

## Tech Focus

# Relive the '71 sensation

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

**A**RUNODOYER 'Agnishikha', the first-person shooter game, has swept aside the gamers across Bangladesh and abroad, as well.

Trimatrik, a local company, developed the game and SHOM Computers Ltd. has published it. The game has its plot and theme based on the War of Independence in 1971 and the game resources have been used keeping the timeline in mind.

*Arunodoyer Agnishikha* should be a great pastime for gamers, at least for those who loved 'Unreal' and the next few versions of the popular first person shooting game.

Along the lines of 'Unreal', Trimatrik developed AA with a composite gaming style of 'capture the flag' and 'total domination of level', making game-play a lot more interesting.

The game has been developed eyeing the international market and the user interface is up to the mark having had six options namely *Info*, *Play*, *Tutorial*, *Option*, *Credit and Exit*.

Through the *Info* option, the player can create or delete profiles. The *Play* option would take the player to a new page, where they can decide the *Battlefield*, the *Team* and the *Time limit* of the game to be played. The *back* button would

always take the player back to the previous page.

To start playing the game, one needs to click on *Connect to the Battlefield* and there are four battlefields from four parts of the country to choose from.

The player can also choose teams from the 'Mitra-Bahini' and the 'Mukti-bahini' with 'Pak-bahini' being the enemy.

Just like any other game, the *Tutorial* option provides a very helpful tutorial to any beginner of the game while *Option* helps configure the controls, test mouse sensitivity and other such necessary details.

The *Credits* option provides the names of the publishers and developers of the game and through *Exit*, the player would be able to quit the game.

The player has to act in favour of the team and as such, has to resist enemy forces, capture the flag, as well as the *Key Points*. The team-based Artificial Intelligence has added a new and active dimension to game-play and unlike most other games, members of a team would all be equally active throughout the entire duration of the game.

Unlike 'Unreal', the maximum number of points that a team obtains would make them the winners.

The system requirements to run the game are an 800 MHz processor, 32 AGP card and 128 Megabyte RAM. The game comes



with *DirectX 9.0*.

The game has some downsides, though, which the developers are trying to fix. For example, it does not run smoothly on a computer running on *Windows 98*. Some musical

scores in the game also are direct copies of already famous and popular game titles.

Leaving these drawbacks aside, the 3D models and design are well planned. Trimatrik has developed the engine for this

game.

"We started developing the game four years back and it took us over one and a half years to develop just the engine," says Rajib Ahmed, one of the founding developers of the game.

One of the other most distinguishing features is the *Liberation War Archive* that the game provides.

"We have taken interviews and provided original accounts of freedom fighters, which can be viewed in the archive and which would help motivate players toward playing the game," says Rajib.

The developers and publishers say they have received great response over the last two months and 30 copies of the game has already been sold in United Kingdom, 20 in the USA and 70 in Canada.

"We are thinking about marketing the game internationally and have already received offers from UK for developing a *PlayStation* platform version of the game," he says.

The publishers are planning to distribute the game at regional and district levels.

The developers have already started working on their next venture, which would also be a first person shooter game, but sporting multi-player options.

"The game would be based on the current Iraq conflict," says Rajib.

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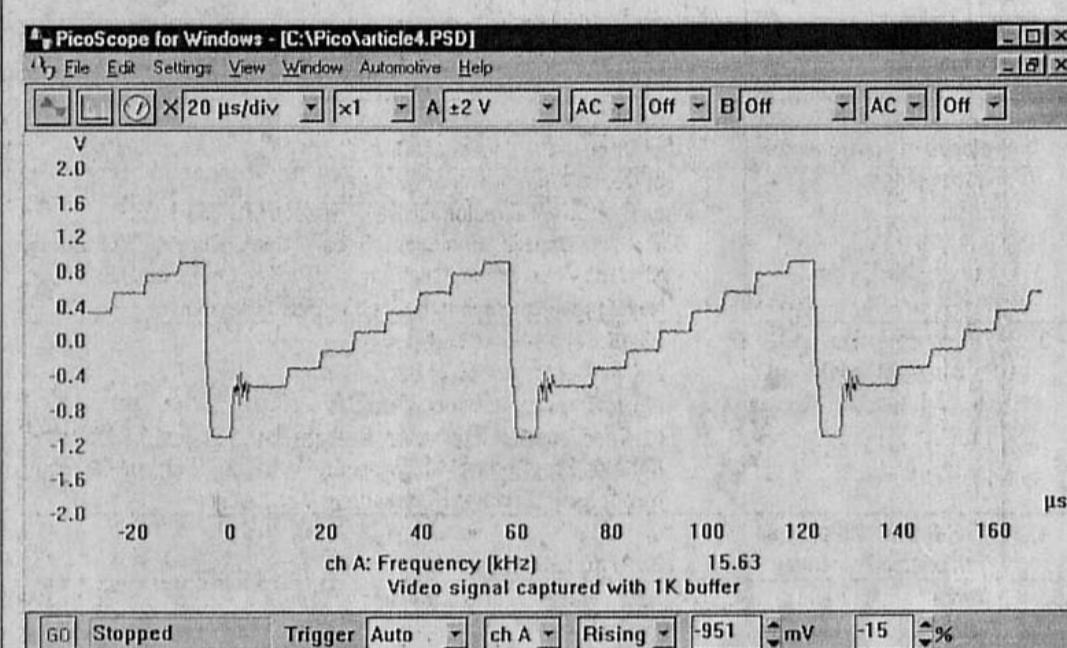
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## Tech Views

# Picotech – micro-tech and oscilloscope



## STAR TECH DESK

THE world is getting smaller by the day and this is being proven by PicoTechnology, UK, which has developed a wide range of professional PC-based instruments that offer all the functionality of conventional test equipment.

The Digital Storage Oscilloscope (DSO) and spectrum analyser meter, and also many features that are not normally available in this price range.

Pico Technology has been manufacturing PC-based instruments for data acquisition since 1991. PC-based test and data acquisition equipment is quickly emerging as the most cost-effective approach to high-quality instrumentation and the oscilloscopes from Picotech bring one of them.

They come from integration of several instruments into single small units that can be on a notebook or a desktop. The oscilloscopes come with a PicoScope software, which turns a PC into an oscilloscope, spectrum analyser and a meter at the same time.

Other than the portability, the

range of oscilloscopes with different specifications. The resolution of the display ranges from 8 to 16 bits and the sampling rate varies from 20 thousand to 10 billion samples per second. Along with an available bandwidth of 200MHz and a 1 MB buffer memory, a built-in signal generator (1 KHz) and a high-speed 2.0 USB (480 Mb/s) make these instruments one of the finest in micro-technology.

A built-in advanced display and automatic trigger modes capture infrequent events such as fluctuation in waveforms. On user demand, duty cycles and rise times of waveforms may be displayed on screen. Automatic parameter measurement is another approach that makes these small instruments rise above any conventional equipment. The company also offers frequent upgrades of the unit through their website ([www.picotech.com](http://www.picotech.com)).

These low-cost oscilloscopes do not require any external power supply as they attain the power needed directly from the PC parallel ports, making the device portable with notebook usage. Depending on the quality and prerequisites of sampling to be taken, Picotech offers a wide range of oscilloscopes with different specifications. The resolution of the display ranges from 8 to 16 bits and the sampling rate varies from 20 thousand to 10 billion samples per second. Along with an available bandwidth of 200MHz and a 1 MB buffer memory, a built-in signal generator (1 KHz) and a high-speed 2.0 USB (480 Mb/s) make these instruments one of the finest in micro-technology.

Uses for such PC-based oscilloscope may range from medical centres to the electrical laboratories in the educational and governmental institutions.

Depending on the built-in specifications of these oscilloscopes, the price ranges from around USD 500 to USD 1400, which at the least halves the traditional oscilloscope prices, or may be beyond. Today's digital world claims a digitised replacement of traditional electronics and Picotech oscilloscopes are surely making such attempts. These units have yet to capture a mass market of replacement, but with such high quality design specifications it will not be too long before they will do so.

## Tech News

# ISVs help drive Oracle 10g adoption

STAR TECH DESK

Demonstrating the ongoing adoption of Oracle 10g, independent software vendors (ISVs) worldwide are embracing Oracle's industry-leading grid computing technology to speed their success building vertical industry solutions on Oracle's industry-leading grid computing technology, says a press release dated June 29.

The advanced capabilities inherent in Oracle Application Server 10g and Oracle Database 10g have driven increased support from ISVs, a community within the Oracle PartnerNetwork that grew more than 40 percent in the past

year. ISVs develop and deploy on Oracle Application Server 10g because of its support for J2EE and Web services, comprehensive business integration capabilities, and its complete and integrated middleware software that help customers reduce the overall cost of deploying applications. New pricing and packaging options for Oracle Database 10g, including Oracle Standard Edition One Database, enable ISVs to offer solutions at a more competitive price and tap into new markets.

ISVs want to extend the benefits of Oracle Database 10g's new features, which include self-managing and automation enhancements to address customer pain points.

"The new capabilities of the Oracle 10g technology have been welcomed by our partners and have had a positive impact on an ISV community that is growing rapidly," said Bronwyn Hastings, vice president, Worldwide Alliances & Channels at Oracle Corporation. "These partners help extend complete Oracle industry solutions to our customers, and we remain committed to providing ISVs with the support and resources necessary to help them be successful."

The Oracle PartnerNetwork hosted its first ISV Forum in San Francisco on June 29-30, and introduced a range of new technical, marketing and sales resources to help application providers speed their business success on Oracle technology and applications. These new tools will help ISVs more easily integrate their applications with the Oracle software, enabling them to add value to industry solutions that are easy and cost-effective to install and manage. Additionally, ISVs are leveraging Oracle's ongoing support of Linux to provide customers with secure, low-cost

computing options. More than 1,000 partner solutions are commercially available on the Oracle/Linux platform.

### ISVs Support Oracle 10g

Across a wide range of industries, financial services, healthcare, life sciences, consumer packaged goods, government organisations and retail, ISVs have turned to Oracle Application Server 10g and Oracle Database 10g to develop tailored solutions that meet the specific requirements for a broad set of markets.

For more information on partnering with Oracle, please visit <http://partners.oracle.com>.

**Assembling Deinonychus**



Tomomi Adachi (C), exhibition guide, assembles a model skeleton of a 'Deinonychus' as she explains about the dinosaur during a press preview of the Dinosaur Exhibition in Chiba, suburban Tokyo on July 15. Some 145 dinosaurs were on display at the expo which started on July 16 and will continue until September 12. A restoration-life-size model of a 27-meter 'Chuanjiesaurus' was also silhouetted on the screen during the press preview of the Dinosaur Exhibition in Chiba.

## Tech News

# Apple rolls out cheaper iPods

REUTERS, New York

APPLE Computer Inc. on Monday introduced lower-priced versions of its iPod digital music player with longer battery life, positioning itself against rivals trying to use lower prices to undercut iPod sales.

Apple said the new model iPod has up to 12 hours of battery life, compared with eight hours in previous models. Poor battery performance in some iPods has drawn criticism.

The 20-gigabyte model, which can hold about 5,000 songs, has a list price of \$299, lower than the previous price of \$399 for a 20-gigabyte iPod. The 40-gigabyte model costs \$399.

Apple is closing the pricing gap between iPod and competitors," said Steve Lidberg, an analyst with Pacific Crest Securities. "Combined with a longer battery, Apple addresses the two

biggest issues it had with the product."

The Cupertino, California, company, best known for its Macintosh computer, has turned to digital music as it has failed to make major gains in the highly competitive personal computer market. But in digital music players, Apple also faces strong competition from Dell Inc. and Sony Corp.

iPod claims a 50 percent market share in digital music players. Its sales almost tripled in the previous quarter. Analyst Lidberg expects shipments of 1.2 million iPods this quarter, more than tripling its sales last year.

Greg Joswiak, vice president of hardware product marketing at Apple, said it expects "a very strong growth" in the third quarter, helped by the upgrade. Traditionally the third quarter is stronger than the second quarter due to back-to-school sales, he said.

Joswiak shot down market rumors of 60-gigabyte models in the pipeline. "We have no plans in regard to announcing 60-gigabyte models," Joswiak said.

"We are trying to create a much more compelling lineup with two models for 20 and 40 gigabytes at extremely compelling prices."

As part of a pilot program, Duke University plans to give iPods loaded with school calendars and other information to its 1,800 incoming freshmen. Students can download class materials to listen to anything from audio examples of textbook exercises to Spanish songs.

iPod users can now change the playback speed of audio books. The new iPods, which are thinner, also offer improved menu programs.

Apple's iTunes online music service is the most popular legal download site, claiming 70 percent of all songs bought online.

The stock fell 23 cents, or less

## Photo Tech



Singapore's Creative Technology launches a new audio player, Zen Touch, their answer to Apple's iPod 19 July 2004 in Singapore. The player caps the company's transformation from computer sound card maker to a PDE maker and puts it in the same league as the industry's biggest players.

PHOTO: AFP



Women use Apple's portable digital music player 'iPod'. Apple Computer unveiled a lower-priced fourth generation of its iPod music player and said a Hewlett-Packard branded version would be out in September. PHOTO: AFP

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