

# The Powers of E-Learning: Acquire CPD Points at Anytime, Anywhere and at Your Own Pace

GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING TECHNICAL DIVISION



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**IMAGINE** this. Working engineers of IEM being able to acquire CPD points at their own desired time and venue and at their own pace of learning.

"This would not be impossible if the IEM embraces E-learning in near future", said Professor Dr. Cham Tao Soon when delivering the 22nd Professor Chin Fung Kee Memorial Lecture entitled "E-Learning Application To Continuing Education Of Engineers" to a 200-strong audience at Auditorium Tan Sri Prof Chin Fung Kee on 24th November, 2012.

The prestigious annual event is co-organised by the IEM and the Engineering Alumni Association of University Malaya.

Professor Dr Cham is the current Chancellor and Chairman of Singapore Institute of Management University (SIM) and he sits on its Board of Trustees. He is also the President of the Academy Of Engineering, Singapore. He has been honoured with FSeng (Fellow of Academy of Engineering Singapore), FREng (Royal Academy of Engineering, UK), MIVA (Foreign Academy of the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences) and FIES (Fellow of Institution of Engineers, Singapore).

He reminded everyone that internet technology has, without doubt, changed our lifestyles and in particular, influenced the learning process which was what prompted him to pick E-learning as his topic.

He described E-learning as an application of the ease and power of the internet including web-based learning and computer based approaches to assist learning. The process could be self-paced or instructor-led and includes media forms of text, images animation, streaming video and audio.

He said E-learning was naturally suited to distance learning and flexible learning. It could be conducted as one-to-one interaction between tutor and student or a group learning environment. With the aid of communication technologies, E-learning could be conducted a synchronously or asynchronously. The former activities use technologies such as blogs, wikis, discussion boards and emails. The latter involves the exchange of ideas and information with one or more participants via Skype conversation or a chat room.

He named MIT and Sloan Consortium as higher-education organizations which have extensive applications of one-line courses, adding that big corporations like UOB have also embraced E-learning for staff training. He further demonstrated the E-learning modules with respect to banking secrecy and computer misuse, fair dealing guidelines and insider trading.

He stressed that online education was more effective than the traditional method of learning as revealed by a 5-year study by Stamford Research Institute (SRI) in May 2009. Then via a 7-minute video, he cited E-learning in SIM University where students were all working adults. The degrees offered at SIM include the disciplines of Arts, Social Sciences, Science, Technology, Accountancy, Business and Human Development, as well as Masters and PhD degrees.

Lastly, he said that with so many IEM engineers spread out all over the country, the E-learning approach would provide an alternative and more convenient platform in continuing education.

There were also active discussions with the audience on the suitability of E-learning in fields that require hands-on skills and critical thinking.

Finally, the organiser thanked Dr. Cham with a memento and there was a big round of applause from audience. ■