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Online way of shopping for computers

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Malaysians who want to buy computers but find battling through jungles (concrete or green ones) too much of a hassle, can now go armchair shopping with a local company's e-commerce innovation of an "online warehouse".

Every step of the shopping process, from comparing capabilities and prices, to ordering, paying and receiving, can be done at the nearest Internet-wired computer, thanks to an interactive website called Absolute Online.

Run by KL-based computer distribution company Absolute Advantage Sdn Bhd, the website has already attracted customers from as far as Mauritius, Sri Lanka and Cyprus since it was launched on Jan 15.

Absolute Advantage chief executive officer Lau Teck Wah said yesterday the site (<http://www.absolute.com.my>) offered about 300 IT-related items including Internet hubs, CD-ROMs, sound cards and printers.

"As one of the country's first Internet merchants, we have different sections targeting end-users and registered dealers, and have a wide range of about 300 items from big names like Microsoft, Intel, Canon and Digital.

"Customers do not have to worry about payment security as we do not accept payment through credit cards but through the Maybank Online system," he said.

Lau said items would be delivered to the buyer's doorstep within 48 hours after confirmation of payment, adding that all goods were insured during delivery.

Absolute Advantage will be among more than 70 exhibitors at the upcoming ITX '98 exhibition, which will showcase local IT innovations, products and brands and is expected to attract more than 40,000 visitors.

The exhibition will be held in conjunction with the country's premier IT conference, Infotech Malaysia. Both will focus on the theme "Turning Ripples into Tidal Waves - Productising Ideas into Solutions and Services".

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also chairman of the National IT Council, will open the four-day event on April 21 and deliver the keynote address at the conference.

At the conference, more than 1,000 participants from the Government, private sector and non-profit organisations will discuss three major components of the National IT Agenda - people development, infostructure development and application development.

There will be five parallel workshops on the Year 2000 problem, Demonstrator Applications, e-commerce, network security and edutainment.

Several State IT councils will publicise their State IT agendas at the conference.

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