

Social Media Set To Make Impact On Rural Voters' Trend

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KUCHING, April 4 (Bernama) -- Thanks to the 1Malaysia computer programme which enabled rural communities with low household income to receive free netbooks from the government, the social media is set to make inroads into the rural areas of Sarawak.

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) head of publication division, Dr Ahi Sarok said today it could be assumed that the social media might influence the voters' choice, especially among the younger generation, in the coming general election.

"But how the social media impacted the voters remains quite difficult to ascertain," he told Bernama here.

The state government in collaboration with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) has given out over 100,000 units of netbooks throughout the state under the project so far.

Similar to the distribution of the 1Malaysia People's Assistance (BR1M), which basically benefited the rural recipients, Ahi said, such projects would have an impact on the rural electorate.

There is a high possibility that these assistance could translate into votes given that the Barisan Nasional (BN) government would continue to use politics of development as the main strategy to woo the voters, he said.

Commenting on the social media's impact, Sarawak Social Media president Wan Abdillah Edruce Wan Abdul Rahman recently said it could help the government disseminate its policies and programmes by engaging the people through the cyber world.

In stressing that his association members were not cyber troopers, he said they could play a role in informing the people as not many of them are able to attend seminars or workshops organised in the urban areas, or have access to the Internet or the media.

The body would be engaging the people in selected areas in Kuching to educate them on Internet networking and social media as well as to invite them to participate in business seminars and workshops at the grassroots level, he said.

Instead of rebutting the opposition through the cyber world, he said, it was better for the members to focus on helping the people on such issues as the government's transformation programme, socio-economy, recreational and education.

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