

UMS embraces digital edutourism to go beyond classroom walls

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LABUAN: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) is embracing digital edutourism as a key initiative, one that goes beyond classroom walls, by combining academic learning with technology and real-world exploration, while cultivating soft skills, creativity, and innovation.

The initiative integrates Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), Internet of Things (IoT), and Artificial Intelligence (AI), giving students interactive opportunities to explore historical sites, science centres and cultural heritage virtually.

Labuan Member of Parliament Datuk Dr Suhaili Abd Rahman, who officiated the ICT-Edutourism: Educonnect Beyond Borders – Borneo Edition programme at the UMS Labuan International Campus (UMSKAL) today, said such efforts allow students to connect academic knowledge with real-world experiences and nurture interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

"As an MP, I fully support initiatives that nurture a digitally literate, creative, and globally competitive generation," he said.

UMS vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Kasim Mansor echoed

the sentiment, stressing that edutourism is not just an activity outside the classroom but a bridge between academic knowledge and real-world experience.

"This programme allows students to link theory with practice, appreciate heritage and local treasures, and sharpen their talents in communication, leadership, and critical thinking," he said.

As a Borneo-based university rich in biodiversity and cultural diversity, he said UMS has long pioneered edutourism through experiential learning.

"With digital tools such as VR, AR and AI, students are no longer limited by time or place. A student can examine the marine ecosystem in Labuan through virtual simulation or explore Sabah's ethnic cultures via interactive applications," Dr Kasim said in his speech delivered by UMSKAL director Prof Dr Shamsul Bahari Shamsudin.

Meanwhile, Dean of UMSKAL Faculty of Computing and Informatics (FKI), Assoc Prof Dr Mohd Hanafi Ahmad Hijazi, emphasised edutourism as an important platform to connect education, technology, and the community.

"Through this programme, FKI offers digital expertise, academic support and opportunities for students to apply their knowledge in real contexts. This not only enriches student learning but also adds value to society and supports the government's efforts to strengthen the national digital ecosystem," he said.

The dean also extended gratitude to Universiti Esa Unggul, Indonesia, for co-hosting the regional initiative, Exness Investment Bank Limited (EIBL) for their support, and the Ministry of Digital Malaysia for its trust and guidance.

Participants from Indonesia, Sarawak, and Brunei attended the programme, reflecting a strong regional commitment to advancing education, tourism, and digital technology.

Dr Hanafi expressed hope that the programme would pave the way for deeper partnerships between faculties, ministries, industries, and communities.

"With the synergy of academic expertise and digital innovation, I am confident Malaysia can become a leader in digital edutourism in the region," he added. — Bernama