

Najib repeats plans to regulate online media
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By Nigel Aw

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today repeated the government's intent to rein in the electronic media which, at present, is free of control under the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984.

"The government will carry out a comprehensive study for the need for an act such as existing ones to take into account of the development in information communication technology.

"The government cannot be viewed as practising double standards in its rules towards the printed and digital media," he said at a media awards night by the Malaysian Press institute tonight in Kuala Lumpur.

Najib also said the government welcomed a self-initiative by mainstream media to draft a code of ethics for journalists and will support the effort.

This, the premier noted, is part of the efforts by editors of the mainstream media to set up a press council for self-regulation and to strengthen journalistic professionalism.

"Under this cooperation, the editors have agreed to prepare a code of ethics to detail the principles of journalism that will be the guiding principle in the duties of gathering and publishing information to produce journalistic content.

"I leave it to the editors to create a workable and practicable code of ethics,"

The government will not interfere and it is up to the industry to regulate itself on journalistic professionalism, said Najib.

An initial plan to set up a media consultative council under the government's supervision was vehemently opposed over fears that it would create another layer of control on the media.

On his promise to allow more media freedom, the premier said that amendment to the PPPA to abolish the need for an annual publication licence in favour of a one-off approval, will be tabled in Parliament this sitting.

