

## news

Digital game art student who won WorldSkills Singapore competition category aims to repeat feat at international level

# Computer crash did not stop him

ANG HWEE MIN

Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) student Ng Jun Xuan, 20, helps to deliver ingredients to his parents' three vegetarian hawker stalls every day after school, even when classes end at 6pm.

Despite getting home between 8pm and 11pm, he then stays up to create and animate 3D game characters.

And while he was preparing for the WorldSkills Singapore competition in the new 3D Digital Game Art category, his computer crashed, taking along with it a year's worth of work.

All that did not stop Mr Ng — a fortnight ago, he won the competition's top prize of a virtual reality set from local company Kaiju Den. He also beat 13 competitors to represent Singapore at the WorldSkills international competition in Abu Dhabi in October.

Mr Ng, who will graduate with a diploma in digital game art and design in April next year,

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— Nanyang Polytechnic student  
Ng Jun Xuan

was surprised by his win.

He said: "I only wanted to challenge myself, I did not know I would win first place."

In 3D digital game art, participants have to design, create and animate three-dimensional game characters and objects.

Mr Ernest Quek, 41, a lecturer at NYP with 13 years of industry experience, said characters can take between a few days and a



Mr Ng Jun Xuan with his Monster Hunt character. TNP PHOTO: ANG HWEE MIN

month to create, depending on the complexity and the artist's skill.

## EXAM-LIKE CONDITIONS

For the recent competition, which was jointly organised by the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) and the five polytechnics here, Mr Ng had to

create a character in 22 hours over three days under exam-like conditions.

Competitors were not allowed to bring in mobile phones, and invigilators would follow them to the toilet, he recalled.

Mr Ng's interest in art began in secondary school, when he started sketching his favourite

cartoon characters on paper.

He enrolled in ITE's digital animation course to pursue his interests of art and gaming as a career.

Mr Quek thinks his student, whom he described as being obsessed with creating game characters, is only a year behind industry standards.

To win in Abu Dhabi, Mr Ng must again complete a character in 22 hours over three days. This time, \$20,000 will be up for grabs.

Mr Ng will buy more equipment and software if he wins, saying: "I'm still using a small drawing tablet, most professionals use a big one."

Mr Ng, who will juggle schoolwork, family and the competition for the next nine months, said: "I had to manage my time before, but it wasn't tough and I learnt a lot of new skills. If you enjoy what you learn, you can't say it's tough."

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