TECHFOCUS

Mobile Internet

Cutting edge mobility

EDWARD APURBA SINGHA

NO matter what your social identity is you always need to network with others in order to keep yourself informed. On the other hand, you always need an uninterrupted flow of information to take an executive decision in mission critical activities. In order to serve all these purposes you need the Internet because it is a virtual world of everything.

With the introduction of wireless technology, it's no more necessary to stay seated at a particular place to get the Internet service. Most of the portable PCs now have built-in wireless facility to let its users surf the net. Recently cellphones have also come up with wireless Internet access facility. Increasingly mobile ph

mobile Internet service named 'mycitycell ZOOM' for business people and general customers as well. This technology allows subscribers to enjoy high speed Internet from any place within the CityCell network.

'mycitycell ZOOM' is a brand name for data service from CityCell. It includes a number of services such as data, SMS and voice. These services run on CityCell's existing CDMA2000 1X platform. The users get the service with a minimum speed of 38 kbps and 153.6 kbps to the maximum, with 72~80 kbps being the average. CityCell

Subscriber can initiate or receive voice call from the laptop. It's also possible to interchange RIM between CityCell's CDMA2000 1X data card and any CDMA mobile phone. In addition to voice call, subscribers can also send in and receive SMS from the laptop, including multiple SMS options. CityCell presently covers 61 districts and 470 upazilas of the country with simultaneous fibre optics and VSAT backup.

CityCell's package Zoom Saver (no data limit) charges 0.02 taka for every kilobyte; other packages such as Zoom

GP GPRS Modem (left), CityCell CDMA Solution connected to a laptop

one operators are becoming the key players in distributing this service to the people.

Mobile phone operators in developed countries have already included this facility in their service; they are in fact emerging as the potential competitors of ISPs. From technical point of view and keeping in mind the subscriber base, Bangladesh is still at the nascent stage of this connectivity. But this technology holds out a bright future, as the Internet is gradually becoming commonplace in the country.

ow in Bangladesh, CityCell, Grameenphone, Aktel, Teletalk and Warid Telecom offer mobile Internet service to their subscribers. CityCell uses CDMA technology while others the GSM. In this article I'll try to highlight all these services to the StarTech readers.

CityCell

CityCell (Pacific Bangladesh Telecoms Limited) is the trailblazer in cellphone in the country. Now they have introduced a

says the performance of this service is quite impressive when compared to GPRS and EDGE.

A subscriber needs to purchase a RIM (Removable Identification Module) in order to activate the data service. CityCell offers separate data devices for PC and laptop; special software is bundled with each device. Subscribers are required to insert the RIM into the data device. After essential software configuration they get connected to the Internet.

Data devices are of two types--USB data modem and PCMCIA data card. USB data modem can be used with both PC and laptop computer through USB interface. On the other hand, PCMCIA data card can be used only with laptop computers, which are equipped with Type-II PCMCIA slot. It cannot be used with mini PCMCIA slots. Two cell phone models--Nokia 3155 and Nokia 6235--can also be used as the data device.

100 (100MB fixed), Zoom 300 (300MB fixed) and Zoom 3GB (3GB fixed) have Tk 300, 450 and 1500 monthly charge respectively.

Grameenphone

Grameenphone is the first GSM-based cellphone operator in Bangladesh and boasts the largest subscriber base. They have introduced cutting edge mobile
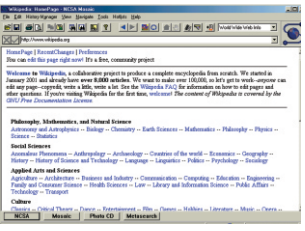
Technology EDGE (Enhanced Data rates for Global Evolution) in order to promote mobile Internet service. According to Grameenphone, EDGE is eight times faster than GPRS.

EDGE technology allows subscribers to download multimedia contents, send in and receive emails and MMS. GrameenPhone offers two different packages for pre-paid and post-paid users.

Package one is available for both prepaid and postpaid subscribers. It's basically pay-as-you-go which means no monthly fixed charge. It only requires browsing charge (Tk

0.02/kb) and content download fee. Content download fee entails price of content and charge for downloading.

Package two is only for post-paid subscribers. Subscribers have to pay a monthly fee of Tk 1,000 for unlimited browsing. Well, they have to bear content download fee separately.

Only GPRS/EDGE enabled cellphones enjoy this service. When a subscriber comes under EDGE coverage, the cellphone indicates it by an icon or indicator. During voice call, EDGE connection gets suspended and automatically resumes once the call is over.

Aktel

Aktel provides data service under the name 'Spice'. It's basically a GPRS technology. Spice allows subscribers to download video clips, animation, polyphonic ring tone, sending/receiving MMS and others. Postpaid customers can browse the Internet using a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant), or use a GPRS enabled handset as a modem to surf net from PC. Presently, Spice service is available in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet and Rajshahi. Two packages are on offer. Package one is available by default and the tariff rate is 15 paisa per KB (including WAP and net browsing). Package two charges Tk 750 a month with no ceiling on browsing.

Teletalk

Teletalk also launched its data service for its subscribers. A subscriber can use their GPRS enabled handset or purchase a GPRS modem to enjoy this service. Basic handset set-up including configure APN is

required to activate the service. GPRS modem comes bundled with special software which the user needs to install in their PC or laptop. Teletalk charges Tk 800/month for the data service.

Warid Telecom

Warid Telecom, the sixth cellphone operator in the country offers data service to its customers. The method to access their service is quite simple and straightforward. If you've bought a Warid connection to access data service, you need not enter the handset's model name and model number into your phone. As soon as you insert the Warid SIM (Subscriber Identity Module) into your cellphone for the first time, it'll automatically initiate a handset configuration request. If the handset is GPRS/EDGE compatible, a flash message with handset configuration settings appears to you. You need to save this message in order to activate the GPRS/EDGE service. Data service charge includes Internet browsing Tk 0.02/KB, WAP Tk 0.02/KB, MMS Tk 5.00/MMS (outgoing only).

Mobile Internet is a promising technology that can pave the way for spreading the Internet across the country. It can also play a pivotal role in narrowing the digital divide.

TECHNEWS

Seminar on interoperability

A promising solution in modern computing

IN this hi-tech age diversified approach in IT has compelled Microsoft to migrate to a new concept called 'interoperability' in order to make it easier for its customers to gain maximum business advantage

In a bid to reveal the basic ideas, Microsoft Bangladesh for the first time organised a seminar on interoperability on June 17. The seminar chiefly targeted different professional groups, such as public sector officials, industry leaders and academicians. Three delegates from Microsoft Asia Pacific enriched the session considerably.

Feroz Mahmud, country manager, Microsoft Bangladesh, formally inaugurated the seminar and highlighted different programs of Microsoft Bangladesh such as partnership learning and unlimited potential for developing skilled human resources in the country.

Tarique Mosaddique Barkatullah, senior systems analyst of Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC), provided an overview of the interoperability challenges in e-governance initiatives in Bangladesh and updated the audience on the ongoing efforts towards a national e-governance interoperability framework.

Oliver Bell, regional technology officer, Microsoft Asia Pacific, in his speech stressed the necessity for interoperability to connect people, data and diverse systems as well as optimising performance of the organizations. "In this complex IT environment, interoperability can add a new dimension to meet the uprising demand of customers", he said.

Steve Mutkoski, local community affairs, Microsoft Asia Pacific, gave a comprehensive overview of standard issues. He said, "Microsoft supports thousands of software and hardware interoperability standards in products. Responding to customer requests, particularly requests from government customers, Microsoft has undertaken to standardise the file format for Office 2007, making the specification available to the broader community without cost. The file format, Open XML, is now an international standard, having been published by Ecma International and is now before ISO/IEC JTC1 for ratification."

Jeff Paine, regional government engagement program manager, Microsoft Asia Pacific, elaborated security issues and IT policy strategies according to Microsoft's standpoint. He said, "Microsoft's vision is to help governments by providing innovate products, tools and sharing knowledge".
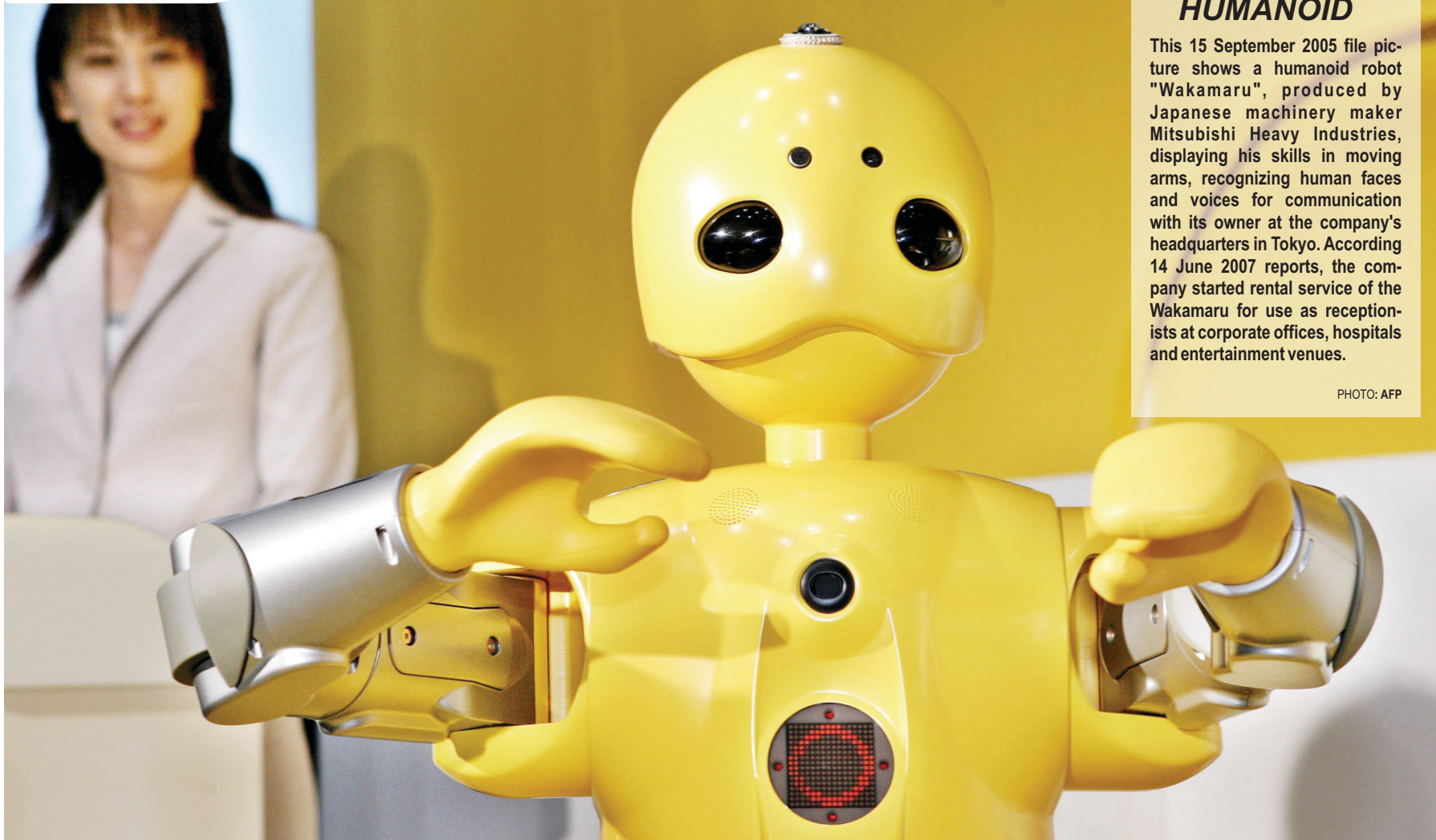
In a friendly conversation with StarTech, both Oliver Bell and Steve Mutkoski talked about interoperability in Bangladesh context. Bell said, "The recent advancement of ICT sector in Bangladesh is quite impressive and interoperability can give a competitive advantage in this regard". Mutkoski emphasised proper technical knowledge to implement interoperability in the country.

Edward Apurba Singha

From right: Jeff Paine, Oliver Bell, Steve Mutkoski at the seminar

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PHOTOTECH

HUMANOID

This 15 September 2005 file picture shows a humanoid robot "Wakamaru", produced by Japanese machinery maker Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, displaying his skills in moving arms, recognizing human faces and voices for communication with its owner at the company's headquarters in Tokyo. According 14 June 2007 reports, the company started rental service of the Wakamaru for use as receptionists at corporate offices, hospitals and entertainment venues.

PHOTO: AFP

TECHNEWS

YouTube to stream videos to iPhones

AFP, San Francisco

APPLE announced Wednesday that YouTube videos will stream directly to iPhones so that users of the soon-to-be launched devices can watch video clips on the go.

Apple said it tailored iPhone software to receive content from the superstar video-sharing website and play it on the device's 3.5-inch (8.89 centimeter) wide display. IPhones go on sale at US Apple and ATT stores June 29.

ATT is the exclusive service provider for the eagerly-awaited devices.

Apple also released an Apple TV software update that lets users of the boxes wirelessly route YouTube videos to their televisions.

"IPhone delivers the

best YouTube mobile experience by far," Apple chief executive Steve Jobs said in a release.

"Now users can enjoy YouTube wherever they are -- on their iPhone, on their Mac (Macintosh computer) or on a widescreen TV in their living room with Apple TV."

Earlier this week, Cupertino, California-based Apple said it "significantly" increased iPhone battery life and upgraded the display from plastic to glass to improve clarity and reduce scratching.

A four-gigabyte model iPhone is priced at 499 dollars and an eight-gigabyte model is priced at 599 dollars.