



MEDIA STATEMENT

MONITORING OF NEWS PORTAL COMMENTS SECTION

The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (CMCF) wishes to provide insights on the need for self-regulation of sites or portals that bring various news information to the public.

In general, the fundamental purpose of disseminating news and the content of current affairs in a democratic system is to enable the public to know what is happening and to understand what may affect them as members of the community, so that they may form their own conclusions. As such, news materials should bring accurate, fair and objective content at all times and not manipulated to resulting in irregularities and distortion from its original context.

From the content industry's point of view, this practice has been applied and monitored by the owners of the respective news agencies that verify any news content they carry. Today's technological capabilities have nonetheless allowed interactivity between the portal and the general public by facilitating further discussions of a news item through comments sections enabled to gain insights and opinions once the news is published.

Nevertheless, what was found is that the space is often used as a platform for expressing dissatisfactions, gross comments with the use of abusive or obscene language, of which some have led to personal insults against individuals. These comments are also clearly visible to the public and may incite hatred and public anger where such comments are inflammatory in nature.

It should be noted here that if something is illegal "offline", it is also illegal "online". In this matter, the relevant current laws of the nation applies.

For the information delivery industry, the concept of self-regulation provides an opportunity for freedom of expression to be enjoyed in our country; but this does not mean that it gives freedom from any consequences arising from any bad conduct of some parties. As a lawful country, the rights of all parties are protected and respected without distinguishing the real world and that of the virtual.

Site owners and portal operators are generally responsible for what is contained in their sites and should take note of the credibility of the portal to maintain its reputation as a trusted and accessible site. CMCF is also constantly supporting the development of the electronic content industry that now embraces the public as content providers. This new segment's involvement is expected to contribute to this ecosystem and maintain it positively.

CMCF calls upon website owners as well as their respective social media portal operators to monitor the information provided by applying self-regulatory principles to ensure that any comments, especially from third parties, do not lead to harm due to abuse by irresponsible parties.

In this regard, the CMCF proposes the use of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Content Code as a moderating tool and self-regulatory guidance that is applicable to all. It is available from our website at www.cmcf.my at no cost. At the same time, the public is urged to always adopt high values of politeness and to be mindful and conscientious in the use of social media for their own protection.

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