Star TECH

Dhaka Saturday February 16, 2008

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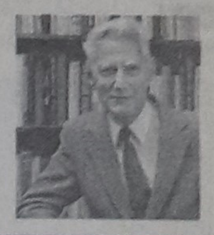
Claude Shannon (April 30, 1916 February 24, 2001)

Claude Elwood Shannon, an American electrical engineer and mathematician, has been called "the father of information theory". Shannon is famous for having founded information theory and both digital computer and digital circuit design theory when he was 21 years-old by way of a master's thesis published in 1937, wherein he articulated that electrical application of Boolean algebra could construct and resolve any logical, numerical relationship. It has been claimed that this was the most important master's thesis of all time.



TECHEXPO

SoftExpo 2008

Software gala heats up

EDWARD APURBA SINGHA

BASIS SoftExpo 2008, the mega exposition of the software industry, is now going on in the city with a view to exploring new avenue for local hi-tech industry. It is also a festival of innovation where exhibitors showcase their high-end products and services.

If you are familiar with modern IT applications, you are supposed to know that software development is an exciting way which helps talents to demonstrate their creativity.

In the near future, when all our activities become fully virtual, our dependency on software will dramatically increase. This phenomenon will lead to a huge surge of innovative software development. Technologically advanced countries now outsource their software development activities. It could be a very lucrative chance for Bangladesh.

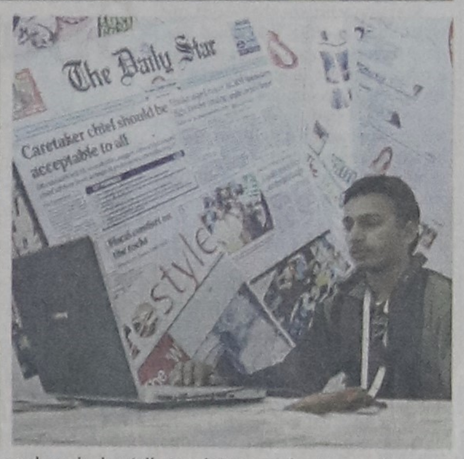
Every year Bangladesh Software and Information Services (BASIS) organises SoftExpo in order to showcase innovations of local talents and attract global IT payers to invest in the local IT industry.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed inaugurated the fair on February 14. He said the importance of ICT for national development is now well established, adding that it is now widely accepted that ICT has become the centre of an economic and social transformation that is affecting all countries.

"In fact, ICT and globalisation have combined to create a new economic and social landscape. In doing so, ICTs have brought fundamental changes in the way enterprises and economics as a whole function", he added.

This year more than 150 local and foreign exhibitors are participating in the fair. Exhibitors at SoftExpo 2008 are multinational software vendors and ICT companies, international ICT associations, local software development houses, successful ICT projects initiated by multinational and local companies, government departments and agencies implementing e-governance projects, ICT training institutes and universities. Apart from regular display, nearly 15 seminars and roundtables will be organised, highlighting issues such as e-governance, e-commerce, internet penetration and ICT4D.

Visitors to this kind of fair generally search for software that is essential and well suited to their day-to-day activities. STM Software Ltd has come up with "Tally 9" software at SoftExpo 2008. It is a popular accounting, inventory and payroll management software and is now available in Bangla. The firm, for the first time, has added value added tax (VAT) analysis and reporting facility to Tally 9.



PHOTOS: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Enthusiastic crowd takes a look at Bangla blog at Somewhere in..'s stall, *top*, latest notebooks on display at Computer Source's pavilion, *bottom-left*, and a visitor checks out the The Daily Star e-paper at it's stall.

Somewhere in..., a Norway-Bangladesh joint venture company, has developed Bangla blog where any person can open their own blog. Other products and services that Somewhere in... is exhibiting at the fair are local community solutions, outsourcing and career related activities.

The Daily Star has introduced e-paper (epaper.thedailystar.net) for the first time in the country. This is an exact replica of the print version of the popular newspaper available online. Readers are now able to enjoy the print flavour of *The Daily Star* on the web. Good navigation system and design have made the website unique. The e-paper is powered by MNHs e-Solutions Ltd. in partnership with *The Daily Star*.

Companies that offer software solutions to telecom industry are also drawing huge crowd at the fair. REVE Systems, a telecom and IP based solutions provider, is exhibiting various cutting edge products such as iTelBilling, iTel ISP Billing, iTel Mobile phone and PC-based soft dialler, iTel IVR, iTel External Router and others. The firm also provides VoIP solutions on open source soft switches like GnuGk and Asterisk.

Flora Systems Limited, a well known IT solutions provider, is showcasing products such as Flora Bank (online banking software), Flora ERP (online ERP software), database application development, rebate form processing, web application development, data entry and conversion etc.

In addition to software display, hardware vendors have also come forward to showcase their products at the fair. Computer Source has put Fujitsu Lifebooks and HP Notebooks on display at their stall. The company also offers a broad array of solutions and services by distributing and marketing IT products from nearly 30 suppliers.

International Office Machines (IOM) Ltd has brought both hardware and software products. IOM is demonstrating "e-Bridge Re-Rite", a software developed for Toshiba e-STUDIO Multi-Function Device (MFD). This software enables the users to convert paper documents to electronic files, like Word, Excel or PDF.

Multimedia companies at the fair have adorned their pavilion with attractive products and services. SW Multimedia Company Ltd, a software firm that basically works for the media, is exhibiting different solutions such as animation, audio/video production, graphic design, desktop publishing, photography and web portal.

Job portals, namely bdjobs.com, aiminlife.com and jobstreet.com, have also showed up at BASIS SofExpo this year. Bdjobs.com, the top visited online career service portal, is exhibiting different services such as online job announcement, online CV bank access, customised e-recruitment solution etc. Aiminlife.com is showing resources for career and manual for online education whereas jobstreet.com has brought different career services.

IT training institutes are offering various programs for people who are planning to step into professional life or upgrade their present status. BASE Limited, a renowned IT training institute, has put on offer various programs and facilities regarding Oracle and RedHat.

Cell phone operator Citycell is displaying its Zoom mobile internet service in the fair. Zoom is based on new age CDMA 2000 1X technology and is now available across the country within Citycell's network. To connect to the internet through Zoom, people need to purchase a special modem or handset to surf the net wirelessly though their RIM card. Citycell says download speed is satisfactory in both stationary and mobile condition.

The BASIS SoftExpo 2008 gained momentum in the evening of the launch day. Several visitors at the exhibition expressed their opinion to StarTech. Rupam, a university student, said, "I'm glad to see the active presence of different universities at SoftExpo this year. It's a unique opportunity for the students to reveal their innovation to the industry players".

Pavel, a software developer, opined that presence of telecom related software should be increased. He said, "In the near future, when mobile operators switch to all IP services, they will require versatile software solutions for the network operation and our young developers can utilise this scope to build up their career".

This year BASIS has taken initiative to kick-start interaction between local and overseas companies through a process called "Match Making". BASIS anticipates that this step will act as a catalyst to draw foreign investment, promoting local innovation in the global market.

The five-day SOFTEXPO has been organised by BASIS with cooperation from Danish IT Industry Association (IT-Brachen), Danish Federation of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (DPSME), Paris Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCIP), UK Trade and Investment and Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) while The Daily Star and Radio Today act as the media partner.

TECHNEWS

Google's Android debuts in Barcelona

AFP, *Barcelona*

THE first mobile phones fitted with Google's Android software platform made their debut at an industry trade show on Monday, a milestone for the internet giant as it looks to dominate the wireless world.

A handful of chip makers -- ARM, Marvell, Qualcomm, NEC, Texas Instruments and ST Microelectronics -- showed off prototype handsets at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona.

Google launched Android last year, hoping to establish its software as the standard operating system for mobile phones and to improve the quality of web-browsing for handset users.

"It's definitely very promising," an analyst for technology research firm Gartner, Carolina Milanesi, told AFP. "This means that we should be on track to see commercial devices in the second half of 2008."

The idea is that Android will lead to radically improved functionality, notably for web browsing, meaning more people will use their mobile phones for internet surfing and other applications.

Internet use on mobile phones can currently be a frustrating experience, with clunky software and slow download speeds.

"There are few phones that provide a compelling web experience," explained a spokesman for Google, Barry Schnitt. "As people use the web more, they'll use Google more and we'll be able to sell more relevant advertising."

Android is being developed by a coalition of 30 handset manufacturers, chip makers and software groups and is based on open-source code, meaning programmers are able to build compatible applications for free.

"The future ability of Android is exciting because it's open-source so it allows developers to come up with the next killer application," said a spokesman for US chip maker Texas Instruments, which demonstrated Android software in a prototype phone.

The Apple iPhone, for example, runs on Apple software and uses Apple applications, while an Android-enabled phone would incorporate applications from any number of developers.

But Google software faces fierce competition from the world's biggest mobile phone maker, Nokia, and its Symbian system.

US software giant Microsoft also has a Windows system for mobiles and a separate consortium is working on an open-source Linux solution.

Android was on display for the first time in only prototype phones. The first handset for consumers from either Taiwan's HTC or US group Motorola is expected in the second half of this year.

Google announced the "Open Handset Alliance" in November last year to develop Android, including China Mobile, HTC, Intel, Motorola, Qualcomm, T-Mobile, Telefonica, LG and eBay.

Gartner's Milanesi stressed that "the road between a prototype and commercial handset is a long one" and said the ultimate test of Android's success would be how easily applications could be used.

The interest in a new software platform from Google also stems from the company's desire to establish its brand in emerging markets.

PHOTO: AFP

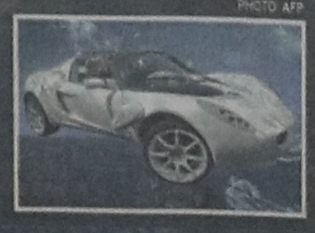
A man tests glasses made by a Danish company Mobintech that connect to the phone, which when worn by a viewer give the impression of watching a 30-inch television at a distance of two metres at the Mobile world congress in Barcelona, left, Computa Maps GPS technology on show, top right, GPS (global positioning system) specialists have begun building handsets with personal navigation software, planning routes and guiding pedestrians with detailed digital maps and a GPS phone called the Nuvifone by US-based manufacturer Garmin, bottom-right, on display.

PHOTO FEATURE

sQUBA

This recent picture released by Swiss car maker Rinspeed on February 15, shows a couple driving a sQuba, the world's first real submersible car built by Rinspeed, that will be presented at the 2008 Geneva car show in March. The zero-emission electric sports car, with power supplied by rechargeable Lithium-Ion batteries, can perform a submerged stabile flight at a depth of 10 meters. Rinspeed boss and James Bond enthusiast Frank M.Rinderknecht said that "For three decades I have tried to imagine how it might be possible to build a car that can fly under water. Now we have made this dream come true."

PHOTO AFP



TECHNEWS

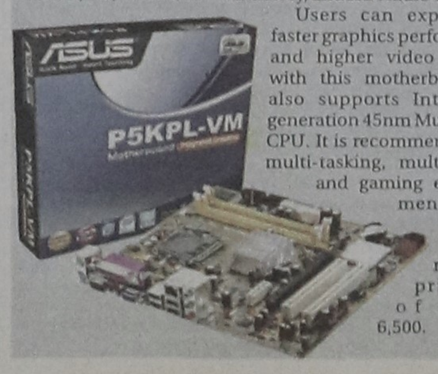
Latest Asus Motherboard unveiled

STARTECH DESK

GLOBAL Brand Pvt. Ltd. (GBPL), one of the leading IT solution providers in Bangladesh, recently unveiled the P5KPL-VM model of ASUS motherboard in the local market.

The P5KPL-VM mainboard, having the Intel G31 chipset inside supports Intel Socket 775 Core 2 Quad, Core 2 Extreme, Core 2 Duo, Pentium D, Pentium 4 and Celeron Processors, says a press release.

It also features 1066(OC)/800/667MHz FSB, PCI Express x16, Serial ATA interface, high performance integrated graphics engine, dual-channel DDR2 1066(OC)/800/667 memory, and HD Audio CODEC.



Users can experience faster graphics performance and higher video quality with this motherboard. It also supports Intel next generation 45nm Multi-Core CPU. It is recommended for multi-tasking, multi-media and gaming environments. The motherboard has a price-tag of Taka 6,500.

Tech-stiles: Clothes that produce power

AP, *Boston*

SOMEDAY, your shirt might be able to power your iPod just by doing the normal stuff expected of a shirt.

Scientists have developed a way to generate electricity by jostling fabric with unbelievably tiny wires woven inside, raising the prospect of textiles that produce power simply by being stretched, rustled or ruffled by a breeze.

The research, described in Thursday's edition of the journal Nature, combines the precision of ultra-small nanotechnology with the elegant principle known as the piezoelectric effect, in which electricity is generated when pressure is applied to certain materials.

While the piezoelectric effect has been understood at least as far back as the 19th century, it is getting creative new looks now, as concerns about energy supplies are inspiring quests for alternative power sources.

For the research described in Nature, Zhong Lin Wang and colleagues at the Georgia Institute of Technology covered individual fibers of fabric with nanowires made of zinc oxide. These wires are only 50 nanometers in diameter 1,800 times thinner than a human hair.

A microfiber nanogenerator composed of a pair of entangled fibers

Alternating fibers are coated with gold. As one strand of the fabric is stretched against another, the nanowires on one fiber rub against the gold-coated ones on the other, like the teeth of two bottle brushes. The resulting tension and pressure generates a piezoelectric charge that is captured by the gold and can be fed into a circuit.

The allure of the idea is that it doesn't take unusual movement to generate usable electricity. Pretty much anything someone does while wearing a piezoelectric shirt would be productive.