

Universiti Malaysia Pahang's Digital Literacy Program for Preschool Children

By Irene - November 30, 2018

Report Post



'Ready or not, here we come' for digital literacy because we live in a digital era with all information we need at the tip of our fingers. We find not only no more geographic boundaries, but also no fine lines between a user and a designer. Today, digital technology is synonym to human beings, regardless of their age and nationality, attributable to the advancements of human-computer-interaction technology. Digital devices have never been more user friendly than they are today. For example, the usability of smartphones is almost intuitive – even a child would be able to use it with ease. Thus, questions arise:

- What does digital literacy mean to preschoolers?
- Does being 'digitally literate' means that pre-schoolers should actively participate in the digital world?
- To what extend should the kids be made aware of the digital technology?

Being motivated by these questions, we, the Reading Makchixx^{NB} – as we call ourselves, together with 20 students from Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) took up a challenge by organizing a Digital Literacy Outreach program for local communities in Kuala Pahang, Pahang, Malaysia. Specifically, we interacted with some preschool children and teachers in Kuala Pahang. The program, which marked a successful collaboration between the Faculty of Electrical and Electronics Engineering (FEEE), UMP and the Community Network Department of Pahang, took place in three phases:

- Phase 1 – UMP Pekan Auditorium Library – February 1st, 2018 (120 students, 10 teachers)
- Phase 2 – Kuala Pahang House – July 19th, 2018 (25 students, 2 teachers)
- Phase 3 – FEEE UMP – August 8th, 2018 (125 students, 12 teachers)
- Phase 4 – Peramu Jaya Primary School – November 19th, 2018 (75 Students, 6 teachers)

The objectives of the program are to:

- introduce digital technology (computer, smartphone and the internet) to preschool children;
- create awareness about privacy and security on the Internet, as well as the importance of being safe while utilizing the digital technology; and
- describe career opportunities available for digitally literate person.

Besides having the ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share, and create contents using digital artefacts, we also include teachings of awareness about privacy and security of the Internet, and the dos and don'ts when using digital devices.

In summary, 345 preschool children and 30 teachers from 7 schools in Pekan participated in this program. These kiddos were divided into 3 groups and each group went through 3 modules, namely computer, telephone, and television. Topics covered in each module include the advancements of the telephone technology – from wired to wireless transmission, cathode-ray-tubes to plasma televisions, classifications of television shows, categories of YouTube channels, and digital users' ethics.

*The Reading Makchixx is made up of a group of lecturers, who share a common interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education for pre-schoolers, from the Faculty of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Universiti Malaysia Pahang, Malaysia.