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Tech players laud Budget 2008

Calls of support for Budget 2008 continue to pour in. The local information and communications technology community reckons that the incentives will spur ICT usage, in particular Internet and broadband applications, to boost efforts to create a more innovative and knowledge-based society. **TECH&U** talks to them.

■ **Cisco Malaysia's managing director
Kumaran Singaram**

Cisco believes the push for effective public-private partnership to accelerate the rollout of broadband will encourage higher uptake of communications technologies that unify data, voice and video. This will support greater workforce mobility, generate corporate efficiencies and enhance consumer experiences.



We also welcome the further reduction of corporate income taxes which will stimulate the economy. In particular, savings from lower corporate taxes could spill over into investment in human capital and information technology as Malaysian companies seek to raise the bar in today's globalised market.

■ **Autodesk's country manager, Malaysia,
Lim Eng Jin**

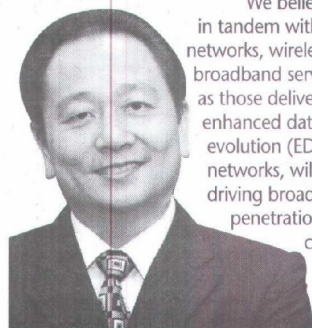
The Government's initiative under Budget 2008 to stimulate the construction sector through allocated funding and project rollouts (like the Northern Corridor Economic Region and Iskandar Development, among others) are commendable and necessary to encourage positive growth. It is expected that the construction sector will grow at 6.3 per cent as a result of the implementation of the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP) projects.

We also welcome the move by the Government to allocate RM9.7 billion for maintenance of public assets and infrastructure. This will improve the overall efficiency in the building, construction, and property sectors.



■ **Nokia Malaysia's general manager
Andrew Cheong**

The announcement by the Government to increase broadband penetration to 50 per cent of households by 2010 highlights the growing importance of the Internet. Similarly, the announcement that import duty and sales tax exemptions will be given on broadband equipment and consumer access devices is heartening as it will be easier and affordable for Malaysians to tap into the benefits of the Internet.



We believe that in tandem with wired networks, wireless broadband services such as those delivered on enhanced data for GSM evolution (EDGE) and 3G networks, will be key to driving broadband penetration in the country.

■ **Telekom Malaysia Bhd's group CEO
Datuk Abdul Wahid Omar**

Budget 2008 is good all around. For the ICT sector, the commitment to increase broadband penetration rate to 50 per cent of households by 2010 is well supported by the Investment Tax Allowance for last-mile broadband infrastruc-

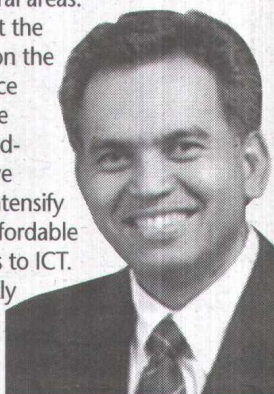


ture, import duty and sales tax exemption on broadband equipment and devices, and tax free benefit-in-kind on computers and broadband subscription fees. This will certainly encourage greater deployment of broadband infrastructure and increase demand for broadband access.

■ **TIME dotCom Bhd's managing director
Datuk Baharum Salleh**

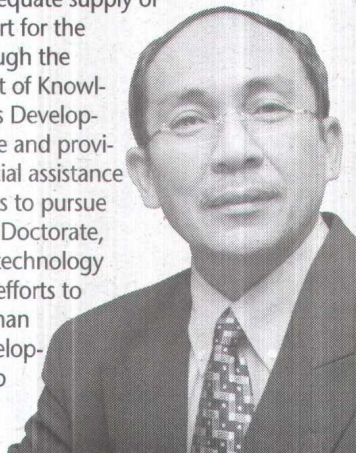
The budget will continue to strengthen the economic growth of the country as well as stimulate the private sector's competitiveness. We welcome the proposed measures to drive the growth of broadband usage and boost ICT development in the country as well as to bridge digital divide especially in rural areas.

TIME is confident the measures, especially on the 100 per cent allowance on capital expenditure spent to provide broadband access, will move service providers to intensify efforts in providing affordable and ubiquitous access to ICT. This would significantly increase the adoption of ICT.



■ **Mimos' president and chief executive
officer Datuk Abdul Wahab Abdullah**

The Government's concerted efforts to ensure an adequate supply of domain expert for the country through the establishment of Knowledge Workers Development Institute and provision of financial assistance for employees to pursue Master's and Doctorate, especially in technology as part of its efforts to enhance human resource development is a step in the right direction.



■ **Symantec Corp's, Malaysia country manager C.M. Woon**

The Government's commitment to reduce digital divide, increase broadband penetration rate to 50 per cent by 2010 as well as provide incentives to small and medium businesses (SMBs) will significantly leapfrog the ICT industry to the next level. These incentives, coupled with effective public-private partnership as outlined in the Budget will enable better access to ICT, promote the development of skills and talents, and eventually build a competitive knowledge society.



■ **CA Malaysia's managing director Queenie Wong**

We applaud the allocation of RM12 billion provided for higher education projects and programmes in areas such as research and development. This is another positive measure in the effort to enhance the human capital base in the country. Also, the continued focus of the Government on developing SMEs will drive this sector as a key engine of economic growth for our nation.



■ **3Com Corp's country manager, Malaysia, Marcus Lai**

The Government's efforts to narrow the digital divide in a quest to establish a knowledge-based economy is a step in the right direction. The target to increase broadband penetration rate from the current 12 per cent to 50 per cent of households by 2010, as well as duty and sales tax exemptions on broadband equipment will definitely accelerate the growth of Internet access.



■ **MDeC's CEO Datuk Badlisham Ghazali**

MSC supports the Government's focus on knowledge workers to ensure an adequate supply of high-skilled workers to meet the demands of the ICT industry. The establishment of a Knowledge Workers Development Institute in Cyberjaya will indeed be welcomed by all the MSC Malaysia companies that are mostly staffed by knowledge workers.

The setting up of the MSC Malaysia Creative Content Centre (MAC3) will support the development of the digital animation industry as well as increase local expertise in the area.

We hope that together with the existing infrastructure in Cyberjaya, especially the Creative Applications & Development Centre (CADC) – collectively will augur well for the creation of skills and local intellectual properties

for the industry, as well as position Malaysia as the preferred location for international content creation and digitisation, including post-production activities.



■ **American Malaysian Chamber of Commerce president Vince Leusner**

The 2008 Budget is a pro-business and investment growth budget which focuses on sustaining strong economic growth, attracting more foreign direct investments into the country and strengthening Malaysia's competitiveness.

The proposed policies and incentives will prepare the economy to be resilient to external risks, stimulate domestic and foreign investments as well as to face the challenges ahead. The Budget also shows that the Government remains committed to increase the competitiveness of the Malaysian economy.



■ **Yahoo! Southeast Asia's managing director Tom Sipple**

The decision to allocate RM45 million for the implementation of SchoolNet projects to provide Internet services to schools is a positive step forward for the country as it continues to build a knowledge-driven economy.

The Government's positive stance will help grow the Internet ecosystem and encourage access and adoption of the Internet as a platform to find, use, share and expand human knowledge from Malaysia. This will ultimately provide long-term educational and economic benefits for the country.

