

Retired seamstress Yeong Yuen Hoe, 68

When Madam Yeong started learning to use the computer six years ago, she never thought she would end up teaching it to others. "I was so bad at it, and I did not own a desktop or a laptop."

She recalls an incident in 2006, when she had to key in her SingPass, a personal passcode that lets users access their Central Provident Fund (CPF) accounts, at the CPF office in Robinson Road.

"I didn't know how to handle the keyboard. I would type a letter and, instead of releasing the key immediately, I would keep pressing it. It was very malu." Malu means embarrassing in Malay.

"I wanted to learn to use the computer so that I could keep up with the times," says the divorcee with two grown-up children.

In 2007, two years after she retired from her seamstress job, she signed up for a nine-hour basic computer course at RSVP Singapore – The Organisation of Senior Volunteers, which promotes volunteerism among seniors.

After the course, her interest in computers grew. From Mondays to Fridays, she would take the MRT from her home in Tanjong Pagar to RVSP in Bishan to practise on the computer for about two hours each time. She also signed up for other IT courses at RSVP, including Microsoft Office and digital photography management, which includes editing photos to make them look brighter or sharper.

A year later, she started to assist the volunteer trainers in teaching these courses to those aged 40 and older. In 2009, she was certified as an IT trainer in Microsoft PowerPoint after taking a certification examination by Microsoft Office. Today, she not only teaches PowerPoint, but also digital photo management and other IT courses at least twice a week at RSVP.

Madam Yeong now owns a desktop, a laptop and a notebook, and hopes to continue to upgrade her IT skills. She is now undergoing certification so she can teach at community clubs.

Her new skills have come in handy when she plans her holidays. She now books her airline tickets and hotel rooms online.



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