



# Minister praises ICTA for making ICT part and parcel of people



Some highlights at the National Best e-Content award ceremony  
Pix by Nissanka Wijerathne



Participating at the e-Swabhmani 2012 award ceremony held recently, Minister Ranjith Siyambalapatiya commended ICTA for its role in making ICT part and parcel of the people.

Gracing the Award ceremony held at Cinnamon Grand, Colombo as Chief Guest, in spite of a tight schedule, the Minister of Telecommunication and Information Technology stated further as follows:

"Sri Lanka's children or adults will do great things if properly guided. Everyone, child or adult likes appreciation. It boosts everyone's spirit. That is why this e-Swabhmani event that gives recognition to best e-content and e-content developers is so important. Referring to the great importance, the President attaches to ICT as evidenced by the facilities for ICT given through the 2013 budget, the Minister said: Praise from opposition is a rare commodity. But the ICT Agency of Sri Lanka received even that towards the close of the 2013 budget debate.

"Making available a rare commodity plaudit of the Government from, an Opposition MP - he praised the ICTA.. This speaks much and it is an eloquent tribute to ICTA. ICT makes wonders. I had the opportunity to be associated with the setting up of 100 skills centres in schools in Anuradhapura. Before these centres were set up, absenteeism at school by students was very high. But after these centres were set up, children are at these centres working on the computers in these centres even as early as 6.30 a.m."

Participating in the event, ICTA CEO Reshan Dewapura pointed out the role of e-Swabhmani in the e-content industry and the need for concerted effort for delivering a brighter future.

"E-Swabhmani is not only another important and successful step in our journey of taking the benefits of ICT to all our citizens, it has also been the catalyst of the e-content industry in Sri Lanka".

Emphasizing the Government's policy of giving prominence to local talent, Dewapura said: "It is the government's policy to recognise and give prominence to local talent, local skills and local innovations. e-Swabhmani is aimed at doing just that, and we are indeed proud to host this event, firmly establishing the future and the progression of the local e-content industry.

"We conceptualised and launched e-Swabhmani back in 2009, giving opportunity to, and encouraging the local talent and the local skills, to come-up with innovative and pioneering digital content, for the benefit of local target audiences, especially for the benefit of rural communities.

Growth in each year

"Each year the applications and responses have grown significantly, and we have been over-whelmed by them. This is indeed a clear indication that the need for local digital content is now widely recognized and the latent innovative talents of the local developers of 'quality e-content', are rapidly coming to the fore.

International awards and WSA 2013 in Sri Lanka

"Also over the years, we have submitted the winning products of this national contest to the internationally held "World Summit Awards", which is held along the same lines, albeit with competition from across the globe.

"I'm proud to say there have been winners from Sri Lanka in each of the World Summit Award events, performing well above the competition in the region, and sometimes even better than the competition in the rest of the world.

"I'm even prouder, and extremely delighted to announce, that this prestigious international event - The World Summit Awards 2013 - will be held this time in Sri Lanka, in October this year. This is again great testimony to the strides we have taken as a country in the field of 'ICT for Development' and 'e-Content'.

"And I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been part of and contributed to this journey. The government, the ICT Industry, the Academia, the Civil Society, and last but not least our Development Partners like the World Bank, should all take credit for an achievement such as this.

Concerted effort, need of the hour

"At time when we need to intensify our efforts to take the benefits of ICT to the ordinary citizens of our country, and achieve our goals of reaching a Knowledge Hub status, ICT led, pioneering initiatives assume even greater importance, and need to be continued with even greater force, for the foreseeable future. "I would therefore like to conclude by encouraging all of you to embrace and join in this effort of delivering a brighter future for our country."

The following are the institutions / ( persons) which made a mark at the e-Swabhmanit 2012 at three levels - (1) Winner (2) Certificate of Appreciation and (3) Merit under the nine categories. (1). e-Government and Institutions, (2). e-Health and Environment , (3). e-Learning and Education, (4). e-Entertainment and Games , (5). e-Culture and Heritage, (6) e-Science and Technology, (7) e-Business and Commerce, (8). e-Inclusion and Participation , (9). m-Content .

