

**Gov't to counter Internet lies**  
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Information Ministry will create a unit to monitor and counter what it says are lies being spread on the Internet about government policies, reports said today.

Deputy Information Minister Chia Kwang Chye said it will issue written explanations to tackle what he said was abuse of the Internet and online technology.

"This special unit will be purely working to disseminate information, explain correct information and counter the misinformation on government policies," Chia was quoted as saying by the Bernama news agency.

"We are in the midst of finalising the administrative part and it will come into effect very soon," he said.

The move comes amid attacks on Malaysian bloggers and Internet users by ministers, including Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who accuse them of spreading slander and gossip.

The government has threatened punishment and tighter controls on Internet use in response.

Two prominent bloggers are also being sued for defamation by the government-linked New Straits Times Press group in an action criticised as an unprecedented attack on freedom of expression.

Chia said that while the unit will tackle misinformation about what he said were issues of "national interest", it will not have the power to act against bloggers, reports said.

"Our role is not to take action against them but rather to give the public the correct and better information through the Internet," Chia was quoted as saying by the New Straits Times. - AFP

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