Tech Focus

Dhaka's tech bazaar

PC hardware stores in the city

NAFID IMRAN AHMED

WHERE will you go if your PC needs a soundcard replacement? One way is to call up the dealer and get it replaced. But you have to pay extra and if the card doesn't suit you, you are in for a big loss. Don't worry though. There is an easier way. Do it yourself.

Although most people disagree, PC hardware is very simple and not at all complicated for the normal user. Minor replacements, troubleshooting and upgrading can be done easily at home. There are a few components in a PC. One needs to identify each and know their functions. Most CPUs of a home PC has a motherboard, processor, RAM, hard disk, video or graphics card, soundcard, floppy disk drive, CDROM and a casing with a power supply unit. Every component has its own manual. The trick is to know where to find what.

One of the major boosts for information technology boost came from computer hardware accessories. The fight is against time and space to fulfil our need for speed and memory. It seems the hardware market is moving at the speed of light. Every other day new chips with super speed and devices with massive storage space are flooding the markets. They are also making everyone confused, what to buy and what not.

In the capital, very few computer hardware stores started their business in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Back then these stores were dealing with PC systems and were not into selling hardware accessories. But the boost in 1990 changed the total scene. Computer markets were established instead of individual scattered stores.

The City Super Market was established in 1990 at the Elephant Road having 20-25 stores dealing with computer hardware accessories and systems. But the scene changed in 1998. The expansion of the IT industry made the market very popular and the number of stores increased. Now there are about 200 stores in the market and in its wings. One can find almost any kind of hardware accessories from new to old in their verities in this market. Prices do not vary from store to store. They have a marginal

So many to chose from: Hardware store at City Super Market
PHOTO: STAR

profit margin. This is also a very good place to search for parts for older PCs.

The City Super Market's success introduced new markets in the city. Alpona Plaza at the Elephant Road and Nahar Plaza at Hatirpool also became popular computer markets. These stores are similar to the ones at the City Super Market.

The hardware market really changed when the BCS Computer City started off in 1999 at the IDB Bhaban in Agargaon. With its unique and modern environment it became an ideal place for computer shoppers. The annual BCS Computer Show has also made the place very popular. Many branded shops such as Flora, Daffodil, Imart, Computer Source, etc. have opened their outlets at the Computer City. One will find a wide range of hardware accessories and software here plus they can buy the product directly from local dealers.

There are also many scattered shops in the city. Popular shops such as Superior Electronics, Flora Limited, Daffodil, Tech Valley, Spectrum Consortium etc. have their individual stores and many branches in the city. Some of these stores specialise in particular areas. For example, JAN Associates in Dhanmondi are the local dealers for Canon Printers, Tech Valley are local dealers for 3COM Network products, Flora are the local agents for HP and Epson and Eastern Plaza's 3rd floor is a paradise for software, games and music CDs.

Most people in our country cannot afford a brand system. Clone PCs also have a wide range of hardware options and you have to decide which one you want. Buying the individual parts you can build your own computer at home.
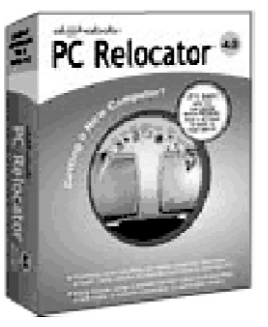

Hardware accessories stores at Alpona Plaza
PHOTO: STAR

New Tech

Alohabob PC Relocator 4.0

MOVING your data to a new computer shouldn't be as traumatic as emigrating to Antarctica. But all too often, it is. A dropped Registry setting here, a lost DLL there, and suddenly, an old app you really need won't run on your new PC. Alohabob PC Relocator 4.0 eases the migration process by analyzing your original configuration and relocating selected files, specific programs, or the entire contents of your drive over a serial cable to a new PC. Don't expect speed with this enhanced efficiency, however, because PC Relocator 4.0 doesn't include a USB cable.

The good: Quick installation; excellent help system and tech support; transfers just the files you want; walks you through the transfer process; works with Windows 95 through XP. **The bad:** Slow trans-

fers with enclosed parallel-port cable; no USB cable provided. The bottom line: PC Relocator is a well-designed app that removes much of the risk and relieves the irritation involved with moving files and apps between computers.

Dr. Tech

Dear Dr. Tech,
How can I get rid of unwanted programmes from my windows? Please give me a solution.

- Riad

Dear Riad,
The following steps might help you get rid of the unwanted programmes:
1. The first thing to do is click the Start menu, Programs. Then hunt for the program you want to delete. Oftentimes, you'll find an Uninstall program under it's program group.
2. Another way would be to click the Start button, Settings, Control Panel. Then open the Add/Remove programs icon. You'll see a list of programs that Windows can remove from your system. Just click the one you would like to remove and hit the OK button.
3. If neither of the above work,

you can always go to the program's folder and delete it. However, there is no guarantee that the program was confined to that folder. It could have other files distributed throughout your computer.
4. Finally, you might consider a program like Clean Sweep. Once installed, it watches which program files go where and can remove unneeded files for you.

Keep in mind that some of the files that get placed on your hard drive when you install a program are basically updates to some of your existing files. So if you are uninstalling something and get a message saying not all the files from a program could be removed, it may be due to the fact that other programs also use these files.

dailystartech@yahoo. com

Star Tech Quiz

Check the box beside the correct answer

1. Which of the following is not a mouse technology?
- [ ] Mechanical
- [ ] Optical
- [ ] Motorized
- [ ] Optical-Mechanical

2. Which of the following is not a programming language?
- [ ] Lisp
- [ ] Java
- [ ] See
- [ ] Perl

3. Which of the following is a broadband Internet connection?
- [ ] 28.8k
- [ ] 56k
- [ ] Modem
- [ ] Cable

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

Last week's answers
1. Internet Relay Chat 2. MS-DOS 6.22 3. DOS
Winner: Imrul Kayes Chowdhury
25 Elephant Road (1st floor), Dhaka 1205

Please fill this up and send your answers to Star Tech Quiz, The Daily Star, 19 Karwan Bazaar, Dhaka 1215 by August 6, 2002.

Tech News

A new name in tech education

The launching of IT dot-One Ltd

STAR TECH DESK

THE fall of the financial market effected the IT industries throughout the world over the last few years. It was passing through a dull period. But things are about to change. The global information technology movement is pacing up once again. New companies are entering the business and creating opportunities for the technical people.

The inauguration of a newly found education service provider IT dot-One Limited was held on July 27 at the Winter Garden of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Dr. Abdul Moyeen Khan, Minster for Science, Information and Communication Technology officially inaugurated the company as chief guest while Dr. M Osman Farruk, Minister for Education was also present as special guest.

IT dot-One will be providing vendor certification education and wishes to develop IT professionals in the country. The company emphasizes on focused IT career development by following the defined tracks that have been devised by the global technology giants, like, Sun Microsystems, Novell, Microsoft, CompTIA, CIW etc. Through a press release the company stated that they have already started the process for absolute adherence, in terms of infrastructure development, resource mobilization and development, attainment of direct partnerships and quality assurance.

Considering the present scenario IT dot-One wishes to put the highest priority in the focused knowledge and skill development areas. In order to provide the authorized education curriculam of the global technology giants, IT dot-One has direct education partnership with: Sun Microsystems as Authorized Sun Education Center (ASEC), Novell as Novell Authorized Education Center (NAEC), Microsoft Corporation as Microsoft Certified Partner (MCP), and currently progressing towards becoming Certified Technical Education Center (CTEC), CompTIA as Corporate Education Partner, Microsoft Office User Specialist (MOUS) as an authorized Distributor and CIW as CIW Authorized Training Provider (CIWATP).

IT dot-One's education center, equipped with latest technology tools, Independent Class Rooms, Computer Labs, Network Labs and qualified/certified faculty is located in Motijheel Commercial Area. The company is committed to develop skilled IT resources for local and overseas markets.

The company also intends to provide various other knowledge-based services to the local community. They are: Business Consultancy Services, Application Services, Networking Services. The company aims to provide these services with the highly skilled pool of resources that it has so far mobilized for its primary venture IT education.

Bio Tech

Can computers fly on the wings of a chicken?

LOUIS JACOBSON

In late June, a chemical engineer from the University of Delaware filed a patent that described a new generation of microchips. The patent proposes to replace silicon which has long served as the basis for microchips with another material. And what might this mystery component be?

Chicken feathers.

Richard Wool understands that non-specialists will find this strange. But he's used to it. Wool and his colleagues at the university's ACRES project (Affordable Composites from Renewable Sources) have been developing new uses for plant fibers, oils and resins. Using such raw materials as the humble soybean, Wool and his colleagues are designing prototypes for everything from simple adhesives to hurricane-proof roofs.

The idea of using natural and waste materials in other ways is not new. Henry Ford grew soybeans around his Dearborn, Mich, headquarters, Wool notes, to find a variety he could use to fabricate auto parts. But when World War II broke out, the work was shelved.

In recent years, environmental concerns have spurred broad efforts to use waste materials, said Brian Love, and associate professor of materials science and engineering at Virginia Tech. These efforts have been bolstered by advances in such fields as engineering, materials science, biotechnology and genetic engineering.

Wool's approach is unusual, said Peter Preuss, a plant physiologist and biochemist who directs the EPA's National Center for Environmental Research one of the agencies that has funded Wool's work. Unlike many other researchers who start with a waste product and then decide what it might be used for, Preuss said, Wool looks at existing products and tries to find a waste product or any easy-to-grow crop that could be used to fabricate it.

"This is going to lead to sustainable technologies that are very

environmentally friendly, "Wool said. "They can help ease the global warming situation in at least two ways. Growing the plants will suck carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, and reducing the amount of petrochemicals that need to be burned will mean less atmospheric carbon in the first place."

Moreover, Wool said, his raw materials soybeans, olives, flax can be grown easily and cheaply. And by substituting for petroleum-based plastics, renewable products could reduce the nation's dependence on foreign and domestic oil.

The chicken-feather microchip is not as weird as it sounds. A microchip is basically a wafer of silicon inscribed with a dense maze of transistors. For the chip to do its computational magic, electric signals have to travel across these transistors.

These signals travel faster in the presence of some materials than others. Air, for instance, allows the fastest movement of all, because it provides essentially no resistance. When traveling near solids, however, the movement tends to kick up opposing positive charges. These charges can distract the signal from completing its appointed rounds.

Though these signals move more slowly in the presence of silicon than they do in air, silicon offers less resistance then many other materials do. That's why it has been used in microchips for so long. But engineers are always looking for ways to turbocharge their chips. Historically, they have been able to do this by inscribing more transistors into ever-tiner spaces. But some worry that a physical limit may be approaching.

One possible alternative for increasing a chip's speed is finding a quicker material than silicon.
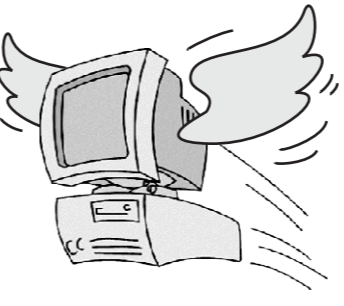
So Wool turned to the chicken feather. He knew that feathers contain lots of air; because birds need to fly, their feathers are strong but light, mainly due to their high air content. Perhaps, Wool figured, the presence of air would make electrons travel

faster.

Wool's team took chicken feathers and plant oils and molded them into a composite material that approximates the shape and feel of silicon. When the researchers tested it for speed, they found that the composite allowed movement at about twice the rate of silicon. Though that's still slower that the speed in air, Wool said, "I was jumping up and down."

Energy Department chemical engineer Mark Paster noted that Wool's results are "preliminary" and "a long way from going commercial." But he added that "if they hold up, they are very intriguing."

Wool acknowledged that the future of the chicken-feather chip technology is very much a "wild

card." Not only would be microchip industry have to change its production methods, but other alternatives may also exist. Wool said researchers have been trying to introduce "micro-bubbles" into silicon to achieve the same effect as his chicken feathers. Wool speculates that those bubbles "should work fine maybe as well as our own composite does."

Even if the chicken-feather chips don't catch on Wool has lots of other ideas. About five years ago, his team began to develop a soybean-based composite for use in John Deere harvesters. Deere & Co made its first prototypes three years ago and began full-blown production last year. Wool is also working with a carmaker he won't name which one to replace petroleum-

based components, such as those made of plastic, with renewable materials. In a similar vein, he's collaborating with Tyson Foods Inc. to make renewable-based replacement parts for the company's fleet of 3,000 Mack trucks. In an effort to use ""very part of the bird," Tyson is working with a number of scientists, including Wool, to develop alternative products made from chicken feathers, said spokesman Bary Griffith.

Vehicle parts are a natural focus for such research, Wool said. "The greatest thing for a truck or a car from an environmental point of view is to make it lightweight, because you'll make a significant impact on fuel consumption," he said. "You wouldn't build a truck out of feathers it sounds outrageous but you could build non-load-bearing parts from them. You'd even get great sound damping."

Historically, the market for alternative technologies has been something of a Catch-22. A new product's price tag inevitably drops as production levels increase -- but those production levels can be hard to achieve early on, when market prices are relatively high. For the moment, "green" marketing is helping Wool sell the idea to early adapters such as Deere and Tyson.

But Wool said he knows that full utilization will require more than that. Corporate manufacturing processes tend to be static, because managers prefer to stick with techniques they know well, rather than chance it with new methods. EPA's Preuss added that creating an infrastructure to collect waste or biomass materials has sometimes proved costly.

"In the end the only thing private industry is interested in is making money, so the question is whether systems he's developing will be cost-competitive with the systems they're replacing," said the Energy Department's Paster. "The answer, we believe, is that there's a very good chance. That's why we're funding his work."

Source: Internet

Tech Toon

"This computer is equipped with an airbag in case you fall asleep!"

Tech Fair

Young visitors try laptops on display at an IT exhibition being held 26 July 2002 in Ho Chi Minh-City. Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai signed last week a plan to raise the country's information technology infrastructure up to the level of other tech-savvy Southeast Asian nations by 2005.
PHOTO: AFP

Tech News Snaps

SB to introduce Internet banking in Sylhet

Sonali Bank (SB) is going to introduce Internet banking system in five upazilas of greater Sylhet from this month to facilitate the expatriate Bangladeshis to send their remittances quickly.

The bank will go for the new system in its branches in Balaganj, Biswanath, Bianibazar of Sylhet, Nabiganj of Habiganj and Jagannathpur upazila of Sunamganj districts as most of the expatriates are from these areas. Earlier, the bank, responding to the demand of expatriate people, introduced the system in Dargagate branch in the town and Moulvibazar branch.

The government has introduced the Internet banking system in the country this year to check money laundering through hundi business and ensure speedy dispatch of money of the expatriate Bangladeshis to their relatives. In Britain the government converted the Sonali Exchange in Britain into a full-fledged bank.
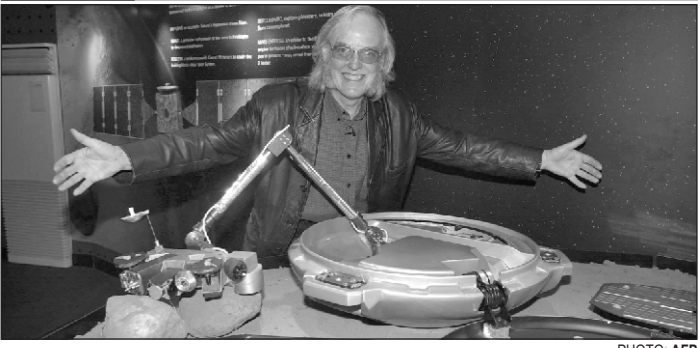
Advanced training for district Data Entry Operators

BASE Limited has started providing advanced training for district data entry operators of Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) under Primary and Mass Education Division. The Effective Schools Through Enhanced Education Management (ESTEEM) Project has sponsored the training programme.

The training for the first batch comprising of participants from 16 districts started on July 18 and ended on July 27. Upon successful completion of the training for this batch, a certificate awarding ceremony was organized at BASE Limited on the concluding day.

Mr. A. K. Mirza Mohammad Shahidul Islam, Director, Directorate of Primary Education was present as the chief guest; while Mr. Nick Santcross, Team Leader of the ESTEEM Project and Mr. Md. Mustafa Kamal, Deputy Project Manager of the ESTEEM Project were present as the special guests to distribute the certificate among the participants. The ceremony was chaired by Mr. B. N. Adhikary, Director of BASE Limited.

Photo Tech

Colin Pillinger, Open University professor of astronomy at the Farnborough Air Show, 23 July 2002, with the Beagle 2 landing craft that will be launched from a spacecraft orbiting the planet in 2003 as part of a 4 billion British pound (6.26 billion euro) European Space Agency project.
PHOTO: AFP

Best 10 Websites
Category: Travel & Vacation