

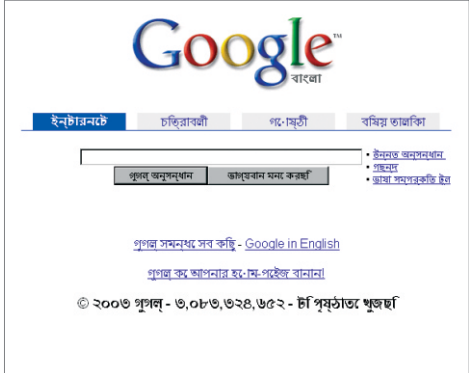
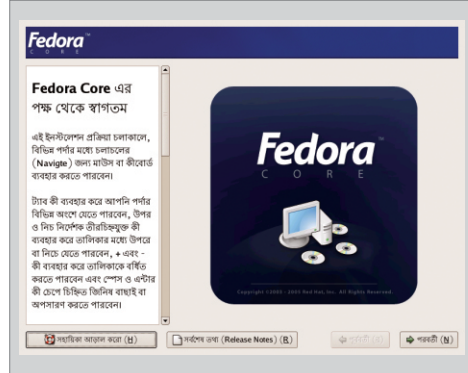
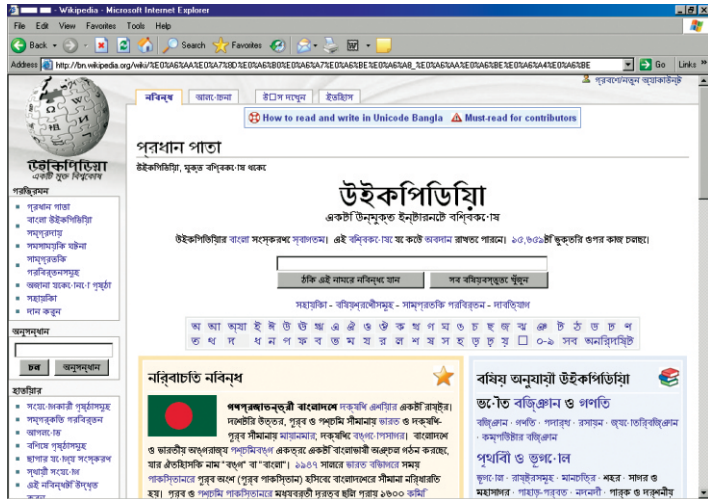
TECH FOCUS

Open source lets you excel in creativity

EDWARD APURBA SINGHA

SUPPOSE you are running a business, having thousands of employees and several branches in different locations. As an entrepreneur you have implemented information technology (IT) in your business to coordinate entire operations and ensure better performance. After a certain period of time, when you are planning to expand activities you discover the necessity to upgrade your company's software.

So you contact your foreign vendor and they ask an exorbitant amount of money for adding extra



feature. This cost is a huge burden on your current expenditure. But you have got no other option but to give in to the foreign vendor. This is called vendor lock-in.

It is a common phenomenon small and large businesses often confront. This happens because we generally use closed source software. These types of software do not give you the power to unilaterally modify or upgrade their functionalities. So some particular vendors are your ultimate destination.

But the scenario is totally different when it is about open source software. As the name implies, open source software gives you the freedom to exhibit your imagination. Not only this, you can minimise your cost and at the same time can reduce dependency on others.

Open source software, however, always means not free software. Under a licence a user can use it for private or commercial ends. In each case, the user has the right to control everything. The concept of open source gained popularity with the development of the internet.

Nowadays many open source software are available on the internet for free download.

The term came into the limelight when Netscape licensed and released their code as open source under the name of Mozilla. Researchers at Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET) used a process called Request for Comments (RFC), which resembles open source standards. It is used to develop telecommunications protocols. However, IBM in the 1950s distributed operating systems in source format to a user group to facilitate the exchange of source code.

Nowadays the concept of open source is not limited to software solutions. It has become universal and encompasses many interesting ideas such as open source government, open market, open document, open source movie production, open-IPTV etc.

Open source unveils a new horizon in Bangladesh. It is not possible for all in this developing country to buy legal software at high price. This is why the local market is

flourished with pirated software. This practice totally violates Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and at the same time compels people to purchase below standard products.

Embracing open source software will bring in some strategic benefits, including developing local capacity/industry, reducing imports/conserving foreign exchange, enhancing national security, reducing copyright infringements, enabling localisation etc.

Open source software began its aggressive journey on the internet. Some open source software applications are Linux Kernel-operating system kernel based on Unix, Eclipse-software framework for 'rich-client application', Apache-HTTP web server, Tomcat web server-web container, Blender-3D graphics application, Moodle-course management system, Mozilla Firefox-web browser, Mozilla Thunderbird-email client, OpenOffice.org-office suite, Open Solaris-Unix Operating System from Sun Microsystems and Mediawiki-wiki server software, the

organisation where the Open Source and Open Content volunteers and professionals can exchange their ideas and embark on new initiatives.

One of the most successful open source projects of BdOSN is Bangla wikipedia. Bangla wikipedia is still at its nascent stage and continuous effort is on to enrich its contents. Though the number of entries in Bangla wikipedia is already over 9000, most of these are stubs (i.e. incomplete articles). According to BdOSN, very soon Bangla wikipedia will be a complete knowledge source in Bangla language.

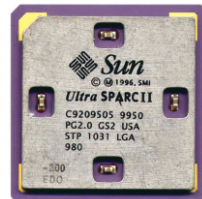
Another organisation, Ankur, is also doing some promising tasks to promote open source in the country. Ankur Group has already started work on Bangla OpenOffice.org. They have already achieved significant progress and OpenOffice.org 2.0 is already visible with most of the menu entries being translated in Bangla. Future versions of OpenOffice.org will have more and more modules in Bangla. Other projects of Ankur include Mandrake/Mandriva Linux Bangla Translation Project, Redhat/Fedora Linux Bangla Translation Project, SUSE Linux Bangla Translation Project and Bangla Google.

All the above-mentioned tasks clearly indicate the recent surge in open source awareness in Bangladesh. If this trend goes on it will definitely have unprecedented impact on the socio-economic arena of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Open Source Network (BdOSN) is such an organisation which was born out of a vision to create a unique platform for open source developers. BdOSN is a non-profit, voluntary initiative of Bangladesh Fundamental Research Institute (BdFRI). It was launched on 24th October 2005 in Dhaka. The initial idea of it is to create a broad

SPARC

SPARC (Scalable Processor ARChitecture) is a RISC microprocessor instruction set architecture originally designed in 1985 by Sun Microsystems. SPARC is a registered trademark of SPARC International, Inc., an organisation established in 1989 to promote the SPARC architecture and to provide conformance testing. SPARC International was intended to open the SPARC architecture to make a larger ecosystem for the design, which has been licensed to several manufacturers, including Texas Instruments, Cypress Semiconductor, and Fujitsu. As a result of SPARC International, the SPARC architecture is fully open and non-proprietary.



TECH NEWS

Access Technologies to assist local software biz

ACCESS Technologies, a Japan based software solution provider, expressed their keen interest to develop a sustainable relationship with the local software industry. Three high level delegates from Access Technologies recently visited Bangladesh and in this regard they unveiled their strategic plans at a press conference on May 10 at a local hotel.

Zubair Rony, consumer product development division, Access Technologies gave a company overview and informed StarTech that they already working with Bangladesh Japan Information Technology (BJIT Limited) to develop their products.

Tomonori Watanabe, senior vice president, Access Technologies elaborated their interest regarding the mission in Bangladesh. "Bangladesh is fast growing country in terms of mobile communication and we are willing to utilise this opportunity," he added.

In a multimedia presentation Watanabe stated their different technologies such as Browser, Live portal, SyncML and Dynamic UI. He basically highlighted the browser technology which comprises distinctive features such as PC quality performance, capable

to the mobile and beyond-PC markets. With research and engineering centres throughout the world and an established culture that emphasises and nurtures innovation and creativity, Access delivers unique solutions that bring value to its customers and partners and which help make people's lives easier, more productive, and more enjoyable.

Principal Access technologies include the globally popular Garnet OS, one of the first and most successful mobile operating systems ever developed, Access Linux Platform, a software platform that combines the ease-of-use and functionality of Garnet OS with a Linux core, NetFront Mobile Client Suite, a comprehensive client software suite for mobile devices, and NetFront an advanced, full-featured internet browser widely recognised as one of the leading browsers in the world.



Tomonori Watanabe, senior vice president, product strategy management, right, speaks at the press conference while Zubair Rony looks on

of running Word, Excel, Power Point and Adobe Acrobat files, no need of proxy server, live streaming/TV broadcast and Bangla support capability.

Access is a global provider of advanced software technologies

TECH NEWS

Nokia opens 'Care' centre in Dhanmondi

STARTECH DESK

WITH a vision to provide best service to customers Nokia Bangladesh launched its 24th care centre in Dhanmondi located on the 5th floor of Prince Plaza. This newly opened care centre comprises state-of-the-art technology and expertise to handle customers' request and troubleshoot their problems in best possible ways.

Asif Manzur, country care manager, Nokia Bangladesh demonstrated all technical facilities and users' request management strategies of the centre to StarTech. In a conversation he stressed that, this centre disseminates its logistic support to all care centres in Bangladesh. If any centre requires advance technical support they can deliberately contact with this centre to get ultimate solution, he added.



According to Nokia, this centre is capable of rooting out all technical failures of cell phones within twenty-four hours and then allocates extra time for trial phase. Within warranty period a customer can enjoy full parts replacement facility and free servicing. In near future, Nokia Bangladesh envisaged to establish more care centre in the country.

Nokia is a renowned cell

phone manufacturing company and currently acquired the status of world's 6th most valuable brand. According to the recent 'Media'-Synovate survey, Nokia has been identified as the top brand in Asia. The underlying reason for this unprecedented success is Nokia's sensible stance to customers, said Prem Prakash Chad, general manager, Nokia Bangladesh.

TECH NEWS

Researchers store data in bacteria DNA

AP, Fujisawa

THESE days, data get stored on disks, computer chips, hard drives and good old-fashioned paper. Scientists in Japan see something far smaller but more

to produce music, text, video and other content.

While ink may fade and computers may crash, bacterial information lasts as long as a species stays alive possibly a mind-boggling million years according to Professor

physicist published the special theory of relativity.

Genetic coding is so massive that information say, a Shakespeare play can be stashed away somewhere in the gene without affecting an organism's overall appearance and other traits.

But mutation could distort stored data. Tomita says data are stored in four places in the bacteria so the data stay intact, though Katsumi Doi, bacteria expert and Kyushu University professor, is skeptical.

"We may need more time for practical applications," Doi said. "But I love the idea." Translating the Einstein message would require solving the code. But Tomita is the kind of freethinking scientist intrigued by the notion that an extraterrestrial might come across it in the distant future and naturally possess the superior intelligence to quickly solve the code.

Tomita shrugs off the obvious question: "Who in the world is going to read bacteria?"

"Many people never even thought about storing data for thousands of years," Tomita said. "This may sound like a dream. But we're thinking hundreds of millions of years."

Masaru Tomita, who heads the team of researchers at Keio University.

Tomita's team successfully inserted into a common bacterium Albert Einstein's famous 'E equals MC squared' equation and '1905,' the year the Nobel Prize-winning

durable bacteria.

The four characters that represent the genetic coding in DNA work much like digital data. Character combinations can stand for specific letters and symbols so codes in genomes can be translated, or read,

PHOTO TECH



INSIDE THE EARTH

Wearing special glasses, Nobuaki Ohno, research scientist of Earth Simulator Center at Japan Agency for Maritime-Earth Science and Technology displays a 3-D images of liquid metal movement inside the earth at 3 x 3 x 3 meters virtual reality room at their laboratory in Yokohama on May 10. Researchers at the laboratory developed programs to transform digital data of natural phenomena into three dimensional images.

PHOTO: AFP