

Engage new media with care

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I REFER to last Wednesday's article, 'A new assumption and a leap of faith' by Mr Arun Mahizhnan and Mr Tan Tarn How.

I tend to agree with the writers' views that it is high time the Government started to engage the masses via integration with new media.

I believe the most important element is speed. Failure to move ahead together with new media would paralyse the Government's attempts to communicate its efforts to the public, who are rapidly evolving into a whole new generation set on pursuing the truth, or rather 'half truths' in the fictitious space called the Internet.

To address the 'how to, how not to and how much', perhaps the Government need not look far for the answers. Just take a look at the political opposition in Malaysia, whose Internet strategy paid off handsomely in the last election. It is indeed contradictory to suggest that a ruling party in one country take after the opposition in another, but what I suggest is that the Government not adopt wholesale, but rather work on the good and do away with what does not apply in our local context.

I also think the Government should exercise caution when using new media as a tool to communicate with the masses. It should be fully aware that new media creates a landscape for people to give feedback and challenge ideas constantly, and it must be prepared to face the full effects of the onslaught. Ultimately, transparency and accountability of the Government should form the key fundamentals of its strategy when taking on new media by the horns.