High-level digital media advisory body to be set up

SPH editorial adviser Cheong Yip Seng will be chairman

By WINSTON CHAI

THE government will rely on a new high-level group to ensure that Singapore does not take in the bad with the good as it embraces the advent of digital media.

The AMIS (Advisory Council on the Impact of New Media on Society) will be formed next month, to study the social, ethical, legal and regulatory impact of interactive and digital media (IDM) technologies.

It is put together by the Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts (MICA).

Chairing the new council is Cheong Yip Seng, former editor-in-chief of the English and Malay newspaper division at Singapore Press Holdings (SPH). He is currently editorial adviser to SPH.

Assisting him as deputy chairman is Tan Cheng Han, dean of the law faculty at the National University of Singapore.

The council comprises 11 others, drawn from a diverse range of industries. They include MediaCorp CEO Lucas Chow, SPH executive vice-president Robin Hu, SingTel CEO Allen Lew and Sinda CEO Manogaran Suppiah.

Besides studying the impact of digital media, the council will also make recommendations to the government on how possible issues can be tackled, according to a MICA statement.

It will report to the IDM steering committee under the ministry.

Plans for AMIS's formation were first unveiled in Parliament earlier this month.

The IDM sector has been earmarked as an emerging growth area for Singapore and has been strongly supported by government bodies like the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore and the Economic Development Board.

In the past few years, these agencies have launched a series of initiatives to attract IDM companies like computer game makers to expand here so as to help build up local capabilities.

The National Research Foundation, on the other hand, has allocated $500 million over the next five years to fund the development of a strategic IDM research programme for Singapore.