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'Adopt code of ethics'

> **Dr M tells bloggers to blog responsibly and contribute to the community**

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KUALA LUMPUR: Former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad urged bloggers to voluntarily adopt a code of ethics so that they blog responsibly and factually to ensure that the blogosphere becomes a respected medium.

"I would like to emphasise the need for bloggers to be responsible, for if we are responsible we can contribute to the community," he said when delivering his keynote address at the Asian Bloggers Social Media Conference 2010 yesterday.

The two-day conference, themed "Reflections of the Social Media Revolution", is organised by My Events International and is attended by about 400 people across Asia.

"Bloggers have the ability to shape the thinking and opinions of communities in the whole world if we want to. This is an opportunity to help for the betterment of the society," said Mahathir, who also has his own blog.

He stressed that bloggers, although free to express themselves, should only express something that is substantiated with truth and facts and not abuse the medium.

"Don't abuse but make full use of the internet. It is a powerful instrument put into our hands," he said.

The former prime minister said he had been accused of censoring the media during his tenure, but he pointed out that the press has never been free.

"There is always someone to control them - the government through licensing, the owners, editors or even the advertisers," he said, adding that whatever one reads and



conference
flanked by
AirAsia Group
CEO Datuk
Sen Tony
Fernandes
and Berjaya
Corporation

chairman and
CEO Tan Sri
Vincent Tan.

hears from the media is what is permitted by the people who are in charge of them.

Now, the advent of the internet has released us from the controls, so we are free to say anything we want within reason, he said.

Mahathir, however, cautioned that this freedom comes with some responsibility.

"Be careful in the use of the freedom; careful in the sense that we will be able to back what we say with truth and facts," he said, adding that only then would blogs have a good reputation and be respected.

Mahathir also reiterated his opinion that,

notwithstanding the Multimedia Super Corridor Malaysia Bill of Guarantees, the government should block access to pornography on the internet.

"When we first had the internet and MSC, we promised that we will not censor the internet but I am now having second thoughts about it.

"I think we should censor access to pornography on the internet because it is causing the children and the young to be exposed to all kinds of filth... but otherwise don't censor the bloggers and what they want to say," he said.