Islamic Guidelines on New Media Usage

Excerpts from Friday sermon (30 April 2010) entitled '*New Media And Its Impact on Society*'

As Muslims, we must be an ethical user of the new media, guided by our taqwa to Allah. There are some guidelines that we should follow in using the new media:

First – Ensure and ascertain the authenticity of the news that we have received before forwarding and spreading it to others.

Allah reminds us in surah al-Hujuraat verse 6:

$$\text{يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ إِن جَآءَكُمْ فَاسِقُۢ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوٓا۟ أَن تُصِيبُوا۟ قَوْمًۢا بِجَهَـٰلَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا۟ عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَـٰدِمِينَ ۝}$$

Which means: *"O you who believe! if a fasiq comes to you with a report, look carefully into it, lest you harm a people in ignorance, then be sorry for what you have done."*

Think of the implications of spreading rumours. If the message is untrue, it is a fitnah. And fitnah has extreme repercussions. Will it not hurt those who are implicated? And hurting others is clearly forbidden in Islam and is against the teachings of our Prophet s.a.w.

Second – Adhere to the ethical guidelines of Islam in interacting with others through social networking sites or personal blogs. Do not use harsh or abusive language towards others.

Third – Observe the boundaries in communicating with the opposite gender, as how we would in normal circumstances, as a good Muslim.

Fourth – Ensure that ourselves and family do not engage in unhealthy activities through the new media.

Observe our children from time to time. To do so, we must fully understand what new media is about.

Fifth – Ensure that our activities through the new media do not distract us from our duties and responsibilities, both religious duties, and towards our family.

Do not let these activities distract us from our prayers and all other religious activities. Let us ensure that it does not weaken our family institution, or affect our work. Be a responsible user and benefit from it, not be destroyed by it.