

Mahathir: Lower software prices will reduce piracy

KUALA LUMPUR: Foreign technology makers would continue to suffer intellectual piracy unless they make their products cheap enough for Southeast Asian consumers, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

"It is not that we are prone to criminal acts, but when the price difference is too great, it is difficult to stop people from breaching copyright

laws," Mahathir said at a seminar for Asian and European businesses.

Foreign groups have complained about rampant copyright piracy in Malaysia.

us watchdog group International Intellectual Property Alliance early this year recommended Washington place Malaysia on a "watch list" with 36 other countries for not doing enough to crack down on copyright piracy.

Malaysian officials have announced plans to enact a tough law that will give authorities power to seize equipment of optical disc factories which provide the basic resources for copying audiovisual and computer discs.

"While our countries should try to enforce intellectual property rights laws, the owners of intellectual property should try to reduce the cost of their property to make

copying less profitable," Mahathir said.

He said that in the Internet age, technology was everything. "Software, for example, is intellectual property par excellence. The hardware costs only a minute fraction and copying CD content is about the easiest thing to do," he said.

"If it is cheap, the attractiveness of copying would be diminished." - Reuters