INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

1. Have you heard of the concept of cognitive or smart cities before?

I think of Cognitive City as something similar to a smart city, where many daily functions are supported by AI, digital apps and automation, but focuses on understanding our needs. In a Smart City, public services and infrastructure rely more on automated systems and less on manual work which make everything more efficient. For example, at mall parking areas, the system automatically scans my car's plate number and opens the barrier, and when I exit, I just tap to pay. Next, Prasarana also provides apps that help make our daily commute easier.

2. When planning a family holiday, do you usually rely on technology (like travel apps or navigation systems)?

Yes, I do rely on technology when planning a family holiday. For example, when choosing a hotel, I usually use apps like Booking.com or Agoda. I compare dates, locations, and prices online, and once I find a hotel that fits our needs, I book it through those platforms.

3. What features do you find most useful when using apps to plan family trips (e.g. maps, weather info, kid-friendly attractions)?

When I plan a holiday, I find features like maps and location reviews very helpful. I usually look at the hotel photos first, then check what places to eat and things to do nearby. I also make sure to look at the room photos and reviews from other guests, because sometimes the pictures can be different from the real thing. These features help me choose a hotel that is comfortable and suitable for my family.

4. Would you be interested in a system that automatically suggests travel destinations and activities based on your family's preferences (e.g. kids' age, interests, budget)?

Yes, It's more convenient that way because it reduces the stress of figuring out which places are interesting and how far they are from the hotel. If the system can suggest nearby places and activities based on my family's interests and needs, It can save time and reduce the mental effort of planning everything manually.

5. How helpful would it be if the system could adapt plans in real-time using live data (e.g. weather changes, crowd levels, traffic)?

That would be better, because sometimes when we plan to visit a place, for example a river or the beach, the weather might change and it could end up raining especially during the monsoon season. If the app can show the weather forecast and suggest alternative places when that happens, it would really help us adjust our plans more easily.

6. Would you trust an AI-driven assistant to personalize your itinerary using data from past holidays or online behavior?

For me, I would trust AI if it makes traveling much easier. Once I've traveled before, it can learn my preferences and habits. So the next time I plan a trip, it already knows my style and can suggest places that suit my family. That saves a lot of time and effort. But on the other hand, my concern is about data privacy. Just like how TikTok can learn our interests and behavior, AI systems can also capture and analyze our data. If the data is managed properly, not changed and misused, I'm fine with it. But if the data is shared with people who shouldn't have access to it, then I would not be comfortable.

7. How concerned are you about sharing personal data (e.g. location, travel habits) with smart city systems or AI-based apps?

For me, it also depends on how much access the app has, like whether it tracks my location. I'm a bit more conventional, so I don't like my personal data being exposed or people knowing where I am all the time. So I only turn it on when I need it, and switch it off when I don't. The downside is that when I turn it off, I might have to re-enter or set things up again each time. That's the disadvantage.

8. Do you think cognitive city systems should have options for parents to filter or prioritize family-safe or child-friendly activities?

If the app can filter based on our preferences, that would be even better. That way, it can match the trip recommendations to what is suitable for each family member.

9. Do you think Malaysia's current digital infrastructure (apps, tourism platforms, connectivity) supports this kind of AI-based holiday planning?

For AI-based suggestions or holiday planning, I've seen something similar before when using Agoda— but not all apps provide it, only some. Usually, if I want to find activities or interesting places nearby, the app doesn't show everything clearly. So I still have to search on Google to find what activities are available in that area. The apps sometimes only show basic information, so I have to look it up myself to get a full picture.

10. Have you used any Malaysian smart city features (like cashless parking, real-time transport tracking, or smart tourism apps) during holidays?

Yes, I have used some of the smart city features, like cashless parking. That one is convenient and easy. But when it comes to things like topping up Touch 'n Go online or using more advanced features, I usually get my sons to help because they are more familiar with the technology. So I do use these systems, but not all of them on my own yet.

11. What improvements would you like to see to make smart holiday planning more accessible for families in Malaysia?

For someone like me, I would really like an app that can guide the whole trip planning process. For example, I can enter where I want to go, and the app will suggest suitable hotels, nearby attractions, places to eat, and even estimate the budget based on how many people and how many days. It would also be helpful if it includes the weather forecast. I also like when there are promotions or discounts, of course we want to save money, but still enjoy something nice. So an app that helps compare options and budget would be very useful for me.