

**SPEECH BY MR S ISWARAN, MINISTER FOR TRADE AND  
INDUSTRY (INDUSTRY), AT THE OPENING OF GOOGLE'S  
NEW CAMPUS ON 10 NOVEMBER 2016 (THURSDAY),  
11AM, AT MAPLE TREE BUSINESS CITY II**

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong

Mr. Karim Temsamani,  
President, APAC Operations, Google

Mr. Caesar Sengupta,  
Vice President, Product Management, Google

Mr. Rahjan Anandan,  
Vice President, Southeast Asia and India Operations, Google

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

## Introduction

1. I am pleased to join you today to celebrate the opening of Google's new campus.
2. Google and Singapore have enjoyed a strong partnership since 2007 when Google established its Asia Pacific headquarters in Singapore. The opening of this new campus is a milestone, and testament to Google's significant growth in Singapore over the past decade. In addition to expanding its headquarter functions, Google will also be building up an engineering team in Singapore to support its vision of reaching the next billion users.

### **Singapore is well-positioned to capture opportunities from digitalisation**

3. The rapid adoption of digital technologies (digitalisation) across the entire spectrum of economic activities is expected to contribute US\$2 trillion in additional output by 2020. This digitalisation will enable enterprises of all sizes – start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and multinational corporations (MNCs) – to participate in the global economy with speed, and scale in a cost-effective manner.

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4. Today, Singapore is a hub for the regional and global movement of goods, services and capital. With the increased digitalisation of cross-border flows, it is important for Singapore to establish leadership positions in digital segments, such as software, devices and infrastructure, to remain a key economic node in the digital economy.
5. Against this backdrop, Singapore aims to become the Digital Capital of Asia and a Smart Nation, with a comprehensive ecosystem of technology and media

providers, supported by best-in-class infrastructure, where innovative digital solutions, services, and businesses are created, commercialised and scaled internationally.

6. We are from a good position given the high rankings accorded to our digital and network readiness by various international reports. The World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Global Information Technology Study 2016 also ranked Singapore as the country best placed to generate economic growth from info-communications and technology (ICT) investments.
7. Indeed, Singapore is well-positioned to participate in Asia's extraordinary digital growth. Today, more than 200 of the world's top digital companies have established their regional headquarters, management and innovation teams in Singapore. Through our living laboratory initiative, companies can test-bed, prototype and bring new ideas quickly to market. Our start-up ecosystem is thriving with over 1,000 technology start-ups in areas such as fintech, e-commerce, advertising technology and analytics.

### **The digital economy creates new opportunities for local SMEs and Singaporeans**

8. One important reason for our focus on the digital economy, and the partnership with leading companies like Google, is the new opportunities it will create for local SMEs and Singaporeans.

#### Opportunities for local SMEs

9. In the digital economy, SMEs can enter online and global markets without high capital and real estate investments. Under its "Go Global" initiative with SPRING and IE Singapore, Google has been partnering local SMEs in the adoption of digital solutions, as well as helping them to

develop in-house expertise, to fast track their internationalisation journey. SMEs that are interested to export can access a rich collection of resource materials on the “Go Global” website, which have been jointly developed by Google and industry experts. Over the past year, Google has helped about 100 SMEs to enhance their online marketing strategies and capabilities, and venture into new overseas markets through online platforms.

10. Coldwear, a local lifestyle concept retailer focusing on winter wear and travel accessories, is one SME that has benefited from this initiative. Through the “Go Global” platform, they leveraged search engine marketing (SEM) tools to enhance their marketing efforts in Indonesia. These tools enabled Coldwear to target their customers more effectively and generate greater brand awareness, which helped the company to increase sales in Indonesia by over 30%.

### Opportunities for Singaporeans

11. Digitalisation will also create exciting new opportunities for Singaporeans. Based on a survey conducted in June 2015 by the Info-communications Media Development Authority of Singapore (IMDA), it is estimated that 53,000 digital and related jobs will be created by 2018. These include skilled and rewarding careers in areas such as analytics, software engineering, cybersecurity and digital marketing.
12. For instance, Ms Yolyn Ang, a Singaporean, is Google’s Head of Business Development and Partnerships for Ads/Commerce Products for the region, and recently led the launch of Android Pay in Singapore. She was also instrumental in bringing Android Pay to

Australia and Hong Kong, and plans to do so for other countries in the region.

13. Google has also been partnering government agencies to equip Singaporeans with the skillsets that are relevant to the digital economy. For example, Google recently launched its “Digitize” programme, in partnership with the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB), to train Singaporeans to become programmatic buying (the algorithmic sale and purchase of advertising space in real time) and technology experts in digital marketing. This programme attracted over 300 applicants, and 24 Singaporeans have already started their training. One of them is Ms Tan Jieyi. Jieyi, who graduated with a Finance degree, has always been excited about the digital economy and aspires to work in the tech sector. The “Digitize” programme will help to equip her with the requisite skillsets.

### **Closing remarks**

14. While the digital economy presents challenges, it also offers new opportunities for companies and individuals. The Singapore Government is committed to do its part by continuing to support innovation, partnerships and skills development. However, it is equally important that companies adopt an open mindset to embrace new technologies and business models, while individuals take advantage of the various training programmes to equip themselves with the relevant skillsets. With the collective effort of the Government, industry and other stakeholders, and partnerships with industry leaders like Google, we are confident that we can fully benefit from the promise and potential of the digital economy.

15. Our congratulations to Google on the opening of this new campus, and I wish the team at Google every success. Thank you.

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