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UNIMY Honoured with MALAYSIA TECHNOLOGY EXCELLENCE AWARD 2026 for Advancing Career-Ready Digital Education

COVER STORY

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From the Editor's Desk

Prof. Dr. Vikneswaran Nair
Editor & Deputy Vice Chancellor, UNIMY

This issue of the UNIMY newsletter should be read with intent, attention, and critical reflection. It brings together a set of perspectives that are not merely descriptive, but necessary for understanding the direction in which education, technology, and professional practice are evolving. The recognition received by UNIMY at the **Malaysia Technology Excellence Awards 2026** is presented not simply as an achievement, but as evidence of a broader institutional commitment to relevance, innovation, and industry alignment. It signals a shift towards a model of education that is increasingly shaped by application, capability development, and future readiness.

Across the contributions in this issue, a consistent message emerges. The advancement of **artificial intelligence** is not a distant prospect but a current reality that is reshaping expectations across sectors including in the **legal fraternity**. However, the discussions presented here also emphasise a critical distinction. While AI enhances efficiency, speed, and analytical capacity, it does not replace judgment, accountability, or ethical responsibility. These remain fundamentally human functions. This is particularly evident in fields such as law and cybersecurity, where the consequences of decision making extend beyond technical accuracy to issues of trust, fairness, and governance.

The issue also highlights an important **transformation within education systems**. Learning is becoming more adaptive, data driven, and personalised, as seen in the work of **UNIMY alumni** and ongoing institutional initiatives. At the same time, there is a need for caution. Over reliance on AI may lead to skill erosion, reduced critical thinking, and a weakening of foundational competencies. This tension between opportunity and risk must be actively managed rather than assumed to resolve itself.

Beyond academic discourse, this issue reflects UNIMY's engagement with the wider community. **Outreach efforts** aimed at school students demonstrate a commitment to building early awareness and interest in **science**, **engineering**, and **technology pathways**. Yet, such initiatives must be sustained through continuity, mentorship, and structured progression if they are to generate long term impact.

Taken together, the articles in this issue point to a central challenge. The question is not whether change is taking place, but how it is being understood and managed. Readers are therefore urged to engage in this issue in full. Each contribution offers a distinct lens, but collectively they present a coherent narrative on **transformation**, **responsibility**, and the need for **informed action** in a rapidly evolving environment.

UNIMY Honoured with Malaysia Technology Excellence Award 2026 for Advancing Career-Ready Digital Education

Prof. Dr. Vikneswaran Nair
Editor & Deputy Vice Chancellor, UNIMY

UNIMY has been recognised at the Malaysia Technology Excellence Awards 2026, receiving the IT – Education award in recognition of its strong contribution to technology-driven, industry-linked higher education in Malaysia. The award acknowledges UNIMY's work in integrating artificial intelligence, cybersecurity readiness, and sustainability-oriented technology laboratories into its academic ecosystem.

This recognition reflects more than a single institutional achievement. It affirms UNIMY's larger direction as a future-focused university that seeks to position itself as a meaningful bridge between academia and innovative industries. At the centre of this approach is a clear educational philosophy that, students must graduate not only with academic qualifications, but also with the technical skills, applied exposure,

and professional readiness required by the digital economy. As highlighted in the award coverage, UNIMY has structured its education model around industry participation, practical technical training, professional certifications, and laboratory-based learning. Industry practitioners also contribute directly to teaching and technical discourse, ensuring that students are exposed to current developments in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and data systems.

One of the university's key initiatives is the introduction of its Bachelor's in Artificial Intelligence programme. Developed in response to Malaysia's growing need for talent in AI development, machine learning, and intelligent systems, the programme is designed to prepare graduates for emerging roles in the country's digital economy. The curriculum covers both foundational AI knowledge and more advanced areas such as agentic AI, reflecting UNIMY's effort to remain aligned with technological change rather than respond to it belatedly.

UNIMY's emphasis on strategic partnership has also played a major role in strengthening its academic and innovation ecosystem. A notable development is its collaboration with i-Sprint, which has led to the establishment of Malaysia's first Application Post-Quantum Cryptography Migration Lab at UNIMY. This facility provides exposure to quantum-resistant encryption and cybersecurity systems relevant to financial institutions and technology organisations, with technologies connected to practices used by more than 170 financial institutions worldwide. This places UNIMY in a significant position within the national conversation on cyber resilience and future-ready digital security.

Prof. Dr. Vikneswaran Nair (Deputy Vice Chancellor), celebrating the award with Dr. Noor Azizah Binti Atdenan (Registrar) and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nor Azlinah Md Lazam (Head of Deans)

In a further step towards linking digital capability with sustainability, UNIMY has also collaborated with Squarecloud to develop an ESG Lab and Centre of Excellence. The facility uses an AI-driven platform for energy optimisation and building performance analytics, creating opportunities for postgraduate research in machine learning, building systems, and energy data analysis. This initiative is particularly important because it reflects

a broader understanding of digital education, one that connects technological advancement with environmental responsibility and applied sustainability.

The strength of UNIMY's model is reinforced by a growing ecosystem of academic, certification, research, and industry partners. The award coverage identifies collaborations with international academic institutions such as the University of the West of England Bristol, Oxford Brookes University, University of Brighton, Northumbria University, and Shandong Polytechnic, as well as industry and certification partners including Alibaba Cloud, CompTIA, Fortinet, i-Sprint, Masverse, and NetAssist. Through these linkages, certification pathways, and virtual lab platforms, UNIMY continues to strengthen its promise of career-ready education.

This award is therefore not merely symbolic. It represents recognition of a deliberate institutional strategy to align academic delivery with technological relevance, industry demand, and national development priorities. For UNIMY, the honour serves as both affirmation and responsibility. Affirmation that its direction is gaining recognition, and responsibility to continue producing graduates who are prepared to contribute meaningfully from their first day in the workforce.

AI and Law Forum 2026: How AI is Reshaping Legal Practice and Education

Thillai Raj T. Ramanathan
Professor of Practice, UNIMY & CTO BAC Education

Part of the forum speakers - Sen Ze (Author, The Intelligent Lawyer), Raja Singham (Founder & Chief Future Officer, BAC Education Group), Dr. Jasmine Begum (Senior General Counsel, Corporate External & Legal Affairs, Microsoft ASEAN), Chan Mun Yew (Partner, TMT Practice Group, Lee Hishammuddin Allen & Gledhill) and Thillai Raj Ramanathan (Professor of Practice, UNIMY & CTO BAC Education)

The AI and Law Forum 2026, organised by BAC Education and UNIMY, brought together students, practitioners, and industry leaders for a timely discussion on how artificial intelligence is reshaping legal education, legal work, and the wider administration of justice. The forum was designed to move the conversation beyond fear and towards responsible adaptation. The central message that emerged was clear, AI is already part of the legal landscape, and the more pressing issue is not whether it will enter the profession, but how the profession will respond while preserving judgment, accountability, and human value.

A strong theme throughout the forum was that AI should be understood as a tool for augmentation rather than replacement. Raja Singham framed the issue in terms of relevance, arguing that while lawyers are unlikely to be replaced by AI itself, those who refuse to engage with it may be displaced

by those who do. He stressed that the value of the future lawyer will no longer rest mainly on access to knowledge, since information is now easier to retrieve and process, but on the exercise of judgment, ethics, and discernment. This position was reinforced across the sessions, particularly in the view that law remains a human system built on responsibility, consequence, and interpretation.

The forum also provided a broader technological context. Thillai Raj Ramanathan traced AI's development from a long period of slow progress to the rapid acceleration seen in recent years, especially after deep learning, transformers, and generative AI entered mainstream use. His presentation showed that AI is no longer limited to assisting tasks but is moving towards acting through more agentic systems. Yet this expanding capability also raises questions about governance, bias, and accountability, particularly in professional domains such as law where consequences are serious and public trust is critical.

From the perspective of legal practice, several speakers highlighted both the opportunities and the limits of AI. Sen Ze reminded the audience that AI does not think or understand in the human sense. It infers patterns and produces plausible outputs, but it does not carry responsibility. Chan Mun Yew similarly noted that AI may improve legal research, documentation review, and technical efficiency, but it cannot replicate advocacy, empathy, intuition, or strategic judgment. Gaythri Raman extended this discussion into legal education, warning that over reliance on AI may weaken core skills if students use it to bypass thinking rather than strengthen it. Dr. Jasmine Begum then widened the lens further by showing how AI and cybersecurity are now deeply connected, with rising cyber threats making resilience, compliance, and legal preparedness more important than ever.

Overall, the AI and Law Forum 2026 succeeded in positioning AI not as a threat to the legal profession, but as a test of its willingness to evolve. The forum made it evident that the future belongs not to those who resist technology blindly, nor to those who trust it uncritically, but to those who can combine legal knowledge, technological fluency, and sound human judgment in a responsible and credible manner.

Readers are invited to continue to the following pages for a structured account of each presentation and its key arguments.

AI, Law and Staying Relevant

Raja Singham
Founder & Chief Future Officer,
BAC Education Group

Artificial intelligence is reshaping the legal profession, but the issue is not whether AI will simply replace lawyers and judges. The more important issue is whether the profession is prepared to remain relevant in a world where technology is changing the speed, structure, and expectations of legal work.

The legal profession is not being replaced by artificial intelligence. But lawyers who choose not to engage with it may increasingly be displaced by those who do. That is the real shift. The conversation should therefore move away from fear and towards adaptation. The question is not whether AI belongs in law. It already does. The question is how law responds in a way that preserves justice, accountability, and human value.

For a long time, the value of a lawyer rested heavily on access to knowledge. Lawyers were expected to master statutes, cases, precedents, and legal doctrine. That foundation still matters, but access to information is no longer scarce. AI has made knowledge easier to retrieve, organise, and process. As a result, legal value is moving from possession of knowledge to the exercise of judgment.

AI can assist with the "what." It can draft contracts, review documents, summarise judgments, and identify patterns across large volumes of information. These functions improve speed, reduce turnaround time, and increase efficiency. But law is not only about information. It is about context, consequences, ethics, and responsibility. It is about deciding not only what the law says, but what should be done. That remains human work.

This is why AI should be understood as augmentation, not replacement. In the same way that medical imaging did not replace the doctor but strengthened diagnosis, AI in law should strengthen professional capability. The future lawyer must therefore operate at the intersection of three areas: legal intelligence, technological fluency, and human judgment. Legal intelligence means deep grounding in law. Technological fluency means the ability to work effectively with AI and digital systems. Human judgment means ethics, empathy, responsibility, and discernment. Real value will be created where these three meet.

This shift also creates an opportunity to improve access and quality in legal systems. If used carefully, AI can help individuals and small businesses obtain legal support at lower cost. It can help courts manage caseloads more consistently. It can also free lawyers to spend more time on complex reasoning and client engagement. But these benefits are not automatic. They depend on how the technology is used and what principles guide its use.

That is why accountability must remain central. Questions of bias, fairness, trust, and responsibility cannot be treated as secondary. Machines may assist decisions, but human beings must remain answerable for the outcomes. Law is not merely a technical system of rules. It is a system of values and consequences.

This also means legal education must change. Too much emphasis is still placed on content over capability, recall over reasoning, and disciplinary isolation over interdisciplinary thinking. What is needed are T-shaped professionals: individuals with depth in legal knowledge and breadth across technology, business, policy, and data. Legal education must therefore become more AI-integrated, more practice-based, and more responsive to multiple career pathways.

Relevance cannot be assumed. It must be earned. If law is to remain meaningful, it must evolve alongside the society it serves. Used thoughtfully, AI offers an opportunity not to weaken the human element of law, but to strengthen it.

From Assisting to Acting: The Evolution of AI

Thillai Raj Ramanathan
Professor of Practice, UNIMY &
CTO BAC Education

We often think of AI as a recent breakthrough. That is not accurate. What we are witnessing today is the outcome of a long, uneven trajectory, what I describe as a 50-year crawl followed by a 5-year sprint.

From the 1950s to around 2020, progress was slow, constrained by rigid programming and human-defined rules. AI systems could only operate within boundaries we explicitly set. The Turing Test, introduced in 1950, framed the central question, "can machines exhibit intelligence indistinguishable from humans?" That question shaped decades of research, but progress remained incremental. We saw cycles of optimism and disappointment, what we now call AI winters, where expectations exceeded capability.

However, this slow crawl laid the foundation. Each milestone mattered, i.e. early neural ideas, expert systems, symbolic reasoning, and eventually machine learning. The turning point came when we moved away from telling machines what to do, towards allowing them to learn patterns from data.

2012 was a critical inflection point. With ImageNet and advances in deep learning, machines began to "see." This was not just an improvement; it was a structural shift. Instead of rule-

based systems, we had models learning from vast datasets, supported by GPU computing power and improved algorithms. Error rates in image recognition dropped dramatically in a very short time. This is what I refer to as the "big bang" of modern AI.

Then came 2017, the transformer architecture. This fundamentally changed how machines process information. Instead of reading sequentially, AI could process entire contexts simultaneously. It could understand relationships across words, sentences, and documents at once. This is the architecture behind all modern large language models. Without it, tools like ChatGPT would not exist.

From there, the acceleration is clear. In 2022, generative AI entered mainstream adoption. What took decades before now happens in months. Reaching 100 million users took years for most platforms. AI achieved this in a fraction of that time. This is not just adoption but it is a signal of how deeply integrated AI is becoming in everyday workflows.

At the same time, AI capability has expanded beyond narrow tasks. We moved from simple games like tic-tac-toe to systems that defeat world champions in chess and Go. These are not just symbolic victories. They demonstrate the ability of machines to operate in highly complex, uncertain environments.

More importantly, AI is transitioning from assisting to acting. Earlier systems supported human decision-making. Today, we are seeing the rise of agentic AI, where systems that can plan, execute, and adapt. These agents can schedule meetings, draft communications, analyse data, and make decisions with minimal human intervention. The shift is subtle but significant in the sense that AI is no longer just a tool you use; it is becoming a system you manage.

We are also entering the phase of embodied intelligence. AI is moving beyond the screen into the physical world, i.e. factories, hospitals, and homes. When machines can interpret both language and physical environments, automation becomes far more powerful and pervasive.

At the frontier, AI is contributing to scientific discovery. Protein structure prediction, for example, has advanced at a pace previously considered impossible, leading to breakthroughs recognised at the highest levels. This signals a shift from AI as a productivity tool to AI as a knowledge generator.

However, alongside this progress, there are important considerations. The speed of advancement raises questions around governance, ethics, and control. If AI systems can act autonomously, where does accountability sit? If models are trained on vast datasets, how do we ensure reliability and bias mitigation? These are not peripheral issues but they are central to how AI will be deployed, particularly in domains like law.

This brings us to application. One practical direction is building domain-specific AI systems. For example, a privacy-first, locally hosted legal assistant. Such a system integrates a local language model, a controlled knowledge base, and secure interfaces like WhatsApp. It processes inputs, transcribes voice, retrieves relevant legal context, and generates responses, all within a governed environment. This is not theoretical. The components already exist.

The implication is clear. The question is no longer whether AI will transform industries. It already is. The real question is how we design, govern, and integrate these systems responsibly. AI is not replacing human expertise. It is reshaping how expertise is applied, scaled, and managed.

The Intelligent Lawyer

Sen Ze
Author, The Intelligent Lawyer

There is a structured argument that artificial intelligence must be understood not as intelligence in the human sense, but as a system that operates through inference. AI does not think, understand meaning, or interpret intent. It detects patterns in language, identifies relationships between words, and generates outputs based on probabilities derived from prior data. The response may appear coherent and persuasive, but it remains a prediction shaped by context, not an exercise of judgment or truth.

This distinction is not merely technical but it has direct implications for legal practice. Law operates through interpretation, responsibility, and consequence. AI, by contrast, produces outputs without accountability. It cannot be held liable, nor can it exercise professional judgment. As a result, AI may enhance legal work, but it does not displace the foundational responsibilities of the lawyer.

The argument begins with the claim that legal work is becoming "safer than ever." This safety is not absolute but arises from augmentation. AI improves efficiency, reduces routine errors, and enables large-scale analysis of documents and evidence. However, this improvement is conditional. The moment AI-generated outputs are treated as authoritative without scrutiny, risk is reintroduced in a different form.

At the core of the discussion is accountability. Someone must remain responsible for the outcomes influenced by AI. Whether it is the lawyer, the firm, or the system deployer, responsibility cannot be transferred to the technology. Legal systems are built on human agency, grounded in intent, negligence, and duty of care. AI does not meet these criteria. It is therefore positioned as an instrument, not an independent actor.

The presentation then develops a layered understanding of professional evolution. At the base is the competent lawyer, grounded in doctrine and legal principles. The next level is the intelligent lawyer, who combines legal knowledge with an understanding of human behaviour, client psychology, and context. Beyond this is the "super intelligent lawyer," who uses AI effectively to compress work, improve efficiency, and enhance decision-making. This progression is not a replacement trajectory but an augmentation framework. Its success depends on how the lawyer engages with AI, not on the capability of AI alone.

A critical dimension introduced is the changing behaviour of clients. Clients increasingly interact with AI before consulting a lawyer. They arrive with partial knowledge, pre-formed assumptions, and sometimes misplaced confidence. They are also more selective in what they disclose, often shaping narratives based on what they believe is relevant. This creates a complex interaction dynamic. Law operates through words, but words are context-dependent, incomplete, and often strategic. Interpretation, therefore, becomes a skilled human function.

AI, however, only processes what it is given. If a client asks the wrong question, omits key facts, or frames the issue inaccurately, the output will be flawed. The system cannot correct poor input. Yet, the apparent fluency of AI responses creates a false sense of certainty. This is where the lawyer's role becomes more critical. The task is not to compete with AI, but to structure the problem correctly, i.e. ask the right questions, reconstruct facts, identify inconsistencies, and interpret the client's situation in its full context.

This leads to a deeper distinction. AI systems have not lived or experienced life. They do not understand emotions, culture, morality, or motivation. While they can simulate patterns associated with these elements, simulation is not equivalent to comprehension. Legal reasoning often depends on these human dimensions, particularly in sensitive or complex cases. This is where the intelligent lawyer's defining strength emerges in the ability to understand what makes a client truly human.

When this human-centred capability is combined with the effective use of AI, the lawyer's role is not diminished but strengthened. The intelligent lawyer, supported by AI, evolves into a super intelligent lawyer who combines speed, scale, and analytical capability with human judgment and ethical responsibility. Judgment is not delegated but it is strengthened.

However, a point of caution remains. The boundary between human judgment and machine assistance is becoming less distinct. In structured areas such as compliance or contract analysis, AI may increasingly shape legal reasoning itself. The risk lies not in using AI, but in uncritical reliance on it.

In sum, AI is reshaping the environment of legal practice, particularly in how information is accessed and interpreted. Yet the core of the profession remains unchanged. Law continues to rest on interpretation, judgment, and accountability, functions that cannot be delegated to systems operating solely on patterns and probabilities.

AI and Legal Practice: Tool, Not Replacement

Chan Mun Yew
Partner, TMT Practice Group, Lee Hishammuddin Allen & Gledhill (LHAG)

Litigation is not a single layered activity. It is multi-faceted, combining both technical and non-technical dimensions. On the technical side, legal practice involves document review, legal research, drafting, and advocacy. On the non-technical side, it includes administration, billing, and client relationship management. The key focus here is how artificial intelligence is transforming the technical pillars of legal practice, while leaving the human dimensions largely intact.

If we look at the evolution of legal research, the shift is significant. In the past, lawyers physically engaged with law journals, casebooks, and textbooks. The process was entirely manual, time consuming, and dependent on access to library resources. Today, the present system is driven by keyword-based searches through online databases. While faster, it remains rigid and rule based. It often retrieves exact matches but misses broader concepts or synonyms. This creates a different challenge, information overload. Lawyers may receive thousands of irrelevant results if the wrong keywords are used. The system rewards persistence and effort rather than insight.

This is where AI introduces value. It improves the efficiency of legal research by managing volume and performing preliminary synthesis. However, this advantage must be understood carefully. AI does not replace legal reasoning. It supports it. The same applies to documentation review. In large disputes, particularly in areas like construction, lawyers may deal with tens of thousands of pages across multiple document sets. The manual burden is significant. AI can assist by conducting initial reviews and producing what can be described as a "first cut." Yet, human verification remains essential. Accuracy, context, and interpretation cannot be delegated fully to machines.

The limitation of AI becomes most evident in advocacy. Advocacy is not a mathematical process. It is an art. It requires navigating perceptions of what is considered just and fair. Success often depends on identifying a decisive argument, the so called "silver bullet," that shifts the balance of the case. This requires years of experience, intuition, and the ability to read factual context and judicial temperament. These are not variables that can be easily quantified or replicated by algorithms.

AI also falls short in handling disputed issues where weight and significance must be assigned. It cannot package arguments with empathy or construct narratives that resonate on a human level. These elements remain central to effective advocacy and are fundamentally human.

The conclusion is straightforward. AI should be positioned as a tool, not a replacement. It is highly effective in managing technical volume, including data synthesis and research support. However, it cannot replicate strategic judgment or advocacy skills. The future of legal practice lies with lawyers who adapt, those who leverage AI for efficiency while maintaining strict checks and balances to ensure reliability.

At the same time, one must be cautious not to overstate AI's limitations. The technology is evolving. Elements of pattern recognition may increasingly extend into areas that resemble reasoning. The critical issue, therefore, is not whether AI will change legal practice, it already has, but how far this transformation can go without undermining the human foundations of law.

Artificial Intelligence: The Future of Legal Education and Practice

Prof. Dr. Vikneswaran Nair
Editor & Deputy Vice Chancellor, UNIMY

Gaythri Raman
Managing Director SEA & India, LexisNexis

Gaythri Raman, the Managing Director SEA & India, LexisNexis, in her presentation at the AI for Law Forum, outlined a structured approach to artificial intelligence at LexisNexis, grounded in professional responsibility and ethics. She emphasised that the organisation prioritises accuracy, relevance, and transparency, with all output supported by verifiable legal citations. This is complemented by a strong commitment to data protection, privacy, and intellectual property, guided by RELX's Responsible AI Principles, centering on fairness, explainability, human oversight, and real-world impact.

To contextualise current developments, she outlined the evolution of AI in legal practice across three stages. The first stage, extractive AI, focused on supporting legal research,

e-discovery, and contract analysis, improving efficiency while retaining the central role of lawyers, particularly junior practitioners. The second stage, generative AI, marked a significant shift, enabling systems to draft contracts, summarise cases, and prepare client communications. This has begun to automate first drafts and routine tasks, effectively augmenting the nature of junior level work.

She highlighted that the legal sector is now entering a third stage, agentic AI, where systems are capable of planning, decision making, and executing multi step workflows such as due diligence, litigation support, and compliance checks. At this stage, not only discrete tasks but entire junior level workflows may be subject to automation, signaling a deeper and structural transformation of legal practice.

Against this backdrop, she emphasised that competitive advantage in the legal profession is shifting away from speed and volume of output towards judgment, ethical reasoning, and the cultivation of client trust; capabilities that remain distinctly human.

Turning to legal education, she observed that AI is already deeply embedded in academic life, with the majority of law students routinely using AI tools for coursework and assessments. The concern, however, is not AI use itself, but the absence of structured guidance and training around it. Without a framework for responsible and informed adoption, students risk a gradual erosion of foundational competencies, including critical thinking, persuasive writing, and crafting legal arguments, while simultaneously failing to develop the new skills and working practices that an AI-augmented profession demands. The danger, she cautioned, is a generation of graduates caught between two worlds, underprepared for both. She further noted that legal systems are responding with increasing scrutiny. Courts in multiple jurisdictions have sanctioned lawyers for submitting AI generated or fabricated citations, reinforcing the principle that all submissions must be independently verified. The use of AI does not diminish professional responsibility but rather intensifies it.

From a regulatory perspective, she pointed to emerging governance frameworks, including the risk-based approach of the EU AI Act, alongside developments in jurisdictions such as Vietnam, South Korea, Singapore and Australia. Malaysia, she noted, is moving in a similar direction, although global consensus remains limited.

In conclusion, she underscored a clear position. AI should be used as a tool rather than a replacement, as a tutor rather than a ghostwriter, and as a support for research rather than a substitute for thinking. While AI can enhance legal processes, responsibility, interpretation, and accountability remain firmly within the domain of the legal professional.

AI and Cybersecurity: New Frontiers in Legal Practice

Dr. Jasmine Begum
Senior General Counsel, Corporate External & Legal Affairs, Microsoft ASEAN

Let me start straight with the reality we are dealing with. Cyberattacks are increasing in speed, scale, and sophistication, and this trend is not incremental, it is exponential. When we look at nation state cyber activity over time, the trajectory is clearly rising, with incidents such as Stuxnet, WannaCry, and attacks on critical infrastructure demonstrating how cyber operations are now instruments of geopolitical strategy.

What is driving this shift? First, geopolitical tensions. Nation states are actively using cyber capabilities for espionage, sabotage, and subversion to advance national interests. Second, regulatory pressures are increasing globally. Governments are introducing stricter cybersecurity laws from GDPR and the NIS Directive to various national cybersecurity acts, forcing organisations to rethink compliance and risk. Third, cybercrime itself is expanding rapidly. It is no longer fragmented; it is organised, scalable, and increasingly professional.

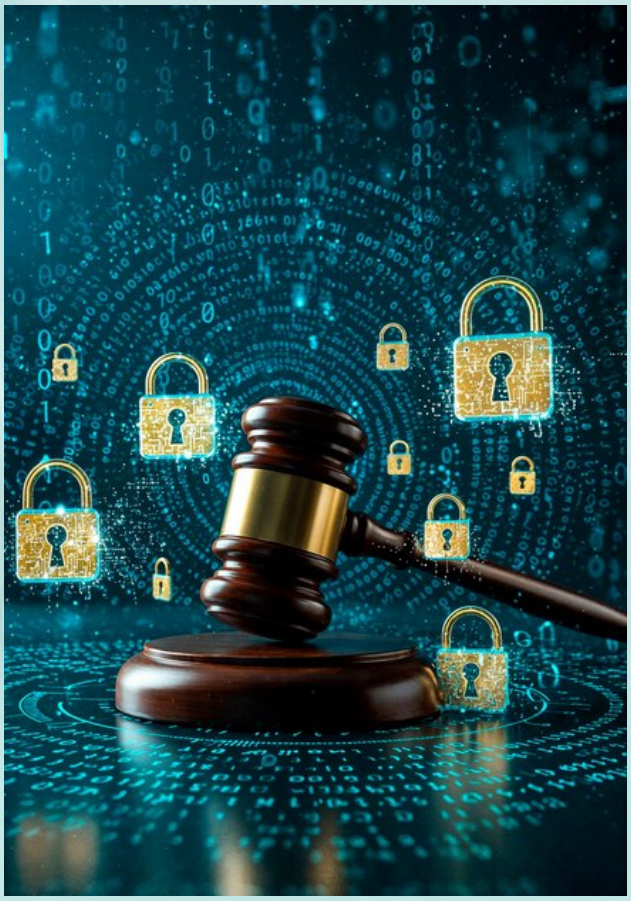
We are also dealing with accumulated technical debt. Legacy systems remain widely deployed, and they introduce persistent vulnerabilities. These systems are harder to secure and significantly increase the impact of any breach. At the same time, rapid technological change such as AI, IoT, and cloud computing is creating both defensive opportunities and new attack surfaces.

The threat landscape today is defined by speed. Attackers can access data within one hour and move laterally across systems in less than two hours. Meanwhile, organisations often take months to patch vulnerabilities. There is a clear asymmetry. In fact, vulnerabilities are typically exploited within 14 days, yet many systems remain unpatched even after nine months. This delay directly translates into risk exposure.

Cybercrime is also highly profitable. We are looking at a global cybercrime economy estimated at around 10 trillion dollars annually today, projected to reach 20 trillion by 2030. Attacks are occurring at a rate of roughly 1,000 per second, and ransomware demands are doubling. This is not just crime it is an industrialised ecosystem. Services such as

stolen credentials, denial of service tools, and ransomware kits are readily available, often operating under affiliate models.

Public sector organisations are particularly vulnerable. A significant proportion of attacks target government agencies, IT services, education, and think tanks. Nation state actors are expanding their reach across multiple countries, with a strong focus on strategic and political targets.



At the same time, the nature of cyber threats is evolving. AI is now both a defensive necessity and an attack vector. Attackers are using diverse entry points, including infostealers and credential theft, while also leveraging AI to scale operations and create more convincing social engineering attacks. We are seeing the rise of synthetic identities and domain impersonation at scale.

Cloud environments are increasingly targeted, particularly where weak or stolen credentials are involved. A significant percentage of breaches can be traced back to identity vulnerabilities rather than system failures.

Real world incidents illustrate the scale of impact. Attacks on healthcare systems, legal firms, and national infrastructure have disrupted operations, exposed millions of records, and forced organisations to make difficult decisions, including ransom payments. In some cases, governments have refused to pay, highlighting the strategic and ethical dimensions of response.

Finally, cybersecurity must be reframed. It is not only about responding to incidents it is about building resilience. Technologies such as SaaS and cloud improve scalability and consistency, while AI enhances detection and response. However, these same technologies can also be exploited by adversaries.

The core message is clear. The threat environment is expanding faster than organisational readiness. Without a shift towards proactive, resilient, and integrated security strategies, the gap will continue to widen.

From Dialogue to Direction: Advancing ESG and Digital Innovation for Sustainable Systems

Prof. Dr. Vikneswaran Nair
Editor & Deputy Vice Chancellor, UNIMY

In conjunction with Earth Day 2026, UNIMY, in collaboration with the Malaysia Institute of ESG (MiESG), successfully convened a timely and policy-relevant webinar titled *"Our Power, Our Planet: Advancing ESG and Digital Innovation for Sustainable Systems."* The session brought together academic, industry, and sustainability perspectives to examine how ESG principles and digital technologies can move beyond rhetoric towards measurable and accountable environmental action.

The webinar commenced with welcoming remarks that positioned sustainability not merely as an environmental concern, but as a systemic challenge requiring coordinated institutional, technological, and societal responses. This framing set the tone for a discussion that remained grounded in practical outcomes rather than abstract commitments.

The keynote address by **Professor Lawal Marafa (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)** provided a critical overview of the evolving relationship between technology, ESG, and sustainable development. His address emphasised that while digital innovation offers unprecedented capacity for monitoring, modelling, and managing environmental systems, its effectiveness is contingent upon governance

structures, ethical considerations, and local contextualisation. He cautioned against an overreliance on technological determinism, arguing that sustainability outcomes must be anchored in human agency and policy alignment.

The panel discussion, moderated by **Professor Dr. Vikneswaran Nair (UNIMY)**, extended this critique into applied contexts. The discussion examined a central question: whether digital and ESG systems are currently capable of delivering real sustainability outcomes. **Say Lim (SquareCloud)** highlighted the operational potential of cloud-based and data-driven systems in improving efficiency and transparency. However, he noted that implementation gaps often limit impact, particularly where organisations lack the capacity to translate data into decision-making.

Sarhan Bin Ismail (MiESG) reinforced the importance of standards, measurement, and verification, arguing that ESG must shift from narrative positioning to structured frameworks that ensure accountability. **Dr. Jennifer Chan (Asian Ecotourism Network)** introduced a community-centred perspective, stressing that sustainability must remain inclusive, with local stakeholders actively participating in both design and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

A moderated question and answer session further explored tensions between innovation and implementation. Participants raised concerns regarding data reliability, greenwashing, and the risk of excluding smaller stakeholders from digital transitions. These exchanges highlighted a recurring theme: that technology, while necessary, is insufficient without institutional integrity and inclusive governance.

The session concluded with a clear consensus that advancing sustainable systems requires a balanced integration of ESG principles, digital tools, and grounded practice. Rather than positioning technology as a solution in itself, the discussion reaffirmed its role as an enabler within a broader ecosystem of accountability, policy coherence, and stakeholder engagement.

Overall, the webinar demonstrated that the pathway to sustainability is neither linear nor purely technological. It requires a critical alignment between innovation and responsibility, where outcomes are measured not only by efficiency gains, but by their contribution to equitable and enduring environmental impact.

UNIMY Alumni in the Spotlight: Advancing AI for Education and Society

Advancing Adaptive Online Learning through AI-Driven Tutoring

Dr. Sireesha Prathigadapa
UNIMY Alumni, PhD Computing

My doctoral research examines how artificial intelligence can be applied to improve the effectiveness of online learning environments. Titled *Enhancing Online Learning: Adaptive Virtual Tutoring and Student Performance Analysis Using GPT-3 with Reinforcement Learning*, the study develops an AI-driven adaptive tutoring system for mathematics education. The system integrates GPT-3 for intelligent content generation with reinforcement learning techniques to continuously refine and optimise individual learning pathways.

The core premise is that learning is not uniform; students differ in pace, comprehension, and engagement. The system responds to these variations by analysing real-time student interactions and performance data, enabling it to provide targeted exercises, immediate feedback, and structured guidance. More importantly, it adjusts its instructional strategies dynamically, ensuring that support is aligned with each learner's evolving needs.

This research demonstrates the potential of combining generative AI with adaptive decision-making models to enhance conceptual understanding and learner engagement. It also contributes to the broader discourse on data-driven education by showing how continuous performance analysis can inform personalised interventions. The findings suggest that such systems can play a critical role in shaping more responsive, scalable, and effective online learning ecosystems.

My experience at UNIMY has been intellectually enriching and professionally rewarding, providing a strong platform to engage in impactful research in computing and adaptive learning systems. It has supported my growth through academic collaboration, research opportunities, and continuous development in AI-driven education.

Building Scalable and Privacy-Preserving AI Systems for Real-World Applications

Dr. Shadia Yahya Baroud
UNIMY Alumni, PhD Computing

My research focuses on the design of intelligent, privacy-preserving AI systems capable of addressing complex and dynamic real-world challenges. With over a decade of academic and postdoctoral experience across Malaysia and international collaborations, my work centres on developing scalable, decentralised architectures that enable adaptive decision-making.

A key contribution is the ML2MAS framework, a multi-agent-based system that integrates machine learning within distributed environments. By combining multi-agent reinforcement learning with federated learning, the framework allows autonomous agents to collaborate efficiently while maintaining strict data privacy. This is particularly relevant in contexts where sensitive data cannot be centralised, yet coordinated intelligence is required.

The applications of this work are practical and diverse. In smart manufacturing, it supports predictive maintenance and operational optimisation. In healthcare, it informs diagnostic processes and decision support systems. In sustainable transport, it contributes to the development of adaptive mobility solutions.

My research outputs include publications in high-impact journals and conferences, alongside international recognition such as participation in the ITU AI for Good Summit. Moving forward, the emphasis remains on strengthening collaboration between academia and industry to ensure that theoretical advances translate into meaningful societal and technological impact. My academic journey includes my time at UNIMY, which formed part of my development toward advanced research in AI. During this period, I gained research experience that contributed to my broader academic progression.

Strengthening Academic Quality: UNIMY Successfully Completes Compliance Accreditation Audit

Dr Noor Azizah Binti Atdenan
Registrar, UNIMY

UNIMY has successfully completed its recent compliance accreditation audit covering six academic programmes: **Diploma in Information Technology (Cyber Security), Bachelor of Computer Science (Hons), Diploma in Interactive Media and Digital, Diploma in Game Development, Foundation in Computing and Engineering, and Diploma in Information Technology**. The audit outcome affirms that the programmes meet the required standards, with several areas identified for further enhancement.

This achievement reflects a strong level of compliance across academic delivery, curriculum alignment, and quality assurance processes. More importantly, it demonstrates the collective commitment of academic and administrative staff in maintaining programme integrity and ensuring that teaching, learning, and assessment practices are aligned with regulatory expectations.

At the same time, the audit feedback should not be interpreted as a conclusion, but rather as a constructive input into the institution's continuous improvement agenda. The identified areas for enhancement provide clear direction for refinement, particularly in strengthening documentation practices, improving alignment across course delivery components, and ensuring consistency in implementation. These are necessary steps if UNIMY is to move beyond compliance towards sustained academic excellence.

The outcome also reinforces the importance of maintaining audit readiness as a continuous process rather than a periodic exercise. The

discipline required in preparing for such audits, ranging from course file management to outcomes-based education alignment, must now be embedded into routine academic operations.

UNIMY extends its sincere appreciation to the audit panel for their professional and constructive engagement throughout the process. Their insights contribute meaningfully to the institution's quality enhancement efforts. Equal recognition is due to all staff involved, whose dedication, coordination, and attention to detail ensured the smooth execution of the audit.

Moving forward, UNIMY remains focused on strengthening its academic systems, refining programme delivery, and sustaining a culture of quality that is both evidence-based and forward-looking.

The UNIMY Team with the MQA Compliance Accreditation Panel.

UNIMY and MDEC Explore Strategic Collaboration to Advance Malaysia's AI and Digital Future

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nor Azlinah Md Lazam
Head of Deans, Academic Affairs and Global Education Department, UNIMY

A high-level exploratory engagement between UNIMY and Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) recently has identified a set of strategic pathways to strengthen Malaysia's digital ecosystem. The discussion was anchored on aligning institutional capabilities with national frameworks, particularly the Government Innovation Initiative (GII) and Malaysia Digital (MD), with a clear emphasis on translating AI potential into measurable outcomes.

A key area of focus was public sector innovation, where both parties recognised the urgency of modernising healthcare systems. A proposed nationwide initiative on medical digitisation aims to convert legacy medical records into structured, AI ready datasets. Such an approach is expected to enhance diagnostic efficiency, improve interoperability, and strengthen decision making across public healthcare institutions. While the ambition is significant, its success will depend on governance, data integrity, and cross agency coordination.

Attention was also directed towards strengthening the Malaysia Digital ecosystem. The discussion highlighted a persistent gap between basic digital adoption and full AI integration among MD status companies. There was a shared view that AI must move beyond symbolic adoption and function as a core driver of productivity, scalability, and GDP contribution. This raises an important consideration: without clear performance metrics, claims of AI integration risk remaining superficial.

The legal profession emerged as a targeted vertical for AI application.

Opportunities in legal technology, including contract analysis, due diligence, and research automation, were identified as critical to enhancing competitiveness. At the same time, the need for standardisation and regulatory alignment was emphasised, particularly as legal systems remain grounded in interpretation, accountability, and professional judgment.

Talent development formed a central pillar of the dialogue. Both institutions acknowledged the need to strengthen advanced AI competencies through structured upskilling initiatives. For UNIMY, this reinforces the importance of maintaining curriculum relevance in line with evolving industry expectations. However, this alignment must be continuously reviewed, as skill requirements in AI driven sectors shift rapidly.

Importantly, the collaboration extends beyond economic priorities to social impact. A proposed Orang Asli outreach programme in Selangor reflects a commitment to digital inclusion, focusing on equipping underserved communities with essential digital skills. This initiative positions technology not merely as an economic tool, but as a mechanism for equitable development.

The meeting concluded with agreement to further evaluate these five priority areas and identify actionable projects. While the direction is promising, the transition from intent to implementation will require disciplined execution, clear accountability, and measurable outcomes.

The UNIMY & BAC Education team were part of this discussion with MDEC on building digital talent and closing capability gaps in Malaysia. From left to right: Senior Manager & Head of Tertiary, Digital Talent & Entrepreneurship, Mr Nik Hishamuddin (MDEC), Associate Professor Dr. Azlinah Md Lazam (UNIMY), Professor of Practice, Thillai Raj (UNIMY/BACE), CEO Mr Anuar Fariz Fadzil (MDEC), Founder & Chief Future Officer Mr Raja Singham (BACE) and Adjunct Professor Murugasan R. Thangaratnam (UNIMY/Novem CS).

Building the Village: Understanding Game Development in Malaysia

Ts. Muhammad Syahmie Shabarudin
Dean, School of Creative Multimedia, UNIMY

How do we bridge the gap between classroom theory and the realities of the creative digital economy? This question framed UNIMY's recent session with Sophie Azlan, a prominent Malaysian game developer and co-founder of Make with Friends.

Organised by our Student Representative Council (SRC), the talk was not just a career briefing but a deep dive into the anatomy of video games as a profound digital art form. Sophie grounded the technicalities of game design in a guiding philosophy: games are "structured play."

We explored the "14 Types of Fun," encouraging students to look beyond standard entertainment. Whether a project aims for intellectual challenge or social interaction, defining the core experience is essential to successful design. The session also uncovered the collaborative ecosystem of game production, detailing the distinct workflows of Game Designers, Artists, and Programmers.

A key revelation was that students need not wait for graduation to enter the industry. Sophie urged immediate action: use free engines, find royalty-free assets, and start building now.

Sophie Azlan, a prominent Malaysian game developer and co-founder of Make with Friends.

The enthusiasm of our UNIMY students was inspiring. As Sophie said, "To build a village, you have to be a villager." The main takeaway is clear: universities provide tools, but the true bridge from theory to practice is students' active creation and collaboration, the foundation for Malaysia's future creative multimedia landscape.

UNIMY Ignites Engineering Aspirations at SMK Kiaramas

Ts. Dr. Syahril Anuar Bin Idris
Head, Centre of Artificial Intelligence, Robotics & Automation (CAIRA)
Senior Lecturer, School of Engineering & Frontier Technology, UNIMY

In conjunction with World Engineering Day and International Mathematics Day, UNIMY engaged with 700 secondary school students at SMK Kiaramas on 8 April 2026 in a focused outreach initiative designed to strengthen awareness of technology-driven career pathways. Conducted in collaboration with SPMflix, the programme brought together students from Form 1 to Form 5, positioning engineering and mathematics as foundational disciplines for future readiness.

The session was led by a delegation from UNIMY's School of Engineering and Frontier Technology, headed by Ts. Dr. Syahril Anuar Idris, alongside Mdm. Suhaila binti Abdul Rahman and Mohamad Iqmal Aiman Bin Mohamad Khir. The keynote address centred on reframing engineering not merely as a profession, but as a structured approach to problem solving. Emphasis was placed on the development of analytical thinking, adaptability, and resilience, competencies increasingly required across sectors.

The session highlighted that engineering education builds a strong intellectual base that extends beyond technical roles. The ability to diagnose problems, evaluate alternatives, and implement solutions was presented as transferable across multiple domains. This positioning is important, as students often perceive engineering within narrow occupational boundaries, rather than as a broader capability set.

A full house at SMK Kiaramas as 700 students gather to celebrate International Engineering Day and International Mathematics Day.

A key component of the engagement focused on artificial intelligence. Rather than presenting AI as a disruptive force, it was framed as an enabling tool that enhances human decision making. Students were introduced to the idea that technical literacy allows individuals to work alongside intelligent systems, improving efficiency and outcomes. This approach reflects a more balanced narrative, where human judgment remains central while technology augments performance.

Ts. Dr. Syahril Anuar Idris engaging directly with the students, sharing his professional experiences and insights into the engineering world.

To reinforce these ideas, the session included a showcase of student-led projects from UNIMY's Computer Engineering programmes. The visual demonstration of applied innovation provided students with a concrete understanding of how theoretical knowledge translates into real-world applications. The response indicated strong engagement, suggesting that exposure to tangible outputs is effective in motivating early interest in STEM pathways.

The programme began with an opening segment led by the school principal, followed by an introduction from the SPMflix team, represented by Eireen Shaiful Nizam, Gabrielle Tavanya Anthony, and Siti Fatimah. Their briefing positioned digital learning platforms as accessible tools to support academic progression, particularly in mathematics and science subjects.

The session concluded with a token of appreciation and a commemorative engagement between representatives of SMK Kiaramas, SPMflix, and UNIMY. Beyond the event itself, the initiative reflects a broader institutional direction—bridging secondary education with emerging technological fields while addressing gaps in awareness and preparedness.

Such engagements are necessary but should not be overstated. Short-term exposure can generate interest, but sustained impact depends on continuity, follow-up programmes, mentorship, and structured pathways into higher education. Without this, the enthusiasm generated risks remaining episodic rather than developmental.

Nevertheless, the outreach represents a meaningful step in positioning engineering and technology within the aspirations of young learners. By aligning educational engagement with national priorities in digital transformation, UNIMY continues to contribute to the development of a future-ready talent pipeline grounded in problem solving, adaptability, and responsible use of technology.

(From left) Representatives from SPMflix, SMK Kiaramas officials, and the UNIMY delegation pose for a commemorative photo following the successful session.

Interactive sessions kept the students engaged and enthusiastic throughout the two-hour programme.

UNIMY's Applied Artificial Intelligence Pathway for the Future Economy

Prof. Dr. Habibollah Haron
Head, Research, Innovation and Commercialization Department (RICE)
School of Computing and Digital Technology, UNIMY

In response to the rapid restructuring of industries through digital technologies, UNIMY introduces two strategic programmes that signal a clear shift towards future-oriented education—the **Bachelor of Applied Artificial Intelligence (Honours)** and the **Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Artificial Intelligence**. Together, these programmes establish a complete academic pathway, from foundational training to advanced research, designed to develop both skilled practitioners and thought leaders in artificial intelligence.

At the undergraduate level, the Bachelor of Applied Artificial Intelligence (Honours) is positioned to address an urgent skills gap. While awareness of AI continues to expand, the demand for graduates who can apply AI solutions in real-world contexts remains unmet. This programme responds directly to that need. It integrates core computing knowledge with applied competencies in machine learning, data analytics, intelligent systems, and emerging areas such as automation and agent-based AI.

The design of the programme reflects a strong applied orientation. Students are not confined to theoretical constructs but are immersed in practical problem-solving environments. Through exposure to real datasets, industry tools, and project-based learning, they develop the capacity to design, build, and implement AI-driven solutions. Industry collaboration further strengthens this approach, ensuring that graduates are aligned with current and future workforce expectations.

At the doctoral level, the PhD in Applied Artificial Intelligence advances this trajectory by focusing on research that delivers tangible impact. The programme is structured to move beyond theoretical exploration towards the development of solutions for complex, real-world challenges. Research areas span intelligent systems, optimisation, AI governance, cybersecurity integration, and domain-specific applications across sectors such as healthcare, finance, and smart technologies.

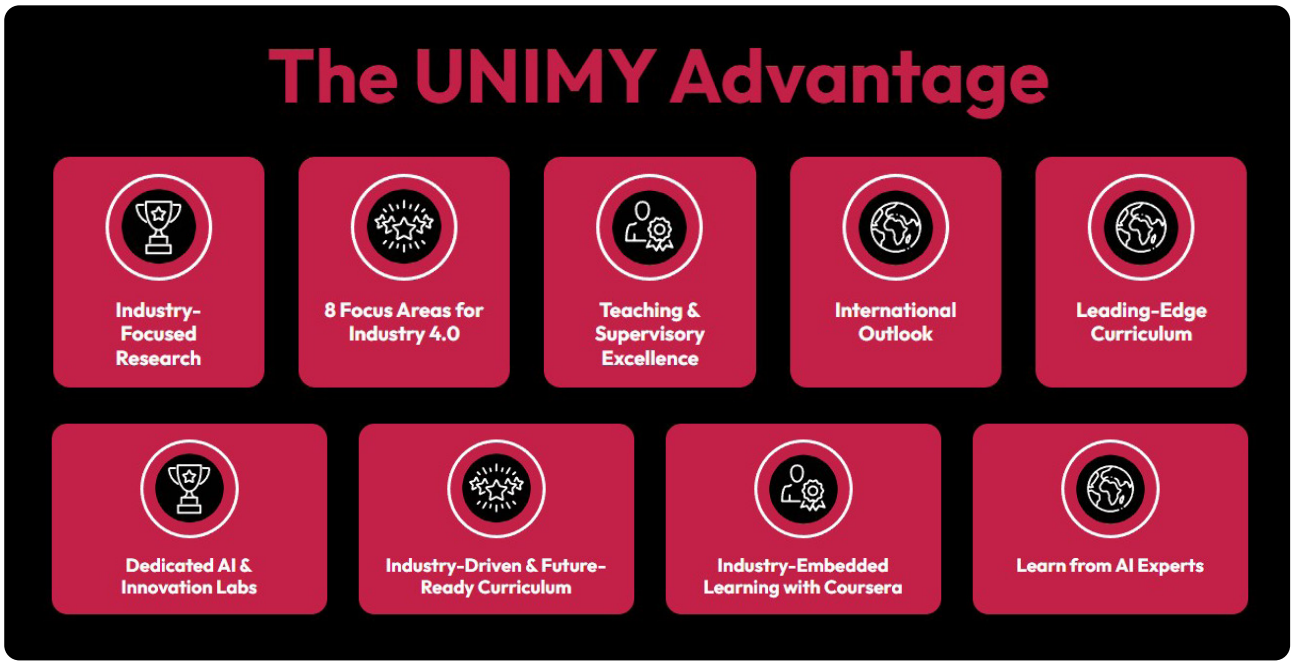
A defining feature of the PhD is its emphasis on translational research. Candidates are encouraged to engage with industry and policy stakeholders, ensuring that research outcomes are not only academically rigorous but also relevant and implementable. This approach reflects a broader evolution in doctoral education, where the ability to bridge knowledge creation and application is increasingly critical.

Across both programmes, there is a consistent emphasis on capability development rather than content acquisition. Students and researchers are trained to think critically, act ethically, and operate within the broader societal and governance frameworks that shape AI deployment. This is particularly important in an era where issues of bias, accountability, and data integrity are central to technological advancement.

From an institutional perspective, these programmes reinforce UNIMY's positioning as a technology-focused university that is responsive to emerging global trends. They complement existing strengths in cybersecurity, data analytics, and software engineering, creating a coherent ecosystem of digital education and research.

However, it is important to recognise that the value of such programmes will depend on execution. Continuous industry engagement, high-quality teaching and supervision, access to relevant data, and sustained curriculum renewal are essential to ensure that outcomes remain credible and impactful.

Overall, the introduction of the Bachelor and PhD in Applied Artificial Intelligence represents more than programme expansion. It reflects a deliberate strategy to shape the next generation of AI professionals and researchers—individuals who are not only technically capable, but also equipped to lead, innovate, and contribute meaningfully to Malaysia's digital economy and beyond.



Click the button below to learn more about the programme:

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