

Budding scientists showcase their works



Li Xuanji (left) and Kuan Xiang Wen showing the bug-finder program at the Young Defence Scientists Programme Congress in Orchard Hotel yesterday. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

A pair of students from the NUS High School of Mathematics and Science have designed a program that can find bugs in a computer in seconds.

To be precise, their bug-finder, named Leek, can do the job 17 times faster than the version designed and built at Stanford University in the United States.

This saves computer networks from crashing.

With the bugs picked up faster, the network has its weak points fixed sooner, making it tougher for hackers to take control of them, said Kuan Xiang Wen, 18, one of the duo.

He and Li Xuanji, also 18, spent their year-end school holidays last year tinkering with computer software to come up with Leek, under the guidance of scientists from DSO National Laboratories.

Their project was one of the 72 developed last year under the Young Defence Scientists Programme (YDSP), a joint effort between DSO and the Defence Science and Technology Agency.

The annual programme, which began in 1992, takes students beyond textbook theories by putting them in the company of defence technology professionals.

Yesterday, the duo were among 136 budding scientists from 11 schools who showcased their works at the YSDP Congress in Orchard Hotel.

Speaking at yesterday's congress, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Teo Chee Hean said innovation was key to sharpening the fighting edge of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF).

"What the SAF lacks in numbers, it makes up for by leveraging on technology and defence R&D," he said.

To give the SAF that edge, the country needs to grow a strong community of capable and committed defence engineers and scientists who will "push boundaries and exploit technology in new ways".

"How far we can go will be limited only by the drive, imagination and resourcefulness of our future defence scientists and engineers," he added.