

## Asia's first one-stop ICT HRD Center launched at AIT

**T**he Internet Education and Research Laboratory (intERLab), the first of its kind in Asia, was launched at AIT on December 15, 2003. IntERLab aims to be a regional center for internet human resources development, helping to train and educate people from the Asia-Pacific region, especially from the Greater Mekong Sub-region, in information and communication technology (ICT).

H.E. Dr. Surapong Suebwonglee, Thailand's ICT Minister, presided over the opening ceremony. In attendance were AIT President Prof. Jean-Louis Armand, Prof. Jun Murai, Co-Chair of the intERLab Steering Committee, Prof. Kilnam Chon, Co-Chair of intERLab Steering Committee, high ranking representatives from Japan's Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs,



*Seen at the intERLab inaugural (from left): Dr. John H. Lee, President of Korea Information Strategy Development Institute (KISDI); Dr. Kanchana Kanchanasut; H.E. Dr. Surapong Suebwonglee; AIT President Prof. Jean-Louis Armand; and Prof. Kilnam Chon.*

## Developments

Post and Telecommunications (MPHPT), and distinguished guests from Korea and Thailand.

H.E. Dr. Surapong noted during his opening address that the Internet has had a great impact on people's daily life; it has penetrated every corner of the world and affected each one of us in our daily routine. The technology is developing extremely fast and is becoming one of the key elements in the infrastructure of our society as it moves towards the status of an e-society and our people inevitably become e-citizens. There is therefore an urgent need to produce highly qualified personnel to



*H.E. Dr. Surapong Suebwonglee, delivers the Opening Address.*

innovate, manage, support and maintain the technical deployment even to live in this e-society.

“Educational institutions have played critical roles in producing highly qualified personnel in ICT, and I am very pleased to say that AIT

has been one of the leading institutions in this role for more than 20 years. Having addressed the issue of infrastructure ever since its establishment over 40 years ago, I am pleased to observe that today AIT is addressing a new infrastructure, Information infrastructure,” he said.

Thailand's ICT Ministry is now heading a working group on E-society and ICT Capacity Building for ASEAN, responsibilities lying in the areas of ICT culture promotion and capacity-building. The intERLab's roles are consistent with Thailand's role in the ASEAN community, H.E. Dr. Surapong added.



*Seated from left: Prof. Jun Murai and Prof. Kilnam Chon listen to the Opening Address delivered by H.E. Dr. Surapong Suebwonglee (right).*

“It is therefore most appropriate that we have a reputable international educational institution hosted by Thailand to strengthen our activities in this area. We hope to work together with AIT’s intERLab to co-ordinate ICT related programs, to act in the capacity of a think-tank and repository for intellectual resources and to help shape the ASEAN e-society.”

The intERLab project has been endorsed by Thailand’s ICT Ministry to help enable countries in the region to keep up with rapid developments in the ICT field. The concept of establishing a fixed location for internet human resources



*Prof. Jean-Louis Armand (right), AIT President, and distinguished guests applaud H.E. Dr. Surapong Suebwonglee after cutting the ribbon to mark the intERLab opening.*

development has been discussed and endorsed by leading Asia-Pacific internet organizations and several leading research institutions in Asia-Pacific and Europe.

The intERLab steering committee is co-chaired by Asia-Pacific

Internet pioneers Prof. Kilnam Chon from Korea and Prof. Jun Murai from Japan.

IntERLab will be organized as a laboratory, focusing on three research directions, namely internet technology and engineering and e-learning as well as its social, policy, business and legal aspects. It will provide



*Above: H.E. Dr. Surapong Suebwonglee and distinguished guests listen to Dr. Kanchana Kanchanasut’s briefing on intERLab’s activities. Right: Dr. Kanchana Kanchanasut and H.E. Dr. Surapong Suebwonglee chat in a cheerful mood.*



training programs for existing infrastructure engineers and technologists, enabling them to enhance their networking skills, and will educate policy-makers and government employees on the applications of the internet. The laboratory will also introduce new business practices and their legal implications to lawyers, business practitioners and professionals, update education specialists in e-



*H.E. Dr. Surapong Suebwonglee and distinguished guests tour the facility in the interERLab.*

learning technologies, and raise awareness among social workers on the social impacts of technology.

Dr. Kanchana Kanchanasut, Director of AIT's Distributed

Education Center elaborated: "interERLab will also conduct research on internet-based education and provide its services and expertise to AIT, as well as produce a new breed of engineers/technologists by conducting regular

academic programs in Internet Engineering/Technology in close collaboration with other well-established academic disciplines within AIT and leading international institutions," said.

On December 15-16, 2003, a workshop on Asian Digital Capacity Building was held at the AIT Conference Center. The workshop was attended by key participants from the Asia-Pacific region in human resources development relating to the internet and information and communication technology, to outline a strategy and an operational plan of action for interERLab activities in the coming years.



*Dr. Ko Ikejima and Dr. Ole Pedersen (second and third from left) of AARM/SERD discuss with H.E. Dr. Surapong Suebwonglee about interERLab exciting promise.*