

#TECH: Google's role in boosting Malaysia's digital economy



By Nur Zerina Othman - October 21, 2021 @ 3:47pm



Grow with Google

MALAYSIA

NEW STRAITS TIMES



KUALA LUMPUR: The Covid-19 pandemic has amplified the importance of digital transformation in expediting short-term economic recovery and boosting long-term economic resilience.

Delivering the keynote at the virtual Grow with Google event, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed reiterates the importance of the "...digital economy and technologies in helping businesses, students to continue learning, job seekers to continue upscaling through online courses and families to stay connected".

"We must capture this digital economy opportunity. It will not only be critical for Malaysia as we forge ahead with our economic recovery efforts, but also to secure Malaysia's future economic resilience.



Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

"We are therefore committed to achieving this with the MyDigital initiative, which sets its sights on transforming Malaysia into a technologically advanced, digitally-driven nation and a regional digital economy leader by 2030. We aim to create a better, more inclusive digital economy future for every Malaysian," said Mustapa.

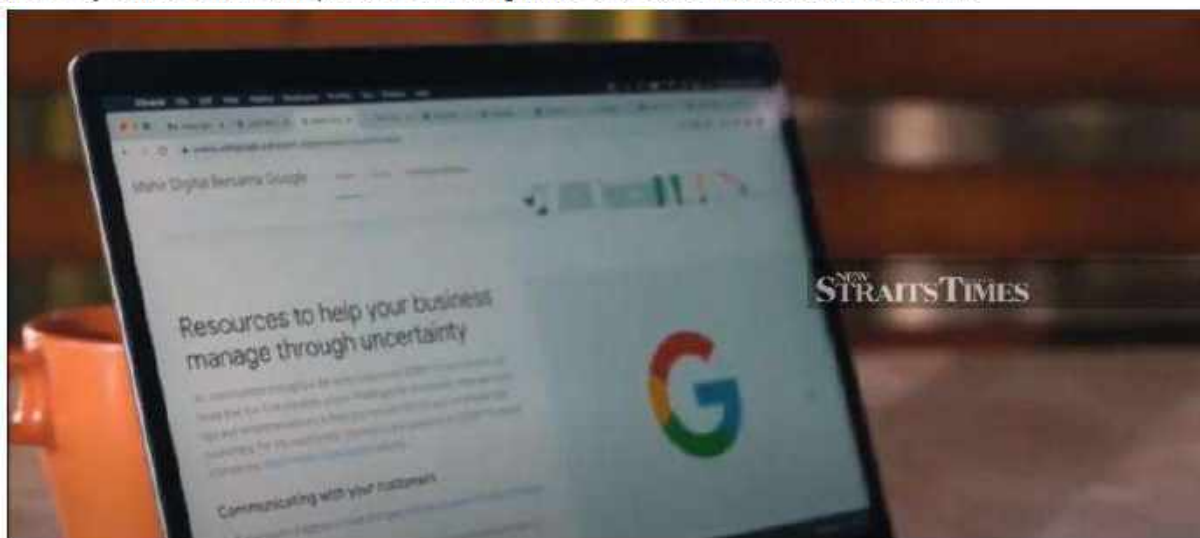
During the event, an overview of the latest report published by AlphaBeta, a strategic economics consultancy titled "Positioning Malaysia as a Regional Leader in the Digital Economy" was also shared where AlphaBeta revealed that digital transformation of Malaysia could generate up to RM257.2 billion in annual economic value by 2030, equivalent to about 17 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020.

Despite its potential, the report also notes that digital adoption in Malaysia remains low and uneven across business sectors and sizes, especially among SMEs.

Digital skills shortage and the perceived high cost of investment in digital tools were cited by Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation to be the key reasons for the low digital adoption rate.

In order to fully leverage the opportunities presented by digital transformation, the report identified three main pillars of action Malaysia could take, and they are: facilitate digitalisation in both the public and private sectors, build the nation's digital talent, and promote digital trade opportunities.

Commenting on Google's contributions to each pillar, Google Malaysia's managing director Marc Woo said, "This past year, many Malaysians have shown great resilience in facing the pandemic, and demonstrated the courage and readiness to innovate. Coupled with the fact that Malaysians are spending more time online and intend to continue using digital services in the post-pandemic future, digital adoption is crucial for businesses. This has motivated us at Google to continue offering free workshops and easy-to-use tools to help micro SMEs digitalise and reach more customers online."



Mustapa in his speech also mentioned how Google has been a committed industry partner "...in advancing Malaysia's economic recovery and our digital economy equation", and one of the many examples is Google's flagship scaling programme, a free training programme for SMEs to help grow their businesses online where according to Mustapa "...was especially vital in 2020 when businesses had to pivot online to survive".

Elaborating further on pillars of action, Woo said that to promote digital trade opportunities, YouTube, an online video sharing platform owned by Google, serves as an "...important platform for local content creators to expand their presence globally and provides an alternative source of income, particularly during the economic downturn due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, Malaysian content creators like Sugu Pavithra and Les' Copaque have succeeded in leveraging YouTube to reach a global audience".



Google Malaysia's managing director Marc Woo

Besides that, Google has also collaborated with esteemed partners to launch programmes to help businesses of all sizes and professionals of all backgrounds build their businesses and careers such as airasia academy (formerly known as Redbeat Academy) and 'Wanita Cukup Berani' by Nestle, alongside their own programme.

During the event, Google also shared some of the success stories from its programme, and one of them is Dough By Sara Bakery, a home-based bakery in Selangor.

Nur Sara Dina, who is the owner, shared how she experienced a major decline in sales at the start of the MCO but after attending workshops she quickly learned how to create a free online Business Profile where she managed to recover and double her sales.



"Google's Business Profile has helped me stay connected to my customers, and at the same time built more awareness and customer trust towards my bakery. As a result, this has allowed me to set up a physical bakery store without any loan and I can now give back to the community through job opportunities for single mothers and persons with disabilities," said Nur Sara.

AlphaBeta's founder and managing director, Dr Fraser Thompson, at the same event, said that the report estimates that "Google's products bring about a total annual business and consumer benefit of around RM40 billion in economic value, which is equivalent to the annual gross output of Malaysia's real estate industry.

"By enabling businesses to unlock new revenue streams and expand their businesses through the use of advertising platforms, Google indirectly supports over 31,000 jobs locally," he said.