

In 1965, computer firm Honeywell released the H316 "kitchen Computer" the first home computer priced at \$10,600. This computer was marketed for the wealthy and savvy housewife. It appeared on the cover of a Neiman-Marcus catalog in 1965. Basically, you could program recipes into the computer and it would store them for you. It needed about two weeks' worth of programming to operate it. So, with the purchase, one received some built-in recipes, two weeks' worth of programming, a cookbook, and an apron.



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TECHFOCUS

Laser acupuncture takes on locals

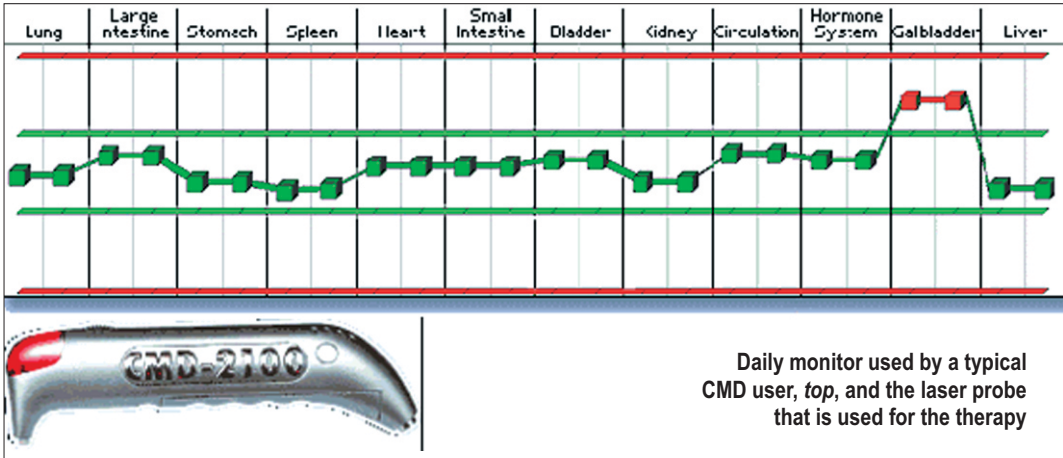
RIDWAN A KABIR

SOFTALK Online Ltd. (SOL), a local software solution-provider, has currently been engaged in implementing the newest face of the most primitive Chinese acupuncture diagnosis under a program called 'Computer Meridian Diagnosis' or CDM, that has been developed to work towards detection of illness prior to their occurrence.

The system, invented by the Russian Space-center scientists who worked on the program for more than 35 years now, requires exposure of the human skin tissue to a laser light at a certain frequency, which plays in detecting any change in the skin impedance level, thus attaining a scenario of how the flow of energy within the body is getting distributed. The system has been made available for public use recently.

"This laser picks on any irregular change of the body impedance, or any imbalance in the usual energy flow within the body, thus causing an alert from the system's external output devices," explained Saleh Rahman, managing director, SOL. "Only after detecting such imbalance, you may work towards correcting it," he added, pointing to the traditional Chinese acupuncture practice.

Thus, CMD is a system built on the frameworks laid out by ancient Chinese medicine practitioners, according to which biological energy, known as "chi" in traditional Chinese medicine, is generated in internal organs and flows through channels near the skin surface, known as meridians. Acupuncture points, generally located on meridians, are where the flow of the energy can be manipulated. The stimulation at these points by various means affects the energy circulation, thus producing secondary effects in connected organs and



systems.

While the Chinese practitioner would make use of his needles to pock on these acupuncture points for producing a beneficial stimulation, the latest therapy includes a laser exposure, as mentioned earlier. Energy regulation takes place and the organ is seen fixed in due time.

"There was a competition between Russia and USA towards better achievements on space-missions and maintenance of proper health conditions of the astronauts in these missions, which played a very significant role in the development of the system," said Rahman.

To maintain proper health status while in the space probes, the Russian astronauts were dosed with CMD on regular basis, and the therapy was continually tested for eleven consecutive years on departed astronauts in the space, proving them a good health. "Laser has its own benefits over the traditional procedures," Rahman stated, citing how chances of bacterial or fungal infections become totally non-exhibiting in such conditions.

A few years back, the system was used on Russian astronauts only and was priced at a million USD per dose. But in time the fractal has dropped down to a sum of USD 20 in current times.

"You may call it consumer economy, but when they decided on putting it out for the commons, the demand created its own supply from the manufacturer, thus pulling price down," Rahman mentioned.

Currently, a total of twenty districts in the country, including Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Bogra, Rajshahi, and Sylhet has outlets using CMD facilities in their medical fronts. "These medical institutions buy what we call 'measurements' from us," Rahman said, while the individual institution gets a complete instrumental and software setup provided by SOL towards providing the laser detection on a patient.

Individual measurements from each patient are then sent, via the internet, to the central CMD-center database located in Germany, one of the countries to whom Russia decided on selling its CMD products at its downfall of communism.

These readings are then compared with data collected from more than 12 million people of similar age and gender under various health-conditions. An instant evaluation is sent back to the host computer with results displayed. "It also suggests places on your body which is in need of the laser exposure corrections," Rahman said.

Members may take several readings daily and send them for evaluation, thereby building a health profile that will reveal trends and patterns.

"Until now we have had about fourteen thousand local patients in Bangladesh, and it has just been a year since its official launching last year," the director stated. These figures show a well-expected trend to follow in on such patterns of medical procurements in the local medical sectors.

"If you know that you can protect any of your organs by simply reacting before-hand, why will you not use it?" the director said. Prospects of the diagnosis include prevention from cancer and heart attacks too.

"CMD's objective is to promote an optimum quality of life and longevity," he defined, mentioning how it is essentially about understanding and managing the balances of life-energy forces and stress factors within the human body. "Thus you know why regular checks are important," Rahman continued, "because if treated at an early stage, the onset of a disease may be prevented." More information on the product is available at the company's website www.softalk-online.com.

TECHINTERVIEW

Microsoft focuses on improving IT literacy in Bangladesh

IT'S been about eight months since Microsoft officially started their operations in Bangladesh. In cooperation with their market development partner Square InformatIX, they have made their efforts on building good relationships with their certified partners locally during the past few months. They have also launched their 'Unlimited Potential' programme on June 13, which was one of the projects Microsoft have planned for this country. For a deeper view of what their courses of action might be at here, **Saad Hammadi** of StarTech spoke to **Saw Ken Wye**, President, South-East Asia, Microsoft Asia Pacific, while on his three-day visit in Bangladesh.

SH: Please tell us about the programmes you have projected for Bangladesh?

SKW: We have come here to make sure we support our customers better. One of the key objectives in our projects is to provide education among the young. Bringing technology and improving IT literacy are what we consider as our personal social responsibility. Positioning ourselves as a partner to the government is also what we consider among our programmes. This time with the education ministry we have had talks on methodologies of increasing IT literacy.

SH: Now that you have located your office here, do you consider our local expertise for your global products?

SKW: We have people from Bangladesh working in Redmond building products for global consumption. We are always on the lookout for smart people to help with our product development strategy. I should point out that we found that the strategy of concentrating product development in Redmond pays the best dividend for us and it will be unlikely that we will be setting up a development facility in Bangladesh.

SH: You must be aware that Bangladesh is lacking in piracy prevention, can Microsoft help in anyway for this matter?

SKW: Surely, it starts with education. We are changing the value proposition for original software. The genuine Windows users are able to get more efficient output system. Besides consumers need to realise that our business is affected by their preferences towards pirated products which at a time may lose the market for these products that they are finding useful.

SH: Language may play a pivotal role for the operation of

your systems locally and for that matter we know that Microsoft in India had already brought operations in their own language. How long might it be when we find your Windows in our native language?

SKW: We will do it but it's a matter of time. One of the challenges we had was the standard. The standard we look forward is Unicode and now finally we hear that Bangladesh Computer Council is applying for Unicode, which should not take more than twelve months to attain the standard layout of the keyboard.

SH: Would you please disclose how much you have invested in Bangladesh market? How would you rank this country in terms of your market among Southeast Asia?

SKW: It is easily over a million dollar investment so far. For now I

also now be organised based on metadata in terms of authors, subjects or keywords. In short, Longhorn is designed to be more connected than your telephone, more informative than your newspaper, and more entertaining than your television.

SH: 'The Finalizer' is what Microsoft had in surprise at their biggest annual technology education (Tech-Ed 2005) conference recently. It's a high-end, smart BattleBot built with Microsoft .NET technologies. We would like your words on .NET technology and how you have linked it with a device like BattleBot?

SKW: Microsoft defines .NET as a process that connects people, systems and services together. It is about providing and delivering an integrated platform to our customers at any time, any place and on any device.

is only natural to assume that customers will want the same experience they have on a desktop/laptop to be with them when they are on move. The best way to encapsulate this experience is to make the data flow seamlessly between different devices under usage scenarios.

So in my case, I have a windows mobile phone. My contact information, calendar, email and tasks are all synchronized with my Microsoft Exchange server. I do not keep any data in my SIM card and in the case when I lose my phone, all I have to do is get a new phone and then sync the information over the air through a GPRS connection. I am instantly 'productive' again.

SH: What would be the vision for Offices of next generation? Here we'd also prefer your words on XML format and its use with Office.

SKW: As our Chairman and Chief Software Architect, Bill Gates had mentioned at the CEO summit at Redmond, the new world of work is what we're living in today and will be adapting tomorrow, and it represents how the work place is changing overall. In view of that, we are focusing our efforts on developing new capabilities in our upcoming version of Offices. Better data visualisation and analysis tools will expose the trends, patterns and exceptions buried in mountains of data, so information workers can find what they need from across different repositories and intelligent searches.

XML enables companies to capture information in such a way that it can be repurposed and reused however and whenever the organisation needs to use it, regardless of platform. Building on the XML support in the Microsoft Office system, customers can improve data flow throughout organisations and build customized business process and productivity solutions that help information workers make a greater impact on their business. XML can unlock information currently stored in back-end or line-of-business systems, which can then be processed and repurposed on the desktop in the Office applications with which people are already very familiar.



Saw Ken Wye, President, South-East Asia, Microsoft Asia Pacific, talks to StarTech during the interview.

rank it as one of the the fastest growing market.

SH: Could you please give us a detailed idea of the technology adopted in Longhorn and its features? Possibly it's being the latest in any operating system releases, so what might be the tasks running behind the screen?

SKW: You should see Longhorn as the next big exciting milestone for us in the Windows operating system space. Some of the fundamental changes are its security, deployment and manageability.

We also expect Longhorn to make data more accessible. Visually, the desktop, folders and icons now provide live snapshots of the documents to help users use and manage their software more intuitively. Documents can

What we have demonstrated at TechEd is really a showcase of how integrated technology can be. The Framework that we used is a key part of helping us to provide customers with greater experiences. The .NET Compact Framework's managed code and XML Web services enable the development of secure, downloadable applications on devices such as personal digital assistants (PDAs), mobile phones, and set-top boxes. EE

SH: Having your Windows available in mobile phones, how does it help in productivity in such a small screen?

SKW: We consider our move into the mobile market as part of an extension of the experience a customer is used to when using a computer. In a connected world, it

TECHNEWS

Installment facility for O2 XDA II, Xphone

DAFFODIL Computers Limited is now marketing the world-renowned O2 XDA II and Xphone in Bangladesh with an affordable price and installment basis, says a press release. The mobile phone has some additional features in comparison to normal mobile phone as follows:

XDA-II Mobile cum Pocket PC:

Tri-band class B Multislot class 10, Built in bluetooth, SDIO, optional Wi-Fi support,

Instant message, short/long message and multimedia message service, Full Internet browsing, VGA camera (480*640), MPEG4 camcorder, MP3 Media player, Speakerphone and voice recorder facility, Removable and chargeable Lithium-ion Polymer Battery, 120mAh, Key lock sup-



port by software, SIM Application Toolkit,

Support for WAP 2.0 browser and XHTML, Handwriting recognition, Download mail attachment,

Cash price: Tk. 49,900/- and Installment price: down payment: Tk. 25,000/- and rest amount by six equal installment.

XPhone: TI OMAP 710 Processor with integrated GSM/GPRS, 64MB Flash, 32 MB SDRAM, Powered by Microsoft Smart phone 2003, Talk time: Up to 3 hrs1, Standby time: Up to 90 hrs1, Roaming indica-

tor, Cell broadcast, Multi-party call conferencing, SIM Application Toolkit, Alternate Line Service (ALS), 12 button numeric dialing keypad, MP3, WMA music format stereo playback, Speakerphone function, MPEG4 (AVI) and Windows Media Video playback Games, Tri-band GSM 900/1800/1900 MHz, Integrated VGA camera for image capture and camcorder, Infrared IrDA & SIR, Wireless Modem

Price: Cash price: Tk. 25,000/-

Installment: down payment: Tk. 12,000/- and rest amount by six equal installment.

For more details one may contract: 9143158, 8115986, 0176-

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PHOTOTECH

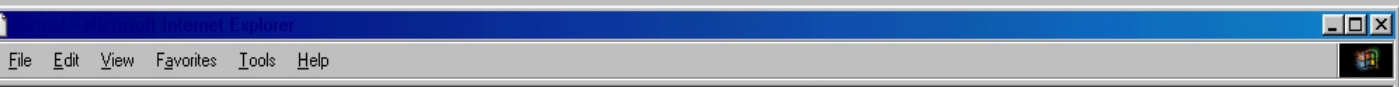


THE H2 BIKE

A prototype of the world's first hydrogen-powered motorbike made by Intelligent Energy is displayed on June 22 in San Francisco, California. The fuel cell motorbike is capable of speeds up to 80 kmh (50 m.p.h.) and emits only water vapors when operating. Intelligent Energy hopes to have models for sale by late 2006.

PHOTO: AFP

TECHNEWS



AOL's solution: a portal in a storm

STEVEN LEVY

NINE years ago I wrote a column about the future of the three great subscription online services -- CompuServe, Prodigy and America Online. In the age of the Internet, I argued, their business model was doomed. People would not pay for content locked up in proprietary "walled gardens" when a wealth of similar information was available free on the Net. I called the trio "dead men walking." I got only two out of three; AOL kept growing. For years, whenever I saw Steve Case, he'd gleefully bring up my premature obituary.

Clearly I underestimated Case's ability to overcome his company's challenges, and even convince a media giant that AOL could continue to defy commercial gravity. Now, of course, the Time Warner merger is viewed as a colossal disaster -- and the bell is finally tolling for AOL's business

model. Subscribers are fleeing like beachcombers after a shark warning -- down to 22 million, from a high of 27 million. Barry Diller recently said he spurned an offer to buy AOL for \$20 billion, a sum analysts reportedly say is more than twice its worth. Compare this with Yahoo's \$50 billion cap, and it's no surprise that AOL's new

strategy is ... trying to be Yahoo. Its new plan involves tearing down the garden wall, opening up its content and building its AOL.com Web into a "next-generation high-speed Web

portal." Not that AOL CEO Jon Miller is going to stop collecting fees that "pay the rent." Giving away the content won't hurry the exodus, he says, because subscribers stay mainly for ISP access,

that comes with that.

Can it be done? To hear AOL executives talk, they're almost there now. They say that their Web properties -- from the AOL.com site to services like MapQuest, Moviefone and AIM -- draw about 110 million unique users a month, not far from the 118 million gathered by Yahoo. "AOL is already one of the few big Internet brands," says Miller.

He hopes to build on this by

a redesigned site that essentially gives away the goodies that previously only subscribers could access: online radio stations (including XM Satellite Radio channels), news, photos services, AOL CityGuide listings and blogs.

Users can choose an opening page based on video streams, a category AOL hopes to dominate (helped by its exclusive on the upcoming "Live 8" concert). It will offer users an enhanced new Web browser (inexplicably built on Microsoft's Internet Explorer rather than the more secure Netscape/Mozilla code that AOL paid for), and it will collect feeds from one's favorite Web sites.

Competitors contend that the once mighty online service will find life tougher outside the walled garden. "It's the right strategy, but years late," says Hadi Partovi of Microsoft's MSN portal. Yahoo spokesperson Joanna Stevens says, "Being free isn't the significant factor -- a long history of feedback from the public makes our services compelling and relevant." They have a point. But having once counted out AOL, I'm reluctant to do it again. Especially now that its business model is no longer a death sentence.



parental controls, security features and customer service. (Acynic might add the following three: 1. inertia; 2. haven't-got-broadband-yet; 3. don't-know-that-you-can-get-AIM-instant-messaging-free-even-if-you're-not-an-AOL-subscriber.)

But Miller knows the future depends on huge Web audiences and the ad revenue

getting more mileage from the users of his disparate sites. For instance, AIM users are being encouraged to adopt a new Web-mail service that uses their IM names as an e-mail address. But the centerpiece of the effort is the expansion of the former backwater AOL.com page to a full-fledged portal. In the next couple of weeks it will become

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