# Moral education – for robots

Singapore is tapping artificial intelligence (AI) – which Richard Wong, head of infocomm technology at Frost & Sullivan, defines as "a programmed algorithm that mimics human functions such as learning and decision-making" – to make everyday life more efficient.

Here are some examples of how players in different sectors are building on the emerging technology, even as they put ethical considerations front and centre.
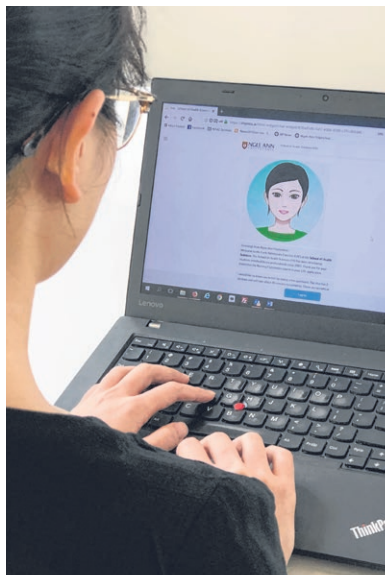
NGEE ANN POLYTECHNIC

In 2019, Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) tried out an AI platform to review early admissions exercise applications for three of its schools. The Early Admissions Exercise Virtual Assistant, dubbed "Eva", read candidates' application essays and chatted with them to personalise interview questions. But, given the impact of the early admissions exercise on students' lives, NP also took a "human-over-the-loop" approach and made sure that lecturers reviewed the applicants who had been turned down by the system. These humans were able to override the AI's decision and go ahead with inviting eligible candidates to interviews.

CERTIS GROUP

Temasek-owned security provider Certis Group, which serves clients such as Jewel Changi Airport, last year opened a research hub, the Certis Centre for Applied Intelligence (CCAI). Besides drawing on its own internal AI governance framework, Certis safeguards data by keeping and processing the information within CCAI. And, while tools like the "Mozart" multi-services platform at Jewel generate predictive insights, the group tells BT: "Ultimately, it is our officers and staff who make the final judgment call, supplemented by other points of information."

PENCIL TECHNOLOGIES

A digital advertising startup that counts the Unilever brand Pond's among its clients, Pencil Technologies draws on marketing and popular culture databases to automatically generate personalised text and visuals for clients. In a Pencil campaign for Pond's acne solution products, which was targeted at millennial men, advertisements that used AI-generated copy fared better online, as they were able to garner more clicks while costing less on a unit basis. The AI platform enables "micro-segment targeting", but the company pledges not to let its AI analyse psychological vulnerabilities or deliberately create manipulative commercials.