

# Digitalisation of Tax Services

A response to the COVID-19 Crisis

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Assistant Commissioner, Taxpayer and Services Division

30 Jul 2020

*Belt and Road Tax Administration Cooperation Mechanism  
(BRITACOM) Working Level Seminar*

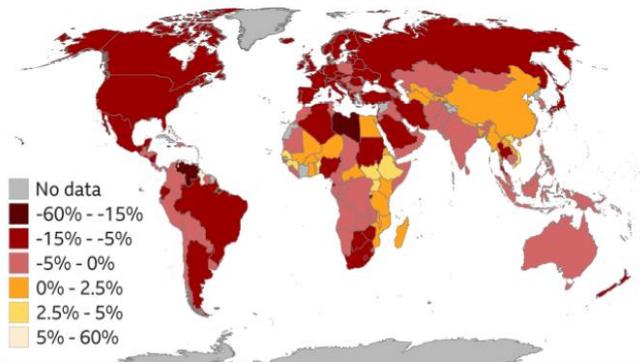
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INLAND REVENUE  
AUTHORITY  
OF SINGAPORE

## Majority of countries on the brink of recession

Real GDP growth, Q1 2020



Source: International Monetary Fund

BBC

## The impact of coronavirus on stock markets since the start of the outbreak

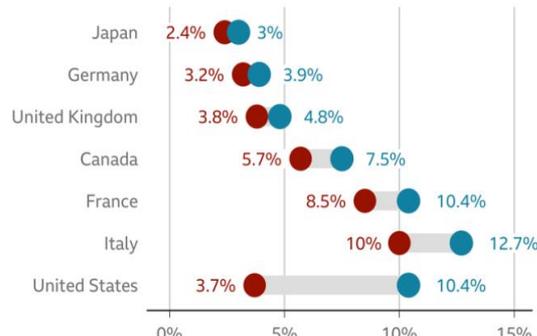


Source: Bloomberg, 29 June 2020, 12:00 BST

BBC

## World economies struggling with rising unemployment

Yearly unemployment rate change, 2019-2020

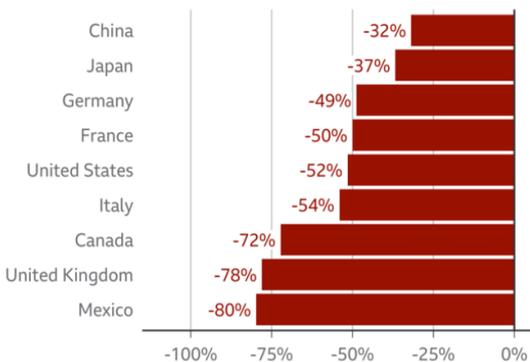


Source: IMF, 29 June 2020, 12:00 BST

BBC

## Huge drop in shoppers

Annual percentage change of footfall in 14-20 June

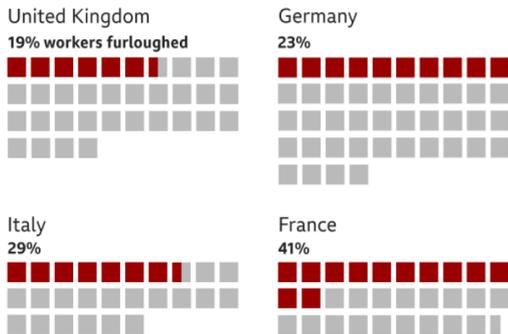


Source: ShopperTrak, 29 June 2020, 12:00 BST

BBC

## Million of workers furloughed

□ = 1 million workers ■ Furloughed ▒ Not furloughed

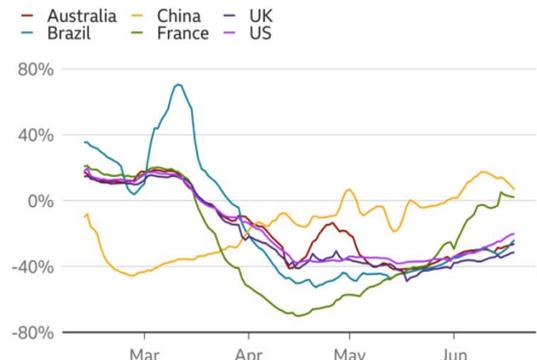


Source: OECD, Government statistics offices, Bloomberg

BBC

## LinkedIn hiring rate by country

Year-on-year percentage change



Source: LinkedIn, 29 June 2020, 12:00 BST

BBC

**26 Mar 2020**

S\$48.4 billion to support households, help workers stay employed and provide greater support for businesses

**26 May 2020**

S\$33 billion with focus on creating jobs and upskilling workers, boosting transformation for enterprises, and strengthening resilience for community



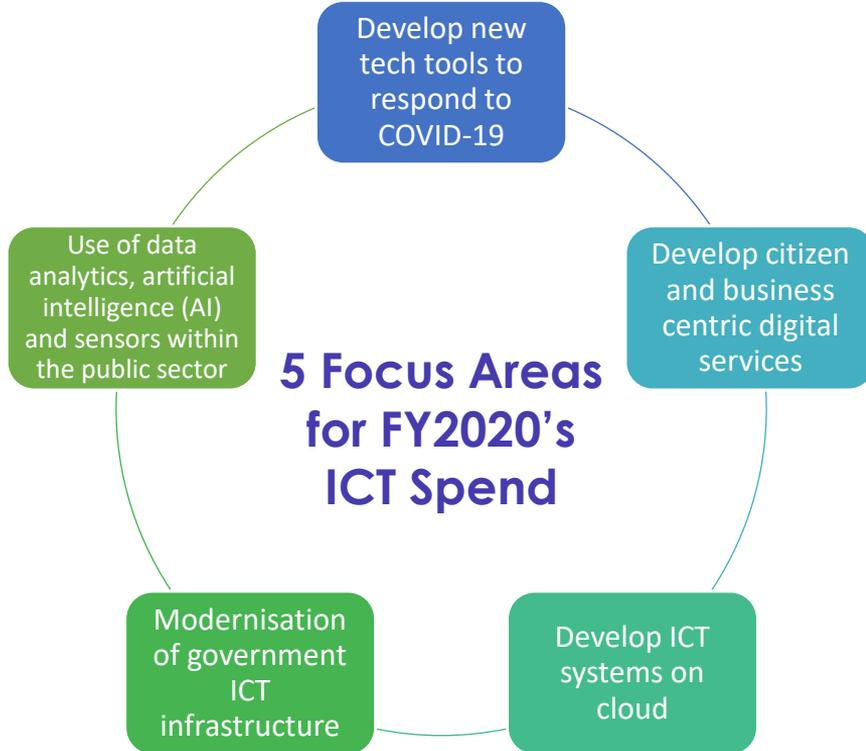
**18 Feb 2020**

S\$4 billion Stabilisation and Support Package to cushion the blow of COVID-19 on local businesses and workers

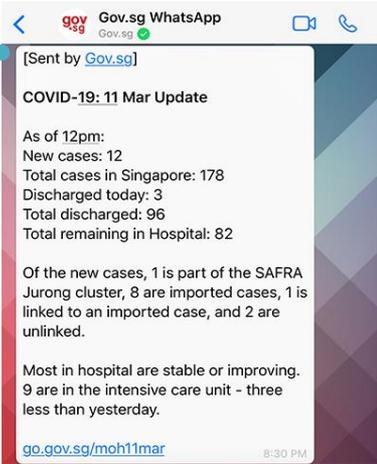
**6 Apr 2020**

S\$5.1 billion to cushion the impact of the 'Circuit Breaker' (lockdown enforced on 7 Apr 2020) on the local workforce and livelihood of workers

# Singapore fights the virus the digital way



Use of **social media and online channels** to push important COVID-19 messages in a timely manner to the public



**VigilantGantry** is a pilot AI-driven automated temperature screening gantry that augments existing thermal systems to enhance the rate of contactless screening, saving time and manpower.



**SPOT**, an AI-powered robot to support safe distancing operations at local parks and delivery of essential medical supplies at isolation facility



# A Safe Singapore in three phases

Phase  
1

## Safe Re-opening (from 2 Jun 2020)

- Businesses that do not pose high risk re-open
- Leave home only for essential activities

Phase  
2

## Safe Transition (from 19 Jun 2020)

- More businesses + sports & recreation facilities re-open with safe management measures
- All students fully return to school

Phase  
3

## Safe Nation

- Gatherings and events resume with sizes limited
- Singapore would have reached a 'New Normal', and will remain at this state till a vaccine is developed

# Safe Transition. A Safe Future?

COVID-19 pushed many businesses into the digital age as consumers shift from offline to online purchases

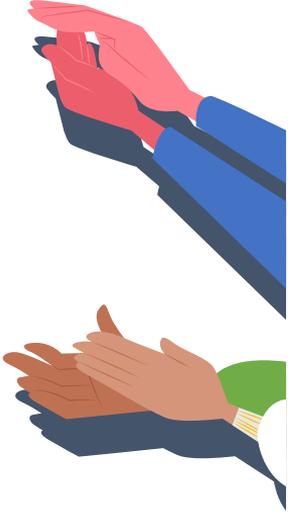


Traditional businesses are now using online services to meet daily needs e.g. WeDoctor, a service that connects patients and doctors online

According to a McKinsey Innovation through Crisis Survey (Apr 2020),

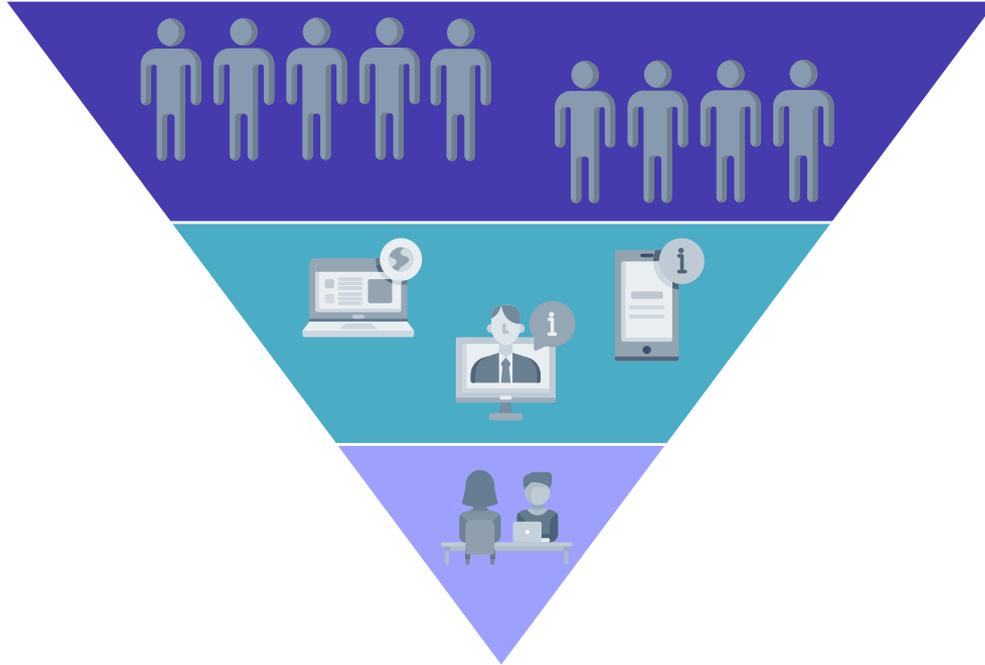
# 90%

of executives from over 200 organisations believe that the COVID-19 crisis will fundamentally change the way they do business over the next 5 years.



How might we...  
leverage this crisis to  
**accelerate digitalisation?**

# IRAS' Philosophy towards Service



“No need for Service  
is the best service”

Where service is required, we  
provide convenient & intuitive  
digital **self-service channels**

For complex queries, our officers  
provide service in a consistent and  
timely manner, **augmented by  
technology**

# Be Digital to the Core with a Holistic 'Digital' Approach

## Digital Processes – Filing

Creating a seamless tax filing experience for taxpayers

## Digital Services

Providing convenient and intuitive digital services to meet taxpayers' needs

End-to-End



## Digital Processes – Payment

Digitalising payment processes for quick and efficient payment and refund

## Digital Communications

Communicating digitally with taxpayers – more timely and eco-friendly

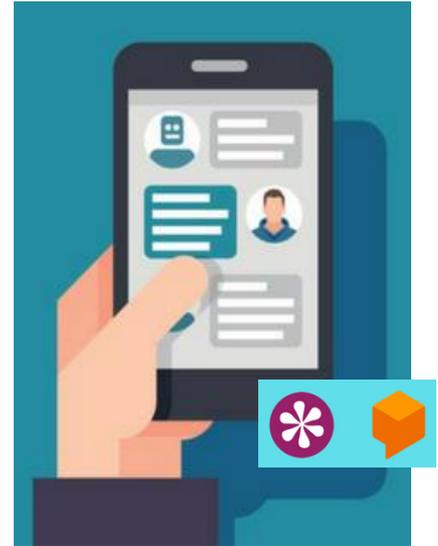
**Redefining  
Experiences  
for Taxpayers**

# Making Tax Filing a non-event



Where tax filing is still needed,  
make it simple and fuss-free

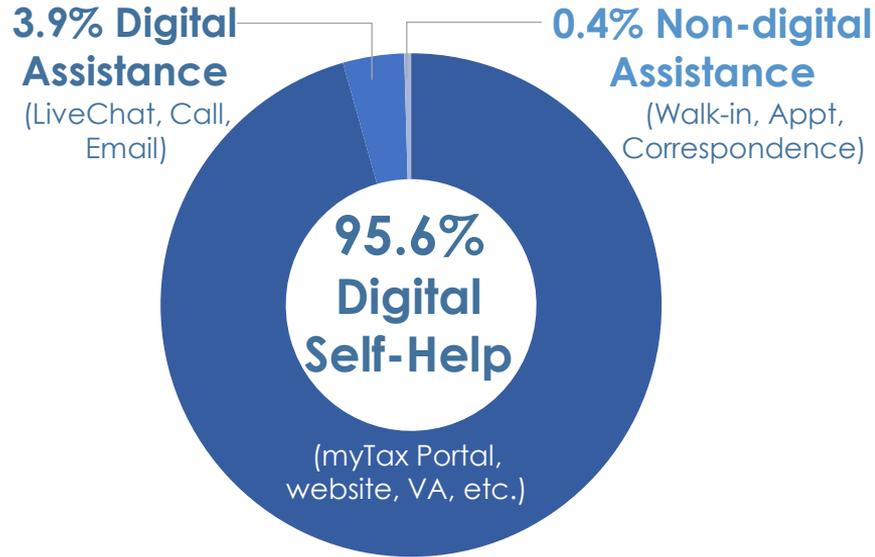
'No Filing Service' i.e. prefill tax returns with data from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties



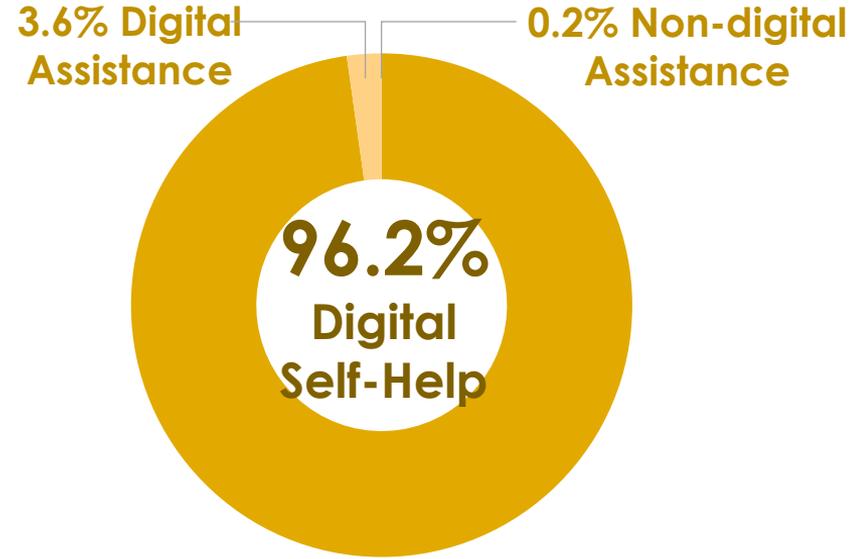
e.g. “**Chat Filing**” pilot  
conversational style filing for Private  
Hire Drivers and Taxi Drivers

# Migrating to Digital Services

FEB-JUN 2019



FEB-JUN 2020



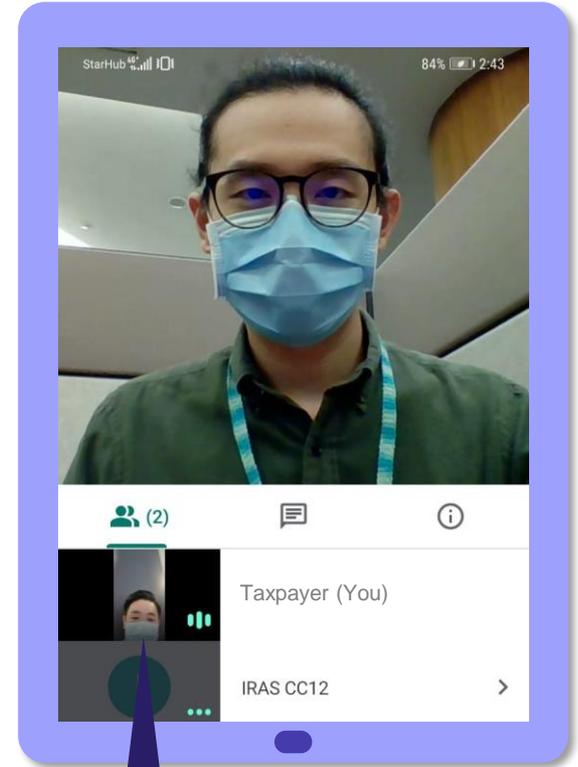
Small, but steady increase in the shift towards digital self-help

# Creating a Virtual Centre

*Harnessing Technology to Do Away with Face-to-Face Interviews*



- **Digital assistance by default**
- Moving towards a future state of an unmanned service centre
- Taxpayer education to promote the use of digital self-help

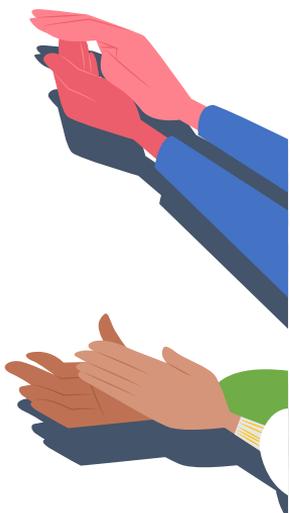


*"I was pleasantly surprised at how convenient and easy it was to get the help I needed on my tax matters. **Video Chat will always be my go-to option from now**, instead of having to specially make a trip down to the IRAS Service Centre." – Mr Tan, 64 years old*

“Success today  
requires the agility  
and drive to  
constantly rethink,  
reinvigorate, react  
and reinvent.”

– Bill Gates



Illustration of two pairs of hands clapping. The top pair is brown-skinned with a gold bracelet, and the bottom pair is pink-skinned with a blue sleeve.Illustration of two pairs of hands clapping. The top pair is pink-skinned with a blue sleeve, and the bottom pair is brown-skinned with a green sleeve and a gold bracelet.

How might we  
accelerate  
digitalisation... and still  
**serve with our heart?**



## The Case of Mdm See: Serving With Empathy



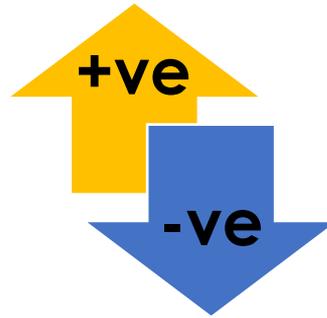
### **MDM SEE, 82**

Wants tax filing assistance. Only has rental income. Not digital-savvy.



# Embracing New Ways of Working

- Work in the comfort of own home
- Increased workplace flexibility and productivity
- Save \$\$\$



- Work-life imbalance
- Feelings of being disconnected from company culture
- Experience burn out



# Physically Apart, #SociallyConnected



Glad for supportive colleagues during my SDA journey  
Johnson, ENFD



Dear **Sze Teen**, a big thank you for your care and support for our GSTLB-Finance team during this period. I appreciate your efforts in actively checking in with us, and finding creative ways for our team to catch-up with one another - our virtual 'Show and Tell' and 'Scavenger Hunt' team bonding sessions were a blast!

**Anna Poh**  
(GST-LB)



Thanks **Boon Lay**, for checking in with the team and making sure we're all okay during this unprecedented and challenging time! The regular skype discussions and Whatsapp messages really help keep the team in touch and the morale high : )

**Roy Xu**  
(IFD-INV)



# How did staff feel through it all?

#01

## Wellbeing, Care & Concern

**>95%** of respondents felt they received sufficient **support and concern** from leaders and colleagues.



#02

## IT Support

**>90%** of them felt **equipped to work from home** and have **sufficient IT support**.

# Thriving in a post-COVID-19 era



- Seize the moment to reimagine and reinvent the future (***dream BIG***)
- Re-plan our strategies (***adopt new ways of working***), and
- Acquire new mindsets and 'muscles' to come back stronger (***build and move with resilience and agility***)!



“Let us turn  
a crisis  
to do good.”

Thank You

