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Y2K solution inspired by genius of 2,300 years ago

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Inspired by an Indian political strategist who lived 2,300 years ago, a modern-day Year 2000 Problem analyst came up with a novel solution to beat the Millennium Bug, whose deadline is less than 450 days away.

Now, Chennai-born S. Jayaprasanna Raj intends to market his Y2K solution, called "Chanakya" after the ancient genius, as a time, money and labour-saving measure to achieve Y2K compliance.

The Y2K problem refers to the inability of some computer chips to read dates beyond the year 1999 in time-sensitive functions, possibly resulting in system shutdown or malfunction, not just in computers but in other equipment critical to business operations and daily life.

Jayaprasanna Raj said most Y2K solutions focus on the two missing digits and employ armies of computer hacks to go through lines and lines of computer code to add those two digits wherever they are missing.

"This is too slow - we have only accomplished about 40 per cent of what needs to be done and there are nearly one trillion lines to be scanned before the dawn of the year 2000," he said during a conference and demonstration of the Chanakya solution.

The Chanakya methodology, he said, introduces an "intelligence feature" at the compiler level, to enable the system to distinguish dates in different centuries based on the last two digits.

A compiler translates codes in a programmer's language into machine codes.

Chanakya, which took about two years to develop, can be incorporated into any programming language, platform (desktop or mainframe, for example) or format for easy usage, Jayaprasanna Raj said.

Deputy Information Minister Datuk Dr Suleiman Mohamad, who officially opened the conference, said he would help Jayaprasanna Raj and local partner Usaha Riang IT (M) Sdn Bhd obtain a meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Aside from India, he said he wanted Malaysia to be another launchpad for Chanakya as the country had displayed vision and leadership in becoming a world-class purveyor of IT with its Multimedia Super Corridor.

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