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There will always be a place for paper

Alice Chia

ADVANCEMENTS in information technology (IT) will not reduce the importance of paper as a medium for the printing industry.

Percetakan Nasional Malaysia Bhd chairman Tan Sri Clifford F. Herbert said paper will always have a place in the sector, particularly in the production of books and forms.

"When you read a book, you would want to feel it rather than read it online. Therefore, I don't think hard copies will ever go out of fashion,"

he told reporters in Kuala Lumpur after the launch of the company's online portal yesterday.

Percetakan Nasional is the appointed printer to the Government and its core business is meeting the Government's printing needs. It prints forms, annual reports, gazettes, computer forms, smart cards, airline boarding passes and others.

Herbert said the commercial sector contributes roughly 20 per cent to the company's revenue. Its clients include Malaysian Airline System Bhd and PLUS Expressways Bhd.

The printing company yesterday launched its online portal to enhance relationships with its customers.

"Through the portal, customers can order online while we can check the status of orders daily," Herbert said. About RM400,000 has been spent to develop the portal.

Percetakan Nasional is targeting a 14 per cent increase in its revenue to RM114 million this year with the launch of its portal.

It posted sales of roughly RM100 million in its financial year ended December 31 last year.

Herbert also said that Percetakan Nasional is constantly updating itself with the latest technology available in the market. It has spent RM5 million to RM6 million on IT last year.

Meanwhile Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Amar Leo

Moggie, who was present at the launch, said cellular phone companies should heed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call to provide nationwide coverage.

"We hope that cellular phone companies will take notice to provide as wide a coverage as possible. This is because mobile phone service is a necessity now to many people," he added.

Leo Moggie also said that cellular phone companies should change their mindset of looking at coverage as competition. "Instead, they can look at competing on providing the quality of service and pricing structure."