To tweet or not to tweet
DON’T BE AN ANGRY BIRD

CLASS ACTS
MEET PROF CONGENIALITY, MS NO-NONSENSE, PROF SPLENDID AND PROF COOL

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?
ENTREPRENEURS WHO ARE ACTING ON THEIR DREAMS

PEH-BACK TIME!
BEST ACTRESS JOANNE PEH ON HER NTU DAYS, SHOWBIZ AND SOCIAL MEDIA
NTU. One of the fastest-rising universities in the global Top 100.

A champion of interdisciplinary pursuits, NTU President Professor Bertil Andersson believes the next big thing can come about when people get talking. Get your ideas bubbling in a vibrant cosmopolitan campus and you may discover solutions to the challenges of our time.

With the implementation of NTU’s new campus master plan, there will be even more opportunities to build connections, share ideas and shape the future. New infrastructure, from large learning hubs to novel shared spaces, will give you all the room and inspiration you need to discuss, debate, and discover that eureka moment.

Be the voice of the future. At NTU, we go from dialogue to action.
FACT: An NTU engineer is responsible for launching the careers of MediaCorp stars Zoe Tay and Joanne Peh. Mr Chang Long Jong, MediaCorp’s Deputy CEO, is one of the many success stories featured in the new book One Degree, Many Choices. It aims to engineer interest in the subject by sharing the achievements of the first batch of engineering students from Nanyang Technological Institute, NTU’s predecessor institution. Read about their lives and see how far an engineering degree can take you. We bet you’ll never look at engineers the same way again.

If you often find yourself nodding off while driving, you’ll want to get your hands on the sleepiness-o-metre. Invented by researchers at the School of Electrical & Electronic Engineering, it can tell if drivers are sleepy by the speed at which they blink while driving. A camera monitors the eyes to see if they have been closed for too long or if the rate of blinking slows. A warning is sent if over-tiredness is detected – a wake-up call that could save your life. The system has a 97-percent accuracy rate in spotting people with their eyes closed.

By September, NTU students can be part of the future of journalism at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication & Information. A $500,000 prototype newsroom of the future is being built there to improve the delivery of news by integrating facilities for producing newspapers, magazines and radio broadcasts. A joint initiative with the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), NewsplexAsia is WAN-IFRA’s first such hub in the region and the fourth of its kind in the world.

Our Science Superheroes...

More than 500 junior college and polytechnic students came face to face with the world’s best brains, including Dr Craig Venter, famous for being one of the first to sequence the human genome and for creating the world’s first artificial life form. They were at the Molecular Frontiers Symposium at NTU, where they also picked the brains of Nobel laureates and learnt about the latest trends and technologies in biomedicine.

Why do sea levels rise? What goes on inside an active volcano and how do we deal with its risks? Can we better predict earthquakes so more lives can be spared? A $5 million research endowment from insurance company AXA will boost research at NTU’s Earth Observatory of Singapore, which is studying these natural hazards and two others just as relevant to Southeast Asia: tsunamis and climate change. Renowned geologist Prof Kerry Sieh (pictured), who heads the observatory, also plans to use AXA’s first endowment in Asia to come up with a uniquely Singaporean way of teaching Earth Sciences.

Congratulations to these winners

VISITING PROFESSOR PROF MICHAEL GRÄTZEL
A key figure in NTU’s sustainable energy initiatives, he received the 2012 Albert Einstein World Award of Science for inventing and refining his breakthrough Dye Solar Cell technology, best described as “artificial photosynthesis”.

COMPUTER ENGINEERING STUDENT ZHANG LIZI
He was named IT Youth 2012 at the IT Leader Awards for developing TruRank, a computer software algorithm that calculates the trustworthiness of netizens and their online postings.

TWO TEAMS OF MECHANICAL & AEROSPACE ENGINEERING STUDENTS
Facing up to stiff competition from more than 90 teams, they placed first in both the Best Navigational Flight Design and Best Fundamental Design (Motor) categories of the 2012 Taiwan Unmanned Aircraft Design Competition.

To these winners...

TOPS FOR ACCOUNTING IN ASIA
NTU’s accounting research has been ranked first in Asia and seventh in the world. The university is also the best globally in auditing research. To top it off, Prof Tan Hui Tong and his Nanyang Business School colleague Prof Clive Lennox are Asia’s top two accounting researchers.
Campus Buzz

What Say You?

NTU’s sprawling campus is dotted with canteens, cafes and lounges, and various other places to chill out and spot head-turners. Christopher Ong asks some undergraduates: where are the best places to people watch?

“Canteen B. It’s frequented by business students who are usually well-dressed, especially when they have presentations.”
SIA MING SHAUN ARTS

“The Global Lounge is a good place to just relax and observe the many people coming and going.”
LEONG HUI YUN ENGINEERING

“The North Spine. I think there are more guys there compared with the South Spine, which has mostly girls from the nearby School of Humanities & Social Sciences.”
ELYSSA ARTS

“The fast food outlets at the North Spine, where there’s often a large crowd, including the sporty people from the National Institute of Education. I look out for those who dress well and also try to spot friends from other schools.”
MOHAMMAD FAZLI SYUFIANDI SCIENCE

“The Nanyang Business School. It has plenty of good-looking and well-dressed people.”
ALVIN LEOW AND CANDICE ONG BUSINESS

FREE AND PLENTY “Research on happiness shows that things that are free and plentiful in life, like friends and family, have the greatest impact on our happiness, as compared with things that are expensive and require a lot more effort to attain, such as nice cars, big houses, and even money itself.”

MONEY NOT ENOUGH “After we have acquired money and status, we don’t spend a lot of time thinking about them on a daily basis. For example, when we get a pay rise, we may be happy from spending our day thinking about what it could buy, but that usually doesn’t last. Soon, our attention will drift away…”

DON’T FOCUS ON KEEPING UP WITH THE TANS “The pursuit of status is a zero-sum game. When there’s a winner, there’s always a loser. And since we can’t keep others from improving, it is quite likely that the race to the top will never end and we’ll be stuck on what is known as the happiness treadmill. So, fill your days with the things that make you happy, regardless of whether other people have the same things as you do, such as a hobby or spending time with your loved ones.”

TRY RATHER THAN BUY “If you really need to spend money to be happy, spend it on an experience, such as a holiday overseas, so you can try new things. Or simply spend it on someone else. The good feelings that come from these types of activities last a lot longer.”

SPREAD GOODWILL “People tend to forget that good social relationships are extremely important for our happiness. Many of us take our relations with others for granted. To lead a truly happy life, don’t neglect your friends and family.”
Her life and career has been a combination of part escape and part reality, from getting feted by fans to being slammed by the critics, from being lavished with endorsements to being wedged between energy-sapping filming schedules, and from her cyberspace musings to being a target of gossip.

"The pen is very powerful," observes Joanne Peh – television star, advertiser's dream, blogger and oh, an NTU communication graduate.

"Journalists have the power to shape opinions. And these days, you just can't keep track of digital media. Suddenly, everyone's a journalist."

So far, so good. By her own admission, she loved the journalism courses taught at the Wee Kim Wee School, especially the modules on writing, which is a subject that has given her the latitude to express her thoughts and a front row seat into how words can be bent to make headlines.

Told in advance about her hectic schedule, the HEY! team hoped for the best but was ready for the worst that the interview, which took place on a Saturday evening at MediaCorp with the concrete-coloured skies belching out rain, would be a brief one before she scooted off for her next appointment.

But Joanne is eloquent, candid, sassy and thankfully, ready to offer a great deal of insight in a lengthy conversation on what makes her tick, what makes her cross and what she makes of her rising stock in showbiz.

CHEST PAINS She wants, quite literally, to get something "off her chest".

She says: "Today, some people will be saying that they are enhanced and the next, my chest size has shrunk. Some days, they’ll be saying that I’m seeing someone. And if you have noticed, all these things are not quoted by me. It’s always a source. What matters is that those who really know me will know that the rumours are all not true. When these rumours die down, the joke will be on the writer."

After all, the tall actress with miles and miles of legs has the inside track on how the media works.

A slew of As and Bs ensured that she graduated with Second Class Upper Honours from the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication & Information in 2006. She wanted to make her mark in print journalism before MediaCorp came a-calling during her final year, and in a show of grim determination, balanced showbiz and studies.

Joanne explains: "I was very clear in what I wanted, and that was not to mess up my studies. If I put my mind to do something, I am able to focus and get it done. Sacrifices were made, I turned down acting jobs and perhaps stepped on some toes. But education is important to me. It’s something that was inculcated in me by my parents. A degree is something to fall back on."

She describes herself as "an ordinary student, just like everybody else" during her four years on campus. Despite living in Halls 1 and 9, she faithfully attended lectures and kept a low-profile, and is glad she was neither ostracised nor given the VIP treatment.

But what lights her fire is journalism, even if that flame was nearly snuffed out early on.

Her dimply smile evident throughout, she recalls: "I am an opinionated person and I..."
Wee Kim Wee Legacy Fund donated to the school's Wee Kim Wee School, who the founding Dean of the scholarship is named after Abroad Scholarship.

Eddie C Y Kuo Study stints with the Professor same through overseas School of Communication & at the Wee Kim Wee School for a year before relocating to Seattle. Joanne chirps: "She was so inspiring, so articulate and such a cool professor. She's young, she speaks her mind and she's like a friend to her students. I guess I'm a bit like Dorothy. I still follow her on Twitter today."

RIGHT UP HER ALLEY Talk to her about her Final Year Project, and her pride swells.

Turning her journalistic eye on the hutong of Beijing, the narrow alleys of a traditional Chinese neighbourhood, she elected to work alone as she didn't want to burden her classmates due to her filming schedule.

"It is a part of China's history, just like the kampung of Singapore, and I wanted to document it before it's gone. It was 2008 then and there was a lot of development as the country was preparing for the Beijing Olympics," she recalls.

"It took me several trips, and one month in total, to get the project done. Some places disappeared even though I was there just two weeks before."

Picking her best photographs, booking the exhibition venue, sorting out the catering, sending the invites, drafting the press release and working 20 hours a day, the long lonely slog was just a prelude to her career in showbiz, where each stretch of filming can last an entire day.

But, she believes that despite having majored in communication studies, one cannot really be prepared for the turbulent worlds of entertainment, even with two Best Actress wins (2009 and 2012) under her designer belt and being named Most Popular Newcomer of 2004 and Top 10 Most Popular Female Artistes in 2004, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

"There's no guidebook for it. So you just come in, bang yourself around a bit, get hurt in the process and pick yourself up," she intones.

"Even now, I have no inkling how a new show is going to be received by the audience. And this is a feeling that isn't just exclusive to the newbies; the veterans feel it as well.

On handling negative comments from the media and netizens, she says: "It's never easy to read bad press and to stomach that. I've learnt not to read too much into it. If the criticism is cruel, I have learnt to ignore it. If it's constructive, I'd say thank you very much."

Speaking about the fickle and fleeting nature of fame and the flip side of stardom has got Joanne philosophical and pensive as the interview takes another corner.

She rationalises: "In showbiz, you can never know whether people will continue supporting you. I've always wanted to further my studies and make use of what I've studied."

Psychology intrigues Joanne as she wants to better understand human behaviour, while philosophy fascinates the thespian as "it helps me see things from both sides of the fence". Law is another subject that she is fixated with. "I love the discipline behind lawyers, the process they go through to defend their cases, the hours they put in, the research, the analysis and how they present their statements," she says, indicating that she is keen to unleash all the horsepower in her cranium one day in courtrooms.

And before this interview draws to a close, she has an idea for the Wee Kim Wee School, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, on how to refine its curriculum.

Joanne suggests: "I would like to see a lot more interaction between the school and MediaCorp to draw more relevance into the course and let students make use of what they have studied."

"For example, NTU students can work at the station and earn credits if their work is shown in the company's portals. That will allow the students' ideas to be heard and let the masses judge."

Her idea may sound a tad radical to some in throwing the newbies into the deep end to let them sink or swim. But that is the essence of Joanne Peh, who plunged into showbiz without any formal training in acting and is now one of the queens of Caldecott Hill.

And she did it while still remaining a person who calls a spade a spade and who shoots from her (svette) hip.
Add him ON Facebook
by Lester Kok

Assoc Prof David Butler has 1,668 friends on Facebook, regularly hobnobs with celebrities and is well-versed in Singlish. He uses Facebook to let his students know about job openings and as Chief Judge of the annual National Science Challenge, has been avidly promoting the joys of science to secondary school students on television.

The British professor from the School of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering is such a hit that he is sought after by students each year to supervise their final-year projects.

“Facebook makes me easily accessible. My students say it’s easier to get hold of me through Facebook than through email and they like it as they can be less formal with me on social media,” says the NTU professor who has about 1,500 students out of the 1,668 friends added on his Facebook account.

Initially, Prof David Butler’s purpose of having a Facebook account was to keep in touch with his friends around the world.

“Some of my students found me on Facebook and added me, so I thought, why not? In fact, having so many friends there means information gets shared faster and easier.”

“It is a useful marketing tool. I use it to send out news to the students such as graduation dinners or programmes. For example, I was recently approached by a company which has three job openings and so far, four former students have approached me to express their interest.”

With his popularity amongst students, it is no surprise that the good-humoured professor gets many requests from students each year to supervise their final-year projects. He limits the number of teams to ensure he doesn’t sacrifice quality time with them.

Friendly and outgoing, he says: “I don’t put up any barriers. I’m quite happy to sit down with students and have a chat over coffee.”

“The occasional use of colloquial language in his interactions with students also helps to put them at ease with him. The 40-year-old says: “When I teach, I use a little Singlish from time to time for good effect. I like Singlish – it is an efficient version of the English language. For example,
**The Iron Lady**

*by Wang Meng Meng*

One by one, as the students troop into the classroom, they greet their lecturer by her first name. This is how Ms Hedwig Alfred from the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication & Information keeps things real.

“I come from the industry and I want my courses to be as newsroom-like as possible,” she says.

That is why students simply call her “Hedwig”, just like how journalists address their editors by their first name.

Demanding and inspiring in equal measure, authoritative but not authoritarian, strict yet popular, the 56-year-old who preaches tough love puts her “disciples” through journalism’s version of Boot Camp. Think: Dead Poets Society meets The Devil Wears Prada. And her students love her for it, giving her the votes that recently helped her garner the Nanyang Award for Excellence in Teaching for her terrific work as an educator.

“It’s true, I’m tough,” the Division of Journalism and Publishing’s drill sergeant tells HEY! “I work my students hard, I pressure them a lot, but many of them learn something.”

Transforming the classroom into a newsroom, the budding journalists are not allowed to sit at the back. And during staged press conferences, they are not given toilet breaks.

“What if the newsmaker says something unexpected? Or, as the students troop in from time to time for good effect. I like Singlish – it is an efficient version of the English language. For example, instead of asking excuse me, you can just say eh, can or not?”

Instead of asking excuse me, is that seat available, you can just say eh, can or not?

“It’s fun and I feel that in some situations, you get the message across a lot faster and it’s a lot more precise as compared to using long bombastic English sentences.”

Slipping with ease from social media to mass media, Prof Butler has appeared on national television as the chief judge of the annual National Science Challenge for the last eight years. Now into its ninth year, it is aimed at promoting science to secondary school students and will be aired on Channel 5 from July to September this year. “On the show, I used to work with Nat Ho and for this year, it’s Alaric Tay. For the other celebrities like Chew Chor Meng and Chen Li Ping, the students and I meet them in the make-up room. They are fantastic with the students. The best was Felicia Chin. She took time out, sat down with the girls and had a great chat!” recounts Prof Butler.

Not at all camera-shy, the National Science Challenge takes the father-of-one out of NTU, into a whole new different environment, allowing him to interact with young students about science and engineering.

“It’s my eighth year doing the TV programme and I still love it. Going to MediaCorp, mingling with the stars, talking to students, teachers and even the parents! They are an interesting bunch to talk to!”

Together with a group of NTU students, he was recently involved in organising the TEDxNTU Conference, an independent event dedicated to the spreading of ideas under the banner of the Technology, Entertainment and Design conference.

“I love being around students. It’s fun! Things like the TEDxNTU conference let me play a non-academic role with students,” adds the bubbly professor.

Prof Butler’s parting shot: “It is just great working with different people. I love the human interaction!”
D grades, while the rest of the class didn’t fare much better. “That is only because she refuses to compromise on her sharp news sense and her demand for accuracy and good English,” he says of her insistence on accurate, snappy writing.

David eventually graduated with a B+ in Newswriting. A year later, in 2010, he was nominated for the Singapore Press Holdings’ Young Journalist of the Year award. Like David, many of Hedwig’s students have since cut their teeth in the local media as well as at wire agencies like Reuters and AFP.

Hedwig started her career with Singapore’s national broadsheet in 1981. She earned her stripes in a two-decade career that took her to The Sunday Times and The New Paper before she joined NTU in 2004. She is married to Mr Alan John, Deputy Editor of The Straits Times. The couple, who are celebrating 30 years of marriage, have a daughter, Nicola, 22, and son, Zachary, 19. Nicola is an art history undergraduate while Zachary, a National Serviceman, has been contributing articles to What’s Up?, a popular monthly newspaper for students, since he was 10.

Recalling each cohort fondly, Hedwig says: “They are really green when they start. Some of them don’t read the papers and the best part of this job is when they come on board and become interested in news. I like to see them get angry with themselves when they get the news angle wrong as it means they are reading, writing and thinking like a real reporter. It pleases me to see them graduate and become confident journalists writing accurate stories.”

She beams with pride when she speaks about the 16 Wee Kim Wee School of Communication & Information undergraduates who spent a week in North Korea last December (see picture above). Just after their return, the country’s leader, Kim Jong Il, died. The intrepid students summoned their contacts from the reclusive state and wrote news features for Singapore’s media, including a seven-page package for The Straits Times.

“They (the students) carried themselves very well,” she says. “Even when they were not allowed to speak to many people, they negotiated (with the government minders) to talk to more people. They were really behaving and working like journalists, always wanting to do more than they were allowed to. It was very rewarding to see their hard work published in The Straits Times.”

For Hedwig, her journalism classes must be as real as it gets, no buts about it.

The beauty of science

by Christopher Ong

This all-American beauty pooh-poohs any attempts to suggest that she fits the bill of a Prof Gorgeous or Prof Beautiful. “I guess you could say I’m Prof Sunshine,” jests Prof Kimberly Ann Kline.

We think she’s also very much Prof Splendid. Looking like she just stepped off the set of an American TV sitcom, this brainy professor just wants to share the beauty of science with her charges at the Singapore Centre on Environmental Life Sciences Engineering at NTU.

“I’m just myself. I present myself professionally, I think some people stereotype scientists,” she counters.

An unquenchable passion for science took her from Bismarck, North Dakota, to Northwestern University in Chicago for higher studies. So keen was she on getting a taste for teaching that while pursuing her PhD and Master of Public Health degrees,
she already made time to lecture at another university. “I wanted to know if I liked teaching,” she explains, “and I found that I was consumed by it. I love the infectious effect of seeing students becoming interested in the subjects I’m passionate about.”

It’s easy to see why Asst Prof Kline, with her warm smile and personable nature, draws people like a magnet. A little bird told us she was a crowd-puller at the NTU booth at a recent science convention in Vancouver, Canada, where she patiently took questions about the university’s programmes despite being a newcomer on campus.

The youthful professor arrived from the United States last November with her husband William Clune, an assistant director at NTU’s Sustainable Earth Office and senior lecturer at the School of Humanities & Social Sciences’ Division of Economics, and pouches Grendel and Dulcey, after winning a prestigious National Research Foundation fellowship that awards S$3 million for research over five years. She has wasted little time practising her philosophy of “see one, do one, teach one.”

“My students watch me demonstrate a laboratory technique. Then they do it themselves. If they can go on to teach it to someone else, it shows they have mastered it.”

A vigorous course, where students are expected to participate in group work and do laboratory work, helped each other. I wanted to be a part of that community. “Today, as a scientist herself, she hopes to be able to inspire her students to “think through things themselves.” She explains: “It’s more fun and meaningful if you have a strong hand in creating your own success.”

“So, what can undergraduates look forward to at her lectures? “A vigorous course, where they will learn a lot. Anyone can read from a textbook but I will teach them to think like a scientist.”

“It’s great to see that moment when students get excited – that aha moment when they start to grasp a new concept.”

When you talk about Asst Prof Lewis Lim, one thing sticks out: the things he will do to get his students’ attention.

One student, Shia Shang Ying, recalls an incident. “Once, he came to class in a black leather coat and Ray-Ban shades. Imagine him in this attire and with his stylish moustache to boot. It was just so funny.”

There was a serious purpose behind this glamour look. “He was trying to look like a military man since the lesson was on military strategies for our simulation game, Markstrat.” That was for his course on Product and Pricing Management, where students act as managers for hypothetical firms and compete against one another every week after the market “closes” to achieve financial targets like biggest profit, largest market share and highest share price.

On another occasion, the assistant professor at the Nanyang Business School showed clips from the film Rocky, the story of a boxer who comes back fighting after losing bout after bout. His simple message: never give up the fight. Every student matters to him, and sometimes, he structures his discussions to favour the underdogs so that they regain confidence and catch up over the gruelling eight-week period of high-level strategic thinking and quantitative analyses.

“My goal is not so much to teach what the students will find interesting during their time in NTU, but what students can remember and apply that will help in their careers.”

When a student, Vivian Ting, turned 41 last week. Oh, and feel free to make a joke about it.”

“This time, the smile is on my face.”
Step into NTU’s Chinese Medicine Clinic and you’ll be greeted by Karen Wee and a new generation of young physicians, well-versed in both the western biomedical sciences and traditional medicine.

by Lester Kok and Wang Meng Meng

Amidst the hustle and bustle at NTU, a young, research-intensive university, an ancient Chinese art that is more than 2,000 years old is being practised. Don’t dismiss Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as old-fashioned hocus-pocus from the Orient steeped in mystical concepts such as yin and yang, with a person’s health indicated by his qi, a life force and energy flow that you thought can only be found in Star Wars.

Nestled on the ground floor of the School of Biological Sciences is the NTU Chinese Medicine Clinic. There, Karen Wee is one of eight youthful resident physicians recruited from the university’s pioneer batch of graduates with a double degree in Biomedical Sciences and Chinese Medicine. At 26 years young, she is a great believer of the benefits TCM brings.

Looking every bit a modern medical doctor in her white lab coat, Karen combines her duties as a TCM practitioner with mentoring her juniors. On top of that, she juggles administrative work, picks herbs in the dispensary and even fills in at the reception counter in a typical 10-hour day.

She is also the founding Chairman of the newly formed NTU Chinese Medicine Alumni Association, which has more than 100 members made up of graduates and current students of the double degree programme. Most recently, Karen and her team organised the association’s first English-medium TCM symposium.

“The fact that TCM can last for centuries up to now, it must have some form of clinical efficacy,” Karen says, underlining her faith in her profession.

“When I was an intern at Beijing, I also saw the effect of TCM and what it can do. But because TCM is different, not everyone can accept the principles and the belief in it, so that is why I think having more scientifically-run clinical trials can help prove its efficacy.”

Stepping inside the clinic, it is clear that NTU’s brand of TCM is a marriage of tradition and modernity. Automated queue numbering makes for an efficient work environment but the tang in the air coming from the dispensary, which stocks drawers full of dried roots, barks and animal parts, makes it unmistakably TCM.

**CUPS, NEEDLES AND COMPUTERS**

Benches for acupuncture, tui na (acupressure therapy) and cupping adorn the consultation rooms where TCM doctors use their fingers as stethoscopes, taking pulses and recording the vital signs in computer databases.

Explains Karen: “Taking one’s pulse is only part of the diagnosis process. We look at their tongue, ask the right questions, even listen to their cough if there is one...”

Chairman of the newly formed NTU Chinese Medicine Alumni Association, which has more than 100 members made up of graduates and current students of the double degree programme.

Karen’s passion for TCM is evident throughout the interview. “Taking one’s pulse is only part of the diagnosis process. We look at their tongue, ask the right questions, even listen to their cough if there is one...”

Karen fondly recalls the two years she spent in Beijing as part of her undergraduate training. When her class was learning a therapeutic kind of massage known as tui na, they had fun practising on one another.

It was not all amusement and games, of course. Before heading to Beijing, the entire class had to undergo a gruelling course that involved completing two 100-hour modules in about half the usual time. This meant one exam every two months and even during recess weeks.

For this lass with the adventurous spirit, that episode toughened her up and she says the two years in Beijing were one of the most interesting times of her life.

Also, I have always been very interested in biology and had thought of becoming a doctor,” the St Andrew’s Junior College alumna reveals.

Karen sees great promise in the TCM sector with complementary and alternative medical treatments gaining popularity. She hopes to have more clinical practice and do research and teaching to improve herself further.

She gets lots of “practice” at social gatherings when she introduces herself and her occupation to people.

“Usually, after they get over their initial surprise, they start to ask for solutions to their health problems. Sometimes, they want me to take their pulse too,” says Karen, smiling wryly at how they try to get a “free consultation”.

“Taking one’s pulse is only part of the diagnosis process. We look at their tongue, ask the right questions, even listen to their cough if there is one...”

Karen’s passion for TCM is evident throughout the interview. “Taking one’s pulse is only part of the diagnosis process. We look at their tongue, ask the right questions, even listen to their cough if there is one...”

Karen has learnt from practising on herself, she adds, and by practising on one another. “It was not all amusement and games, of course. Before heading to Beijing, the entire class had to undergo a gruelling course that involved completing two 100-hour modules in about half the usual time. This meant one exam every two months and even during recess weeks.

For this lass with the adventurous spirit, that episode toughened her up and she says the two years in Beijing were one of the most interesting times of her life.

Today, the girl who once cringed at the sight of needles is a fully certified acupuncturist. “In Beijing, we had to practise poking needles into ourselves first before trying it out on one another’s non-vital acupoints, such as those on the hands. Initially, the idea of poking the needle into someone else scared me,” recalls Karen, adding that they had to learn the location of all 361 acupoints and by practising on herself, she eventually became confident enough to do it on others.

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“Taking one’s pulse is only part of the diagnosis process. We look at their tongue, ask the right questions, even listen to their cough if there is one...”
Who wants to be a millionaire?

Are you dreaming of becoming a millionaire? Entrepreneurs don’t just dream but act on their dreams. Five entrepreneurs tell HEY! what drives them towards fulfilling their ambitions

by Mabel Lee

As an engineering student, Marcus Cheng learnt how to build systems and design software to provide computing solutions. But one thing was missing.

“I didn’t know how to sell,” says the Computer Engineering graduate. “I believed that if I wanted to start a business, I would need to understand salesmanship in order to find customers for my products and services.”

Inspired by the sales-oriented background of successful entrepreneurs, he decided to choose marketing modules as general electives in his final year at the School of Computer Engineering. In 2005, he graduated from NTU with a Second Class Upper Honours degree, all raring to kick-start his career in sales.

At IBM, he surpassed himself by exceeding his sales targets for two consecutive years, and in his third year, became one of the youngest client systems managers in the company. For Marcus, mediocrity is an alien state. “I believe in excelling in everything that I do. I never want to be average,” he says.

This unyielding mindset, along with a strong entrepreneurial spirit, saw Marcus leaving IBM in 2009 and, with the help of investors, he started ACCLIVIS. It is a company that supports the complete technology needs of businesses, from data management to network integration.

“The IT industry has several sectors,” Marcus explains. “In the field of system integrators, there are a number of established companies offering sophisticated solutions. However, some customers prefer something less high-end, and I saw this need as a business opportunity. That’s where ACCLIVIS comes in.”

Getting customers to trust the new start-up, however, was no easy task. Even hiring staff proved difficult as candidates were unsure of the new company’s future.

“People eventually trusted us as they believe in the history of the founders,” Marcus says. “The good relationships I’ve built with my contacts and previous customers also helped, and we were given the chance to deliver.”

And deliver they did. The 32-year-old technopreneur led ACCLIVIS to become a million-dollar enterprise, reaping S$15 million in revenue in 2010 in its first year of operation.

Not resting on his laurels, Marcus is continuously pushing himself to make ACCLIVIS one of the most recognisable brands in the IT industry, and the company is working towards an Initial Public Offering in the next five years.

While monetary rewards are gratifying, they are not central to his goals. “Profits are enticing, but they’re not instantaneous or constant. A lot of hard work is involved,” says the self-driven IT whiz.

So how can young, entrepreneurial hopefuls follow in his footsteps?

“Be resourceful, seek advice and get to know other entrepreneurs in the same line,” Marcus advises. “Sometimes, naivety, or a lack of research, could be the reason businesses don’t succeed.”

He also attributes his achievements to his education at the School of Computer Engineering, where he learnt to think critically.

“I often ask myself: Is this the best way to implement this? Is there a more efficient way of achieving the same result?” NTU has taught me how to constantly question myself and this is a lifelong skill that has served me well.”

PHOTO: JOSEPH NAIR

Golden boy: To Marcus, mediocrity is an alien state.
Finding IT With Passion

In between running a million-dollar start-up offering indoor tracking solutions, Asst Prof Ting See Ho hits the lab, lectures, grades papers and supervises projects, like all other faculty members

by Lester Kok

While most of his peers were busy working their way up the corporate ladder, this young academic skipped the rungs and went straight to the top by becoming his own boss. At a relatively young age of 33, Asst Prof Ting See Ho founded his own technology company, YFind Technologies, in between lectures and research at the School of Electrical & Electronic Engineering.

“In my business, we deal with indoor positioning solutions, which is most commonly used in shopping malls,” says Asst Prof Ting. Elaborating, he explains that his company’s business applications can be used to do market research, such as telling you which shops are popular with shoppers and the average time a shopper spends at a certain shop.

“I actually chanced upon this idea through my interactions with the industry. Indoor positioning technologies are not new, but most require special devices that are quite expensive, and what the industry wants is something simple and cheap,” says the smiley professor.

Not one to let a good opportunity slip away, the father-of-one tapped his expertise in wireless communication to devise a system that uses smart phones and Wi-Fi to track the movements of people inside a building. This information is useful for streamlining work operations at airports, hospitals and large offices.

With his product in hand, he started YFind Technologies in October 2010 together with two partners who have expertise in business development.

YFind generated over $100,000 in its first year of operations and recently received significant funding from investors. Although Asst Prof Ting declines to reveal the exact amount of funds raised, he reveals it is “series A funding”, which refers to the first significant round of funding received by a company and usually ranges from $1 million to $10 million in Singapore.

Setting up and running your own company is no piece of cake, says the young entrepreneur, whose son, Jit Pin, was born two years ago, around the time he started YFind.

“It’s tough! Although I’m no longer involved in the day-to-day operations of the company, I still meet up with my partners once or twice a week to brainstorm and to strategise. I do this on top of my work at the university,” says Asst Prof Ting, whose employees include one of his former PhD students.

“My biggest sacrifice is sleep, especially back in the early days of the business when I had to wake up every three hours to take care of my newborn. Thankfully, those days of late night feeding are over,” he says. Despite forgoing sleep and burning precious weekends, getting YFind on track is a challenge that Asst Prof Ting relishes. With the fruits of his labour ripening, he plans to take a year off teaching to focus on developing his company and is grateful to have received the blessings of his bosses at NTU.

“It benefits my students as I get invaluable industry experience so that I can be a better teacher,” says the bespectacled professor, who joined NTU straight after receiving his doctorate from Tokyo Institute of Technology in 2006.

“Previously, I had an idea of how the IT industry works. Now, through my work and industry collaborations, I have actual first-hand experience to share with my students.”

Asked the million-dollar question, he says he hopes to make his first million “probably in a year, if everything goes well”.

“I see this business opportunity as a chance to improve myself, and it doesn’t matter whether I succeed or fail. Either way, I would have learnt a great deal. Taking this route has changed the way I look at things,” he adds cheerfully.

For those venturing into entrepreneurship, his advice is: be ready for hard work, stick at it for a few years to see results, work with good people and, “most importantly, keep thinking about the business and how you can improve it”.

They are young, had no capital and were stepping into uncharted territories, but Jason Lee and Ewan Sou, both 24, beat the odds to set up AllDealsLeak.com, a popular website that reviews deals and points consumers to credible online discount sites.

The duo, both final-year students, beat the odds to set up a company and the pair decided to start a deals site similar to Groupon and Mocca Perks. Regrettably, it was hard to sustain the business.

“It was a tough trade. Some of our competitors were jacking up prices and masking them with huge discounts to entice consumers. We experienced some bad deals ourselves and felt cheated,” admits Ewan. The episode led them to start a blog reviewing those deals instead.

One year on, the blog has evolved into a full-fledged website.
An average day for NTU student Germaine Ng looks something like this – three meetings, a slew of lectures and tutorials, and the backbreaking work of managing her very own café. It might seem a lot on one’s plate, but the final-year English Literature major takes it in her stride. “It’s all about priorities. My social life has taken a dip, but this is the best period to find out who your real friends are.”

One of them is 25-year-old Zen Tan from the School of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, whom Germaine met while pursuing her Minor in Entrepreneurship at NTU. Together with four other group members from different courses such as accountancy, computer science and electrical engineering, they set up Pitchstop Café as a final-year project.

The food & beverage outlet, nestled in the heart of NTU’s Innovation Centre, serves up an enticing menu of pizzas, burgers and beer to a diverse lunch crowd that includes fellow entrepreneurs and venture capitalists.

But success hasn’t come easy for Germaine. She recounts the time when she approached her parents – Dad works in logistics and Mum teaches – for a substantial loan to set up the café. Touched by their support, Germaine, the one with the “rebellious streak”, had a few teary moments. The capital injected into the venture eventually came up to a few tens of thousand dollars.

Another hurdle came when four partners wanted out – after deciding that managing Pitchstop was taking a toll on their studies. Undeterred, Germaine and Zen took on their share of the workload and carried on with the fledgling business. Her motto is simple – “I just make things happen. I made the choice and I’m following through with it.”

Today, Pitchstop sees a mix of new and loyal customers falling in love with its yummy pizzas, and is operationally profitable. Not just a swanky eatery that can seat 130 people, it is also a place for student activities and performances with its mini stage and good sound system.

So when does this feisty 23-year-old hope to make her first million? “Probably ten years from now,” she humbly estimates. She has set her heart on becoming a serial entrepreneur with more businesses established regionally. Contrary to the name chosen for her café, there is no stopping Germaine.

Way to go, gal!
**Feature**

**Love in the First Degree**

Soulmate, check. Engagement ring, check. Wedding date, check. Photo shoot and ceremony at NTU, check. HEY! speaks to four couples and our official marriage solemniser (yes, we have one!) to find everything’s coming up roses for campus weddings…

by Evelyn Choo

Under the searing heat, Mr and Mrs Lee Jorwe lie on the grass at Hall of Residence 12. They look slightly uncomfortable and start to draw the looks of passers-by. The couple know this but laugh it off. “Perfect,” exclaims the photographer. His camera goes click.

It was there that the lovebirds first met in 2004 during their freshman orientation. Nine years on, that turf still holds a mound of memories for the couple, which is why it made their list of must-have backdrops for their post-wedding photo shoot.

Like Mr and Mrs Lee, many engaged or newlywed alumni who hooked up on campus have sought permission from the university to have their pictures taken at its scenic grounds.

Puah Sze Ngee, who graduated from the School of Electrical & Electronic Engineering in 2006, picked four locations, including a tranquil spot in the Yunnan Garden and the Lee Wee Nam Library.

“It was a pleasant feeling as we could take our time to reminisce the past and enjoy the scenery after so long – and it wasn’t too crowded on campus. I guess we chose the right date and timing as it was the pre-exam period and most students were busy mugging!” Sze Ngee says.

Seemingly nondescript venues have also proven popular with couples such as Tan Chee Wee and his fiancée. “We wanted to recapture the moment where we met while studying nine years ago. That’s why even though Canteen B is not the most scenic locations in NTU, it’s our first choice.”

But celebrating marriage goes beyond the pre-bridal fanfare – our campus has even hosted weddings. The man who, quite literally, gets couples hitched is Soon Min Yam, Director of the Alumni Affairs Office.

Over the past six years, Mr Soon, a licensed Deputy Registrar of Marriages, has solemnised the nuptials of 139 alumni couples and members of the university community.

“By providing this service, I hope that I am also indirectly encouraging more couples to get married and start families early,” he quips.

One of those indebted to Mr Soon is Dr Ong Soon Eng, a research scientist at Temasek Laboratories @ NTU, who once studied in NTU. He met his wife through his PhD supervisor, Prof Sam Zhang. When it came time to pick a wedding venue, the couple hit on the idea of getting their marriage solemnised on campus, where they first met. But when they realised there were more guests than the solemnisation room at the Alumni Affairs Office could hold, they decided to host a full-blown wedding here instead.

“The decision was mutual. We both agreed it was a splendid idea, although some of my colleagues later told me that I was so unromantic holding the ceremony here,” Dr Ong laughs.

He and his fiancée eventually celebrated their big day with an elegant reception at the Nanyang Auditorium, with the blessings of the university administration.

“The space, the height and, most important of all, that flight of stairs down to the foyer – it was sheer grandeur. I couldn’t afford a lavish wedding ceremony then, but did my best to make it a special and memorable one, for us and the guests,” says Dr Ong, who is now a father of two.
PG OR NOT?
Do parents try to influence their children when they make that life-changing decision about which undergrad course to take? HEY! finds out
by Christopher Ong

In Singapore, choosing a university and undergraduate course of study is often a big decision involving parents. It was certainly a family affair at the recent NTU Open House, where many prospective students were spotted with their folks in tow.

But do parents really have a say when it comes to what course their children study and where? HEY! spoke to a few parents who say they support their children, even when they don’t concur with the choice made or if it does not match their expectations.

The results of a recent study by NTU on undergraduate admissions bear this out, with about 60% of youths interviewed saying they make up their own minds and about a third saying it’s a decision made jointly with their parents.

Ng Cheow Kheng, a deputy director at the National Parks Board, is one parent who gives his children the freedom to choose the next chapter in their life. His daughter, Phoebe, 18, from Victoria Junior College, is considering pursuing chemical engineering at NTU after her A-levels. Her two older siblings had chosen their own undergraduate paths with stellar results.

Mr Ng shares: “From my experience, children have their own inclinations. If they have an interest in their work, they will find meaning and inspiration in what they do. It doesn’t benefit children when parents impose their choices on them.”

“Parents may get a little anxious when their first-born is choosing a course. I remember how we wanted our eldest son to do medicine, but he preferred engineering. In the end, he got an NTU scholarship and became a CN Yang Scholar to pursue his first love, so it turned out fine.”

Regional director Soh Soon Ghoe, father of recent Raffles Junior College graduate Bryan, sees his role as that of an advisor. “Children may not know what they want to do after their A-levels. As parents, we can talk to them to try to understand their interests so we can better advise them.”

“I’ll fully support my son’s decision to do something related to his interests as I believe that will help him go far in life.”

This approach sits well with Bryan. “It’s good to have a supportive mum and dad as you don’t have to worry about them saying ‘no’ and can just focus on doing well,” he says.

In the other camp are parents Mr and Mrs Adrian Tan, who would like their daughter – a straight-A student – to challenge herself by getting out of her comfort zone.

Mrs Tan says: “We asked her to apply for courses like law and medicine, but she wants to study accountancy and business. We have tried to persuade her by sharing industry insights from lawyers and doctors we know. We even arranged for her to do a nutrition-related internship in a hospital.”

They have since accepted that their daughter cannot be swayed. “These days, children are very set in what they want to do,” says Mr Tan, who accompanied his wife and daughter to find out more about NTU’s Nanyang Business School.

Raffles Junior College graduate Dominic Lo knows of an ex-classmate whose parents want to influence her choice of course. He says: “They keep trying to guide her towards courses she is not interested in, but she can’t offer any alternatives as she is not sure what she wants. She feels pressurised and stressed.”

Maybe that is why office administrator Jasmine Chia does not want to force her son to give up his dream of reading accountancy, despite her sentiments that the “life of an accountant is not an easy one.”

She says: “For more than ten years, he has had to study subjects, like science, that he doesn’t really enjoy. I guess now’s the time for him to choose what he really likes.”

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WORDS FLYING HITHER AND TWITTER

On social media, it seems that these days our fingers are doing most of the talking. And some have got their fingers burnt as their words went viral.

HEY! gets a sociologist and a media law expert to weigh in on what’s brewing in the online world

by Christopher Ong

It’s obvious you ‘Like’ the Internet.

Your life story is up for all to see on Facebook and you may have even forgotten who you have “added” amongst your hundreds or thousands of friends. In your free time, you engage in verbal jousting on forums and leave your comments on news articles. You record a video of yourself with your smart phone and post it on YouTube. You “Retweet” what your favourite celebrity says on Twitter and sometimes add your two cents’ worth (all in 140 characters or less).

On the World Wide Web, anyone can be a star. The focus is on you, if you want it to be. The attention. Some days you are just musing about little incidents in everyday life. Sometimes the discussions can get heated. But wait a minute, before you click on the upload or send button, is there anything you should watch out for?

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Facebook, Twitter, Weibo, blogs and forums – so many places to express your thoughts to the rest of the world very easily. All you need to do is visit a blog site, open an account and start writing.

The barrier to entry is very low so anyone can be a publisher, and the result is that almost everyone is. But, the fact is, you do need some specialised skills to publish well, and these skills can be taught. For example, the professional training students get at the Wee Kim Wee School not only helps them to think and write well, but also to anticipate the response to what they write.

We are also seeing more such cases because of the social networking that is going on. These days, going viral is easier with sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and other social networking tools.

Assoc Prof Kwok Kian Woon, NTU’s Associate Provost (Student Life) and Head of Sociology at the School of Humanities & Social Sciences:

Tha issue of people getting into trouble over online comments they have posted is a global one. With so many channels of expression on the Internet, it’s easy to offer a quick opinion on anything. But there are risks, because what you say in private could easily get shared. For example, the complaint you wanted to share with a few friends over inflammatory racist statements or homophobic remarks. These are arguments directed at the person whom you are in dispute with, for instance, telling someone: “I don’t like your face.” It is more productive to make an argument against the argument itself.

Just like how you shouldn’t unfairly shout someone down during a debate, there should be a certain ethical dimension to online discussions. Emotions can run high, so there is some need for anger management. The Internet is in many ways a public space and things said in the heat of the moment can get blown out of proportion. Stereotyping doesn’t help either. Sometimes, after an unhappy encounter, someone may make unavouey statements about the other individual that are generalised to the entire group he or she belongs to. This may stir up the aggrieved parties a knee-jerk reaction. Yes, it can be hard to get people to stop once they start to taunt one another with provocative words. But why is it that most get away with this, while a minority find themselves in trouble with the law?

Prof Ang: Scolding someone may not be an offence. Similarly, just because the remark in question is offensive does not make it an offence to have said it. Different people have different levels of sensitivity and not everyone will report a fellow user for an unpleasant comment.

So we should try other ways to resolve the situation first before turning to the authorities?

Prof Ang: I think so and have said this several times in The Straits Times. The offensive remarks were posted by young people in their youthful exuberance, and caused no real harm apart from being insulting and hurtful. In addition, those who made the remarks were sorry.

Assoc Prof Kwok: Yes, it should be a last resort. I think we can start by being civil in our day-to-day interactions. If we can’t be civil in person, how can we be civil online?

Prof Ang: Yes. The rule of thumb is that whatever applies offline generally applies online. The Sedition Act has been used – in one case against two men who had made subversive and inflammatory racist statements online. The Act is worded very broadly, so it’s best not to respond in anger.

Many young people just want to share their good times, frustrations and viewpoints but they seem to be the ones getting into trouble over their online remarks...

Prof Ang: All of us learn through trial and error. Perhaps older adults have figured out what not to say or how to express ideas in a way that does not offend others. It comes with practice, and that’s probably why they are not as likely as the younger ones to make very public errors.

These days, even children get on the Internet to share their thoughts. How old must one be to be held legally accountable?

Prof Ang: You must be at least seven years of age. And if you are between the ages of seven and twelve, you must first be proven to be mature enough to understand the nature and consequences of what you have done.

So how can passionate youths comment on topics close to their hearts without angering others and generating negative headlines? What’s the secret to better online discussions for all?

Assoc Prof Kwok: For starters, try to avoid ad hominem comments. These are arguments directed at the person whom you are in dispute with, for instance, telling someone: “I don’t like your face.” It is more productive to make an argument against the argument itself.

Just like how you shouldn’t unfairly shout someone down during a debate, there should be a certain ethical dimension to online discussions. Emotions can run high, so there is some need for anger management. The Internet is in many ways a public space and things said in the heat of the moment can get blown out of proportion. Stereotyping doesn’t help either. Sometimes, after an unhappy encounter, someone may make unavouey statements about the other individual that are generalised to the entire group he or she belongs to. This may stir up the aggrieved parties a knee-jerk reaction. Yes, it can be hard to get people to stop once they start to taunt one another with provocative words. But why is it that most get away with this, while a minority find themselves in trouble with the law?

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What’s In Here?

Lean machines and dream bots

Futuristic cars that can travel thousands of kilometres on the sun’s rays alone. Roadsters that zip further on just a litre of fuel. Robots that can be programmed to dance and play football. These feats of engineering by students take pride of place at the School of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering’s Innovation Lab.

NO VENTURE, NO GAIN
This sleek concept car (above) made an impressive debut in 2010, clinching the Solar Grand Prize at the first Shell Eco-marathon Asia. It’s revving to go for its third race and is now being kitted out as a fully electric vehicle. In the next Shell Eco-marathon Asia, the Nanyang Venture III will compete in the battery electric category.

BATMOBILE
Here’s one for the Caped Crusader, and it’s eco-friendly to boot. Dubbed the “Batmobile”, the Nanyang Venture IV (far left, middle) was designed and built by students last year. Not just outwardly dashing, it dashed past the competition at the second Shell Eco-Marathon Asia, winning the best diesel car and safety awards. The students hope to continue their winning streak at this year’s eco-marathon, where the car will compete with a new carbon-fibre composite shell.

SOLAR, SO GOOD
Unlike its brothers who try to go further on a single litre of petrol (or its equivalent), this big boy has travelled some 2,283 km without a single drop of fuel. At the World Solar Challenge last year, the Nanyang Venture V (main picture) raced down the middle of Australia, from Darwin through the outback and to the finish point in Adelaide. The team came in 12th out of 37 teams, ahead of more established competitors from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of California, Berkeley, and University of Cambridge.

ROBOCUP
These agile robots (left) can do whatever our students programme them to do. Next up for these guys is the annual RoboCup, where robots compete in soccer. Not only can our smart bots kick a ball in style, they can also dance and interact with autistic children to help draw them out of their shells.

Changing gears:
Assoc Prof Ng Heong Wah gives students pointers on retrofitting the Nanyang Venture II.
FRESH FACES, BRIGHT SPACES
Snatches of campus life and HEY! moments

EXCUSE ME, ARE YOU AN ACTOR?
Incoming Art, Design & Media student Chen Yi Xi, son of local celebrity couple Edmund Chen and Xiang Yun, and Keely Wee, a student of NTU’s National Institute of Education, were filming on campus in the new webdrama i.Rock.

DRUM ROLL PLEASE
Campus Superstar 2 female champion Keely rocks the stage with Mandarin pop singer Derrick Hoh on set at the School of Art, Design & Media.

I WANNA BE A PEACOCK
Make a proud statement on this pillar, an interactive art installation created by first-year Art, Design & Media students.

IF YOU CAN TURN INTO ANY ANIMAL WHAT ANIMAL WOULD YOU BE?

I WANT NOBODY, NOBODY BUT YOU
Students from the NTU Kpop Dance Group get into the groove of the campus hallyu wave at their annual concert.

BIG, BRIGHT AND BREEZY
Cosy up to new study areas at the South Spine.

RED HOT
Caffe Express’ newly air-conditioned interior is the latest hot spot for chilling out.

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DIALOGUES IN ACTION

HEY! What are you reading?

RED HOT
Caffe Express’ newly air-conditioned interior is the latest hot spot for chilling out.
Is it true you don’t take coffee? My personality is already so energetic. If I took caffeine, it would be too crazy. Once or twice a month I may drink coffee, but that’s purely for taste.

You are the director of the Center on Global Brand Leadership at Columbia Business School in New York. Now, you are also here in Singapore to head the new national institute at the Nanyang Business School. Why is the study of Asian consumer behaviour important? Much of the economic vibrancy we see in Asia is spurred by consumer behaviour. The economic power of Asia, together with the cultural and political shift in the region, makes this research vital.

What do you think is the next consumer trend, in terms of lifestyle? To have a more personalised style and taste, especially for the sophisticated or well-travelled consumer. Also, bringing out one’s individuality instead of simply immersing in brands. Asian consumers are obsessed with lifestyle and image. What is the “Singaporean image” and how can it be improved?

Singaporean consumers are very focussed on shopping. I think they can afford to be edgier with their buying choices. In Japan, Shanghai and Korea, the people, especially the youth, dress much more wildly. Many people spend half their time perfecting their Facebook profiles... is social networking a great way to “brand” ourselves? Yes, since this opportunity did not exist for prior generations. If you look at yourself as a brand, as companies do, then this is a great vehicle because it is unbelievably cheap. You can get the word out and become famous.

Facebook is also a popular marketing platform for youths with new business start-ups such as online blogs and cafés... It is a fantastic marketing tool. In a way, it goes back to the origins of marketing, which was much more personal. Facebook provides us the intimacy of a personal network while giving us exposure on a global scale.

How can you use Facebook group or page stand out from the rest? It is a matter of design, but ultimately also one of personality. If you are not an interesting person, you can package yourself up, but I think people will find out. It is much better if you have an interesting message or something to say about yourself.

What advice do you have for budding student entrepreneurs with good business plans but zero marketing knowledge? Understand what you really want to market, and what value you wish to provide to customers. Also, bring yourself into the picture. People these days prefer to see a face behind a product or company, so do not be shy about marketing yourself in connection with your business.

Now to understand the SCHMITT brand... describe yourself in five words. Innovative, edgy, analytical, professional, global.

You have appeared on several TV programmes including The Daily Show with Jon Stewart and CNN's Business Unusual. What makes you so unconventional or worthy of a big TV spot? I am more of a creative type. It is not so much that I am great; it is more of me doing things some people have not thought about. Being on The Daily Show, for instance, had a sketch where students played the roles of different teenage consumers, such as the techie, the deal-fanatic and the fashionista. In an academic setting you want to be serious and rigorous, but I think learning works best when it has entertaining elements.

What keeps you busy at NTU? Hiring staff for the new institute, bringing in visitors, organising conferences... just to name a few. Life here is busy but fun. I like the five research pillars by Bertil Andersson, the NTU President, as there is a lot of innovation coming out of it. It is a great time to be at NTU.

If there is one thing you could change about yourself, what would it be and why? My impatience. In Asia you have to be patient. You have to sip tea and wait until something ultimately happens. It drives me crazy because I still have so much to do with my life.

Such as? Apart from my research and career, I love to pursue the arts. Reading literary classics, for one, greatly inspires me. I am impressed by the precision and beauty by which people can describe the world.
Thinking Aloud

**GOING DUTCH**

by Jeffrey Huang

Three months into my exchange at Maastricht University, I have settled well into my new lifestyle here in The Netherlands. The Dutch students are a close-knit community and are always willing to offer help if you need it. One incident that impressed me early on was when two students whom I did not know offered to walk me to the bookstore and helped me get the book I wanted.

It has been interesting in the classroom too, as my newfound friends are more vocal than Singaporean students and are not afraid to voice their opinions, be it in a simple chat with a professor or during presentations. Perhaps this is partly because at Maastricht University, there are fewer lectures to attend and we learn through our classmates’ presentations at tutorials. This way, students have practice speaking up.

The frequent use of problem-based learning, where we tackle real-world problems and do research to come up with our own solutions, also trains us to think more analytically. Through meeting people from all over the world, I now better understand and appreciate their traditions and customs.

I’ve had lots of opportunities to visit landmarks like the Louvre Pyramid in Paris (below, left) and the Tower Bridge in London.

People have asked me how I juggle my time between studying, hanging out with friends and accomplishing my daily routines, all without the comforts of home. Well, I have grown as a person – I feel I’m more independent now and also more adaptable. I am also more organised and have deeper foresight when planning and executing things.

In March, I travelled with a group of friends from Copenhagen in Denmark to Stockholm in Sweden and then to London – all in the short span of seven days. Considering what little budget we had, there was a lot of research to do to accommodate everyone’s transport and lodging preferences. For sure, the time and effort invested to ensure plans like these go off without a hitch have helped me to better handle unexpected situations on the go.

The memories and takeaways from this exchange will always remain in my heart. While surfing the Internet the other day, I found this quote which resonates with me: “An exchange isn’t a year in your life, it’s a life in a year.”

Jeffrey Huang is a second-year student reading Economics at the School of Humanities & Social Sciences. He enjoys analysing ideas, believes in the ‘power of equilibrium’ and hopes to be an economist when he graduates. Now semi-fluent in beginner’s Dutch, he enjoys greeting people with it.
For Assoc Prof Simon Yu, it was love at first flight. A hobby started in his youth – that of building and collecting model planes and tanks – and a passion for military history have served him well in his role as an academic and Head of the Division of Aerospace Engineering at the School of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering.

Says Assoc Prof Yu, who has been with NTU for 21 years: “When I started teaching fluid mechanics, I found that my experience in building model aircrafts helped me to teach better.”

While each piece in his collection is unique in its own right, Assoc Prof Yu’s personal favourite is a miniature version of the Lancaster Bomber, although when he entered the fuselage of an actual Bomber in London’s Imperial War Museum, he found to his surprise that “it was very flimsy and would not be able to withstand many shots from a 20mm calibre anti-aircraft gun.”

Assoc Prof Yu’s other passion is language. He has picked up enough Japanese to hold him in good stead when travelling, but has had little success mastering French because of his “awful pronunciation”. – Siddiqua Ovais

Yo! Some say that dancing is the art of getting your feet out of the way before your partner steps on them.

But 60 NTU students with an attitude from the university’s MJ Hip Hop Dance Club showed they are much better than that. Their slick hip-hop moves are captured in a music video that has become a hit on YouTube, garnering 12,000 hits and counting since it was uploaded more than a month ago.

Filmed over two days, the three-minute MTV-style video is directed and produced by Daniel Bob (left), a third-year Art, Design & Media student, and the clip is NTU’s way of reaching out to prospective undergraduates during this year’s admissions campaign.

Entitled “NTU Dance Tour”, the energetic music video showcases eight iconic locations on the Yunnan Garden campus as the students Harlem shake, glide and crip walk their way from under the spacious dome of the School of Biological Sciences foyer to the avant-garde School of Art, Design & Media building (main picture), a futuristic structure of glass and grass. Robots join them inside a lab at the School of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, as man and machine boogie together to illustrate NTU’s strengths in engineering and technology.

Buoyed by the success of the music video, Daniel says: “I’ve received very positive responses from my peers. They think I’ve done a great job and I’m definitely proud of my work.”

As for the dancers, they had to work every part of their bodies, including their lips. “The dancers had to constantly keep their smiles on for the video despite being tired from the many takes they had to do,” says Heng Yih Fang, the project coordinator from the MJ Hip Hop Dance Club.

No robots were harmed in the filming of this music video.

Watch the funky music video at www.youtube.com/NTUsg
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Lim Xin Yi
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School of Materials Science and Engineering

Jin Wei Krishnan
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