THRIVING TECHNOLOGY-BASED CULTURE ... Visitors at Unimas' booth take a look at the programmes its students have access to. — NST picture by Rohanis Shukri.

12,000 throng info technology exhibition

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Widespread, user-friendly access to information technology was the prevailing concept among exhibits at the eighth annual ITX'96 exhibition at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Themed "Towards a Knowledge Society — Creating the Environment for Change", the exhibition on information technology drew more than 12,000 professionals, students and families when it opened to the public today after two days allocated for trades people and VIPs.

Among the exhibitors was Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) which featured highlights from its "technology-based information culture".

Besides tutorials and lecturers' notes put on line for students' convenience, the university also gives its students computer classes and access to computers for them to create projects and solve problems at their own pace, said Prof U Kyaw Tin Hla of its Medicine and Health Sciences Faculty.

One attractive feature is the eye-shaped "information kiosk" which provides free information on higher education to students and visitors.

"We will have the first kiosk on campus by the end of January," said Jerry Somboonsarn, financial

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controller of Sarawak Software Limited, which is working with Unimas to develop and set up several kiosks at strategic places around the campus.

"The kiosks will eventually be trilingual — in Bahasa Malaysia, English and Mandarin. It's a new way of dishing out information," she said.

Other exhibits were "telemedicine" booths set up by Remedi Pharmaceuticals and Telekom Malaysia Bhd, featuring technology which enables doctors in different hospitals to exchange information via satellite and fibre optics.

"This brings specialists together with patients, nurses and general practi-

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tioners at remote locations," Remedi Pharmaceuticals business development executive Mark Tan said.

He said the company hoped to provide such links in Sabah and Sarawak.

ITM lecturer Norhayati Ahmad, who came with her two children, aged 10 and 13, and her husband, said she found the exhibition timely and effective.

"My children liked the virtual reality games, but I was very interested in the video-conferencing and telemedicine exhibits," said Norhayati, who heads ITM's Science, Media and Computer Unit.

R. Ganesan, 19, of Che-

ras, said he found the exhibition interesting.

"There was a lot of information on the Internet, virtual reality games and chat-lines," Ganesan said.

Alan Fung, executive director of the Association of the Computer Industry Malaysia, one of the organisers for the exhibition, said it was successful in drawing both quality exhibitors and quality visitors.

"Among the registered exhibitors were Singaporean companies and multinational giants like IBM," he said, adding that many exhibitors brought in partners.

The four-day ITX '96 which ends tomorrow is organised by the National Information Technology Council in association with the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems, the National Institute of Public Administration, the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit, the Malaysian National Computer Confederation and Telekom Malaysia Berhad.

The *New Straits Times* is the official newspaper for the exhibition.

Supporting publications are *Berita Harian's Berita Komputer* and *Sin Che Jit Poh's Cyberworld*.

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