

Dynabook

The Dynabook was a conceptual system proposed by Xerox PARC in 1968. The ideas behind it led to the development of the Xerox Alto prototype, which embodied all the elements of a graphical user interface, or GUI, as early as 1972. The Dynabook concept described what is now known as a laptop computer or, a tablet PC or slate computer with nearly eternal battery life and software aimed mostly at giving children access to digital media. Adults could also have used a Dynabook, but the target audience would be children. Alan Kay was the main proponent of the Dynabook concept.



TECHFOCUS

# Archaic law bars online shopping

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E-commerce has become a second name for the internet. Shopping, for most, has always been characterised by tired feet, crowded markets and desperate searches for a good parking spot. All these factors put together take all the enjoyment out of shopping. But with the advent of online shopping, buying and selling is no more a matter than a click of a button, that too from the comfort of your home.

That is the scenario for most countries of the world, including our neighbour, India. For Bangladesh, however, this is a realm that is yet to be explored fully.

A few Bangladeshi websites are available online which cater to this idea. The number, however, is shamefully small. According to Rakib Khan, CEO of Hut Bazar.com, a total of only 37 such online stores are present for Bangladesh, out of which most have already been forced to discontinue owing to lack of customers.

The main aim of these websites, simply put, is to draw at the already weak heartstrings of nostalgic and homesick Bangladeshis living abroad by allowing them to send gift items to their near and dear ones in Bangladesh. Gift items include flowers, cakes, sweets, toys, etc. They even provide you with the option of choosing the specific date that you would like your gift to be delivered. Currently, these websites deliver only to major or specific cities in Bangladesh.

Since items are shipped from within Bangladesh, you can expect complete freshness of your delivered item, which obviously becomes mandatory when delivering food items and flowers.

These companies have links to major stores in Bangladesh and their delivery team purchases the goods from these stores and delivers them to the doorstep of your loved ones.

The business is a highly lucrative one, and profits start pouring in, becoming almost ten-fold within a very short time span.

The downside, however, is that these websites can only cater to customers residing outside Bangladesh. Due to the restrictions on international credit cards to use online, payment for these services becomes impossible for Bangladeshis in Bangladesh. Therefore, the Bangladeshi market cannot be



tapped into at all. Few of those who are really interested have to request relatives living abroad to provide their credit card numbers if there's something that they really need to buy online. This turns out to be more of a pain than an advantage of any sort.

"Absence of payment gateways such as PayPal or E-Gold in Bangladesh reduces our customer market a great deal. This, combined with reduced internet usage by the majority of the Bangladeshi population, owing to lack of basic internet skills, further becomes a cause of concern," says Rakib Khan.

"The media should take a strong step and speak up for allowing the ease of payment gateways in Bangladesh. This would benefit both us as well as the customers," he adds.

Until this hurdle is lifted, these companies could think about accepting cash or cheques from the doorsteps of interested customers. That would also be a valuable service, wouldn't it? Moreover, they can also think of extending their delivery services

to other parts of Bangladesh like small towns, villages, etc.

In fact, why only gifts? The big brand companies of Bangladesh should also make an effort towards online sale of their products. In doing so, they will certainly be remembered in the

prayers of their loyal customers, besides multiplying their own profits. Since payment gateways are still not open, they could accept cash on delivery of the product. Another option could be to allow the use of local credit or debit cards within Bangladesh.

In the meanwhile, fellow Bangladeshi residents, cheer up! Maybe you can't purchase gifts online, but what you can do is buy and sell property and ser-

VICES online. Websites such as Clickbd.com, CellBazaar.com and the new KenaBecha.com.bd allow you to do just that.

With the help of these websites, you can sell any new or used article such as a mobile phone, or laptop at your stated price. You can also sell land, as well as offer services such as computer repair, beauty treatments, etc. All items are categorically classified, so users who are looking to buy can find their items of interest with ease. These websites simply act as a platform for users to sell and buy goods and services. The name and contact number of the seller is provided so that the buyer and seller can mutually decide the mode of payment and delivery themselves.

An interesting feature in the Clickbd.com website is the option for users to auction their items. However, the need to register and become a member in order to buy or sell becomes a bit of a bother for many.

I found Cellbazaar.com the user-friendliest. Its well-categorised options allow users

to search by price range, location or brand name. Moreover, the availability of its mobile phone version makes for easy browsing anytime and anywhere.

Kenabecha.com has quite an appealing and colorful interface. Being still in its initial stages, it has a lot of categories, like "Toys and Baby Products" empty, which is understandable. However, what is not acceptable is the fact that after having set up hoardings of the website on the streets, it has been put on the web incomplete. A number of links within the website were found to be inactive, including links like "How to Buy and Sell". These little details should be carefully thought out and taken care of before putting up a website on the internet.

All in all, I shouldn't be complaining too much. Just the courage of the owners of these websites to have ventured into this new alley of online shopping and trade for Bangladesh deserves great admiration. We hope that they are able to take Bangladeshi e-commerce to a new level.

TECHVIEWS

# New look of Facebook

MAHDIN MAHBOOB

IN an attempt to hold on to its popularity, Facebook, the fastest growing Online Social Networking site, has recently introduced a complete 'new look'. Whether the new look is here to stay or not still remains to be answered, but let's have a sneak peek into what the new look is all about and its share of pros and cons.

Facebook has been developing its new design for the past 6 months and as a part of this process has received feedback from more than 100,000 of its users. One of the principal changes in the new Facebook is an expanded 'Wall' section, which will incorporate feed information about friends' activities as well as the ability to leave comments.

In addition to that, a Publisher feature allows users to add photos, upload videos, or write notes from a single place. Other information, such as applications or photos have been organised into tabs.

Founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg said: "We've made the changes rolling out in order to highlight the most recent and relevant information that users value, give users even more control and ownership over their profiles and simplify the user experience. Facebook's new design makes it a lot easier for users to share information."

The development comes as Facebook and rival MySpace vie to become the central hub of online communications and social networking.

With the new updates, you won't be able to see a member's entire profile on one screen,

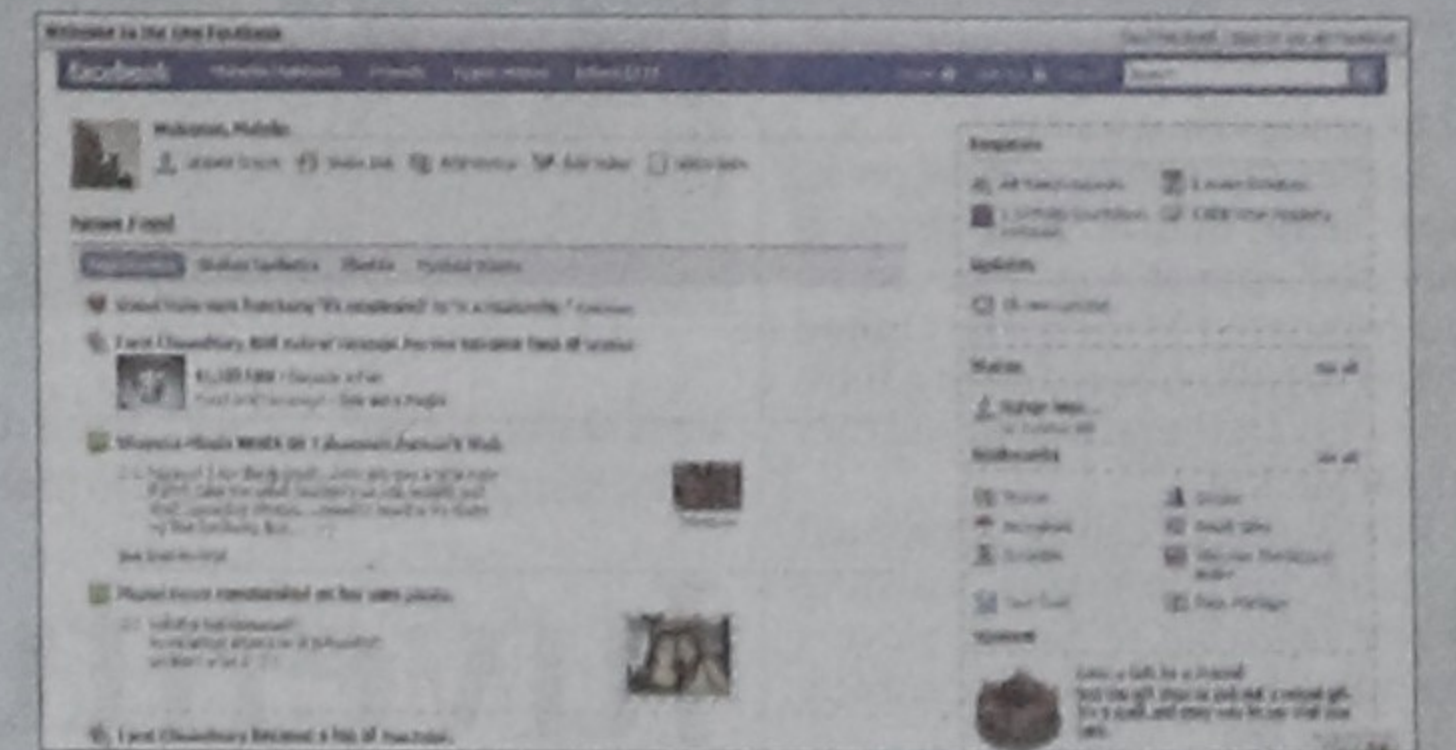
Personal information about someone will be included on one "tab" of a profile, whereas the "wall" - public messages, developer-created applications, News Feed updates, and other activity-related information - will be on a separate tab. A third tab will link to the photos that the member has uploaded. Facebook has also said that members will be able to create separate tabs for their favourite applications.

Part of this is because of technical issues, Facebook has said, telling members that the

and videos. Downloaded applications, such as Text Twirl, will be listed under their own tab, and information that does not change frequently has been relegated to a less visible section of the site.

Most importantly, however, the manifold updates that a user receives about what their friends are up to - known as "feeds" - will be brought together in a single place, making the site cleaner but also more appealing to advertisers.

I personally found the new



changes will make the interface cleaner. "As more and more information is available on Facebook - more photo albums, more applications, and more history - we've realized that Profiles have become cluttered and slow as a result," a release from the site read. "We're trying to make profiles more simple and relevant, while still giving you control over your profile and how you express yourself."

In the 'all-new' Facebook, users will now have more control over their "Walls", the sections of their profiles where friends can leave comments

look of the Facebook 'Home' much less appealing than what it used to be. It seems to be a badly organised notice board with too many notices on it! It might be true that I too might become used to the new 'looks' in the long run, but if the first impression fails to be impressive, I really don't think it will be able to impress later.

Facebook, which has 80 million regular users, is hoping that the new features will reassure users who have become concerned about the amount of clutter on the site, particularly as they store more personal information on their profiles.

# D.Net and RI to enhance computer learning

STARTECH DESK

D.Net (Development Research Network) and Relief International (RI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on July 26 to collaborate their activity on 'Enhancing computer learning programme along with internet connection'.

Nazrul Islam, country director of Relief International, Bangladesh and Dr. Ananya Raihan, executive director of D.Net signed the MoU on behalf of their organization, says a press release.

Dr. Raihan said that to reap the benefits of a new economy and achieved the Millennium Development Goal's, Bangla-

desh needs its young generation to be educated and acquainted with the state-of-the-art knowledge of ICT. It is understandable that with the



The objectives of the collaboration are to promote ICT in a basic education setting and improve the general state of education in Bangladesh, introduce Global Connection Exchange (GCE) program activities, Teacher Professional Development (TPD) training, ICT Youth Leadership Training, Technology Volunteer Corps Training, International students and teacher exchange and many more.

D.Net and Relief International will implement Global Connections and Exchange Program through 20 school based Computer Learning Centers (CLCs) and 27 school based Internet Learning Centers (ILC) in Bangladesh.

poor resource base, it is not an easy task for the government alone to provide facilities and necessary resources for learning ICT skills throughout the country.

PHOTO TECH



## ORGANIC SOLAR CELLS

An employee of Japan's Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) displays a prototype model of leaf and flower shaped organic solar cells, colored green and red, with flexible modules at a solar power exhibition in Tokyo on July 31. The AIST, Tokki Corporation and Mitsubishi Corporation have developed colorful, flexible and light weight film shaped solar batteries.

PHOTO: AFP

TECHNEWS

# A glamorous HP launching

STARTECH DESK

FASHION and technology have always inspired each other and are both at the hub of today's pop culture. In a glamorous event with Bangladesh's fashion industry leader Khaled Khan, HP launched three new notebooks on July 31.

During the event, HP unveiled two inspirational HP Imprint designs. One is the 'Mesh' HP Imprint on the new HP Pavilion dv3000 Entertainment Notebook PC which is HP's first 13.3" Pavilion notebook. The one is the 'Unity' HP Imprint on the Compaq Presario CQ20 Notebook. HP also unveiled its HP2133 Mini-Note PC.

The new mesh patterned graphic line of the notebooks inspired fashion designer Khaled Khan in designing his new clothing.

The HP Pavilion dv3000 Notebook has been basically designed for travellers, gamers and hobbyists, says a press release. It gives mobility and keeps one connected on the go. Available now in Bangladesh at an estimated price of around Tk 1,68,999, the HP Pavilion dv3000 comes with a 13.3" Ultra BrightView wide screen display and offers the latest in Dual Core processor technology to manage any professional or multimedia application.

It also comes with the latest NVIDIA card

to deliver outstanding graphics for gamers and multimedia users. Its Intel Centrino Duo mobile technology ensures extended battery life and a reliable wireless connection. Moreover, a full sized colour matched keyboard enhances ergonomic comfort and ease of use.



The improved security system allows it to memorize multiple passwords, and an integrated Fingerprint Reader offers the latest in biometric technology, providing safer and easier access for users. With its HP 3D DriveGuard it protects the hard drive from data corruption or loss and system

failure caused by operational shock when users are on-the-go.

The 'Unity' HP imprint is available in Bangladesh at an estimated price of around Tk 1,02,900. With an eye-catching design of a smooth, high gloss coating, it will reflect the user's personal technology style.

The Compaq Presario CQ20 Notebook PC offers the latest mobile technology in a versatile notebook that is built to travel. Watching movies can be a real pleasure on its 12.1" diagonal High Definition display with BrightView technology and immerse sound from Altec Lansing speaker system. Users can easily research online, send emails and work on projects at the same time with it.

The full function HP 2133 Mini-Notebook PC has a price range starting from under Tk. 49,900. It is especially designed for the professional youth, who like to play, learn and work anywhere with its integrated 801.11a/b/g or b/gWLAN connectivity.

With a startling weight of 1.19kg, it comes with an 8.9" display and a large full size keyboard. It also provides an option for a 4GB SSD (Solid State Drive) flash module, up to 160GB Hard Disk Drive with Linux as well as Windows Vista Home Basic for a better computing experience. The 3D DriveGuard is also available with this.