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Dr M proposes council for IT development

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has proposed the setting up of a special council that will formulate strategies and a vision of integrated information technology (IT) for the public sector.

The council, which could be called Government IT and Internet Council (Gitic), aims to make IT a culture in the public sector.

Among the items that can be included in its terms of reference are planning and determining safety measures and proper standards to be used, he said.

It will also supervise and monitor the use of Internet in the public sector. This is critical in view of the exposure that Internet use could bring since it is open.

Furthermore, the Government has decided not to have any policy to censor the contents of information available on the Internet, he said at the Prime Minister's Quality Award ceremony held in Kuala Lumpur yesterday in conjunction with the opening of the National Electronic Government Symposium.

Dr Mahathir said the Malaysian Administration Modernisation Planning Unit, as the main agency responsible for IT development in the public sector, can look into the possibility of setting up such a council.

At present, the country has the National Information Technology Council to formulate policies and strategies for IT development and applications, particularly in the area of promoting IT industries and links with the private sector.

Dr Mahathir said the IT-inclined paradigm shift in economy and administration undertaken by the Government at present requires the involvement of all parties.

"Changes that will occur are not going to be small but will touch our entire way of living, either at the office or at home; in official matters or personal. In short, these changes require the practice of a new culture, namely IT culture. This culturisation process will take a long time, but it must be started with confidence and proper planning. Each person involved must be assured that the changes are good and will benefit them, their organisations and, subsequently, the nation," he added.

Dr Mahathir said there are at least two main groups which are the main targets of government efforts to make IT a culture. The first is those who operate IT applications and the second, consumers.

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