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Mahathir-Internet

POISON-PEN LETTERS, AN INTERNET MISUSE, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, April 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has described poison-pen letters put up in the Internet as a misuse of the communication instrument.

"Now in the Internet, we see surat layang (Malay for poison-pen letter), all kinds of things," he told reporters after opening a virtual reality seminar here today.

"We thought that with the Internet there will be no censorship, people can tell the truth but people use the Internet to tell lies," he said.

Dr Mahathir was asked to elaborate on his speech that new technology such as virtual reality, as with everything else conceived or invented by Man, could benefit or damage humans.

"You cannot overcome dangers...with the Internet and with this free cross border communication what can happen is all kinds of unacceptable things will come in.

"That is why it is important to revive ethics, values and all that...because the only defence really now is in yourself," he said.

In his speech, the prime minister commended Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) for taking the initiative to organise the two-day seminar.

"Although UNIMAS is a relatively young university, it has the potential to explore new vistas through innovations and collaborations with international institutions," he said.

Dr Mahathir said foreign institutions such as Germany's Fraunhofer IAO, Britain's University of Nottingham and Sweden's Linkoping University have made headway in virtual reality projects.

He said UNIMAS' move to establish its Reality Centre in Technology Park Malaysia was timely.

"To make it a reality, investments in the centre are much needed," said Dr Mahathir, who called on foreign and local organisations and industries to collaborate and form a consortium to support the initiative. -- BERNAMA  
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