Share Their Academic Journeys and Aspirations

SP continues to nurture exceptional talent in the maritime sector, with students excelling in various disciplines and overcoming unique challenges. SP Diploma in Nautical Studies student Joline Lee Rui En shared her 12-month sea internship experience, embracing challenges in a male-dominated field. She noted that her leadership skills as vice-captain of SP’s Handball girls’ team enhanced her maritime journey by improving her communication and emotional management during high-stress situations. Meanwhile, SP Maritime Business student Fatin Nur Syaza discussed her prestigious Gold Medal award from the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and her passion for sustainability and operational efficiency in the maritime sector. Fatin’s dedication to these principles is evident in her academic and extracurricular pursuits. Additionally, Javeed Shah Halith, a Specialist Diploma in Maritime Superintendency student, talked about the challenges of juggling work, studies, and family life. As a father of two, Javeed pursued his part-time studies while working, emphasising that adult learners can effectively manage the demands of further education alongside family responsibilities by creating strong familial bonds and ensuring mutual support at home.

SP Graduate, 56, Among 600 Mature Students Graduating from Polytechnics

Among the approximately 25,000 students who graduated from polytechnics in 2024, 600 were over the age of 40, according to the Ministry of Education (MOE). This number has remained consistent over the past few years. The MOE hopes to see “greater training participation among those aged 40 and above” with the newly announced SkillsFuture Level-Up Programme, which includes a SkillsFuture credit top-up of $4,000 for mid-career Singaporeans starting in May. One notable graduate from SP is Mr Mohamed Nazi. Almost 30 years after obtaining an Industrial Technician Certificate, Mr Nazi returned to the classroom. Encouraged by his daughter, whom he had urged to pursue a master’s degree, the 56-year-old technical officer in the rail industry accepted her challenge: “I’ll do it if you do it too.” They pursued their studies together, and after more than two years, Mr Nazi graduated with a diploma in engineering, specialising in rapid transport technology.

SP Graduate, 56, Among 600 Mature Students Graduating from Polytechnics

Source: The Straits Times, 19 May 2024

Source: Berita Mediacorp, 21 May 2024

Source: MaritimeONE, 5 Jun 2024

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