Digital literacy needed to complement AI use: Fahmi

PUTRAJAYA: The application of artificial intelligence (AI) technology must be strategically complemented by efforts to strengthen digital and social media literacy, to ensure the country's information ecosystem remains safe, ethical and responsible, said Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil.

He said the rapid advancement of AI should not be viewed in isolation but must go hand in hand with society's capacity to assess, understand and filter information, particularly amid the growing complexity of the digital landscape.

According to him, AI serves as a support system that could help provide early warnings, offer context and detect potential misinformation, but users must also be equipped with a strong level of digital literacy.

"As recipients of information, readers and viewers, what kind of attitudes do we need to adopt, to ensure we are able to distinguish between true and false information? At the very least, there must be guidance. For example, when we drive a car, we still follow the lanes.

"AI also plays a role in sounding the alarm when we are too close to colliding with the vehicle in front. That is why I see the combination of AI, digital and media literacy as something that can be further strengthened. It is a very powerful combination."

Fahmi said the integration of the three elements could help foster a society that is more resilient to information manipulation, slander and digital fraud, thereby reducing the risk of social harm and public confusion.

He added that the government recognises the need to leverage AI as one of the key mechanisms to curb the misuse of the technology, particularly in addressing the spread of false information and fraudulent content across

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digital platforms.

He also said the "fighting AI with AI" approach has long been applied in the field of cybersecurity, including in detecting and countering malicious code (malware) and AI-based malicious software.

"We have to fight AI with AI. In cybersecurity, AI is already being used to combat AI-based malware."

Fahmi added that in the context of journalism and the dissemination of information to the public, AI has significant potential to be harnessed positively, particularly in fact-checking and assessing the validity of claims.

He said the concept of agent-based artificial intelligence, or agentic AI, could assist in verifying or refuting the accuracy of information that spreads rapidly on social media platforms.

As an example, Fahmi said the X platform uses an AI app known as Grok, that allows users to obtain additional context or early verification of viral claims.

"Although it is not perfect, I find it to be a very interesting use of AI for the purpose of news verification." – Bernama