

By STEFAN NAIDU
intech@thestar.com.my

CYBERCITIES: LOOK ABROAD FOR INSPIRATION

MALAYSIA can learn much from other world-class cybercities to further improve its own such developments, said networking giant Cisco Malaysia.

Its managing director, Anne Abraham, said a lot of technological improvements can be learned from looking at cybercity projects outside the country. "A good example is the Incheon Free Economic Zone (IFEZ)," she said.

IFEZ is a development project in South Korea to build a cybercity that is designed to create the most favourable business and living environments with the help of cutting-edge technology.

The projects currently underway there include the Songdo Convensia Convention Centre, which is being equipped with the latest in radio-frequency identification (RFID) card systems for controlled accessibility.

There are also cameras with voice-recognition capability and wireless Internet access in all areas of the convention centre.

Also being constructed is the Songdo International School which will use blackboard-sized touchscreen projectors and an interactive teaching software known as *enVision Math*, designed to reinvent the way students look at mathematics as a subject.

The software employs visual aids and allows students to work out mathematical problems on big screens — making it easier for the others to learn the methods.

Huge example

Those developing cybercities in Malaysia could take a leaf from South Korea's book, said Abraham.

She said South Korea is the world's 13th largest economy but the IFEZ project is enormous even by South Korean standards. It is set cost the Seoul government US\$41 bil (RM147bil) and will engulf three regions near the city of Incheon by the time it is completed in 2020.

"The city is being built on financial sustainability, service blueprints, urban planning and green technology," she said.

"According to our South Korean partners, the cybercity will contribute about 2% of the country's Gross Domestic Product and create more than 300,000 jobs. This is certainly something Malaysia should be taking a closer look at."

Cisco is providing advanced networking infrastructure and expertise for the construction of the IFEZ. It is also working with South Korean officials to create a business model and help with investment logistics.

The city and 'u'

"What we are trying to achieve in this city is self-sufficiency and for that you need to make it so that people can easily live and work there," said the director of IFEZ's u-city business division, Michael Byun.

"The 'u' stands for ubiquity. We want our technology solutions to be everywhere to facilitate people in their everyday lives," he said.

Byun said the installation of an urban integrated operations centre will allow cybercity officials to consolidate different aspects of municipal management into a single system.

"Administration, transportation, facilities management, and disaster prevention are some examples of the various components that will come under the responsibility of the operations centre," he said.

"Most importantly, the city is designed to be eco-friendly, utilising the most energy efficient technologies and techniques available."

Everyone should be building cybercities like that, added Abraham.