Training journalists to work with technologies of the future

By LEE U-WEN

ASIA’S first news-training facility opens its doors this Saturday at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

Called Newsplex Asia, the $500,000 centre, housed at NTU’s Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, is a tie-up between the university and the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (Wan-Ifra).

The 160 square metre facility, the third of its kind in the world after similar ones in the United States and Germany, is designed as an inter-disciplinary news laboratory to train journalists and news professionals to work with technologies of the future.

The school’s chair, Benjamin Detenber, said: “The Wee Kim Wee School is proud to establish Newsplex Asia here at NTU. Having such premier teaching facilities will provide an unparalleled educational experience for our students – the reporters and editors of tomorrow – and continue to attract the best students, faculty and staff from all over the world to the school.”

Newsplex Asia, which can accommodate up to 60 people, will have high-tech facilities such as overhead screens for teaching and monitoring news channels and a multi-purpose mini studio for digital audio and video broadcasts.

Student journalists will be taught how to produce news content for multiple platforms, given how consumers are increasingly demanding multimedia news and information in easily accessible forms.

During semester breaks, Newsplex Asia will host professional training and workshops for the media industries here and in the Asia-Pacific region; it will focus on media-convergent journalism and the development and implementation of integrated newsroom strategies.

Among the centre’s first industry partners is Singapore Press Holdings (SPH), the largest single employer of the Wee Kim Wee School’s graduates.

SPH has provided the news ticker panels at the entrance to the centre and along its glass frontage. These panels will carry real-time local and international breaking news updates in English and Chinese round the clock.

This Saturday’s official launch of Newsplex Asia is one of the highlights of the Wee Kim Wee School’s 20th anniversary celebrations. There will also be a public lecture titled “News as public knowledge – Why we cannot turn out the lights on professional journalism”. Three hundred people are expected to attend the lecture.

The two other Newsplex centres are at the University of South Carolina in the US and at Wan-Ifra’s headquarters in Darmstadt, Germany. A fourth facility is to open in Saint-Etienne in France this month.