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Exciting meeting for MyPC members

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Members of the Microsoft-New Straits Times Young Programmers Club (MyPC) congregated for the first time today, in an excitement-charged atmosphere.

About 34 MyPC members and some of their parents, got together for a whole-day day-long session on getting to get to know one another and also hearing from MyPC creator Derrik Khoo, sponsors and mentors.

Aged between 10 to and 15, the 34 spent the better part of the day delivering presentations on one of the club's first "assignments" - The Merdeka Project.

The young members travelled from far as far as Kedah and Johor.

The assignment entailed the writing of a multi-media essay, complete with interesting layout and design to be posted on the World Wide Web.

The essay was on Malaysia being our country and therefore our responsibility. (For links to the website on the essays, please access www.nstpi.com.my).

They were later "critiqued" on their work by the different mentors who are professional software developers.

The highlight of the day was the presentation of software courtesy of guest of honour, New Straits Times Press (M) Berhad's group editor-in-chief Datuk A. Kadir Jasin.

The software comprised web development tools and courseware, like Windows 98, Mastering Series for J++, Visual Basic 5.0 and Front Page 98.

MyPC, an initiative of the New Straits Times Sdn Bhd, Microsoft (M) Sdn Bhd and Brave & Bold Sdn Bhd, is a virtual club of 50 "mature" high achievers led by about 10 mentors.

The club was launched on March 18 by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Microsoft chairman and chief executive officer Bill Gates.

To date, it has received 2,350 applications and will sign up 200 members by the end of the year.

Kadir in his speech said motivated children were often the offspring of motivated parents.

He thanked sponsors' Microsoft and Hewlett Packard Sales (M) Sdn Bhd for providing services and products worth RM1 million each and RHB Bank Berhad for providing a start-up fund of RM50,000 for the running and management of MyPC.

Kadir also advised club members to utilise the computer in a "productive and constructive manner" and urged members to refrain from indulging in irresponsible discussion but instead take part in intellectual discourse and serious exchange of views.

"I am confident you can all come up with programmes that are both useful and able to be sold."

On a lighter note he Kadir added said those who did not want their e-mail 's censored by parents should not in the first place be sending e-mail that needed censoring.

Khoo who is also the president and chief executive officer of Brave & Bold - a MSC-status company and a member of Patimas Computers Bhd - said the aim of the club was to discover and nurture young programming prodigies in the mould of Gates.

Carrying on the theme of "Malaysia Boleh", Khoo said the club's "Big Dream" was that a Malaysian could create the next "killer application".

Killer applications are basically applications that redefine problem solving, an example of which is the Windows operating system.

"We want to help create a nation of software producers, not just limited to consuming software and services," he said.

Khoo also urged members to appreciate intellectual property rights and reject pirated software.

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