

**2011: Year Of Success For Nation's ICT Sector**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 29 (Bernama) -- The year 2011 has been a year of success for the nation's information and communication technology (ICT) sector as the national broadband household penetration is at 62 per cent or four million of 6.5 million households.

The increase is an improvement from the 54 per cent penetration recorded in 2010, which means the country is well on its way towards achieving the target of 75 per cent broadband penetration nationwide by 2015.

The government had set the national target as part of the National Key Economic Area (NKEA) initiatives to increase the national broadband penetration rate and bridge the digital divide nationwide.

Excellent broadband service will give a huge impact in stimulating the economy, enhancing competitiveness, reinforcing local and foreign investors' confidence, enriching creative and innovative minds, and it serves as a conduit to disseminate information and knowledge to the people.

Various factors have contributed to the success, including the distribution of the 1Malaysia netbooks and the launch of broadband facilities in villages nationwide.

Some 472,900 units of the 1Malaysia notebook computer had been distributed to school students nationwide during the first and second phase of the programme.

One million netbooks had been allocated under the programme with an allocation of RM1 billion and this initiative was expected to contribute 15 per cent to the national broadband penetration rate.

Another effort to narrow the digital gap between the urban, rural and interior population was the setting up of WiFi villages and currently, there are 1,400 WiFi villages in the country, mostly in Perlis, Sabah and Sarawak.

The villages were provided with the normal computerising system with broadband facility, which was free of charge for the first three months, while a minimum of RM10 per month would be charged subsequently.

The government will also push very hard to roll out the various necessary infrastructure to enable states like Pahang, Kelantan, Sabah and Sarawak to keep up with the rest of the country and achieve 75 per cent household broadband penetration rate by 2015.

Currently, their rate is below 50 per cent because the number of people having computers is still low in relation to the country's population.

Despite all the achievements, Malaysia also faces cyber security issues, and the nation is expected to lose RM2.73 billion in the next five years if it is not properly managed.

A total of 7,404 cyber security cases were handled by CyberSecurity Malaysia's Cyber999 Security Incident Help Centre in the first half of 2011, which was a 147 per cent increase over the same period the previous year.

These included incidents such as e-mail spam and scams, identity thefts, phishing, indecent content, malware and instructions, as well as newer concerns like cyber-bullying, cyber stalking and online addiction.

The nation was also shocked by attacks by hackers on several official government websites and others several months ago because it was affecting the ICT system for the people.

The hacking attacks have underscored the need for information technology personnel to stay abreast of technology and need to always keep upgrading their skills.

Given the increasing amount of cyberthreats, there is a need for more proactive -measures to prevent more Internet users from becoming cybercrime victims and it takes more than reviewing or improving current cybersecurity laws.

The setting up of the Global Cyber Security Alliance (GSCA) would help manage cyber threat at an international platform to improve national cyber security capability.

Apart from that, the alliance would help focus on preventive measures to develop national preparedness in the face of threats by international cyber hackers, and would also improve international cooperation through the private sector in handling national cyber security.

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