

Taib: Use ICT to bridge digital gap in rural areas
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KUCHING - Sarawak Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud (*picture*) said he was not unduly worried about internet abuse but instead expressed concern that the information communication technology (ICT) should be used to bridge the digital gap, particularly in rural areas.

He said, in that context, the ICT practitioners should get together with the print and electronic media in Sarawak, to reach out to the people, through a good and widespread network of information.

"Forget about the blogs, Twitter or Facebook (social networking websites) as these are hobbies for people but it is much more important to link to government services, especially serious affairs of development which are the bread and butter of the people," he said at the Sarawak ICT Development and Media Network launch and Sarawak Chief's ICT Media Award 2010 presentation here Tuesday night.

He said getting the people to be internet savvy was half the battle won and the mass media had a role to play in helping to bridge the digital gap through dissemination of information on ICT in their news articles and write-ups.

He was confident that it would enable the people to make full use of facilities provided by the government within years as Sarawak underwent an economic transformation with the Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (Score) as the impetus for development.

Score was expected to create 1.6 million jobs within the next 20 years, including 30 to 40 percent in the high-paying categories, he said.

Earlier Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr George Chan hoped that the state government would be able to work closely with the media fraternity to promote greater knowledge of ICT development and build a network of writers skilled in ICT reporting with the formation of the ICT Media Network.

He said the network had been organizing various programmes and activities such as seminars, talks and study visits to key government ICT installations to promote ICT development awareness, good governance and efficient public service delivery through ICT use since then.

On the annual ICT media awards for the Sarawak media community, he said, it was one of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) and communities ICT outreach programmes regularly undertaken by Sarawak Information Systems Sdn Bhd (Sains).

Sains is a company wholly owned by the Sarawak state government. - Bernama

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