

Six reasons why Dr Mahathir wants to censor the Internet
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So Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad says that if he returns as the prime minister, he will censor the Internet. Not surprising, really.

Had Dr Mahathir ruled Malaysia in the age of the Internet, he would not have lasted more than one term. His excesses, double-talk, rampant corruption and skewed implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) would have swallowed him.

Tyrants, dictators and their ilk all want to return to the pre-Internet age. And they couch their real intentions by saying that the Internet corrupts the young, blah blah blah.

But why would Dr Mahathir, who encouraged the growth of the Internet and its public access in Malaysia, and even pledged to keep it free, now change his mind?

Here are the real reasons why he wants to censor the Internet.

1) So that the government can stay in power by deceiving Malaysians with half-truths and lies printed and published by their abettors-in-chief: the mainstream media.

Many of the newspapers and television stations are owned by Barisan Nasional political parties and they present a picture of the country that bears little resemblance to the reality.

The coverage of the missing MH370 plane is a perfect example. While the rest of the world's press has been unmasking Malaysia and showing its core of mediocrity, the mainstream press have been on magic mushrooms.

2) So that the government can continue giving sweetheart deals to politically-connected businessmen and family members of politicians.

Would the National Feedlot fiasco have become public knowledge in pre-Internet Malaysia? No way.

Newspaper editors would be told by Putrajaya to shut down the story. In this instance, The Star and others had no choice but to cover the cowgate/condogate because of the wall-to-wall coverage on portals and blogs.

Censoring the Internet will provide a ripe environment for a return to inflated one-sided and obscene privatisation deals like the toll concessions.

3) So that the government can control the discourse on important issues like banning the Catholic weekly Herald from using the word Allah in its Bahasa Malaysia section.

If not for the Internet, Malaysians would be fed lies by Utusan Malaysia on how there is a great conspiracy by Christians to take over Malaysia; how Catholics want to use the word Allah to convert Muslims.

Malaysians will not have the other side of the story: that Catholics and Christians in East Malaysia have used the word Allah for more than 100 years; that there have been precious few conversions and that most international scholars on Islam are incredulous and tickled by the government's prohibition on the use of Allah.

4) So that the inadequacies and sheer incompetence of Cabinet ministers and other government leaders can be concealed from the public.

Think of the likes of Hasan Malek, Idris Jala, Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar, Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

5) So that family members of politicians can buy luxury goods such as gigantic diamond rings and designer bags, buy super expensive properties overseas and suddenly become some of the richest businessmen in Malaysia without scrutiny.

Do we ever wonder where the nouveau riche get their money from? Or their sports cars and properties across the world?

6) So that the opposition will not have an avenue to push their propaganda and news to the people. The Internet has levelled the playing field in terms of media access for the opposition and those who hunger for such news.

Without the Internet, the opposition would be left to just ceramahs, faxed articles and statements that only a few would have access to. The Internet - more so, mobile internet - has freed up information for all. - March 26, 2014.

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