

Tech focus

A dream for Bangladesh

STARTECH DESK

As a versatile technology, the application of computers in education covers a wide spectrum, from simply representing the material in an ebook to expanding the capability of less quality teachers, to capturing the imaginative interest of the students and thus motivating students to learn. Given the disparity in educational quality in rural less developed areas, focused application of computers can be vital for social progress. One of the largest challenges of quality education in rural areas is quality teachers. Unfortunately, the skilled teachers usually choose to stay in the cities. Thus, in rural areas, the students face the lack of skilled teachers, as well as lack of exposure to current technologies, in addition to their many other challenges.

A young, inspired heart, Anwar Hossain, is implementing his vision to create Virtual Teacher (VT) to be provided to the rural areas of Bangladesh. VT is a computer implemented resource that provides explanations of scientific topics, through creative presentation, involving real life example in a way that compensates for the lack of skilled teachers for rural students.

Some of the most common outcomes of the applications of computers in education are:

- Simple animation of concept
- Simulation of Lab Experiment
- Real Life visualization
- Distance learning

All these streams are not applicable or, perhaps not optimal in all geographic areas and social dimensions. As an example, in the simulation of a lab experiment, the student interactively changes the parameters in an abstract experiment to see the outcome. However, in a developing country, where students don't even under-



Still from the animation explaining Newton's Third Law

stand the basic concept, watching computerized graphic abstract objects bounce off of each other at various angles and speed is not effective.

The VT is to provide visualization from a very real life context that connects directly to the rural environment of the students, thus building a base of understanding that is very genuine and within their experiences.

The VT will include the following:

- 3 Use of Text/Audio/Animation /3D visualization for explanation
- 3 Explanation begins with something from real life with which students are familiar
- 3 Provides the resource in multi-channels.
- 3 All the resources are in Local Language
- 3 Step-by-Step explanation
- 3 Interactivity in some cases

In the beginning, the VT will be developed for class IX/X of Bangladesh.

Some benefits include:

- 3 Will make students enjoy learning rather than "Study-for-passing-exam"
- 3 Will make a common "resource availability" standard all over the country
- 3 Will increase students' spontaneous interest in course subjects
- 3 Will make students much more confident with better visualization of the subject matter
- 3 Will require students to study less to understand any topics
- 3 Will minimize the problem of "lack of enough teachers" and also "lack of quality teachers"
- 3 Will make people in rural area familiar with modern technology
- 3 Will serve as complementary teacher to the students
- 3 Teachers will be benefited by

visualizing the topics in multimedia presentation and insightful explanation.

Improve the presentation skill of students, an urgent need for professional life.

The VT dream will enhance nicely the plan of the Government to distribute computers in schools. The usability of any resource like this in school level is surely not currently optimal. Usually computers and technology are presented as show piece and kept almost intact without proper use. Even though there is some coursework currently on the computer, the topics included don't typically utilize the great power of the computer technology.

Once the resource is developed, it will be distributed among all the schools of Bangladesh free of cost and provide a big step to bridge the Digital Divide while enhancing the quality and understanding of the students.

Tech News

Green light for Earth station

BTRC hands over licence to DNS

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

A local company is to construct the country's first satellite earth station.

Telecom watchdog, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) yesterday formally handed over the license to DNS SatComm Limited for establishing the VSAT hub styled as satellite earth station.

BTRC Chairman Syed Marghub Murshed handed over the license to Eng. Rafel Kabir, managing director of the DNS Group in a simple ceremony. Dr. Abdul Moyeen Khan, minister for science and information communication technology (ICT), witnessed the ceremony as the chief guest. Prof. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, vice-chancellor of BRAC University among others attended the function.

The station would cater to domestic and international data communication services.

Banks, other financial institutions, big government and private entities, foreign offices, multinational companies and non-government organisations (NGOs) are to be the probable users of the VSAT Hub.

This would create jobs and overseas data and multimedia communications would be facilitated at a cheaper rate.

It would also create opportunities for low cost solutions for enterprises to have satellite-based domestic or international communications, DNS officials said.

"Hassle free communication between corporate headquarters

and branches would be much easier and cost effective," DNS Managing Director Rafel Kabir said.

He said "There would be huge savings on foreign currencies, as customers would pay locally for satellite communications."

"It will generate scope to earn foreign currencies as well, because the earth station will initially cater services throughout the Asia Pacific rim and the Middle East," he added.

DNS SatComm Limited, a concern of DNS Group, established in 1993, expects to complete the construction of the earth station within the next six months. DNS would then be able to provide a wide range of bandwidth.

U.S satellite communications company Hughes Network System would probably provide the technology and equipment. Moreover, Hong Kong-based Corporate Access (CA) and Singapore based SingTel is also to provide us with technical assistance. Services would be provided through undersea fibre optic cables after the country is connected with the information super highway.

Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB) has signed deals with an international consortium to connect the country with the global information highway through a fibre optic cable network. Atiqul Ahsan, COO of DNS said, the station is to be built on ten acres of land at Gazipur. Foreign investors would substantially invest in the project, he said.

Tech Snaps

'CISCO Network Academy'

On March 16, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and JOBS Project invited 27 instructors, from nine educational institutions, for the first training session of the Cisco Network Academy Programme Instructors, says a press release.

The Cisco Networking Academy Programme is an e-learning programme that provides students with the technology skills that are essential in today's global economy. The Programme is a comprehensive 4-semester/280-hour course that trains students of all ages to design, build, and maintain complex computer networks. More importantly, the Programme prepares students for globally recognised, industry-standard certifications such as the Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA).

Software fair

A software fair and programming contest will be held at the Asian University of Bangladesh on March 30 and 31. Interested students are requested to register by March 29.

Photo Tech



PHOTO: AFP

Prototype of new humanoid robot "SDR-4X II" dances during a press preview in Tokyo on March 27. The 60-centimeter-high entertainment robot can communicate with people, walk and avoid obstacles using special sensors. The new robot will be put on view to the public at the Robodex 2003 from April 3 in Yokohama, suburban Tokyo.

Dr Tech

Dear Dr. Tech,
Like everyone I also get SPAMs every single day. Could you let me know how I can find the domain from the spamming e-mail address so that I can unsubscribe or try to my e-mail address from their list. Hassan

Dear Hassan,
Once someone requested to be added to our mailing list, so I copied their e-mail address and had full intentions of pasting it into the subscription form.

Well, I must have been distracted at the time because I accidentally pasted the address into my web browser address box and hit Enter.

Before I could mutter a profanity, up came the web site for his e-mail domain!

Don't click the address, copy and paste it into your web browser then hit Enter. It will turn into this:

Cool huh?

So, if you ever feel the need to find out where someone is coming from, especially if it's a "SPAM" type e-mail, just copy and paste the e-mail address into your web browser and hit enter.

This is also good if you want to see someone's web site but only have their e-mail address (presuming that they own their own domain).
dailystartech@yahoo.com

Web Tech

New Al Jazeera web site runs into headaches

REUTERS, New York

HACKER attacks and technical glitches caused a string of



headaches on Tuesday for a new English-language Web site launched by Arab satellite TV network Al Jazeera.

The Qatar-based network, already controversial in the West for airing messages from Osama bin Laden, has faced a storm of criticism in the United States for broadcasting Iraqi footage of five U.S. prisoners of war and at least eight corpses.

Its new site (<http://english.aljazeera.net>) went live on Monday, but was

quickly hit by hacker attacks -- as was the Arabic-language site (www.aljazeera.net).

Staff were unable to update the English site for about four hours on Tuesday, said it managing editor Joanne Tucker.

"We've had a lot of obstacles thrown in our way," Tucker said. "I thought the launch of this site would be quite smooth and wouldn't make too many waves, but the reaction has been amazing. It has been almost surreal."

Al Jazeera's information technology manager Salah Al Seddiqui said the company was also told by its Qatar-based vendor that U.S.-based DataPipe could no longer host its site from the end of the month. Al Seddiqui said the company was moving its servers to Europe.

Tucker said war sensitivities may have been behind the decision, but DataPipe said in a statement it was ending its relationship with a company that manages Al Jazeera's site on March 31. It said it had no direct ties with Al Jazeera.

The new English-language site has no multi-media capability but carried photos from the footage showing the U.S. prisoners of war. The

Arabic-language site had the video, prompting a flood of traffic on Sunday.

Lycos cited that video as the factor that made Al Jazeera the most searched term on search engine, generating three times as much search activity as anything else.

The surge traffic badly hit the site's performance. Product manager Roopak Patel of performance tracker Keynote Systems said the

site's performance "went to hell" on March 23.

Tucker said the new site, which for now is devoted exclusively to the war on Iraq, was a temporary operation pending a full launch tentatively set for mid-April.

"Every story on the site now has a byline. It should have been (that way) from the first day but it was just one of the glitches," she said.

Tech Toon



"A lot of girls hang out in the chat rooms. Does our virus software scan for cooties?"

Star Tech Quiz

32

Check the box beside the correct answer

1. What protocol is used on the internet?

- NetBios
- TCP/IP
- NTX
- NetPro

2. What is the rule making body of the web?

- World Wide Web Consortium
- World Wide Web
- World Web Council
- A. World Web Works

3. What does ISA stand for?

- Internet System Act
- Industry Standard Arch
- Internal System Address
- International Standard

Name: _____ Occupation: _____

Address: _____

Contact Number: _____ E-mail: _____

Last week's answers

- 1. Basic Input Output System 2. 4
- 3. False

Winners: Jamee

10/C Shuvetcha Sheikhghat, Sylhet
Please fill this up and send your answers to Star Tech Quiz, The Daily Star, 19 Karwan Bazaar, Dhaka 1215 by April 2, 2003.

Audio in a matchbox



PHOTO: AFP

Employee for Japanese toy giant Takara, Maiko Hasumi, displays the tiny sized IC audio player "Music ChoroQ", shaped like Volkswagen's New Beetle mini-car and weighing only 50g, at the company's headquarters in Tokyo on March 26. The Music ChoroQ has a 64MB stamp-sized Memory Stick Duo memory card and will cost 19,800 yen (165 USD).

Tech Jobs

- Perdana College of Malaysia**
Post: Part-time Faculty Member
Last Date: April 06, 2003
- North South University**
Post: Assistant Professor through Professor
Last Date: April 03, 2003
- Seventh Sense Software**
Post: Scientific Programmers - Computational Quantum Chemistry
Last Date: April 03, 2003
- Technovista**
Post: Software Engineer; Database Programmer; Test Engineer
Last Date: March 31, 2003
- Sansons Corporation**
source: www.bdjobs.com
- Post:** Export-oriented Developers/Designers/Managers
Last Date: March 30, 2003
- Opex Group**
Post: Manager IT & MIS
Last Date: March 30, 2003
- Southtech Limited**
Post: Programmer; Quality Implementer; Implementation Analyst; Database Analyst
Last Date: March 30, 2003
- Cyberview Network & Communication**
Post: Network Support
Last Date: March 31, 2003

Best 10 Websites: Videos and DVD

- Reel.com**
Reel.com, Inc. is the #1 online video seller on the Internet
URL: <http://www.reel.com>
- TimeLife.com**
Shop for Time Life Books, CDs, VHS videos, As Seen on TV products, and clearance items. Titles include Monty Python videos, Paddington videos, and Frank Sinatra CD collections.
URL: <http://www.TimeLife.com>
- Express.com**
Express.com is an online entertainment destination bringing together commerce (including DVD movies, video games and entertainment products), a fully integrated community and diversified unique content.
URL: <http://www.express.com>
- Half.com**
Half.com is the Internet's largest person-to-person, fixed-price marketplace where books, music, movies, DVDs, CDs and games are usually discounted at bargain prices.
URL: <http://www.half.com>
- VIRGIN Megastore**
Video's And More!
URL: <http://www.virginmega.com>
- Videoflicks.com**
The search ends here.
URL: <http://www.videoflicks.com>
- DIGITAL EYES**
Digital Eyes is a leading retailer of high quality DVD products, with a second-to-none reputation for extensive knowledge, fast shipping and first-rate customer service.
URL: <http://www.digitaleyes.net>
- SUNCOAST.com**
Movies, Music, and More!
URL: <http://www.suncoast.com>
- CDconnection.com**
Welcome. You're connected to CDconnection.com. CDconnection.com deals exclusively in the online sale of compact discs, DVDs, and VHS tapes. We have been serving the online community since 1990.
URL: <http://www.cdconnection.com>
- CheckOut.com**
CheckOut.com is the online connection to the worlds of music, movies and games.
URL: <http://www.checkout.com>