Rasmus Lerdorf *November 22, 1968*

Rasmus Lerdorf is a Danish-Greenlandic programmer and is most notable as the creator of the PHP programming language. He authored the first two versions. Lerdorf also participated in the development of later versions of PHP led by a group of developers including Andi Gutmans and Zeev Suraski, who later founded Zend Technologies. In 1993 he graduated from the University of Waterloo with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Systems Design Engineering. Since September 2002, he has been employed by Yahoo! Inc. as an Infrastructure Architecture Engineer.

startech@thedailystar.net

TECHSPOTLIGHT

BASIS SoftExpo 2009

Towards digitalisation

SAMIUL ISLAM RIKTH

EVERY year Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) organises a spectacular event to showcase the magnificent wonders of the Software and IT services industry in Bangladesh.

And this year it was no different.

On January 27 the doors of the Bangladesh and China Friendship Conference Centre (BCFCC) welcomed the public to BASIS SoftExpo 2009 with the theme 'Linking People with Technology'.

The major aim of this year's exposition was to present market potentials of information and communication technologies in Bangladesh, to the international players in different fields like national and international vendors and service providers, investors, development agencies, policy makers and ICT associations.

As many as 115 stalls and nine pavilions of different multinational software vendors and ICT companies, international ICT associations, local software development companies, successful ICT projects initiated by multinational and local companies, government departments and agencies implementing e-Governance projects, ICT training institutes and Universities made the main building of the BCFCC their home for the five-day exhibition.

As you make your way through the entrance of the main building of BCFCC, you are taken aback by the crowd that built up near the IT firm-Genuity System LTD who were exhibiting its unique gPlex Softswitch Call centre Solution GFax- Virtual Fax Service Professional IT Training.

Nearby, major sponsor Grameen Phone was also showcasing its different facilities offered to its customers like BillPay, Cell Bazar, CIC Heathline, Data Service and Basic GSM.

Just beside the Grameen Phone pavilion, somewhere in... which is an outsourcing service firm was exhibiting its exceptional mobile and web community for people, businesses and different service sectors in both Bangla and English. In other words it's another version of facebook, which is local and gives you the insides of what is happening within your local community via the net or even thorough a simple SMS. So visit somewhereinbangladesh.net/community and find out more about this new and fun experience.

Desktop Computer Connection Ltd displayed the Desktop e-Banking system at this year's fair which has been designed to meet the challenges of a new banking era. The Desktop e-Banking is integrated, multi-user, multi-tasking, multi-currency banking application software that is being used in many major banks making the entire banking system much more flexible and easier.

Not only does this making banking easier, initiatives like this and many more also help us achieve the target of reaching a digital Bangladesh by 2021.

PHOTOS: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Visitors browse stalls at the SoftExpo 2009 at Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre

Another such initiative that will help us achieve a more modern and hi-tech country is e-Commerce. Several stalls were set up by different companies to provide the facility of e-Commerce while at the same time provide different kind of e-commerce solution. ClickBD Limited is one of the major companies where you can sell or buy almost anything new or secondhand in an exciting e-commerce format. Apart from that companies like Winux Soft Ltd, US Software Ltd, Roots Information Technology and Moon Networks.

Also after the successful parliamentary elections, the idea of e-Governance has also hit the market at a high pace. Several companies were providing methods and solutions to actually implement this idea taking us another step closer to a digital Bangladesh.

Solitus, a company of Agree Ya Solutions from USA, Mi3, Inc as well as TechnoVista Ltd were focusing on e-Governance solutions, e-Government and e-Government applications respectively apart from providing business software and solutions. Another company, Dohatech New Media displayed its Voter Registration Enrolment and Multi Biometric Duplicate Detection System.

Safety and security were another major highlight at this year's grand event. Singaporean company ACTAtek Pte Limited displayed its very own ACTAtek, a world class SNMP and LDAP compatible SSL-protected Access Control Time Attendance Linux web-based Biometrics and RFID, Smartcard and PIN System. It's highly secured and does not need a costly and complex dedicated architecture due to all the software and hardware being built-in to the system. It's also waterproof and this was literally explained within the stall.

Another security device that was displayed that makes your shop, home or office entirely secured is Third Eye, designed and developed by Maayas Engineering and Technology.

ACTAtek Pte Limited was not the only foreign company at the fair. Companies from US, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Russia all showcased their products and IT enabled services. Also at the same time many tech diplomats from different countries spoke at various seminars held throughout the five-day event.

Further down, American International University of Bangladesh and Daffodil University set up stalls to showcase their own products and services. However, it was the stall set up by United International University (UIU) that created the entire buzz.

The stall put up by the Department of Computer and Engineering of UIU displayed several products and devices that awes you like an Unmanned Vehicle, Walking and Dancing Robot, Industrial Robotic hand, Car Security System using GSM and even a UIU energy meter reading device. The specialty of all these devices is it was built by the students and lecturers of UIU.

Throughout the entire fair many IT based firms were offering different kinds of promotions and discounts on various training programmes to attract the students who were making the most of this entire exhibition without having to pay an entrance fee were enjoying the latest advancements in the software and IT sector of Bangladesh leading to digitalisation.

However, a digital Bangladesh cannot be achieved only through the discoveries of different technologies and services. We, the people of the country need to value our local entrepreneurs and software developers. At the same time, the government needs to be supportive and take certain measures to make it easy and flexible for the Software and IT services industry within the nation to flourish not only in the local market but at the global market as well.

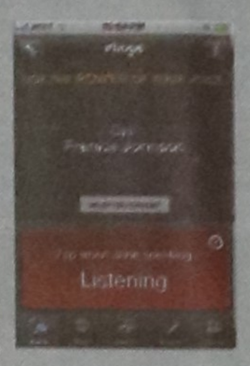
So if you want to see what will take us another step closer to a more modern and digital Bangladesh, I suggest you grab your shoes straightaway and make your way to BCFCC because tomorrow is this last day of this mega exposition.

TECHVIEWS

Future phones to read your voice & gesture

MAHDIN MAHBOOB

ACCORDING to a report by Priya Ganapati of Wired Dot Com, buttons on Cell Phones are pretty much on their way out. Five years from now, it is likely that the mobile phone you will be holding will be a smooth, sleek *brick* a piece of metal and plastic with a few grooves in it and little more.



Like Apple's iPhone, it will be mostly display; unlike the iPhone, it will be much more than *just* a touchscreen - it will respond to voice commands and gestures as well as touch.

Specialists predict that Mobile interface design has to mimic the touch, sight, gesture and auditory feeds that we use to interact with our environment. That means speaking to your phone rather than typing, pointing with your finger instead of clicking on buttons, and gesturing instead of touching. You could listen to music, access the internet, use the camera and shop for gadgets by just telling your phone what you want to do, by waving your fingers at it, or by aiming its camera at an object you're interested in buying.

Over the last few years, advances in display technology and processing power have turned smartphones into capable and smaller versions of computers. As a result, phones have gone beyond traditional audio communication and texting to support a wide range of multimedia and office applications.

The one thing that hasn't changed, until recently, is the tiny keypad. Sure, there have been some tweaks, such as T9 predictive text input that cuts down on the time it takes to type, a QWERTY keyboard instead of a 12-key one, or the touchscreen version of a keyboard found on the iPhone. But basically, the act of telling your phone what to do still involves the use of your fingers, specially your thumbs!

Experts say the industry needs a new wave of interface technologies to transform how we relate to our phones. The traditional keypads and scroll wheels will give way to advanced speech recognition and motion sensors.

In the future, instead of a single large screen that is fragile and smudged by fingerprints, phone designers could create products with multiple touch screens.

Users could also interact with their phone by simply speaking to it using technology from companies such as Massachusetts (USA) based Vlingo.

Vlingo's application allows users to command their phones by voice. That could enable you to speak the URLs for web pages or dictate e-mail messages!

Natural speech recognition has long been a challenging affair for human-computer interface researchers. Most devices with speech-recognition capabilities require users to speak commands in an artificially clear way. They also tend to have high error rates, leading to unpopularity.

Unlike conventional voice-recognition technologies, which require specific applications built to recognize selected language commands, Vlingo uses a more open-ended approach.

User voice commands are captured as audio files and transferred over the wireless connection to a server, where they're processed. The technology personalizes itself for each individual user, recognizing and training itself based on the individual user's speech patterns.

"If you say Boston and it shows up as Austin you can correct it on screen," says Vlingo CEO Dave Grannan. "And when you make the correction you are training the system."

This new technology would also mean there is absolutely no need to memorize a list of commands or change the way you speak!

Information Source: Wired.Com

TECHNEWS

SKorea claims advance dog cloning

AFP, *Seoul*

A South Korean bio-engineering company Thursday claimed a world first, saying it has successfully cloned dogs using stem cells derived from fat tissue.

RNL Bio said two puppies were cloned using stem cells derived from adipose tissue, which was taken from a beagle.

The firm said it was the first time that dogs have been cloned from adipose stem cells rather than from somatic cells.

RNL Bio said it extracted fat tissue from the beagle last October, isolated and expanded stem cells from it and developed 84 cloned embryos.

The embryos were transplanted into five surrogate mother dogs on November 10 and one of the five produced two clones, named Magic and Stem.

"RNL Bio achieved similar cloning efficiency with stem cells to that of conventional method (using somatic cells)," the company said in a statement.

Independent confirmation of the reported achievement was not available.

The company handed out pictures of the puppies but said it did not show them in public for fear that the surrogate mother dogs would get excited and harm them.

Park Se-Pill, a cloning expert not linked to RNL Bio, said the apparent technological breakthrough would diversify methods for cloning pets and cut costs.

"It also raises the possibility of pet cloning turning into a full-fledged industry," he added.

The firm said stem cells derived from adipose tissue have great potential in treating Alzheimer's, diabetes, osteoarthritis and other diseases in humans.

RNL Bio last year arranged the re-creation of a pitbull terrier for a US woman in what it claimed was the world's first commercial cloning. Researchers at that time used the dead dog's refrigerated ear tissue to create the clones.

PHOTO

THE VAN DE GRAAFF EFFECT

Fair hostess Tanja has her hair electrified as she touches a Van de Graaff generator to promote the enertec International Trade Fair for Energy on January 23 at the fair grounds in Leipzig, eastern Germany. The fair focused on different offers ranging from energy supply over energy services, power and power station engineering, renewable energies to instrumentation and control technology, geodata infrastructures and geoinformation systems for power and environmental issues.

PHOTO: AFP

TECHNEWS

Asus launches quality graphics solutions

STARTECH DESK

One of the world's quality graphic solutions, ASUS, recently launched the EAH4670 series of the latest ATI Radeon™ HD 4670 GPU graphics card specially designed for discerning users looking for enhanced home theatre experiences.

The special EAH4670/HTP/512MD3 is equipped with a large-sized 512MB of onboard memory designed for feature-rich DirectX 10.1 gaming and the finest multimedia playback at ultra-high resolutions.

The series (EAH4670) utilizes a specially designed fansink, which effectively drives away heat from the graphics card.

Other special features added in the graphics card are HDCP compliant, ATI CrossFireX Technology, Dual-link DVI support, ATI PowerPlay technology and HDTV-out etc.

Global Brand Pvt Ltd is the distributor of the latest series and the price is TK. 10,500.