Be accountable and don’t deviate from truth, Masing tells bloggers

KUCHING: Senior Minister and Minister of Land Development Tan Sri Dr James Masing said bloggers should never deviate from the truth and not be too imaginative when making statements through the online social media.

Although they might not be accountable to their readers and the general public, he said they should never forget that they had to answer to “someone up there” (Almighty God), who they ought to fear most.

He also said online social media would only be beneficial if it was used with full responsibility by sharing knowledge and information to bring the country to greater heights instead of being used to spread blatant lies and slanderous remarks in order to bring the government down.

To highlight the power of online social media, the Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS) president and Baleh assemblyman said in the 2008 general election Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders were caught with their pants down when the opposition started making unauthentic statements against them through blogs.

“Now we have realised the danger of the social media network and are now ready to counter any false allegations put in the blogs to discredit the government.

“However, at the same time we also would like to advise bloggers to refrain from using the social media to spread blatant lies and wild allegations against other people. This is because they may not be accountable to their readers but they must not forget that they are accountable to someone up there,” he stressed.

He told reporters this at a news conference before opening the Colloquium on Applications of Information Technology in Industry at International College of Advanced Technology (ICats) here yesterday.

The first colloquium organised by ICats was attended by 125 students from ICats, Swinburne University, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) and Inti College.

Later, when speaking at the event, Masing said the colloquium was very timely while the topic chosen bore great relevance in view of the importance of information technology (IT) in today’s world.

Because of that, he said, the state government had always encouraged the use of IT, like the Sarawak government portals for public service, control and administration which had greatly expedited the delivery of government services to the people.

“We have all benefited from these advances in technology, thanks to the state’s IT professionals,” he said, adding that the support system and encouragement given by the government would continue to spur them to improve IT services for the benefit and convenience of the people.

Among those present at the event were Assistant Agriculture Minister (Research and Marketing) Datuk Mong Dagang, Assistant Minister in the Chief Minister’s Office Datuk John Sikie Tayai, assemblymen Snowdan Lawan (Balai Ringin), Malcom Mussen Lamoh (Batang Ai) and Dr Johnical Rayong (Engkilili) and ICats board of governors chairman Dr Razali Abon.