

Retraining ICT grads on the job

HAVING an information and communications technology (ICT) degree nowadays does not guarantee a job. Companies, especially those in the hi-tech areas, want graduates with specialised skills and who can easily fit into their working culture without much training.

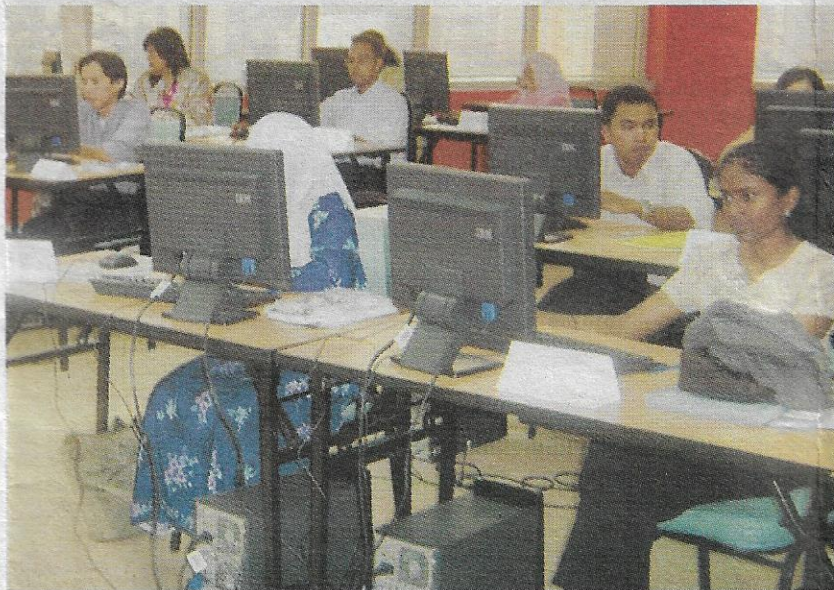
For Jason Chelliah, the difficulty of finding a job after graduating from college has left him with no choice but to take whatever offer that comes his way.

"After I graduated in June last year, I worked at an insurance company's IT department doing IT support work. It was not the type of job I was looking for, but since it was difficult to get a job, I had no choice but to take it," said the computer studies degree holder.

And even though he has a degree in computer studies majoring in programming, he said the courses he had learnt at college are very basic.

"At college, students only have a limited time to learn programming as there are other subjects to learn as well, and this may have contributed to the students' limited knowledge in this area."

For Chelliah, this is one issue that he faces when looking for a job in the programming space. Despite being paid RM1,300 for his IT support work, he believes his future lies in the programming line. So, after three months, he quit and joined a programme sponsored by Multimedia Development Corporation called *Buzznet Mentored On The Job Training Programme*, a move initiated to tackle the problem of ICT graduates not being able to fit well into the industry.



The Mentored On The Job Training Programme aims to tackle the problem of ICT graduates not being able to fit well into the industry.

The programme focuses on Java training and takes six months to complete. Java programming is the focus as it is currently the most sought-after skill in the technology industry.

Another graduate, Ahmad Hafiz Janudin, believes that most ICT graduates fail to get jobs because they lack the programming skills needed by the industry.

"English proficiency is another factor that contributes to the failure. Many of the graduates are unable to speak well in English, and this will affect their performance during job interviews," he said.

By taking part in *Mentored*, Ahmad Hafiz said he managed to expand his knowledge and skills in programming and brush up on his English and presentation skills since trainees

have to interact in English and all the teaching and course materials are in English as well.

For Norzarina Mod Isa, the programme is valuable for graduates who want to refresh their skills and refocus their job target.

"Most graduates have no clue on where to go after graduation, and this has led to many of them working in areas not related to their studies," she pointed out.

Norzarina said part of the course's target is to inform trainees about the paths that need to be taken in software programming and their prospects. "Trainees will also be taught on making presentations in English to cast away their fear of public speaking."

The programme is conducted in a real-life office environment where stu-

dents work on customer applications and are being monitored and advised by mentors, who are industry experts.

"Trainees will get work experience as opposed to classroom training. This will break the 'chicken-and-egg syndrome' many graduates face when companies look for people with real work experience, which new graduates do not have," said Buzznet's founder and chief Sanjoy Bose.

In addition to providing a good understanding of the fundamentals in Java, the programme covers common foundational courses addressing software development lifecycle, database skills orientation and report writing to complement application development learning.

Buzznet is targeting to retrain 140 graduates by July.