

24/03/1998

Membership applications continue to pour in

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KUALA LUMPAUR, Mon. - Applications for membership to the Microsoft-New Straits Times Malaysian Young Programmers Club (MyPC) continue to pour in from across the country, with 300 received as at 5pm yesterday.

MyPC, launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Microsoft Corporation chairman and chief executive officer Bill Gates last week, is a breakthrough initiative to discover and nurture young Malaysian programming talents aged 15 years and below.

MyPC's creator Derrik Khoo, who is also chief executive officer of Brave & Bold Sdn Bhd, said: "The overwhelming response is all the more remarkable considering that it has only been five days since MyPC was launched".

Deemed a "virtual" club, MyPC's activities will be conducted largely over the Internet and is expected to start operations in May.

There will also be periodic face-to-face meetings for members to get to know one another and to exchange ideas.

In its entirety, MyPC will support the Multimedia Supercorridor (MSC) in its overall development, especially in the area of human resource development, spearheading IT applications among the young that will hopefully provide the necessary opportunity for the next Malaysian generation to leapfrog into the Information Age.

Among the more outstanding applications received was one from 13-year-old Lee Sher Win from Sekolah Menengah Bukit Gambir, Penang, who has an Internet account, an e-mail address and a personal website to boot.

Sher Win also claims to have a basic understanding of programming tools like C++ and hypertext mark-up language (HTML), an outstanding achievement for someone his age.

Just as impressive was an entry by 10-year-old Nur Syarafina Rosli, of Sekolah Kebangsaan Convent Ipoh, who has her own personal computer, an e-mail address, an Internet account and claims that she uses programming tools like Microsoft Visual Basic.

Not to be outdone is eleven-year-old Rajiv Raja Ratnam from Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan Seri Serdang, Selangor.

This smart lad owns a PC, has his own e-mail account, surfs the World Wide Web and is familiar with Visual Basic.

Then there is 14-year-old Jasper Cheng Jiew Hao, from Johor Baru, who is studying at the Woodlands secondary school in Singapore.

He has his own PC, surfs the Internet and does programming as well.

It is the intention of MyPC to create an "all round" individual achieved through a carefully planned programme which will focus on grooming members in their respective areas of expertise without losing sight of the other key areas of their personal development.

Members, assigned to qualified mentors, will be given special assignments based on their business, networking and programming skills.

In order to be granted entry into the programme which runs for one academic year (approximately four semesters), all MyPC applicants will have to undergo an aptitude test.

An annual membership fee will also be imposed.

MyPC will also fully sponsor deserving and talented underprivileged children through its sponsorship programme.

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