WHAT DOES AI MEAN FOR THE FUTURE OF FIRE SAFETY IN SINGAPORE?

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Opening
Data is important. As the saying goes, no data, no AI. The explainability of why we are doing certain things with AI must be paramount.

Tagline
Bold
Innovation.
Reinvented.

Wee Wei
Hello, welcome to this special edition of Tech in Asia. I'm honoured to be joined by the Deputy Commissioner Daniel Seet of Singapore Civil Defence Force or SCDF. Accenture has the privilege of collaborating with SCDF to harness the power of AI and technology to enhance operational readiness.

Today, we'll explore that story fuller and also see the potential of how it could help SCDF reinvent the way it serves Singapore.

Daniel, let's start with SCDF identity. The public knows SCDF more for her emergency response but there's so much more. How should the public understand SCDF's role?

DC Daniel Seet
I think you're absolutely right in that the public knows us more for our emergency services, our firefighting, emergency ambulance services, even our responses to hazardous materials leakages. We also do fire safety enforcement work. We manage the island-wide network of public shelters and also the network of public warning sirens.
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Wee Wei
In today's environment with the increasing use of batteries, the changing mix of usage for buildings, how does that change SCDF's role, the risk and responsibilities?

DC Daniel Seet
Actually, the fire safety landscape is never static. Today, we are facing new risks and challenges such as those posed by electric vehicles. From the fire safety point of view, we got to stay in step with technology.

Wee Wei
Today, SCDF has articulated a bold vision. With iCore an intelligent core, AI is not just a tool but potentially a strategic enabler. Can you share how you see AI fitting into the broader reinvention agenda for SCDF through iCore that looks to integrate data internally and as well as external sources?

DC Daniel Seet
iCore is going to be a very instrumental part of SCDF's transformation going down the line. But maybe let me double back to how it all started.

In 2022, we embarked on a digital transformation study with Accenture and we developed a suite of 16 different programs to guide our digitalisation journey. One of these programs is on data analytics and iCore actually sits right in the heart of this vertical. Now what iCore serves to do, if we can borrow the concept of Lego bricks, is to really build and stack various kinds of data use cases.

The Targeted On-site Inspection Tool (TOIT), is an example of such a use case. The end result, it should give our officers more intelligent insights based on a network that connects all the various capabilities that we have, the various systems that we have.

Wee Wei
I think it's really inspiring for SCDF to look at this in a holistic manner. It's easy to jump to one use case and you're laying the foundation for what it needs for future ongoing innovation around AI. That's exactly what you've created with the vision around iCore.

So, let's go into that first use case, TOIT, our Targeted On-site Inspection. We are in the early months of deployment. What have your officers come back with in terms of feedback into how TOIT is complementing the way they work?

DC Daniel Seet
Pre-TOIT, what our stations needed to do was to understand which are the high-risk buildings that they must visit every year to check on the fire safety systems. And then the rest of the lower risk buildings, they would spread it out over a span of one to two years. It's manual, laborious and very intensive.

TOIT comes in at a critical juncture. It ingests the building data and provides a propensity score for the various buildings. What it tells the fire station commander is, in a given time, what are the buildings that will have a higher likelihood you will find violations there.

We started a proof of concept. We realised that with ingested data guided by a model, the accuracy levels easily doubled. TOIT will become even more intelligent and the stations will be able to plan their fire safety enforcements. Data tells us that we have been increasing in our effectiveness of how we conduct fire safety enforcements. We set ourselves a couple of goals.

One, over time, lesser instances with serious fire safety violations. Two, less post-fire serious violations. Next year we will be launching the full operationalisation of TOIT and that will include even more data linkages to other government systems.

Wee Wei
And actually, it goes back to your earlier point about how it is never static.

Reflecting on SCDF's AI journey, what advice would you give organisations that are just starting out, especially around navigating challenges like data quality, governance, culture?

DC Daniel Seet
Data is important. As the saying goes, no data, no AI. So, anyone looking to start on this journey must consider what kind of data do they already have, what kind of data they may need and how to adjust the way the data is collected.
The explainability of why we are doing certain things with AI must be paramount. We need to be able to explain to our colleagues how we are designing it, what are the guardrails so that everyone feels safe in using it. Then, start small, build that body of trust and let momentum roll forward.

That is how we are doing it. I will offer this as a suggestion.

Wee Wei
So, start small, but dream big, and scale

DC Daniel Seet
Yes, and that’s right.

Wee Wei
and roll it out progressively.

DC Daniel Seet
That's right.

Wee Wei
Thank you for your time today, Daniel.
I hope that this conversation will inspire others to also start their AI journey and progress onto Gen-AI. and I wish you all the best on SCDF's ongoing reinvention agenda.

Wee Wei & Daniel
Thank You.

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