

## **'Umno can't control Papagomo, Parpukari'**

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Umno New Media Unit is unable to control party-aligned bloggers prone to using defamatory material in cyber warfare, according to its chief Tun Faisal Ismail Abdul Aziz.

This, he said, was because bloggers such as Papagomo and Parpukari refused to submit themselves to the party's official new media machinery.

"They are pro-Umno but they call themselves independent bloggers. You can't control them.

NONE "Some of them hate me so much... they don't like me, they don't want to be ordered, instructed, advised or controlled," said Tun Faisal (right), himself a target for some pro-Umno bloggers.

However, he said, they undoubtedly contributed to Umno's strength in countering its Pakatan Rakyat counter-parts.

But this, Tun Faisal added, was a double-edged sword as during party elections, they could turn on one another or target rival members.

'They may turn guns inwards'

"Of course, now it's near the general election and they are attacking the opposition, but I'm more worried when we face party elections.

"The bloggers will compete against one another, it's not easy to control them... we still don't have a way to solve this," he admitted on the sidelines of a forum on social media ethics in Kuala Lumpur last night.

This class of often anonymous bloggers, he said, were different from some 27 in the party's new media unit who were subject to party guidelines.

"When you are under the party, there are certain things you have to abide by. We have positions and carry the party image, we cannot whack the way they do," he said.

He added that he personally disapproved defamatory and vulgar blog postings.

"I am proud that I am placed among the top 10 Umno bloggers without resorting to such things, I don't curse, I don't publish nude pictures."

NONE However, he admitted that pro-Umno bloggers adopting defamatory and sensationalised content tended to be more popular than others like himself.

"They have an audience, or else how can they get 500,000 to 600,000 hits a month. Hate them or like them, people read their blogs."

He said the only way to put a stop to this culture would be for people to change their mindset and reject such content.

But the culture adopted by pro-Umno bloggers today was in fact inherited from Reformasi bloggers during 1999, when they launched personal attacks against the then-prime minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

'We've balanced out cyber war'

For the official Umno new media unit, Tun Faisal said, he has trained around 1,800 members in social media use since being put in charge in 2010.

The objective is to bring balance to the game as Pakatan Rakyat cybertroopers had dominated the Internet during the 2008 general election.

"In 2004, we had actually began initiating a new media unit and managed to balance the game. But after 2004, we started to lag behind and were unaware the landscape had changed in 2008.

"It was no longer write-ups, there were a lot of slanderous pictures and videos, that's why we got knocked out," he said.

However, this time, he said Umno cybertroopers have been trained to be less reliant on the mainstream media, and produce their own content.

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