

Student creates & sells Facebook application for FIVE-FIGURE SUM

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WANT to learn how to create a Facebook application during class time?

Now you can, at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Its School of Computing is starting a new module next semester on Facebook programming.

And it's creating a buzz among current and former students – one of whom called the new course “revolutionary”.

Students will learn programming, web design, analyse and critique existing Facebook applications and, as a finale, create and present their own applications.

The course hopes to attract self-motivated students with the desire to create that “killer application”. Like Mr Trey Philips, 21,

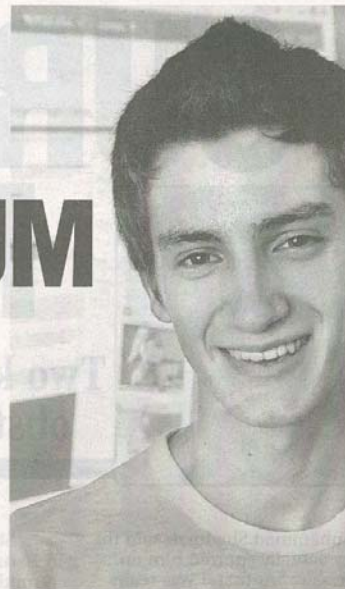
NUS to launch new module on Facebook programming

who's at NUS as part of the student exchange programme. He spent a mere four hours writing a Facebook application called Extended Info in May – and managed to sell it for a cool five-figure sum a month later to a travel company.

The twist: He's not a computer science student.

The philosophy and psychology major from the University of Texas at Austin picked up web design and programming out of interest, from the age of 13.

He said: “The technical skills behind Facebook applications are very basic. That's why, as a



◆ *Trey Philips, who's at NUS as part of the student exchange programme, spent only four hours writing a Facebook application.*

allowed to take the module, which is called Software Development on Evolving Platforms. Specifically, it's looking for those with strong design backgrounds and “entrepreneurial aspirations”.

And instead of using NUS' usual points “bidding” system to join the course, interested applicants are asked to submit personal essays, detailing what they can bring to the table, and describing that cool Facebook application they hope to create.

NUS' Assistant Professor Ben Leong, who came up with the idea, said he became inspired after working together with a group of 10 students on IT projects for two volunteer welfare organisations.

At the same time, the Facebook phenomenon was growing.

He emphasised that the module is not so much about Facebook, as it is about teaching the students how to learn, and to develop innovation and confidence.

Dr Leong plans to have 40 students in the class, although he expects the number of applicants to exceed that.

NUS is not the first university to offer a Facebook module. Stanford University launched its Facebook module in September – and it proved a huge hit with its students.

philosophy student, I can pick it up. The difficult part, and the purpose of this course, is for people to know how to take these skills and use them in the real world.

“Even if you're an expert, you're not going to use the most advanced skills all the time. You need some advanced skills, and a good idea.”

Students from all faculties are