

Tech Focus

The next big tech thing

STAR TECH DESK

MANY kids having IT background dream of being high-end programmers -- or at least the ones passing out with a good GPA, but few reach the standard to make considerable contributions to the fledgling gaming industry.

eSopers is one such group comprised of students yet to graduate. Their debut project was much-talked about -- 'DhakaRacing', the first 3D game made in Bangladesh.

One of their upcoming projects is the first person shooter and strategy game called *Bangladesh-71*. One of the developers, Ashik

Noon, said it is the very first strategy game to be completed by end of December. They are hoping to launch the product by next January.

One of the amazing features of this new gaming product is that it enables participation by gamers and enthusiastic individuals about our War of Independence. The developers

are welcoming real life short stories related to the great war for the development of the game. Visitors may submit write-ups using a link at their official website <http://bangladesh-71.games.esopers.com/>. The compilations once judged, finest stories would be selected for the different levels of the

game. The winners will be entitled to a place in the credits section.

This is indeed a great step towards preserving the national heritage.

And this is the very first time a game will be developed using a game engine called *Agni*, which has been developed by the group, said Ruman Zakaria, game programmer and Ali Imran, 3D graphics artist.

The making of the game can be divided into two broad categories -- '3D modelling' and 'Engine development & Game programming', stated Imran and Ruman.

Ashik is leading the 3D modelling team while Imran, Kajol and Rana are working on the character modelling and animation.

As for the Engine development & Game programming, Adnan is leading the team, with Ruman as game programmer and Remon, Zahid and Mishu are working as game engine developers.

eSopers also tagged along with a mate Md. Asif Ali to finish what they call a 'side scrolling platform game' called *Eden Harbour*. This is one of the few mobile (cellular phone) games made in Bangladesh, targeted for the Nokia 60 series sets.

Based on a sub-contract from *Game Mix*, a US-based software company, the picture



slides (sprites) for the game have been supplied from abroad but the coding and final part are being done by the local boys. The

game is expected to hit the market next year. They mentioned that half of the work is already complete.

Another finished product of the group is *Virtual Home Design (VHD)*, a customised modelling software. One of its features include 'interactive 3D walkthrough', which has been specially built for the real estate developers. With the VHD, building demonstration becomes very easy once they supply blueprints to eSopers. The team will design it, depicting a pictorial visual representation of the environment.

Buyers can visualise the virtual 3D design of the rooms along with furniture in it and can actually make a rough sketch of how their future home might look like after construction. It takes less time and at the same time, it is economical. At present, they are waiting for a sponsor to market the product.

This is another step towards an extension of their thought process.

For more details, readers may log on to <http://esopers.com/>.

Tech Snaps



Technohaven launches TelIS

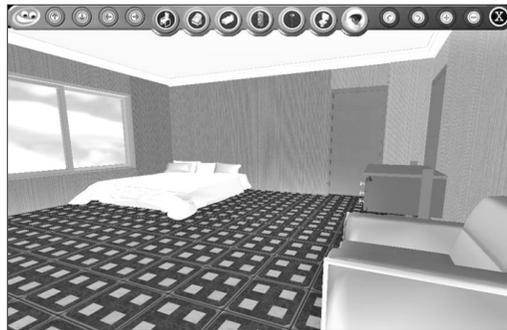
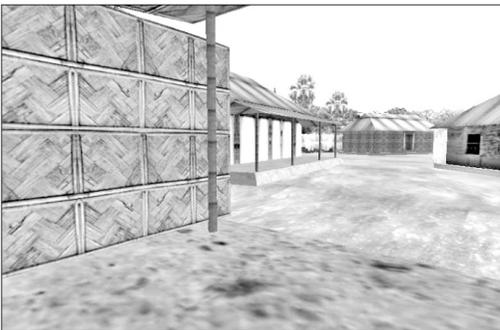
Technohaven Co Ltd, a local software company has launched a leasing software named TelIS (Technohaven Leasing and Investments System) at a local hotel on October 18, says a press release. Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury was present as chief guest, while Matiuur Rahman Mintu, president, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) and A Quadir Chowdhury, chairman, Bangladesh Leasing and Finance Companies Association (BLFCA) were also present as special guest and as guest of honour respectively.

Habibullah N Karim CEO, Technohaven Co Ltd and president, Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) said that TelIS was developed by the local IT professionals and it is much cheaper compared to any similar foreign software.

Photo Tech



Apple Computer Chief Executive Officer Steve Jobs talks with U2 singer Bono using "iChat" software while delivering the keynote address on October 16 in San Francisco. Apple, which shook up the music landscape this year with an online "store" offering song downloads for 99 cents, said it was opening up the service to users of rival Windows-based computers.



Clockwise from top left: Title of the game 'Bangladesh-71', a screenshot from the game, another screenshot based on a village and a glimpse of the VHD.

Fish Bot

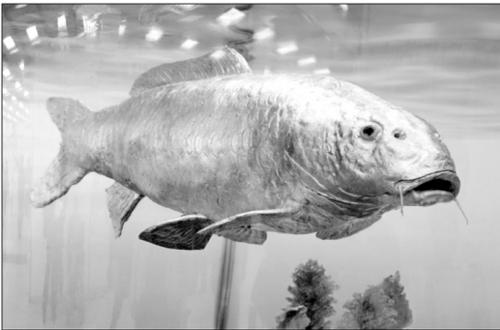


PHOTO: AFP

Japan's machinery giant Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' (MHI) subsidiary Ryoumei Engineering unveils the new fish robot swimming in a fish tank in Tokyo on October 15. The MHI already developed smaller sized sea bream and coelacanth shaped robots in 1999 while they manufactured a golden colored carp shaped robot, 1 meter in length and weighing 17 kilograms, which can swim 0.4 meter per second in the water like a real fish.

Tech News

Now nanotech lets you know how your brain cells chatter

AFP, Paris

FRENCH scientists using an innovative microscopic scanning technique say they have discovered that nerve cells almost buzz with molecular agitation when they communicate with each other.

The work sheds light on how cells operate at the synapse -- the minute gap between neurons, as nerve cells are called.

Neurons communicate by sending chemical signals across the synapse, which then latch on to specific targets, known as receptors, on the membrane of the adjoining cell.

The chemicals activate an electrical signal in that cell, which then sends on a chemical signal to its neighbour, and so on down the line, eventually triggering the desired response or movement in the finger, hand, limb or other organ.

Until now, little was known about receptor movement, and it was thought that these vital "locks" that open to the heart of the cell were largely static.

But nanotechnology, harnessed to a video camera by



PHOTO: AFP

Computer image mapping parts of the brain. French scientists using an innovative microscopic scanning technique say they have discovered that nerve cells almost buzz with molecular agitation when they communicate with each other.

French researchers, shows the receptors to be extraordinarily active and that they even move around dynamically on the

membrane surface. The discovery is important, because it highlights the complex, highly mobile mechanism by

which a receiving cell is able to detect just a single molecule.

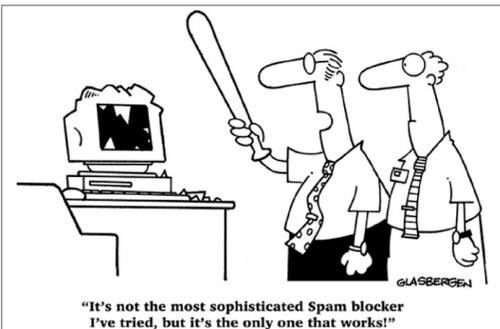
The team, led by Antoine Triller, head of an Inserm unit that specialises in synapse research, and Maxime Dahan, of the Kastler Brossel Laboratory at Paris's Ecole Normale Supérieure, publishes its work in Friday's issue of *Science*, the US scientific weekly.

Their observations were made on spinal cord tissue from rats, and used a probe called quantum dots -- fluorescent semiconductors, with a cadmium-selenium core and a zinc sulphide shell -- to tag receptors for glycine, a key synapse signalling chemical.

The "dots" measure just five to 10 billionths of a metre across, and are just a quarter of the smallest nanoparticle tracers used so far. Those particles, made of gold or latex, range from 40 to 500 billionths of a metre, which means they are too big to reveal the single-molecule properties of living cells.

The movement given by the fluorescing quantum dots was filmed in real time, and for long durations, using a video-microscope.

Tech Toon



"It's not the most sophisticated Spam blocker I've tried, but it's the only one that works!"

Star Tech Quiz

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Check the box beside the correct answer

1. What does the term "wave table synthesis" relate to?

<input type="checkbox"/> memory	<input type="checkbox"/> sound
<input type="checkbox"/> video	<input type="checkbox"/> BIOS
2. What is the name of the spec for the holes in a monitor's spare grill?

<input type="checkbox"/> CRT	<input type="checkbox"/> picture tube
<input type="checkbox"/> dot pitch	<input type="checkbox"/> grill holes

Name: _____ Occupation: _____
Address: _____
Contact Number: _____ E-mail: _____

Last week's answers

1. AGP 2. 133Mhz

Winners: Zahed Khan

Apt No. 1/301, 73 Green Road, Dhaka 1219

Please fill this up and send your answers to Star Tech Quiz, The Daily Star, 19 Karwan Bazaar, Dhaka 1215 by October 27, 2003.

Tech News

HP keeps the SMBs running

STAR TECH DESK

HP outlined its strategy and product and service offerings to further expand on its #1 market position in the Small and Medium Business (SMB) customers in Asia Pacific on October 8, says a press release. To support its goal to grow faster than the market, HP will invest US\$100 million in executing and enhancing its SMB initiatives in the region.

The Asia Pacific strategy announcement is being made in conjunction with HP's worldwide Smart Office SMB initiative, unveiled by HP chairman and chief executive officer Carly Fiorina on Thursday, September 18. "HP is the worldwide leader in this customer segment today

generating more than \$21 billion in global revenue annually and we intend to extend our leadership as the preferred go-to partner and supplier of technology to SMBs," said Carly Fiorina, HP chairman and chief executive officer. "This initiative includes products, technology solutions and partnerships specifically designed to meet the needs of SMB customers and is backed by a \$750 million investment in R&D, marketing, sales programs and services," said Fiorina.

"Elements of the strategy are already in place in Asia Pacific. The global initiative will serve to further strengthen HP's commitment and focus in meeting the needs of this key, growing customer segment,"



Chong Kok Leong speaks at the small and medium business launch event

said Clarence Cho, director, SMB Marketing, HP Asia Pacific and Japan. "By delivering worry-free technology that's easy to own and manage, coupled with a

technology experience that removes complexity, we enable SMBs to better focus on growing their business," said Cho.

Best 10 Websites

Category: Search Engines & Directory Services II

- Open Directory**
The largest "human edited" directory on the web.
URL: <http://www.dmoz.org/>
- ixquick.com**
Spiffy meta engine with quality rankings.
URL: <http://www.ixquick.com/>
- looksmart**
An effective & fast search index.
URL: <http://www.looksmart.com/>
- HotBot**
Large good quality search engine.
URL: <http://www.hotbot.com/>
- Lycos**
Established search service.
URL: <http://www.lycos.com/>
- Netcraft**
Find out what servers are used at any specific website.
URL: <http://www.netcraft.com/>
- Librarians' Resource Centre**
Great toolbox of free databases, technical resources & knowledge management tools.
URL: <http://www.sla.org/chapter/ctor/toolbox/resource/cover.htm>
- Reference.Com**
Search newsgroups, mailing lists & web forums.
URL: <http://www.reference.com/>
- EuroSeek**
Quality European search engine.
URL: <http://www.euroseek.net/>
- excite.**
Renowned search service.
<http://www.excite.com/>