A STUDY INTO THE NEED FOR LEGAL MEASURES AGAINST BLOGGING IN MALAYSIA

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CHAPTER ONE

BLOGGING IN MALAYSIA

1. A STUDY INTO THE NEED FOR LEGAL MEASURES AGAINST BLOGGING IN MALAYSIA

1.0   Introduction

This is an overview on blogging that occurs in Malaysia. The problems that arise are being discussed in this Chapter to determine the need for certain legal measures against the blogging in Malaysia.

1.1   Background

In Malaysia, the Internet has become an essential part of the citizen daily life. It can be said that offices in Malaysia are connected to the Internet. The Internet is originated from the United States which was developed in 1962 by the United States Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).[1] This was called the Interneting project and the system of networks, which emerged from the research, later it was known as the "Internet".[2]

Malaysia has launched its Multimedia Super Corridor[3] project (hereinafter as MSC) by the former Prime Minister Tun Mahathir Mohamed in 1999. The objective of this launching is to attract investment from the software firms, electronic publishers, telecommunication specialists and other multimedia ventures.[4] The Malaysian had a chance to experience the unlimited access

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[1] Janine S. Hiller and Ronnie Cohen, *Internet Law & Policy,* (2002) p6. DARPA's objective is to allow the network computers to communicate clearly across multiple, linked packet networks.

[2] Anonymous, 'A Brief History of the Internet and Related Network', available at *<http://www.isoc.org/internet/history/cerf.shtml>* downloaded on (20/03/2007).

[3] The MSC is a 750 sq km strip of land which situated at south of Kuala Lumpur.

[4] Mohammed Hassan, 'Malaysia Takes Off Into Cyberspace?', available at *<http://www.muslimedia.com/archives/sea98/mycyber.htm>* downloaded on (20/03/2007).

of information better and the Internet had become a medium to communicate by the introduction of Internet.

The usage of Internet by household in Malaysia is shown in a survey published by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) which was conducted in 2005. Its aim is to address user side data gaps on attributes and current trends on the use of Internet in Malaysian homes. The finding of the survey shows the age group of '15-19' has the highest number accounting for 18.6 percent of all Internet users in private households.[5] In addition to that, with respect to the intensity of usage, Malaysian surfers tend to surf 9 hours per week. The survey done had shown that the Malaysian are beginning to be more computer literate and are more dependent on the internet for information.

As early as 1997, blogging had become a new instrument for internet users to express their views. Blogs[6] usually provide commentary and news on various subjects such as politic, fashion and local issues. An ordinary blog usually consists of text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. The main characteristic for blogs[7] is that the readers are able to leave comments[8] in an interactive format.

The increase of blogging activity among Malaysian had made many to urge the government to impose some guidelines and perhaps impose a rule on registration for all the local bloggers. It may seem impossible but according to Dr Nur Aliah Binti Zahri,[9] said that Malaysia has the technology to introduce registration but it is just a matter of the permission by the parliament. Malaysia can based on the regulation impose by the other jurisdictions like the Republic of China in controlling and monitoring the activities of the bloggers by filtering and blocking the

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[5] Most of the users are either employed (37.7 percent) or are students (36.5 percent). The remainder consists of employers (5.0 percent), self-employed (8.8 percent) and unemployed (12.0 percent).

[6] It consists of text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic.

[7] Anonymous, 'Blogs', available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog> downloaded on (20/07/2007).

[8] The comments are also published for others to read, thus make it just like a discussion.

[9] A Deputy Director of Internet Communication Technology (ICT) in Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit which are known as MAMPU.

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TABLE OF CONTENT