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Be proud our PM has vision and knowledge of technology

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I MAKE no apology for being an admirer of the achievements and leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in making the Malaysian information technology and multimedia industry the envy of the world.

This admiration was heightened last week when Dr Mahathir held a "Dialogue with the PM" session during the Multimedia Asia Conference at Mines Exhibition Centre.

Not only did he agree to extend a planned one hour event into one that exceeded 100 minutes, but he also answered a wide range of IT-related questions posed by members of an audience of 400 people comprising Malaysians, foreigners working in Malaysia and overseas visitors.

As one of those in the audience, I can say for certain that the session was entirely unscripted; questions were not "planted" and those asking questions were not pre-selected or vetted.

Would any other world leader have been willing to subject himself to an impromptu Q&A solely related to IT topics?

More importantly, would any other world leader have been capable of handling such a range of questions about IT and the K-Economy (Knowledge Economy)? I do not think so. It is also significant that all those who put forward questions were handled with courtesy and all questions answered with authority and with humour.

Those members of the international media, who are sometimes critical of a lack of transparency in Malaysia, should ask themselves whether their Prime Minister or President would be willing to subject themselves to the type of session in which Dr Mahathir participated.

Again, I think not. All Malaysians should feel proud they have a Prime Minister who has both the vision and knowledge of technology to drive the country forward into the 21st century.

Successful embracing of IT developments and the K-Economy will surely determine a country's overall success in the coming years.

Malaysia is ready to reap the rewards of that vision.