

Tech View

Beginning of the end

Doors to shut on MSN chat rooms from mid-October

Saad Bin Fazle Hammadi

MICROSOFT has decided to close the MSN chat rooms from October 14 in Europe, Middle East, Latin America and most of Asia. According to their survey, they have found that at least one out of five children uses the chat rooms regularly. Increasingly, the chat rooms have become very dangerous and harmful for children in their growing age.

Public chat rooms are the safest place for the exploiters to spoil teenagers. These chat rooms have become very popular all over the world. It has also been observed that these chat rooms always see heavy traffic and it becomes difficult for the operators and MSN management to control the lewd subjects and ratings.

"This announcement is a very positive step forward and will help close a major supply line for sex abusers who go to great lengths to gain access to innocent children by grooming them on the internet," said Chris Atkinson, net safety expert, NSPCC.

"All MSN is doing is sending chat room users underground. MSN's one million plus chat room users are not going to stop using chat," said a Freeserve spokesperson.

It is a good decision that MSN has taken to close chat rooms. They are already providing a good service with MSN messenger that is safe and secure. It is a private chat zone which means users can add only those people they know. So there is no interference of unknown people or strangers and also privacy is being maintained.

Other chat rooms should also terminate their process as public chat rooms turn to be harmful and dangerous with virus attacks taking place and moderators failing to supervise them. We must take concern about the society and then think of business.

Agreed Imrul Kayes Chowdhury Ashish, operator, BDFriends.org and director of DataBangla: "The basic idea of internet communications is to share cultures and ideas. And anything that threatens the free space of interaction and simulations should be got rid of. Adult contents and porn hunting should no way be allowed anymore to leave a scar on your children's tender minds."

Towfik Elahi Newaz did not. "It's a ploy of MSN to avoid the inevitable that would have faced it unless they called it quits now. What about hundreds of thousands of x-rated sites and other chat communities such as Yahoo!, ICQ, Paltalk can be accessed to pursue the same elicited ends."



Michael Hoffmann

Tech News

HP to prop up business in Bangladesh

M A HAQUE

HEWLETT Packard (HP), one of the biggest IT hardware producers in the world, foresees bright prospects of their products in the South East Asia region & also in Bangladesh. HP has produced more than 80 digital technology-based products. They will invest \$100 million in South Asia including Bangladesh. They expect a \$119 billion market in no time.

HP's capital will grow to \$1.56 billion by 2006. This has been declared by Michael Hoffmann, senior vice president, Imaging & Printing Group, HP Asia Pacific/Japan at "HP Exprezzo 2003" conference recently held at Peninsula Hotel in Bangkok.

The two-day conference was held to announce the launch of HP consumer strategy, digital imaging & entertainment and was attended by HP Asia Pacific executives and world's top business personalities. Their new products are digital camera, 8-ink photo-printer, PC with new technology, wide-screen technology notebook PC, pocket PC, new wireless notebook PC, new excellent scanner etc. HP is planning to form strong alliance with the world mobile giants such as Nokia to provide mobile technology.

HP is in a good position to lead the digital entertainment arena as it brings simple rewarding technology into the living room. "We are enabling consumers to experience digital entertainment in way never before possible, by easing the process of capture and transforming music, photo and video into digital form. It is about moving technology away from the home office into the living room and allowing consumers to easily bring images, video and music to life, anywhere they want," said See Chin Teik, vice-president, Consumer Desktop Business Unit Group, HP Asia Pacific/Japan.

HP delivers vital technology for business and life. The company's solutions span IT infrastructure, personal computing and excess devices, global service, imaging & printing for consumers enterprises and small & medium business. For the last four quarters HP revenue rose up to \$70.4 billions.

The writer is the assistant editor of Computer Jagat.

Tech Snaps

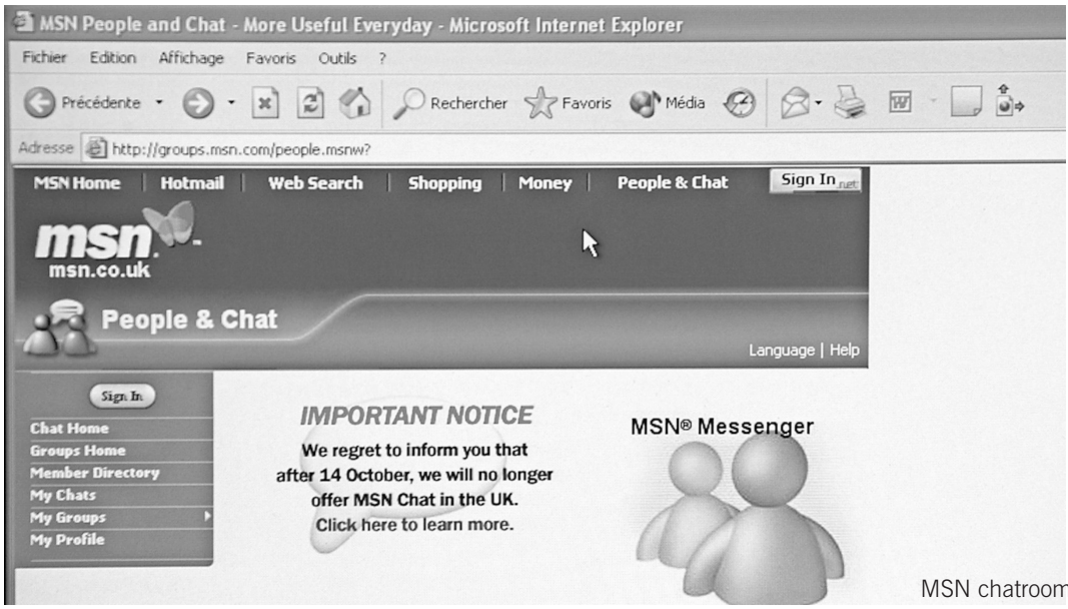
BSCIC's course on "Entrepreneurship Development in IT Sector"

For the skilled IT youths who are willing to start a business in this sector; but have no prior experience, Bangladesh Small & Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) has organised a training course on "Entrepreneurship Development in IT Sector", says a press release. The curriculum of this course is based on international standard modules but adapted specifically to the needs of our country. From this course the entrepreneurs will know about different aspects of IT business and will be able to select a profitable business of his own. He will also be able to prepare his business plan by himself. He will also acquire practical experience of marketing, production, organisation & management and financial aspects of the business.

Minimum qualification: HSC, Course fee 1000/-, Seats available 15 (fifteen), Registration is going on first come first serve basis. For more information one may contact Md Abdul Wadud, Chief Faculty Member, Entrepreneurship Development Faculty, Small & Cottage Industries Training Institute (SCITI), House # 24/A, Road # 13/A, Sector # 6, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka-1230. Phones- 8915353, 8914111, 8911939, 89111969 (PABX) 8913684 (Principal), 8914262 (After office hour).

Oracle consultant visits Bangladesh

Kashif Siddiqui, consultant, e-Business Solutions, Oracle Corporation recently visited Bangladesh on a four-day trip. During the visit he met key IT executives in both private and government sectors to explore possibilities to provide Oracle e-business and e-government solutions.



Digging up the

Mesozoic Age



PHOTO: AFP

This recent handout picture given by the French Museum of Natural History (MNHN) shows scientists looking at bones of "Tazoudasaurus Naimi", a nine-metre long herbivorous sauropt from the middle Jurassic age, discovered recently in Tazpuda, southeastern Morocco. The officially named "Tazoudasaurus Naimi", was discovered by a team of scientists from Morocco, France, Switzerland and the United States.



Star Tech Quiz

59

Check the box beside the correct answer

1. The main computer that stores the files that can be sent to other computers that are networked together

☐ clip art ☐ backup server

☐ peripheral ☐ file server

2. Which of these is NOT a programming language?

☐ Pascal ☐ PL/I

☐ Findler ☐ J

Name:

Occupation:

Address:

Contact Number:

E-mail:

Last week's answers

1. minimise 2. Sholes

Winners: Nishad Kabir

15/6 Andarkilla, Chittagong.

Please fill this up and send your answers to Star Tech Quiz, The Daily Star,

19 Karwan Bazaar, Dhaka 1215 by October 6, 2003.

Spy Tech

E-spying on lover? Better be careful

REUTERS, San Francisco

A company calling itself Lover Spy has begun offering a way for jealous lovers -- and anyone else -- to spy on the computer activity of their mates by sending an electronic greeting, the equivalent of a thinking-of-you card, that doubles as a bugging device.

Computer security experts said the Lover Spy service and software appeared to violate US law, but also said the surveillance programme pointed to an increasingly common way for hackers to seize control of computers.

Marketed as a way to "catch a cheating lover," the Lover Spy company offers to send an e-mail greeting card to lure the victim to a Web site that will download onto the victim's computer a trojan programme to be used for spying.

The Lover Spy software, sold for \$89 for up to five computers, purports to record anything the victim does on the computer, including all keystrokes, passwords, e-mail, chats and screen shots and even turn on the victim's Web camera.

The spy programme discreetly sends the information to the Lover Spy server which then forwards it on to whoever paid for the software, maintaining their anonymity, according to the company Web site, which did not list contact information.

"Lover Spy is being used today by private investigators worldwide, spouses and parents who want to protect their children," the site claims.

"Yikes! That is clearly a wiretapping violation," Chris Hoofnagle, associate director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center, said when told of Lover Spy.

"It sounds a lot like a commercial version of Magic Lantern," the controversial programme the FBI proposed a few years ago to remotely install a keystroke logger onto people under investigation, he said.

Other spyware exists, such as eBlaster from Florida-based SpectorSoft, but it is installed manually and marketed for customers to install on their own computer, Rasch said.

"Typically, you have a husband or wife who puts a keystroke logger on the home PC to monitor what Web pages the spouse is going to and what e-mails they're sending," he said.

However, even installing a spyware programme on your own computer may be illegal if it is recording the data of someone else without their consent, depending on the state in which the spying occurs, Hoofnagle said.

Not only could the Lover Spy company be prosecuted for selling software that enables spying, but the person who pays for the service could face up to 10 years in prison and fines for actual damages under the federal Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, he said.

People should be cautious about allowing Web sites to run unknown code on their PC, he added.

Tech News

HP, ORACLE move to give local ISVs edge

STAR TECH DESK

ON September 23, Hewlett-Packard (HP) and Oracle Singapore announced the launch of a regional network of competency centres, known as Partners Innovative Technology and Solution Centres (PITSTOP), says a press release. Both HP and Oracle will together commit an estimated US\$10 million in products and services over the next three years around South East Asia.

This investment aims to fast-track the development of a strong regional ecosystem made up of robust local communities of Independent Software Vendors (ISVs) and System Integrators (SIs) within the South East Asia infocomms industry. PITSTOP centres will help to strengthen their technology capability, showcase their solutions and gain access to overseas markets.

There will be five PITSTOP centres set up in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand over the next few weeks. HP and Oracle expect this network and its programmes to generate revenue of up to US\$100 million for their partners over a period of five years.

This is the first such initiative in the region. At the core of this initiative, partners of HP and Oracle will be able to use the PITSTOP centres to significantly reduce both costs and time-to-market by facilitating collaboration locally and across geographic borders. PITSTOP centres will also function as a market catalyst to seek out business opportunities for local infocomm enterprises. Local developers can leverage all PITSTOP centres to expand their offshore resources, support their overseas clients, develop cross-border strategic alliances, and penetrate new markets.

"Nearly one-third of the developer community in South East Asia are either partners with HP or Oracle and they constantly look to us for more support. PITSTOP centres around the region enable us to help our partners with our technological and marketing expertise to become more effective and market-focused," said Keith Budge, Regional Managing Director, South Asia Region, Oracle Corp. "In addition, the PITSTOP centres are an important platform for the technology community to create innovative technologies and solutions."

As a 'live' lab for localised product development, all PITSTOP centres will run the full range of Oracle infrastructure software and Oracle E-Business Suite on HP's technology platform. Each PITSTOP centre will provide application developers with a well-supported competency centre that allows partner ISVs to improve their skills, develop applications and demonstrate their solutions.

"Through PITSTOP, we aim to nurture greater entrepreneurship in the local and regional IT com-



PHOTO: AFP

Japan's electronics giant Sony employee Eri Hayakawa displays a skeleton model of the new robot dog 'AIBO ERS-7' during the press preview at the company's showroom in Tokyo on September 26. The new AIBO, weighing 1.6kg, is equipped with 20 joints to make smooth body movements and 576MHz 64bit RISC processor on its CPU. Sony will put it on the market in November with a price of 185,000 yen (1,580 USD).

Best 0 Websites

Category: Security Resources

- SANS

SANS Institute

Practical guide to eliminating the top ten Internet security risks - a must read for systems administrators.

URL: <http://www.sans.org/topten.htm>
- CERT

Top quality service highlighting Internet security vulnerabilities.

URL: <http://www.cert.org/>
- Problems with E-Commerce Security

Revealing article on the realities of online security.

URL: <http://www.wired.com/news/ebiz/0,1272,44690,00.html>
- Server Security

Scary summary of web server security survey.

URL: <http://www.theregister.co.uk/content/6/19373.html>
- The Register
- Cracker Diaries

Inside look at the lives of the cyber crims.

URL: <http://www.zdnet.com/zdnn/stories/news/0,4586,2703351,00.html>
- TakeDown

Detail in story of the infamous cracker Kevin Mitnick & the high tech drama of his stunning detection & capture by the brilliant Tsutomu Shimomura.

URL: <http://www.takedown.com/>
- Hacker Hotel

Report from a fun filled hacker confest - eFawly Towers.

URL: <http://news.cnet.com/news/0-1003-200-5402894.html?tag=tlh>
- Wireless Worries

Mobile hackers "wardriving" through wireless networks.

URL: <http://www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=12406>
- TCP Protocol Fault

Fatal flaws in TCP initial sequence numbers. It's a doozy.

URL: http://www.internetnews.com/wd-news/article/0,,10_170891,00.html
- SNMP Fault

The trillions of hours of human life wasted in updating faulty software code (see below) is nothing compared to what could happen with this one.

URL: http://www.businessweek.com/bwdaily/dnflash/feb2002/nf20020220_5030.htm