

# Engage

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Getting to know  
the Malaysia IoT Association



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By Tara Yean Pics by Brandon Eu



Dasser, Azrin and Lai

**T**he transitioning journey towards digitalisation is never an easy task. There are many things that one has to consider before taking the leap. The company's finances, its capabilities, the readiness of its employees, the direction of the new business model and so much more. But don't fret, not everything has to be taxing. You just need to look at things in a different way in order to realise that digitalisation is for the better, especially once you start to consider the possibilities that the Internet of Things (IoT) holds.

Unbeknownst to many of us in Malaysia, the country went on for a long time without having an agency, body or association of any kind that could help facilitate, encourage and promote the transformation process. At the most, there was Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), but they were more focused about another branch of digitalisation. The same goes with the National ICT Association of Malaysia (PIKOM) that mostly focused on the information and communications technology (ICT) sector.

Back in 2015, IoT Labs principal consultant James Lai had a chance meeting with the then Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), Datuk Seri Panglima Madius Tangau during the launching of the National IoT Blueprint. The Government was just starting to become more active with digitalisation initiatives. That meeting sparked the conversation between several individuals that represented different companies and organisations to initiate the creation of an association to lead the IoT

industry, which became known as the Malaysia IoT Association (MyloTA).

"We found a big gap from the absence of an industry-based association that can help tackle issues regarding IoT, which was one of the things highlighted during the launch of the National IoT Blueprint," says Lai who is now MyloTA chairman.

Lai noted that there were seven original founding members of MyloTA, comprising of startups and SMEs. "We started off small, but we saw the need for the nation to embark on IoT."

Growing up to currently hold 54 members and companies as part of the association, the original seven companies that was responsible for MyloTA was Lai's own IoT Labs, Paul Tan from Websuite Solutions and Antara Exhibitions, Jeyakumar from iCEE International, JT Yeo from Advenxus Technologies, KS Chan from i-Stone Technologies and Muhammad Hassan from 3i Engineering.

Most of them were system integrators, helping clients with their Industry 4.0 or industry of IoT projects. Along the way, MyloTA also recruited Telekom Malaysia (TM) to take a seat in the association. Ultimately, they became one of the first ones to spearhead the IoT industry. Now, there are many other players getting into the game in hopes to tap into the potential of IoT.

"This is a good thing because it validates our initial vision of seeing the gap that needed to be filled, and we were just the platform that connected all the system integrators together. Even on a global scale, there's still



no single company that can do the A to Z of IoT. We want to build our own ecosystem across the board while still able to have a little bit of friendly competition now and again, just to keep the ecosystem healthy,” Lai explains.

He continues by saying that the objective of MyloTA apart from creating a holistic ecosystem, is being the platform to bring all the individual players together to share knowledge and keep the wheel turning, while also providing training opportunities related to IoT. This aim is further solidified by the association's own annual signature event known as Hypernet of Things (HOT), now on its second installation, where it addresses the low awareness on the significance of IoT. Aside from tackling the issues faced in the country's journey towards digital transformation, the 2018 edition of the event also aims to inspire innovations and creativity among youths and startups.

Surely enough, we never run out of SMEs who are interested in what IoT has to offer. The problem is not in the lack of interest, but in the lack of education and knowledge on how to embark on this journey. Not to mention the fact that SMEs and startups rely on smaller amounts of budget compared to big corporations.

“The SMEs, they need a bit of a push sometimes. They need to hear about the success stories, listen to the journey before taking the next step because exploring IoT projects is not a trivial matter. One of the challenges I see in the industry is that the project is either thrown in the direction of the engineers or the IT guys. This approach will fail, as the adoption of IoT requires both sections to collaborate with each other,” says Lai, believing that the members of MyloTA is able to offer such value as they collectively cover various sectors of the industry.

With Lenovo for example, its country sales manager and MyloTA deputy chairman Steven Loh reveals that the company is currently working on developing talent for the IoT industry. “We're trying to determine the readiness level of the local talent. We need to see what we can do to boost up the country's digital economy. The scene is different from 10 years ago. Just because you know IT, it doesn't mean you know IoT,” says Loh.

#### Capabilities of IoT

We all remember what happened on 11 November 2018 (11.11), when Lazada had their biggest annual sale event of the year. With each year, the total spending cost by consumers continues to increase. Not only does this tell us how much Malaysians love to shop online and taking advantage of discounts, the transactions made on that day recorded a variety of data – from what the consumers bought and, how much they were willing to spend on a particular item, to what their browsing behavior was like and which area they were coming from. Although that sort of data might seem useless to some, but to others, it's valuable insights on how their business can do better next time.

With the advent of IoT, that data can help manufacturers and retailers to calculate their production for next year, thus making them more prepared than the previous one. All at once, that piece of information is able to increase efficiency and productivity of a certain company. Now, imagine that on a much larger scale, where any electronic object that can be connected to the Internet, is connected. All that big data has to go somewhere, right?

Another good example is how TM is working with Malaysian Public Works Department (JKR) to improve the traffic lights system in certain areas. TM ONE head of product and business technology Azrin Aris explains, “Currently, there are seven different traffic light controllers that requires seven different system to manage those traffic lights. To improve this, we use IoT to capture information from the existing traffic light controllers, normalise the data and present them back to the supervisors in JKR on a single dashboard. They no longer have to spend money on seven different systems, but they can opt to subscribe to our cloud service on traffic light management system as a service to get a full view of whatever that's happening on the streets.”

Soon, drivers wouldn't have to suffer with faulty traffic lights that are constantly blinking yellow for hours as TM's new monitoring system

enables faster response time from the traffic light operators. Any faults detected from the lights will be reported within three seconds and goes straight to the contractors in charge of that particular area, automating numerous processes that significantly increases the productivity rate.

“It's not only about generating revenue. It's about reducing operation costs, optimising it and ultimately increasing productivity and response time,” Azrin goes on.

“In this particular case, if you are a traffic light manufacturer, you need to be aware of these things so that maybe the new generation of traffic lights you produce will be smarter. If you're an SME in the maintenance industry, you would need to readapt your way of working and instill a new way of fixing up traffic lights where your technicians would need to be technologically savvy,” adds TM ONE vice president and chief marketing officer Mahmoud Dasser.

#### Technology is there, but what about the people?

According to Lai, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Once there is enough data collected, there might be some conflicts in terms of how a number of tasks or jobs would be automated. Despite being an age old argument, one cannot run from the reality that automation will take over some trivial tasks, requiring the workforce to get better in something else to monitor and watch over those automated machines.

“What people need to understand about this situation is that we will still need human workforce in the industry. We may not need physical labour workforce as much, but we still need data scientists. It's inevitable that the roles evolve according to the times,” opines Azrin.

Pointing out on how some people can still be stuck in ‘2.0 level’ even when technology has reached ‘4.0 level’, Loh mentions how the country is ready in terms of business technology, but that never stops the complaints from the people, demanding more. From normal automation to smart automation, Malaysia already has the technology to help businesses thrive locally and even expand globally. But it's still never enough to some people as they still complain about wanting more speed or better connectivity, in which they probably only need to ‘Netflix and chill’ instead of putting it to better use.

When asked about that local SMEs would need in order to make the best use of IoT apart from needing a huge mindset change, Loh believes that collaboration is key. “Even big conglomerates can't do certain things on their own. They need to work together with external parties because everyone has their own expertise to offer to the table,” he notes, saying that the association is able to help SMEs to connect with each other to promote collaboration and partnerships both internally and with foreign multinational companies.

Speaking of which, Dasser shares some of his view on what the future holds for IoT

and how companies can tap into the long-term impact of IoT. Coming back to the point about the possibility of electronic devices can be connected to each other on a large scale, companies with IoT-enabled products will have the opportunity to move from the traditional sell-and-buy transaction method and look into a product-as-a-service business model.

“We can already see this happening in the world right now, where some people choose to buy the usage of a car instead of buying their own cars. Something like a pay-per-use model,” Dasser adds.

This can give the company continuous revenue over the product despite ‘leasing’ it out to others. With IoT, the product or device can keep track on how often it is used and after some calculations, the companies can keep the business going as long as the users are still using the product and the customers can save on expenses.

“I think that (Malaysian SMEs) do have the capability to adopt this type of business model, since they are the ones who can afford to start small and open to trying new things. You shouldn't have a negative mindset about innovations. Most of them would be intimidated in thinking ‘has anyone else done what I'm about to do?’ In my view, why can't they have the mindset of wanting to do it better by doing it their own way! Take the first step and don't wait for others to do it,” Dasser advises.



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## About:

Registered in the later part of 2016, MyloTA is founded by a group of individuals and companies in the private sector, passionate and involved in IoT value chain in Malaysia and beyond. With the global trend of 50 billion devices (things) connected by 2020, IoT will be an important catalyst in transforming the digital economy landscape. MyloTA works together with industry players to develop a thriving IoT eco-system for companies adopting and providing IoT solutions & services

## Mission:

To work together and collaborate with industry players in developing a thriving ecosystem for companies adopting and providing IoT solutions and services

## Vision:

To Champion and realize the full potential of IoT as part of Malaysia's digital economy, empowering towards the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

- To promote investments, use cases and applications of IoT
- To be the forum for IoT entrepreneurs, researchers, CIOs and policy makers for sharing ideas and expertise in latest IoT technologies
- To harmonise and promote partnerships in software, hardware and platform services
- To promote local IoT companies at the global level and increase their competitiveness
- To help industries in their digital transformation journey using IoT

## MyIOTA 2018-2019 Committee:

**Chairman:** James Lai (IOT Labs)



**Deputy Chairman:** Steven Loh (Lenovo Technology)

**Secretary:** CC Lee (Axiomtek Sdn Bhd)

**Asst. Secretary:** Datuk Sri Ganes (SG Education Group)

**Treasurer:** Paul Ng (Antara Exhibitions)

## Exco members:

Prabodh Seth (iCEE International)

Yong Siew Wai (Mimos Bhd)

Chin Le-Yan (STMicroelectronics)

Anderson Goh (SNS Network)

Bryan Bieh (Etech I.T.)

Sriman (Biotech)

Novert Stulang (SG Akademi Sarawak)

On November 13 and 14, MyloTA organised the second instalment of its signature event, known as the Hypernet of Things (HOT) 2018, in partnership with TM ONE at Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) Tower. The event focused on keeping the industry up to date with the latest updates and trends in manufacturing and automation solutions, attended by solutions providers, technology enthusiasts and leaders of the IoT industry.

During the event, MITI deputy minister Dr. Ong Kian Ming mentioned that the launch of the Industry 4WRD initiative by the Government could be considered as Malaysia's response to the Fourth Industrial megatrends. He also said that the local proliferation of the IoT ecosystem is an important area of opportunity for the country to move ahead.

Indirectly, it will also help Malaysia achieve its aim of becoming a strategic partner for smart manufacturing and one of the primary destinations for the high-tech industry as a total solutions provider in the region.

"The commercial value for IoT is exponential. I hope that our Malaysian IoT companies will have a footprint in the global arena. We can drive our aim of global partnerships between local startups and multinational companies at industry-driven events such as HOT 2018," stated Dr. Ong in his speech.

Apart from showcasing the capabilities of various local innovations via the



exhibition where over 60 exhibitors participated in, the event acted as a platform to connect current local talents of the industry with consumers. This could help provide more opportunities for IoT-related businesses to grow in the country while attracting other IoT experts to invest in Malaysia.

Apart from that, MyloTA also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Malaysian Technology Development Corporation Sdn Bhd (MTDC) on November 7 2018 to mark the collaboration between the two parties in the areas of IR4.0. The collaboration involves the consultancy, services and training to both its client organisations and SMEs as well.

Through the MoU, MTDC and MyloTA aims to share their strengths and expertise with each other in order to better

provide companies with insights on how to best adopt IR4.0 technology and help them ease the burden of the transition process towards digitalisation.

MALAYSIA SME's Engage is a monthly pull-out aimed at giving business councils, chambers of commerce and trade associations a platform to Engage with SMEs.

If your association wishes to be featured, please contact the Editor Rupinder Singh at: [rupinder@malaysiasme.com.my](mailto:rupinder@malaysiasme.com.my)