Portal Tech

Desi portals put info at your fingertips

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WEB portals offer a broad array of resources and services, such as e-mail, search engines and on-line shopping facilities. One of the first web portals was that of America on-line, the giant access provider.

A number of large access providers now offer portals for their own users. Companies with portal sites have attracted the investors because of the large number of visitors they command. Recently even countries have started such portals to promote tourism, services, jobs and so on. Bangladesh has its own share of portals though most of them are not that 'widely' popular.

bangladesh.com is one of those very few portals lots of people know about. Anyone with a view to know about Bangladesh would be able to learn a lot from here. It has a directory of Bangladeshi links to interesting sites, a search facility, news, weather, business information, a map, a community forum and other interesting services.

The only difficulty one might face would be finding the contact address of the developers of this site.

Then comes **bangladesh.cc**. It opens up with a page that looks a lot like a windows explorer directory. But it actually is the directory of all the bangladeshi links available through bangladesh.cc. Unlike bangladesh.com, this portal offers free e-mail service, classified ads, information on Islam as a religion and matrimonial information. Some aspects of the portal are still under development and once these are completed this would definitely be a portal worth visiting.

www.bangla2000.com proclaims to be the largest web portal for Bangladesh with all the necessary services. But the news updates are probably made on a monthly basis that may cause problems for browsers who depend on the portal for breaking news and recent happenings in the country. The portal is being moved to another location and hopefully it would be a lot more efficient once that happens.

Beside these general web portals, Bangladesh also has a number of specialised portals. One of them is **www.webbangladesh.com**. The portal has a free email service.

www.virtualbangladesh.com, is a well organised portal with a colorful and artistic home page. It lacks the free email service and classified ads but has all other aspects like news, tours and so on. A necessary and helpful service like the English-Bengali online dictionary is also provided.

Last but not the least is **www.bangladeshinfo.com** that provide updated news and services. The team working behind the portal would like to further promote it through media accreditation.
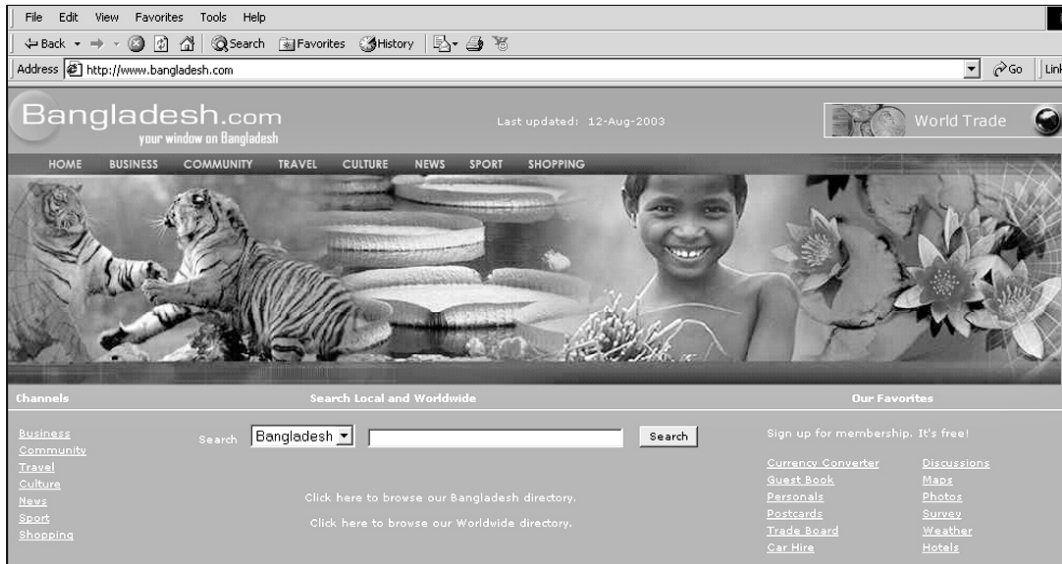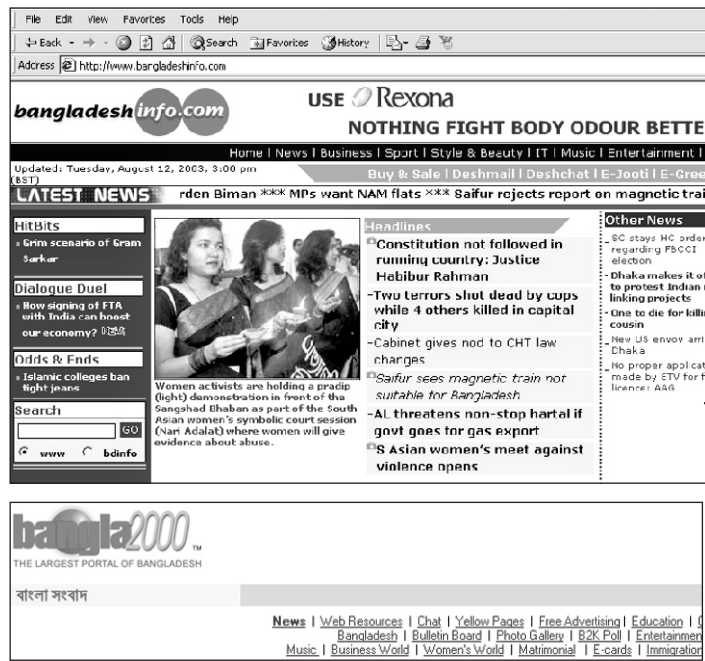
"Most people do not even know about these Bangladeshi portals as these are not receiving the necessary exposure," said Mr. Sajidul Haque, a senior executive of bangladeshinfo.com.

" We have been operating for more than two years now; and only at the last Bangladesh Computer Society Fair did we get the chance to inform Minister Tariqul Islam about our needs." said Haque.

Reportedly, a verbal confirmation from the minister has been obtained and media accreditation for bangladeshinfo.com is already underway.

Dr. Tech

Dear Dr. Tech
I have this annoying problem. Everytime I open a new browser window or click a link on a web page, another window called www.adblaster.info pops up from no where. I have to keep closing it but it is a real problem. Can u help me out?
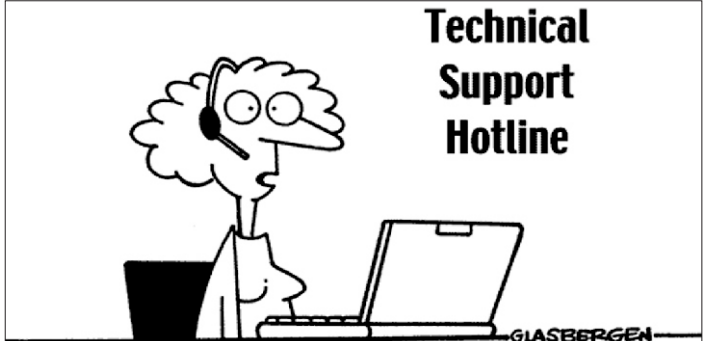Simon

Dear Simon,
All you need is a pop up stopper. I found a bundle that not only includes a fantastic pop up stopper, but several other awesome programs. Look at this:

iClean - This is the pop up stopper program (and I love it :-). It not only kills all those annoying pop up windows, but also does a lot more. It also removes internet temp files, saves space and removes cookies placed by "spam" web servers and tons more.

In short, it allows you to surf the web without pop up windows and to cover your tracks so no one can tell where you've been. All of this is completely customizable through check boxes, so you can use only the features you want. It works with both Internet Explorer and Netscape.

I've been using this for a week or so now and can report that it's very effective at killing pop up windows. Another spot is Advertising Killer (http://www.buypin.com/akiller.php) - This is from BuyPin software. It is free, but you must register the software with BuyPin as they want you to visit their site. It is customisable, meaning you have to create rules before it will work properly.

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Tech Toon

Technical Support Hotline

GLASBERGEN

"Sometimes all your computer wants is to feel appreciated. When was the last time you said 'thank you'?"

Star Tech Quiz   52

Check the box beside the correct answer
1. How many bits in a byte?
- [ ] 1
- [ ] 4
- [ ] 2
- [ ] 8

2. Which of the below formulas add cells a1 through a5 in Microsoft Excel?
- [ ] =sum(A1+A5)
- [ ] =add(A1+A5)
- [ ] =sum(A1:A5)
- [ ] =total(A1:A5)

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

Last week's answers
1. Interleave   2. /public_html
Winner: Rasheda Hossain
43, Al-ameen Road, Green Road, Dhaka.
Please fill this up and send your answers to Star Tech Quiz, The Daily Star, 19 Karwan Bazaar, Dhaka 1215 by August 18, 2003.
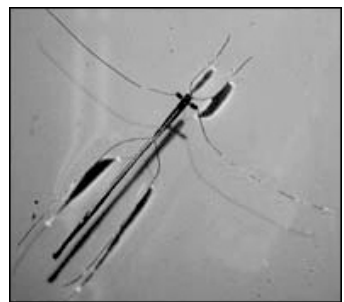

Robo Tech

Robot insect walks on water

BBC ONLINE

SCIENTISTS have developed a robotic insect which walks on water.

The team, based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US, were testing out a theory about how one family of foraging insects performs the same trick.

Robostrider, the water strider's robotic counterpart

Previous theories put forward to explain how water striders (Gerridae) manage to propel themselves across the surface of ponds and lakes had one major problem.

They predicted that young water striders should be too weak to move, while nature shows clearly that they are not.

Rowing and surface tension

Surface tension explains why water striders do not sink below the surface as they stand on water.

But a careful experimental study was needed to explain how they propel themselves forward.

"What we did was to apply some conventional techniques of flow visualisation in fluid dynamics," MIT's John Bush told BBC News Online.

"You basically sprinkle dye or tiny particles into the water and record what happens with a high-speed camera."

Dr Bush and his collaborators, David Hu and Brian Chan, discovered that the secret to the water strider's locomotion is that it rows across the water without penetrating the surface.

The rowing motion leaves a telltale vortex behind each foot, clearly visible on camera.

The robotic version of the water strider is bigger than its real-life counterpart and its motion less graceful, but it does seem to show that the MIT team has managed to capture the essence of a natural phenomenon.

Details of the research appear in the journal Nature.

The insect's long hairy legs leave telltale vortex trails in the water

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Photo Tech

PHOTO: AFP

Japanese electronics giant Sony's audio engineer displays the company's latest earphone MDR-71SL, which is the world's smallest at a 9mm in diameter driver unit and priced at 5,000 yen (42 USD), plugged into the cut model of silicon-made mold of human ear at the company's office in Tokyo on July 30. Nagano's team has 100 silicon molds of human ears in addition to another 100 plaster molds and 300 samples of ear holes.

Tech News

Web worm attacks Windows

An Internet worm that takes advantage of a recently discovered, widespread security hole in Microsoft Corp.'s Windows software emerged around the US and other countries on Monday, crashing systems and spreading to vulnerable computers, security experts said.

The worm, dubbed LoveSan, Blaster, or MSBlaster, exploits a vulnerability in the Distributed Component Object service that is hosted by a Remote Procedure Call feature in Windows 2000 and Windows XP that lets computers share files, among other activities.

Once it gets onto a vulnerable computer, the program downloads code from a previously infected machine that enables it to propagate itself. Then, it scans the Internet for other vulnerable machines and attacks them, said Johannes Ullrich, chief technology officer at the Internet Storm Center at the SANS Institute.

In some cases, the worm crashes the victim machine, but does not infect it, he said.

The worm contains code that includes a phrase: "Billy Gates why do you make this possible? Stop making money and fix your software!!," according to SANS.

Anti-virus provider Network Associates rated it a medium risk for consumers and corporate computer users, while rival Symantec Corp. rated it a high risk for distribution and a low risk for damage.

-Reuters, San Francisco

Magic Coat

Post-graduate student Cherief Nadji of France wears a special see-throgh coat made of movie-screen like material which enables to be seen background scene through the coat during a demonstration at the University of Tokyo on August 11. Tokyo University's Professor Susumu Tachi developed the optical camouflage technology that the scene behind the coat is captured by a video camera and project its scene on the special material coat virtually.

Best 10 Websites   Category: Science - III

Discovery Online
Rich site full of news & articles about human behavior, history, planet earth, space, tech issues & much more.
URL: http://www.discovery.com/

Smithsonian Magazine
Read the magazine, explore art, science & history - vsee the image gallery & visit the US castle.
URL: http://www.smithsonianmag.si.edu/

Discover Magazine
Science news, web picks, feature stories & NeuroQuest mini lessons on how the mind & brain work.
URL: http://www.discover.com/

The Invention Dimension
MIT's invention resources include The Inventor's Handbook, video library, Inventor of the Week, awards program & a tons of toys for gadget fanatics.
URL: http://web.mit.edu/invent/

The Science Museum
Rich entertaining & educational exhibits from the London Science Museum.
URL: http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/

Significant Event Imagery
Stunning satellite images of the world's big events.
URL: http://www.osei.noaa.gov/

Scanning Electron Microscope
Take a unique microscopic look at the world or browse the archive of magnificent magnifications.
URL: http://www.mos.org/sln/SEM

Explore Science
Great demonstration of the usefulness of interactivity in science education.
URL: http://www.explorescience.com/

How Things Work
Useful science site built around intriguing questions.
URL: http://erwin.phys.virginia.edu/Education/Teaching/HowThingsWork/

Try Science
Fun science experiments for kids, in six languages.
URL: http://tryscience.org/