

Tech Event

A treat for network operators

SANOG V starts in the city

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

FOR the first time in Bangladesh, South Asian Network Operators Group (SANOG), a non-profit forum of Data Network Operators in South Asia, is conducting SANOG V Programme, an eight-day event consisting of workshops, tutorials and a conference. The prestigious event has been co-organised by Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB).

"We have received positive response from almost all the network professionals and operators, who registered for various workshops of the programme," said Akhtaruzzaman Monju, president, ISPAB and director of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) while talking to StarTech.

The event started off with a workshop on February 6 and will continue till the 13th. The two-day long tutorial session will start from February 11 and the event will come to an end with a conference on the final day. Twenty-seven Network professionals, consisting of 15 fellows and 12 trainers, have arrived in the city for the programme.

"Previously it was quite tough for a network operator or a professional from this region, to attend workshops and events such as these, which usually took place in most of the western countries," said Faruq Ibn Abu Bakr, Programme Committee Manager, ISPAB.

SANOG was formed by a group of South Asian network operators and professionals to cut down on the expenses and focusing on this they hold resourceful workshops and tutorials in the different parts of the South Asian region.

Ever since the group was formed, through programmes like these, network professionals of this region have shared, exchanged and updated knowledge and learnt new technologies over the last few years.

The SANOG V Programme



A workshop in progress at a local hotel on the first day of the 8-day long SANOG V programme.

committee received a huge amount of applications from interested individuals from all over the country. Around 90 percent of the applicants were selected and registered for the workshops.

"We had no other choice but to chop down the number of applications, as we cannot accommodate all the interested network operators," said a member of the committee.

Over 150 network operators and professionals from Internet Service Providers (ISP), Telecommunication companies, and other relevant organisations are attending the workshops.

Under the programme, 5 workshops consisting of important topics like *Network and Host Security*, *ISP Routing and BGP Multi-homing and DNS/DNSSEC* have been scheduled. These workshops are being supervised by network specialists from CISCO, APNIC and *Network Resource Startup*

Center (NRSC).

WILAN is the Platinum Sponsor for SANOG 5 programme, while Cisco and Metronet are the Gold Sponsors. Juniper Networks, Advance Data Network, ATC are among the Silver Sponsors. The lab setup and Local Area Network (LAN) support for the entire event are being provided by IIT Dhaka.

Even though, the programme is an effective tool toward the development of ISP and telecommunication sector, the event lacked technical and financial support from the government authorities concerned.

"We did receive encouragement from the authorities but it was already too late to receive any support from them," said Monju.

The President acknowledged the aid of FBCCI and NBR along with the financial and technical support of the Platinum, Gold and

Silver sponsors.

Some managers of the programme committee also complained about the problems that the foreign trainers and instructors had to face at the immigration while entering the country.

Philip Smith, an Instructor from CISCO, and a citizen of Great Britain was given only a week's visa when the entire event will be going on for eight days. ISPAB is trying to extend the instructors' visa by another week, which is essential under the prevailing circumstances.

"Despite such problems, hopefully with help from the authorities concerned events such as SANOG V, can become an important instrument for generating skilled Network Operators and Professionals, which will be highly necessary after the arrival of the anticipated submarine cable," Monju concluded.

Tech Spotlight

'Kayoty' - the first ever home-made spyware monitor

RIDWAN A KABIR

DIFFERENT species of Spywares and their associated activities have long been elusive to everyday users, since there was no known method to monitor the traffic created by most of the spy software.

Keeping this in mind, Subedar Technologies, a local software company, developed a spyware traffic monitoring system known as 'Kayoty', which in Bangla means ('Kay' 'Oty') 'who's that?' 'Kayoty' became a pride for our country by securing its position in the popular software site tu cows's (www.tucows.com) anti-spyware rank listing.

Aftab Jahan Subedar, software engineer and owner of Subedar Technologies and the architect of 'Kayoty', claims this monitoring system to be a hardware level software interface.

"Tucows still remains one of the oldest and most-popular net clearance houses," said Subedar claiming that this is the first time ever that any Bangladeshi software is actually being approved by such a download-site like Tucows for sale and download.

"While running as a piece of software, 'Kayoty' actually taps into the computer's hardware level to generate the traffic monitor," cites Subedar.

Built using Visual C++, 'Kayoty' will display information about the internet or intranet connections of a computer, including IP address, host names, direction of the traffic, amount of data transacted in bytes and the last connection timestamp.

This display which is more like a machinery stethoscope, hence exposes the leakage and will act as a warning to the targeted computer's owner or user.

Spywares, which are not to be compared with PC viruses act to infect a computer by leaking out its browsing information or hard disk data to a motherserver, or vice versa, and this server is where the spywares are

controlled from.

Immediate symptoms of a spyware attack are usually overload of network traffic that is not generated by the users themselves or losing control over browsers like Microsoft Internet Explorer. "Kayoty will even notice you if network traffic is initiated while you're not using the computer," says Subedar, stating that this is one of the possible actions by spywares.

Spy software can record your keystrokes as you type them, passwords, credit card numbers, sensitive information, where you surf, chat logs and even take random screenshots of your activities.

A good number of spyware vendors use 'stealth routines' and 'polymorphic' (meaning to change) techniques to avoid detection and removal by popular

download', leading to a spy-infected PC," mentioned Subedar.

"There are hundreds," says Subedar, referring to the types and quantities of anti-spy programmes lurking in the net and how online spying has become more prevalent and more 'sophisticated' with growth in net connectivity and data-transfer.

Anti-spy programmes look for signatures or traces that are specific to certain spy software. Some simply scan text strings to find them, and others like X-Cleaner and XBlock actually extract and attempt to remove spywares.

"Unfortunately, these anti-spy programmes can be double-edged swords too!" exclaims Subedar. Spies often use anti-spy software to make sure their

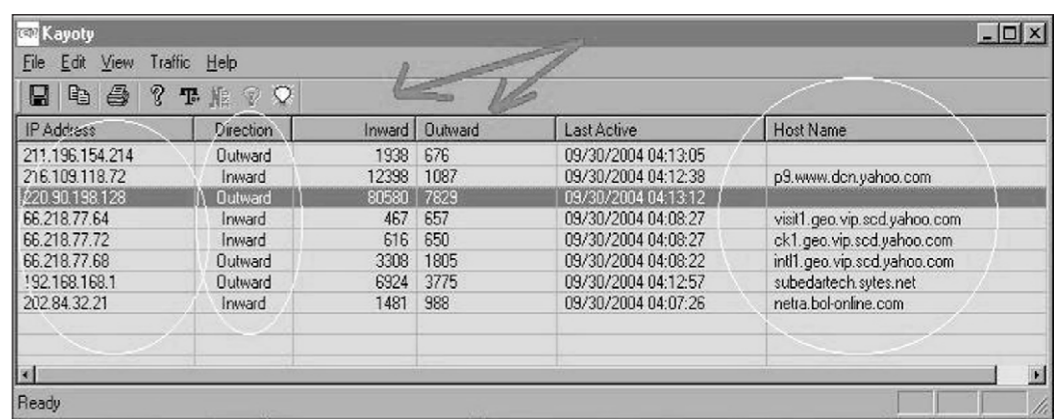
the user to attend to counter-measurements based on information shown on 'Kayoty's screen.

While it remains quite difficult to remove spyware programmes automatically from one's system, Subedar Technologies is testing such interactive products that are soon to be on the market.

Subedar challenges any local or international entity to generate any such spyware 'watchdog' software, he regretfully mentions how this international achievement from Subedar Technologies has not been well recognised by locals as yet.

Tucows sells 'Kayoty' at 25 US Dollars, but for locals it is available at only Tk 100. A free seven-day demo of the software can be found at www.geocities.com/jahan_geo.

Future plans of Subedar



A screenshot of 'Kayoty' in action.

anti-spy software. In some cases, spyware vendors have gone as far as to counter-attack anti-spy packages by attempting to make them inactive.

Such spy programmes are commonly installed unknowingly by the user when they click on 'koof' links such as automated weather updates, calendar managers, screen savers, atomic clock synchronisers, etc.

"These kinds of links are everywhere in the net and when one enjoys broadband connection, they tend to click on absolutely any link to exhibit the 'claimed power of faster

spyware can't be detected. There's a hidden arms race that rages between spyware vendors and anti-spy companies," he adds.

"It still remains unknown to the user what these anti-spy programmes do when they're online," states Subedar, hence putting the computer security more at stake.

"This is where 'Kayoty' plays in," he continues, mentioning how it displays intranet activities, and thus pulling out any unwanted exchange of data from the computer. Its reports on unwanted network traffic warn

include building an embedded microchip system, which will work as an intelligent system to administer nominal level activities like detecting low-charge on car battery and recharging it.

"This will be a point-of-cell computer, which will only administer one application using a single micro-controller," the software developer pointed out. Such a single-application computer will also have keyboard and mouse interface to interact with the user and take their commands.

Tech News

Companies challenge Intel microprocessor

AP, San Francisco

SETTING up a battle for the future of computing, engineers from IBM, Sony and Toshiba unveiled details Monday of a microprocessor they claim has the muscle of a super-computer and can power everything from video game consoles to business computers.

Devices built with the processor, code-named Cell, will compete directly with the PC chips that have powered most of the world's personal computers for a quarter century.

Cell's designers say their chip, built from the start with the burgeoning world of rich media and broadband networks in mind, can deliver 10 times the performance over today's PC processors.

It also will not carry the same technical baggage that has made most of today's computers compatible with older PCs. That architectural divergence will challenge the current dominant paradigm of computing that Microsoft Corp. and Intel Corp. have fostered.

The new chip is expected to be used in Sony Corp's next-generation PlayStation game console. Toshiba plans to incorporate it into a high-end television. And IBM has said it will sell a workstation with the chip.

Beyond that, companies are remaining coy about where it might be used and whether it will be compatible with older technology.

"With this massive computing power, we'll get to the point where we'll get closer to photo realistic-type effect that will be able to be generated by the computer," said Jim Kahle, an IBM Corp. fellow.

Supercomputer claims are nothing new in the high-tech industry, and over the years chip and computer companies have steadily improved microprocessor performance even without altering chips' underlying architecture.

And while its competitors may well match the Cell chip in performance by the time it debuts in 2006, it differs considerably from today's processors in constitution.

Cell is comprised of several computing engines, or cores. A core based on IBM's Power architecture controls eight "synergistic" processing centers. In all, they can simultaneously carry out 10 instruction sequences, compared with two for today's Intel chips.

The new microprocessor also is expected to be able to run multiple operating systems and programs at the same time while

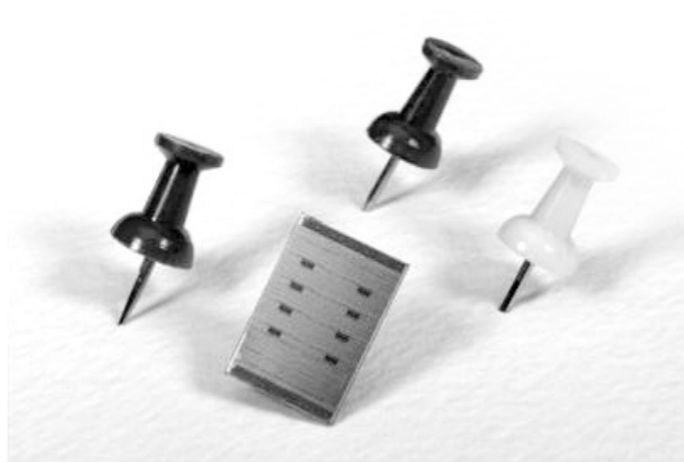


PHOTO: AP

This undated photo provided by IBM shows the IBM/Sony/Toshiba jointly developed Cell microprocessor is essentially a supercomputer on a chip.

ensuring each has enough resources. In the home, that could allow for a device that's capable of handling a video

game, television and general-purpose computer at once.

"It's very flexible," Kahle said. "We support many operating systems with our virtualization technology so we can run multiple operating systems at the same time, doing different jobs on the system."

Later this year, Intel and Advanced Micro Devices Inc. plan to release their own "multicore" chips, which also increase the number of instructions that can be executed at once. IBM and Sun Microsystems Inc. already sell chips with multiple cores, mainly for business servers.

Cell also appears to have an advantage in the number of transistors 234 million compared with 125 million for today's latest Pentium 4 chips. Traditional chip makers, however, have regularly doubled their number of transistors every 12 to 18 months.

Cell is said to run at clock

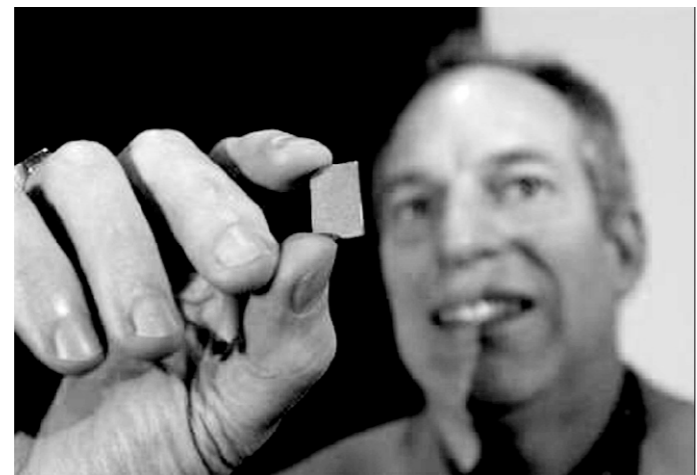


PHOTO: AP

Jim Kahle, IBM Director of Technology for Cell Technology, holds up a new Cell Technology chip during a news conference in San Francisco on February 7.

The Sweeper



PHOTO: AFP

A student of Hokkaido University demonstrates a prototype vehicle "Sweeper", which Associate Professor Tatyuki Tanaka recently developed in the image of a witch broom, at the university in Sapporo, northern Japan on February 4. The 175-cm unicycle equipped with a 300-watt electric motor and a rechargeable battery has ability to cruise for 30 minutes with a two-hour charge at a maximum speed of 10 kilometers per hour. Users can control the motor power by the broomstick, pushing forward to speed and pulling to throttle down.