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10 tech developments to look forward to in 2019

10 DEC 2018



Singapore took significant strides towards becoming a Smart Nation in 2018. 2019 is already shaping up to be an exciting year of technology developments. We feature 10 public sector tech developments citizens can look forward to in the year ahead.

With 2019 just around the corner, we take a look at some exciting tech developments from the public sector that are on the horizon for the year ahead. If ridiculously fast internet and flying taxis sound like science fiction to you, read on to find out how the future is closer than you think.

1. More citizen-centric apps

2018 saw the official release of the Moments of Life (Families) mobile app—a flagship project embodying the government’s anticipatory and responsive approach to delivering digital services. The app will soon be expanded to include other critical moments in a citizen’s journey through life, making it more convenient to access services when making a career switch or caring for an elderly family member, for instance. Also launching soon is the Parents Gateway, which will serve as a one-stop platform for parents to interact with schools on administrative and financial matters.

2. Greater access to data

Public agencies amass huge repositories of data, which could contain insights useful for improving processes and developing new products. The Singapore government is thus looking to make more datasets publicly available to crowdsource ideas and co-create solutions with citizens and businesses. Through portals such as Data.gov.sg, the SingStat Table Builder and the Land Transport DataMall, the government will continue to release data in a timely fashion and make it easily accessible to the wider community.

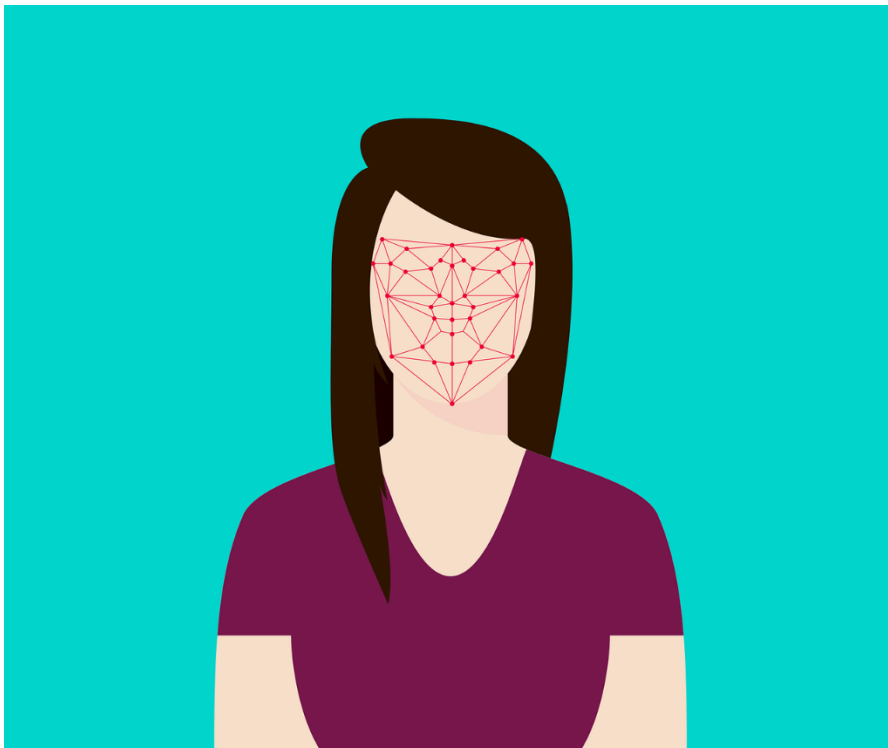


3. New opportunities to collaborate with the government

Alongside more open sharing of data, frameworks for public-private partnerships have been put in place to encourage inventors and entrepreneurs to step forward and help solve Singapore's problems. The Ideas! Portal, for one, will continue to list hackathons and other public sector innovation initiatives that industry players and individuals can participate in. Meanwhile, the Singapore Government Tech Stack makes it possible for businesses to participate in the development of digital applications for citizens in a convenient and secure sandbox environment.

4. Safer online transactions

Cyberattacks have become increasingly sophisticated in recent years—gone are the days when a password alone could assure immunity against hacking. To grant citizens greater peace of mind when transacting online, multifactor authentication methods will be used across all government digital services, taking the form of SMS One-Time Passwords, OneKey token validation, and biometrics, which include fingerprint and facial recognition.



5. A comprehensive e-payments ecosystem

Some 19,000 existing QR stickers from different e-payments service providers are being replaced by the Singapore Quick Response (SGQR) Code, which will serve as a unified platform for cashless transactions island-wide. NETS will also be installing all-in-one e-payment terminals at coffee shops, hawker centres and industrial canteens across Singapore.

6. Trials of faster internet

Imagine being able to download a high-resolution Hollywood movie to your mobile phone in mere seconds. 5G networks promise to make such rapid, high-volume data transfers possible, although the infrastructure and standards for these networks are still being put in place. Three major telecommunications providers in Singapore are already laying the groundwork for 5G in Singapore: M1 has teamed up with Chinese tech giant Huawei to begin field trials of 5G technology; Singtel is working with Swedish telco Ericsson on a pilot 5G network; and StarHub is

collaborating with Finnish multinational Nokia to optimise industrial and consumer 5G applications. Expect to see more 5G developments in 2019.



7. Bigger blockchain ambitions

The world witnessed the price of Bitcoin peak in 2017, then saw it slump in 2018. Through it all, blockchain—the underlying technology powering Bitcoin—has continued to gain momentum as a mechanism for decentralised and secure transactions. Seeking to leverage these properties of blockchain, the Monetary Authority of Singapore and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority have been jointly developing the Global Trade Connectivity Network, a blockchain-based trade finance platform for cross-border payments. The platform is expected to make its debut in early 2019.

8. A smart lamp post near you

ST Engineering has been awarded a S\$7.5 million contract to give lamp posts in Geylang and Buona Vista an upgrade with Internet of Things sensors and cameras. These smart lamp posts are part of the government's efforts to create a Smart Nation Sensor Platform that allows real-time monitoring of

not just road traffic conditions, but also pedestrian footfall and environmental parameters such as temperature and humidity. The data collected will help inform urban and transport planning, as well as enhance security in Singapore.

9. Autonomous cars, buses and flying taxis

Autonomous vehicles look set to become more commonplace on Singapore's roads. Both the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore will see driverless shuttle buses navigating their campuses in 2019. Meanwhile, German company Volocopter will be conducting test flights of their electric air taxis, which seat two passengers each and can fly autonomously or via remote control. Testbed air spaces have yet to be determined, but remember to keep your eyes on the skies!

10. Augmented reality at Singapore bicentennial events

Exhibitions, conferences and festivals will be held throughout 2019 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the arrival of Sir Stamford Raffles in Singapore. Educational trails at Fort Canning Park and the Singapore River will also feature the use of augmented reality technology to bring history to life.



Photo from Singapore Bicentennial Office and Partners

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