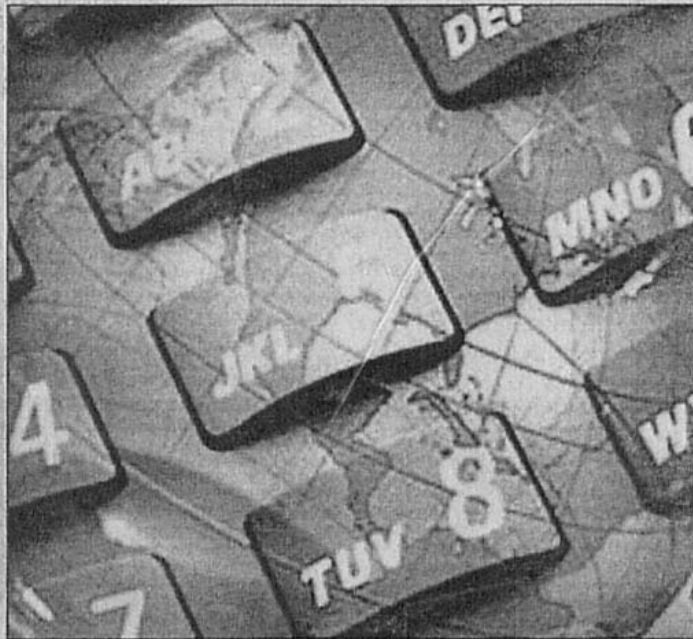


Tech Focus

A call-center in the making

Insoft Systems ties up with Malaysian solution provider Unified Communications



RIDWAN A KABIR

A local ICT company called Insoft Systems (Bangladesh) has made the courageous move of setting up a 'call-center' in Dhaka.

With technical assistance from its Malaysian partner, Unified Communications, ISL is already training a set of twenty-one trainees in English proficiency at one of its sister concern company, HSTC Ltd, located in Karwan Bazar.

According to ISL, different US-based private sector companies have already shown their interest in a Bangladesh-based call center and are eagerly awaiting its services. This is possible as a result of the country's huge reservoir of low-cost labour who have enough education to undergo call-center-related training.

"We will work primarily for US-based companies," says Samiul Haque, vice president (Technical) of ISL.

As a major portion of the calls routed through the call-center will be international, it is essential that the customer care agents have English-speaking ability.

"The minimum prerequisite is that one has higher secondary education," Haque mentions,

adding that this approach may finally claim a major share in advancing the country's economic structure.

The vice president (technical) hopes for a larger group of trainees in due time.

According to ISL, mostly US-based companies are interested in participating in such ventures with Dhaka-based companies. "This is because our country has maintained a good business tie with the Americans for a long time," Haque said. Accordingly, personal persuasion from ISL has played a major role in pulling such companies on-board. "ISL's attendance in international fairs and seminars also played a major role."

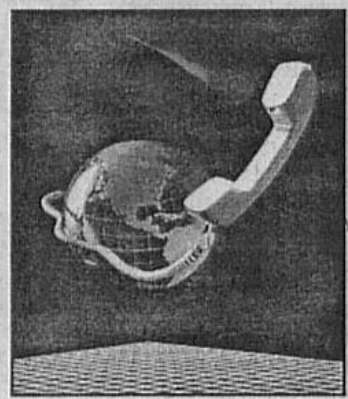
ISL purchases voice-operating systems solutions packages from Unified Communications, which include Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP) network extension links to connect subscribers at any global location. It also provides location-based services (LBS), contact centers and CRM solutions, and other mobile solutions that are required for call-centers to run at optimised productivity. These products are capable of supporting both CDMA and GSM networks, thus enhancing the performance range of the call-center.

A call center does not just serve as a 'help desk' or service center. It also works as a 'Contact center' providing solutions and information via phone and internet.

The touch-tone automated system, which provides a convenient dial-pad is an exclusive added feature in the package and a pioneering attempt for the local business, though it is not new to developed countries. "It is time we catch up with these countries and take our ICT growth one step ahead," Haque added.

"Outside of talking, all required nominal information will be shared through pressing phone buttons while calling client companies under this system," Haque cited. This solution is entirely based on the LBS system from Unified Communications, a major telecommunication products and customised solution provider from Malaysia. ISL will be the sole distributor of this product in Bangladesh.

LBS works on a location-based engine, with roaming and further value-added services (VAS) on standard GSM signaling which tracks down the registered subscriber's location information. The VAS solutions, which may include news and entertainment updates, enable operators to address subscribers' desire for personalisation, entertainment, info-communications and mobility by providing innovative and creative ways for them to express their individual iden-

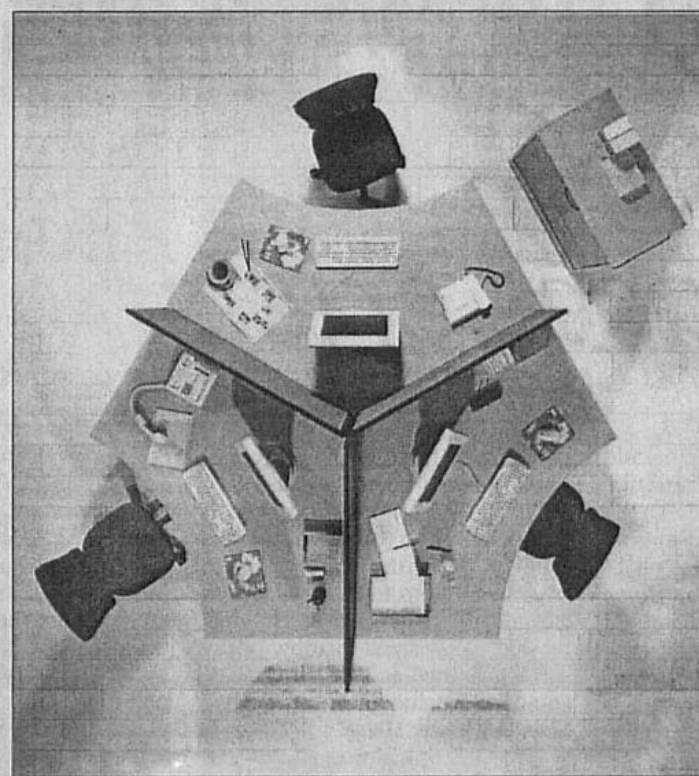


tity.

"We plan to set-up a General-packet-radio-software (GPRS) system for the local phone companies." Under the GPRS system, a push-to-talk button will be located on all registered mobiles which will allow any registered friend of the average operator to be reached by pushing this button, while the phone works as a local-range wireless radio device. Mostly, users will pay at least Tk 4 to call a contact from the same locality. "The GPRS uses the

the LBS systems. "Grameen Phone has its own VAS working, and these mobile companies are only committed to telephony services, while any other local phone company, including Sheba Telecomm, CityCell, and Aktel will soon be approached from ISL to make use of the VAS system," the vice president said.

At present, it is important for ISL to understand how much bandwidth and equipment such as mobile voice switches and accessories - are required for running a call-center. Once



same local relay center to receive and transmit a signal without reaching for the satellite, thus cutting off any bandwidth use," Haque said. The user will not have to make any charge-payments per usage of this service. This service is quite new in the world-frame as well. Nextel Communications, a US-based mobile service provider, provided one of the first examples.

Different mobile phone solutions such as SMS, USSD, or WAP are constituted within

fully listed, this equipment will be bought from Unified Communications.

Insoft Systems hopes for all governmental support for its endeavors and hopes that policy-makers will fully comprehend its objective.

Insoft Systems (Bangladesh) Ltd. is nurturing the technical and human resource-side of the setup and hopes to succeed in creating a supportive infrastructure within a short period, which is the most crucial part for a 'call-center'.

Tech Workshop

Learning to be secured

Workshop on Digital Security, Authentication and Copyright Protection

STARTECH DESK

A day long workshop on Digital Security, Authentication and Copyright Protection was held at the BCS Conference Hall on January 11, says a press release. Organised by Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS), the workshop was first of its kind in Bangladesh.

President of BCS, SM Iqbal, inaugurated the workshop in presence of the BCS Executive Council Members. The key resource person of the workshop, Dr John Choi, CEO and president of MarkAny Inc. of South Korea, who is a reputed consultant on digital security, authentication and copyright protection presented more than 40 workshops and seminars on the subject around the globe. Dr. Choi was accompanied by Professor Jeongbae Lee of Department of Information and Computer Science, Sunmoon University, South Korea, who also presented an important session at the workshop.

The workshop targeted the ICT companies who provide and develop services and solutions on internet, networking, data communication, software,



multimedia, voice communication, ATM or credit cards and online financial transactions including banking and related value added and other IT enabled services to businesses within Bangladesh and across the borders.

Twenty five personnel, mainly responsible for system security management and assurance, from different companies attended the workshop. Dr. Choi and Prof. Lee elaborated the aspects, tools and techniques of digital security and authentication of documents and contents to make and

keep those safer and how to protect the copyright of those products and services in detail. The workshop was segmented by lectures, visual presentation, practical session and open discussion. The participants also interacted with the presenters with great interest.

It is expected that the participants at the workshop would be able to contribute for safer products, services, contents and documents at their respective places of work implementing the techniques and tools they came to know through the workshop.

100 years of awareness



This picture taken in Princeton in 1931 of German-born Swiss-US physicist Albert Einstein (1879-1955), author of theory of relativity, awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921, playing the violin. Germany, the birthplace of Albert Einstein, launches January 19 a year of international celebrations to mark the 100th anniversary of three of the physicist's four papers that changed the way we view the Universe.

PHOTO: AFP

Tech News

Scientists floored by photos from Titan



This picture taken on January 14, shows one of the first returned by the ESA Huygens DISR camera after the probe descended through the atmosphere of Saturn's moon Titan. Initially thought to be rocks or ice blocks, they are more pebbled. The two rock-like objects just below the middle of the image are about 15 centimetres (left) and 4 centimetres (centre) across respectively, at a distance of about 85 centimetres from Huygens. The surface is darker than originally expected, consisting of a mixture of water and hydrocarbon ice.

PHOTO: AFP

AP, Germany

PICTURES snapped by the Titan probe and a low, whooshing sound picked up by an on-board microphone drew gasps and applause from scientists, as the mission to Saturn's moon continued its breathtaking revelations from more than 900 million miles across the solar system.

Data beamed back Saturday from Titan, one of Saturn's moons, sketched a picture of a pale orange landscape with a spongy surface topped by a thin crust.

"The closest analogues are wet sand or clay," said John Zarnecki, in charge of instruments analyzing Titan's surface. Scientists at the European Space Agency were clearly excited about the success of the mission, which had confirmed some long-held theories and produced startling surprises.

"I have to say I was blown away by what I saw," lead scientist David Southwood said at the agency's headquarters in Darmstadt. "It was an extraordinary experience to look at some of the stuff."

Images taken on descent, from about 12 miles right down to the surface, suggest the presence of liquid, possibly flowing through channels or washing over larger areas, said Marty Tomasko of the Lunar and Plan-

etary Laboratory at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

"It is almost impossible to resist speculating that the flat, dark material is some kind of drainage channel, that we are seeing some kind of a shoreline. We don't know if it still has liquid in it."

A thick layer of cloud or fog that obscures the planet was found to be hanging at about 12 miles from the surface, but absent closer to the ground.

The clouds are most likely methane and dark areas on the surface are "a reservoir" of liquid methane, said project scientist Shushiel Atreya.

A boom mike extended from the 705-pound Huygens probe

has captured a loud, rushing sound. Mission scientists did not immediately say what it might mean, but instruments on the probe have detected winds of about 15 mph.

Titan is the first moon other than the Earth's to be explored. Scientists believe its atmosphere may be similar to that of the primordial Earth and studying it could provide clues to how life began on our planet.

Huygens was spun off from the Cassini mother ship on Dec. 24 before it began its 2 1/2-hour parachute descent on Friday, taking pictures and sampling the atmosphere before landing on Titan, where temperatures are estimated at 292 degrees



A scientist of the European Space Agency (ESA) explains one of the first raw images returned by the ESA Huygens probe during its successful descent to the surface of Saturn's moon, Titan, 14 January 2005 in Darmstadt's ESA-Space center.

PHOTO: AFP

Tech News

Intel to unveil the next Centrino

AP, San Jose

INTEL Corp. will launch a major upgrade of its popular Centrino technology for notebook computers Wednesday, as the world's largest chipmaker seeks to expand the product's audience from business users to consumers.

The new chips, code-named Sonoma, are expected to enable more consumer-friendly systems that better support video, audio and games. When Centrino was first launched, it was targeted primarily at business users.

"We are trying to take what we started with Centrino and continue to evolve it," said Mooly Eden, vice president of Intel's Mobile Platforms Group.

Centrino consists of a microprocessor, chipset and wireless radio all of which were built to maximize notebook performance while minimizing electricity requirements and overall system size. Its 2003 launch turned out to be one of the most successful in Intel's history.

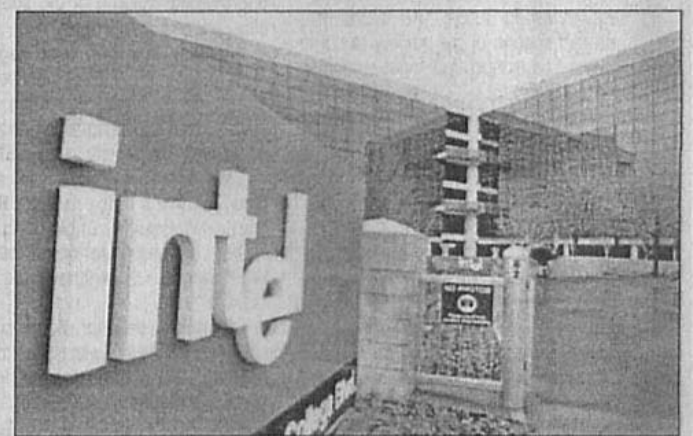
The new version is expected to increase the top clock speed of the Pentium M, the microprocessor component of Centrino, as well as

make memory improvements. The company said the new integrated graphics chip should have no problem handling 3D games, DVDs or even high-definition video.

The chip also will support high-quality audio such as Dolby Digital and 7.1 surround sound. And its radio

it's expected that the prices of notebooks based on the new technology will start well below the first Centrino-based machines introduced in 2003.

Competition in the laptop chip market is expected to increase this year. Intel's main rival, Advanced Micro



Exterior view of Intel Corp. headquarters in Santa Clara, California

PHOTO: AFP

component has been upgraded to support a standard is less susceptible to interference from electronic devices such as portable phones and microwave ovens.

Intel declined to comment on prices before Wednesday's launch in San Francisco, but

Devices Inc. is expected to launch a low-power, high-performance microprocessor for notebooks called Turion in mid-2005, though few details have been released.

Unlike Intel, AMD is only supplying the processor, not a bundle of chips.