

Search engine to drive AsiaEP earnings

By LEONG HUNG YEE

hungyee@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: AsiaEP Bhd expects its new business-to-business (B2B) search engine to capture the world market and boost the company's earnings, said managing director Dr Bernard Tan.

"We expect to expand our customer base by 10,000 times with this search engine," Tan said after the B2B ITAH Search Engine launch yesterday.

AsiaEP has a clientele base of about 500,000, comprising mostly manufacturing companies.

According to US-based Jupiter Research, advertisers collectively spent US\$18bil on Google's and Yahoo's search engines last year while a total of US\$7.4bil was spent on search engine marketing in 2005.

Tan said as B2B constituted about 16%, or US\$1.18bil of global ad spending on paid search, there was potential for AsiaEP to grab a slice of the growing search engine advertising market.

"If we manage to grab just 1% of the market, this would translate into a revenue of RM42.6mil," he said, adding that the company had been provid-



Dr Bernard Tan (right) demonstrating the B2B ITAH Search Engine to Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Abdul Rahman (left) and executive director Ayvee Lee (middle) at the launch.

ing an e-marketplace for the last 10 years.

B2B ITAH would be riding on AsiaEP's e-marketplace strength for traffic as it had redirected its existing customers to the new search engine, he said.

Asked if the company had

plans to develop other search engines, Tan said there were such plans but it was premature to disclose the details.

He said the impact from B2B ITAH was expected to filter through in AsiaEP's final quarter ended Feb 28.

Meanwhile, full earnings would be evident from its financial years 2008 and 2009, he added.

AsiaEP posted a net profit of RM3.07mil on turnover of RM7.8mil for the nine months ended Nov 30, 2006.