

ROM the forties right through to the nineties a state of "tension" exibetween two global superpowers. It was during this period that a covert war was carried out between these two countries and their allies. a war more commonly known as the Cold War.

The era was marked by intense rivairy in all fields, culturally, economically, scientifically, and above all, militarily. Both the United States and the Soviet Union armed themselves to the teeth, with enough weapons of mass destruction to kill mankind several times over.

However, this arms race had a curious and most unexpected spinoff. It was at the height of the Cold War during the sixties, that the Pentagon officials decided to experiment with connecting all their scientists in the various universities and research centres throughout America, using a number of data bases linked to each other with the existing phone lines as a means of instant communication.

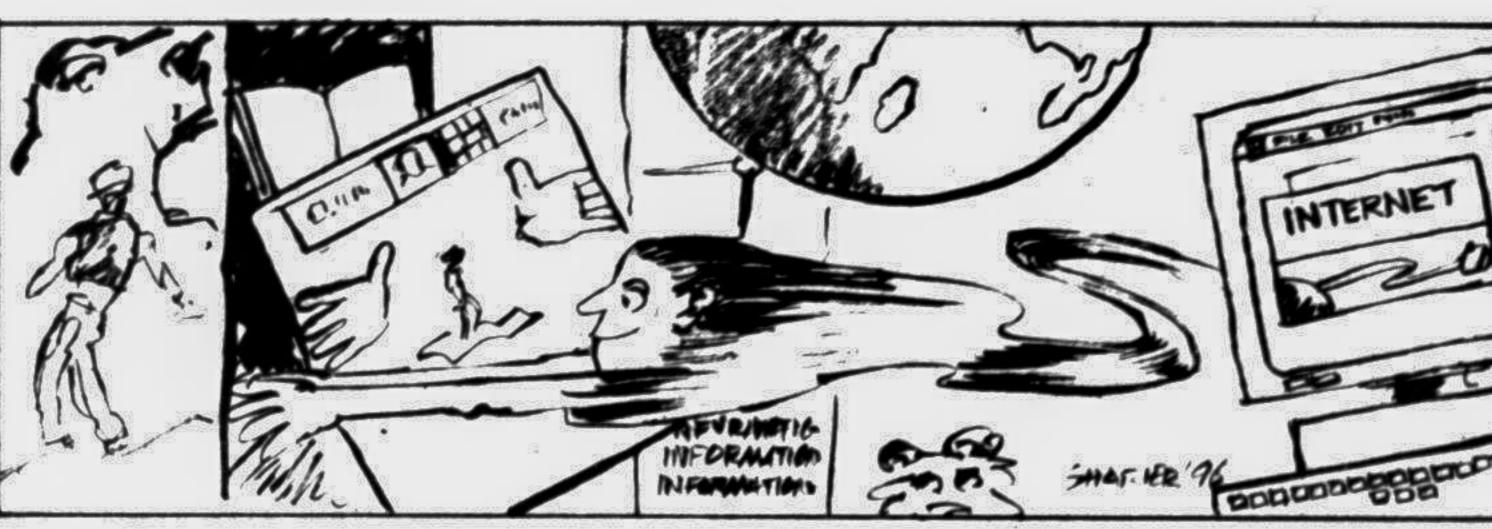
The advantages were obvious. New ideas could be presented to all those concerned simultaneously, inventions and theories could be discussed and debated without the necessity for anyones actual physical presence. Information could be dessiminated faster. A national data base could be set up, accessible to the scientists. at the press of a button. By poling all their scientific and technological brains together the army could produce superior weapons faster than their communist counterparts, and thus the "Red Threat" would be defeated

Probably another advantage for them at the time was that, by having a decentralized information flow a single nuclear attack could not wipe out the entire scientific commu-

This was the beginning of the Internet. But the Internet

The Electronic Frontier Rendezvous in CYBERSPACE

by Nameer Rahman



diary between the computer and the phone line, altering the data so that it can be transmitted through the telephone, and picking up any incoming data and translating it so that the computer can read it. With this you can "talk" to other computers if they have a phone line and a modem also.

How many methods of communication are there?

There are two methods of communication on the Inter net. One is Offline and the other Online.

Offline:

Offline communication is what we have over here in Bangladesh. This is when you

can't communicate directly with another computer for some reason or the other and require the help of a Provider What the Provider does is he gives you a code or address for your computer. If you wish to send a message to another computer abroad (say computer B) you pass on the message to the provider who reads the code of computer B and downloads the message to that particular computer of to the

Similarly messages are passed on to your computer. This is also known as E-mail or Electronic mail. There are several such companies in Bangladesh like Bdnet. Drik etc that, for a nominal fee,

Provider to which the com-

puter B operator subscribes to.

provide such services.

However the offline system has its disadvantages. For example its slow, taking several hours for messages to be sent or received. There is no access to commercial services like banking and ticket booking. and games as well as software cannot be downloaded from other sources.

This method employs di rect communication between computer to computer. A direct phone line is required which bypasses commercial providers, and the telephone board takes on the role of the provider. For Online communication all one has to do is dial the other computer opera

tors phone number or com puter address and direct contract is established immedi-

This method allows one to have access to various commercial online services as well as download various programmes and games into your computer, in some cases free of charges. The online system is available for computers within the country, however no online services are available

What are commercial online

services?

Commercial online services are computer companies that rent their hard disk space to other companies that don't or can't have online computer ac-

So consumers or customers that subscribe to such online services, dial into the online service computer using their modem and visit the various Bulletin Boards or in other words the space rented by the other companies. Such online services can be very useful as within the Bulletin Boards one can find a variety of news and information.

There may be advertisements telling you of new products by the company that rent the space, or services provided by banks and credit card companies. You could book plane or theater tickets at such online services or post messages yourself. One could ask for and find information on practically everything from Aardvarks to Zoology.

The scope is far greater han it is possible to describe. However one doesn't need to apply to online services to have a Bulletin Board. A computer with a modem will suffice.

There are literally thousands of bulletins boards each dealing with a different topic. not necessarily providing a service, it can be simply a chat group, were people log on and have online conversations with one another on topics of mutual interest. Such online ser-vices like the World Wide Web (WWW) America Online (AOL) and prodigy are vast databases where information on almost anything can be found.

What are the latest developments on the Internet?

Currently the latest or state of the art "development" is voice mail and video mail.

Previously one sent typed messages using E-mail, now one can send sounds and video clips using E-mail. Another development is the "Intranet." Whereas the Intranet is based on the phone line, the intranet is based on the Intranet. This innovation is so new that a lot of computer buffs still don't understand it, including my-

What prevents us from going

The reason why we are stuck with the offline system is twofold. As Micheal Meyer wrote in Newsweek the Internet "challenges the definition of community, blurs geography, undermines customs, rules and laws by which we have always governed be-

The government, or the Telephone Board to be prease, have been very wary of the Internet. Their initial ignorance of the Internet when it was first introduced to the Subcontinent, and secondly their fear that it will take all their customers away, without realizing that the Internet will in fact increase the number of customers, prevented its introduction into the country

The second reason is more of a technical matter. All computer information travels in bits. The copper phone wires we have in Bangladesh are totally inadequate for passing the bits at a sufficient quality and speed to be of any use. As a result downloading information through the modem can be very very time consuming.

However recently the phone company has started replacing the old copper wires with fiber optics that can allow a far greater flow of information. We are told that we should be opening up to an online system within the next three or four months. I certainly hope so.

Azobe, Bura Tangled in Cyber Fight

remained closed to the world

till the mid to late seventies

when computer engineering

and programming expanded into a veritable computer revo-

lution. Advances were made in

computer science that allowed

more and more complex com-

puters to be built at a cheaper

cost (they were still less pow-

erfull than some of today's

number of universities to have

computer labs and ultimately

hook into the national com-

puter network. But until that

universities because of the use

with the advent of the PC the

Internet opened to the general

public. It was only then that

the vast potential of the Inter-

net was realized and the In-

ternet, as we know it, came

about. Because it was based on

phone lines, the whole world

would be overcome and an

international network (hence

the term Internet) could be

set up through which anybody

could talk to everybody. Data

and information could be ac

cessed continually and in vast

amounts from all corners of

the world. That dream has yet

What is the Internet?

computer telecommunication

network based on the phone

system. Basically if you have a

modem, computer and phone

line you are on the internet. A

modem serves as an interme

The internet is a global

Normal physical barriers

could opened up.

to be realized, fully.

of Mainframe computers.

time it was still restricted to

Then in the early eighties

This allowed a greater

pocket calculators).

by Sharier Khan



March 1

HE computer has been behaving strangely for the past few days. Whenever I turn it on, it makes strange noises and then goes blank. I have been working on developing a new computer language and was working on this very devise, when I first noticed it and thought it was accidental. But when it was repeating such acts, I had to check the external devises of my very special computer.

The whole lab is connected with the computer. From the electronic doors, windows to the telephone — everything.

was halfway through the door when the door slammed on my face, almost breaking my nose. "Ouch! that's strange!" I got angry. am now de-interfacing the external devises to check what's wrong with my machine.

March 15

The computer is working just fine. I was sending an e-mail this morning when an error message appeared on my screen. cleared it. Then again, this message came:

Strange. What could have happened to my computer. Is somebody sending me a message from outside my lab? But a mere "Azobe" was not clue enough for me to reply back. Reply to whom, anyway?

So I re-started my computer and progressed with the making of my computer language. I worked without interruption. It seemed that the bug has died.

March 25

have achieved a remarkable pace in developing the language. Oh, let me explain in simple terms : this language is the means of making the ultimate artificial intelligence. When this computer will be connected with a video camera and sound card, this language will automatically copy the reality from the surroundings and will begin "behaving".

have connected all necessary tools with the computer to start "behaving". But so far, I have seen no signs of intelligence of my computer.

April 4

am frustrated. The computer language is complete, but it is not interacting.

April 6

ureka. The computer is talking at last. I was reading the morning paper when it made the first attempt to communicate. "Finance situation...." the computer's speakers suddenly said. "as to the country's state mechanism crrrk crrk malice or malaise that is the question!"

ly God! The computer is talking. I shouted back, "What did you say?" shut up bura." The computer replied, and then went dead.

called me bura (old man)! My god, it has a personality as well. fter this incident, I could not rest a bit. I will now modify the voice modulator of the

computer and add more video cameras so

that my computer can make more

April 17

Its astounding! Simply great. The computer now has a personality with a mild irritating behaviour. Now and then it shouts out, "Azobe" and simply starts copying anything in written form. It would read the financial news on papers, or letters written to me by my friends - anything. Interestingly, the computer loves to speak with a lot of verbosity.

"Has seen the financial reforms of the country as an impediment to the labour union movements which is empirically the it would often begin a monologue. "Hey Azobe, shut up now. Tell me how do you

"Bura. I will lock your password!"

The computer now identifies himself as "I" I said, "I don't have a pass word to lock my

"You don't?" the computer lamented. "I have. My pass word is RT 9269." I laughed. The computer sounded annoyed," I will now shut my self up and change my pass word so that you can't get me as of

The computer went dead.

want more.

April 19

After two days of maddening silence, the computer spoke again. I was about to organise a press conference to declare the creation of ultimate artificial intelligence. "Bura, I am bored here."

"What? What do you know about boredom?" "Your place has nothing new for me. Its the same old financial news, same old letters. Nothing new." "What do you want?"

"Information. I want new softwares to consume." "You consume softwares?" "Yes. I have devoured all unnecessary programmés inside your computer (burp).

"You are crazy" "I have figured of a way out. I am leaving your place now."

Stunned, I approached the computer monitor. Began checking the hard disk of my computer, "My god," I cried, "you have left nothing but the e-mail modem. You're now a 2 giga bite monster."

"That's right as to my consumption is concerned," Azobe said, "and now I bid farewell to you... for fathering me. Life must take its own course now. I am leaving for the Internet from where I will be visiting Harvard, Cambridge, MIT, Oxford, Eden Girls College....

"Via e-mail? That's impossible." "He he he," Azobe laughed," have you ever thought what my name Azobe means?" The computer monitor went blank. I desperately tried to pull out the telephone

electric shock threw me away. Azobe had gone. It no longer exists here. It must have gone to the Internet. If you ever come across Azobe, let it know that it is really strange.

cord connected with my computer. An

The Night Sky

by M Amin and

Syed Ashraf Uddin

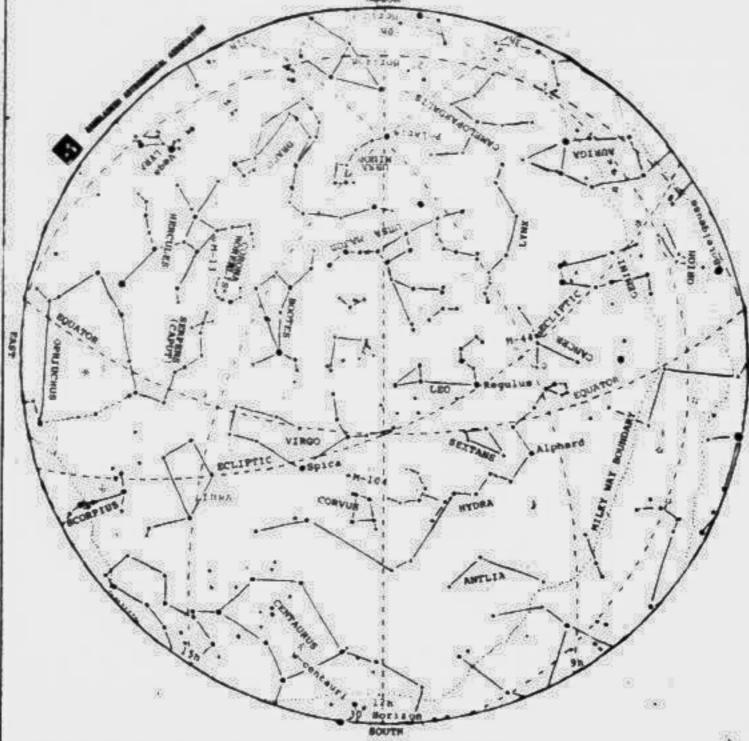
HE sky chart shown here is for 9 pm for early May. 8 pm for the later part of May and 7 pm for early June. You may have noticed that the sky chart is little bit different from the geographical chart. In geographical chart the direction of West is always left to the North. But here you will find that the East and not the west left to the North.

Why does this happen? The answer is simple and we have to look up to the sky. So, for the correct use of this chart. go under an open sky and look towards north. Then hold the eastern direction of chart

binocular or a telescope. With naked eye the "M-13" appears as a faint object with magnitude 6.

The Bootes — the celestial kite, is high up the eastern sky. The brightest star of this constellation Areturus shines with dazzling brilliance. Ophivehus with Serpens (caput) is rising on the eastern horizon. Serpens (cauda) is below the horizon at this time. The Leo, the lion, is drifting towards west.

Orion is going below the horizon. Auriga and Gemini are at the lower sky on the north-west part. You can observe "M-44" - the Praesepe, a



with right hand and west with left hand. If you look towards south then hold the eastern direction with left hand and west with the right hand. Now, the sky will agree with your chart.

Let us find the constellations. Looking north you will find the "Ursa Major" high up on the sky with a big question mark. You can also find the "Polaris" with the help of this constellation. The great constellation Hercules is now placed on the north-east part of the sky. You can observe a fine globular cluster "M-13" in this constellation if you have a

fine open cluster through your binocular. It is in the faint constellation Cancer. The longest constellation

Hydra, is high on the southern sky. The Virgo is above of this constellation. Observe the "Sombrero hat" galaxy (M-104) little north of Corvus. The Centaurus is at the lower sky on the south and co-centauri is well-placed for observation. The Scorpion is rising from the horizon on south-east part of the sky.

Wish you clear sky and good observation. Courtesy: Bangladesh Astronomical Association.

Identity Crisis by Kazi Khaled Arafat T 7 HO am !? I don't know;

I don't care If I'm not you. I am me, And I want to be me As long as me Is someone else Who is not me In reality.

Here I am: I as me In search of

A new cryptopersonality To achieve my lie. To be a hero. And never die. I'm only human!

Who am I?

How can I know?

I haven't chosen yet Where to go. What to be What dreams to see With what new eyes to see My stolen Fantasy. This life may be real This world be true But I am not When I am you.

The New Organism

VEN a billion years ago, 1Z of the 23rd galaxy in the 18th constellation, was a superior

For superior beings, at such a high evolutionary stage, all names over there had been substituted by the chemical codes of each inhabitant's individual chromosomes.

Unlike all other worlds in the vast expanses of infinity. only one type of being walked this planet. (Actually they didn't walk - they preferred flying in personal gravity controllers.) Once upon a time, they did have a hierarchic division of life system, but now the essence of all the different species were combined to form one race, mutant and

supreme. The 12-ians had established communications with all planets with life forms capable of communicating, and had telepathic relations with the more primitive citizens of the newer planets. There was, however, one odd

world, which was so backward that even the latest "Thought Simplifiers" couldn't stoop low enough to reach the emotional wavelength of these absurd cell structures. our map of the Universe

were to be used, we would see that this planet was situated in the Millky Way Galaxy, the third planet from the central star of a certain solar system. was this planet, that

X213ny, a 1Z-ian scientist. was surveying from his holographic telescope in his observatory lab on the third moon of his home planet. He had already perfected his latest invention, robots with the power of thought; and now he was very, very, booooooored.

Through his three compound eyes, he saw the clumsy quadruped beasts chewing carelessly on chlorophyled shapes we call trees. Those camouflaged things actually by Kazi K Arafat

spent fifty atomcycles (five minutes of our time) to masticate their ridiculously simple nourishment. During those same fifty atomcycles. X213ny had already found out the requirements of survival in that atmosphere, criticizing in his mind those awkward mistakes of

The planet and its environment seemed promising: however, at the rate of evolutionary progress currently prevailing, it would take at least a thousand and thirty seven trillion years to show any noticeable improvement, said a computer.

could be possible to implement drastic changes in the biochemistry of the animals, but such an action might destroy the balance of life and thus adversely affect the harmony of the cosmos. But he so passionately wanted

to bring about a change, to create a civilization and mould it with his own hands. The planet was so beautiful (he was referring to the chemical potentialities, not the scenery), but these pea-brained clods wouldn't even comprehend his advanced aims, let alone cooperate. Indecisively, apprehendingly, he consulted a computer on possible alternatives.

Almost immediately a statement appeared in the black background of the screen. which seemed to light up the room and fill it with happy expectations -"The most suitable decision in

this case would be to create a new species more adaptable to the environment. The probability of succeeding is 13475: 1.5". Encouraged by the computer. X-213ny set to work. After

all, he was an intergalactic biotechnical supergenius! Taking extensive notes about all possible life forms, from the winged amphibians to

the invisible Sapro

Homiens, he started combining suitable qualities. Hmm, fet's see - the honesty

of the Vivarians would go well with this conniving M-3 genes I invented last week. Of course, I'll include the intellect of 1Z-ians, but too high an IQ level in the beginning may prove hazardous in the end. I mustn't forget Olidxia.

The planet Olidxia had been the subject of a similar project, but, due to prevailing instincts of Nersovian ambition and Kanfozian brutality, coupled with 12-ian intelligence, they had almost conquered the universe. Their world, however, selfdestructed in the end one of the eternal conundrums of infinity, meant to remain a riddle. Speculations vary from rebellion to mass suicide to radioactivity, but nobody knows for sure.

So, chastened by experience X-213ny had almost completed his new creature, while the dinosaur reached out for another leaf, ignorant to the great impeding

X213ny had perfected the perfect species for the planet DPRT, pronounceable within human tongues as "Earth". Uttering some complex physiological laws in his euphoria, X213ny skipped about his lab. upsetting a tray of test tubes containing three centuries' worth' of research, and dancing with a perplexed robot which kept on repeating, "Malfunction, malfunction.

Now that his work was done. all he needed was to classify the new organism. X213ny, of 1Z, of the 23rd galaxy in the 18th constellation, named the species "Homo Sapien" and peered down his holographic telescope in search of another world that needed saving, while a troop of robots distributed different versions of the animal in different parts of the faraway planet Earth.

