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Unitar has MSC status certification

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UNDENIABLY, there is plenty of IT expertise in R&D and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) within the country.

But therein is a poser. Where are they and why are they not visible.

Getting them together is what the Faculty of Information Technology of virtual university, Universiti Tun Abdul Razak is working towards, determinedly.

Not one to rest on its laurels, Unitar had received the MSC status certification from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in late June, joining the ranks of five other universities out of the total 23 institutions in the country.

With Prof Dr Khairuddin Hashim, at the faculty helm as the dean and chief technology officer of the university, Unitar has already started the process going.

"I know for certain there are a lot of them out there ... and this form of a database will be the first of its kind."

The faculty is now in the process of developing a portal, a forum of discussion targeted at the special interest groups, for example, multimedia or software engineers as well as researchers.

This, he said, will bring out the numerous experts in the field and have probably been working in isolation and do not know if their work is being duplicated by some other researcher in the country.

"We are also in the process of developing a module for researchers to register themselves, the research project they are putting in," he said, in an interview at the Kelana Jaya campus.

In the long run, the fruits of the research can also be appreciated by the commercial sector which would not have to look out of the country.

Khairuddin has been creating waves in the industry when he recently called for the setting up of an information and communications technology university which will take a lead role in research and core technology development, in addition to producing the much-needed ICT workforce.

The ICT university should be a public set-up so that funding from the Government for its academia to carry out research and development will be accessible.

Khairuddin's argument of getting the researchers in the country together is simple:

"With this network, we can identify the right kind of people for MSC. Many of them obtained their Phd abroad but have not been fully utilised when they return to Malaysia," he said, adding that some of them have been doing small scale projects on their own.

But time is of the essence and, if the country wants to develop fast, it has to maximise utilisation of the limited resources in the country, even the manpower.

With this target in mind, the university is also organising a seminar on "ICT Research & Applications: Innovations at Work" from Sept 25 till Sept 26 at the Malaysian Airlines Academy (MAA) in Kelana Jaya.

The CITRA 2002 Secretariat can be contacted through fax :03- 78802404 or Email: citra2002@unitar.edu.my.

The emphasis is that R&D drives the intellectual community into coming up with innovative ideas and production of prototypes to be comercialised.

The output of such activity in turn drives the manufacturing and product development sectors into producing innovative products for the

marketplace. We need to be developers and not mere users of technology.

"To compete in a rapidly changing global arena we need to tag along and lead in some technology areas in the future."

The CITRA2002 programme committee is requesting original papers, describing diverse areas of IT and computer science research and applications development work. Submitted papers should be previously unpublished and not currently under review by another conference or journal.