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Shabery to hear out bloggers

KUALA LUMPUR: The Government will not control bloggers but will consider their views as well. That is the assurance given by newly-appointed Information Minister Datuk Ahmad Shabery Cheek, who is planning a meeting with the blogging community "in the next few weeks to hear them out".

"The alternative media, like bloggers, play a role in nation building. It is the most direct and simple channel for people to voice their opinions. Sometimes, they can bring about a negative effect but it is mostly positive."



First meeting: Shabery and Datuk Tan Lian Hoe meeting reporters for the first time as Information Minister and Deputy Information Minister at Angkasapuri yesterday.

Shabery said some had overlooked the significance played by bloggers, who could now form their own personal broadcast centres via their websites.

He dismissed the view that bloggers sided with the Opposition, saying that the bloggers only expressed their personal opinion.

"Bloggers are individuals and they have differing opinions. I cannot say that they are all Opposition. Sometimes, they are seen to support the Opposition but sometimes they criticise the Opposition too," he said.

On whether the Government would enforce some control on the blogging community, Shabery said they would not do so.

"The question of controlling bloggers does not arise. As the saying goes, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink," he said.

Asked if there was a message that he would pass to the bloggers in the meeting, Shabery said: "It is better that I be a listener first".

To a question whether the mainstream media had lost its credibility and relevance due to laws governing the media, he said that the rise of blogs was a global trend, adding that

this, however, did not mean that people had sidelined the media.

“No matter how free the mainstream media is (from government control), like in the USA, UK and Australia, it is still subject to the standpoint of their respective media (organisation) heads. So, people will still seek alternative news,” he said.

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