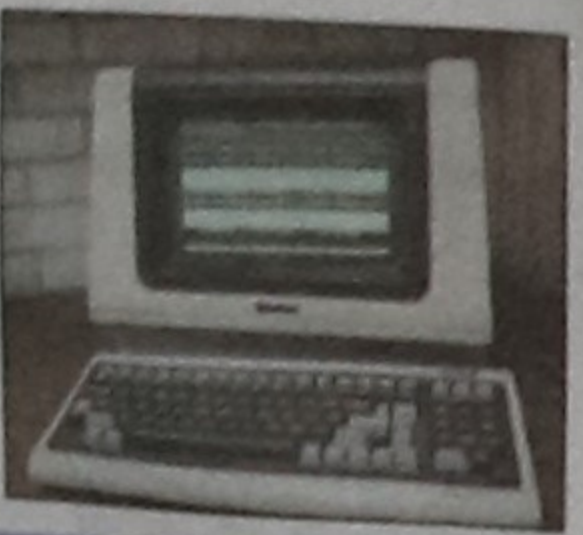




A computer terminal is an electronic or electromechanical hardware device that is used for entering data into, and displaying data from, a computer or a computing system. Early terminals were inexpensive devices but very slow compared to punch cards or paper tape for input, but as the technology improved and video displays were introduced, terminals pushed these older forms of interaction from the industry. A related development was timesharing systems, which evolved in parallel and made up for any inefficiencies of the user's typing ability with the ability to support multiple users on the same machine, each at their own terminal.



TECH EXPO

Towards digitalisation

BCS Digital Expo 2009 continues until Saturday

SAMIUL ISLAM RIKTH

THE world is heading towards complete digitalisation. And in this case, Bangladesh is NOT lagging behind.

Over the recent months, Bangladesh has taken several initiatives in the form of different kinds of fairs, events, seminars and many other mediums focussing on a digital lifestyle.

And keeping that very focus in mind, Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS) in cooperation with ICT Business Promotion Council of the Ministry of Science and ICT (Information and Communication Technology), yet again, has created immense buzz by organising another four-day grand exhibition at the Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre (BCFCC).

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by cutting the ribbons on March 25, inaugurated this magnificent exposition called BCS Digital Expo 2009, leading to a modern world showcasing a digital lifestyle.

Keeping in line with their target, the theme of this year's expo is "Towards a Digital Bangladesh". The aim behind this expo is to create a digital connection and interaction between the country's sci-tech industry and the people, in order to make the nation more aware of how to experience and enjoy a digital life using different kinds of technologies for the daily activities.

A total of 62 stalls and 16 pavilions (put up by 54 local and foreign exhibitors) have spread over the 200,000 square feet of the venue displaying computers, notebooks, mobiles, home theatre systems, HDTV, gaming consoles, home networking and security systems, digital kitchen appliances, digital fashion, technology in cars, imaging products, media streaming and many other modern products which makes life simple and easy for people from various walks of life.

One of the biggest attraction this year's BCS Digital Expo is offering of the system of E-ticketing. This is the process of pre-booking your single or season ticket via a single click over the net. By booking your ticket online, you can also get a 50% discount. By doing so, the use of the internet is being promoted, which is a huge step in contributing to digitalisation.

Laptops and notebooks were being displayed in almost every stalls and pavilions. Discount and freebies are being offered along with the purchase of different models of notebooks.

Lenova, one of the major sponsors for this year's grand exposition displayed a wide range of their laptops which could be assessed, accessed and browsed by the visitors.

Apart from that, Acer, Apple and Toshiba have various models of their own notebooks on display. Companies like Ryans, Computer Source,



Comp Valley, Dreamland Computers amongst many are following the same trend by exhibiting laptops of HP, ASUS, DELL, BenQ and Fujitsu in their stalls and pavilions.

Another pavilion set up by Intel catches the eye a great deal. This is because on display they have their new Intel Core i7 Processor Extreme as well as their Intel Core 2 Quad Processor Q9400. Along with their displays, they are also offering the visitors a chance to actually experience digitalisation via playing different games on the fastest desktop processors on the planet.

The pavilion put up by Daffodil is also highly impressive. Within their pavilion they have settled in



and automotive after sales service.

Aktek is also participating in this year's fair. They have been promoting their services such as Aktek Call Blocks, Aktek Directory Service, Aktek Phone Backup, Instant Internet and Googoon. They are also sponsoring this year's BCS Digital Expo 2009.

Several software companies have taken part to bring the world's various types of softwares to help make different sectors like banking, government, hospitality, education, and even training more interactive, modern and digitalised. The companies include DataSoft Systems Bangladesh Limited, Orange System, Unique Business Systems and many



their variety of business activities, which has grown rapidly overtime and benefitted the ICT industry massively. The concerns under Daffodil include Daffodil Computers Ltd, Daffodil Software Ltd, Daffodil Web & E-Commerce, Daffodil International University, and Daffodil TechnoKids amongst many more ICT and education ventures.

The Banglalion Company has also been creating a lot of hype within the fair as they were introducing WiMAX in Bangladesh for the 1st time at 2.5 Ghz. WiMAX which refers to Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access which provides a speedy wireless internet line with up-to-date wireless broadband technology and nationwide coverage. This will improve the way we live, work and play.

Banglalion is also the ISP provider for the BCS Digital Expo and provides the Wi-Fi connection throughout the venue.

LCD monitors along with digital cameras/camcorders and printers were also highlighted at this year's exposition. Samsung, another major sponsor is flaunting these products within their pavilion.

Jan Associates, the sole distributor of Canon products were also displaying their variety of Canon Digital & SLR camera, Canon Bubble Jet & Laser printers, Large Format Printer, Scanner, and Multimedia Projector.

Even a stall by Rahimafrooz Distribution Ltd were showcasing their different products ranging from batteries, tyres, lubricants, emergency power products, CNG conversion and re-fuelling stations

more. In congruent with the theme of this grand fair, several seminars, roundtable discussions and a ramp and dj show have been organised which is open for all to attend. A few have already taken place, however there are many more in line that can still be attended.

Roundtable discussions on "Digital Governance: Public Services at Doorstep" and "ICT for Education: Foundation for Digital Bangladesh" are being held today from 10am to 12:30pm and 3pm to 5:30pm today. There is even a ramp and dj show for all to attend today between 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

Apart from that another roundtable discussion on "Connecting People: Priority for Digital Bangladesh" is due to be held tomorrow from 10:30am to 1:30pm. Tomorrow is also the last day of the fair, and to end this grand fair on a high note, President Zillur Rahman is expected to attend as a chief guest in the concluding programme.

This mega exposition is a true example that explains our genuineness and sincerity of achieving a digital Bangladesh as an entire nation. By organising more similar fairs and discovering and introducing different technologies and softwares we can make the people of our country more aware of a more contemporary lifestyle and get them adapted to the different appliances and gadgets that make life easy, simple and digital.

TECH NEWS

Facebook vows 'improvements' after user back

AFP, Washington

FACED with a torrent of complaints over its latest redesign, the social networking hub Facebook has vowed a series of "improvements" to eliminate clutter and make the website more user friendly.

"Since we launched Facebook's home page design, we've received thousands of emails, Wall posts and comments from you along with direct feedback from all of our friends and family," product director Christopher Cox said in a blog post late Tuesday.

Cox pointed to several areas "where we're focusing on improvements immediately and over the next several weeks," after the site earlier this month introduced a busier, twitter-like feed on its popular networking site.

"We've heard feedback that there is a lot of application content appearing in the stream. We will be giving you tools to control and reduce application content that your friends share into your stream," Cox wrote.

Rather than reload the page in order to see new posts, Facebook will introduce "the ability to turn on auto updating in the near future so you no longer need to refresh the page," he said.

Photo tags, or notifications that pictures of a user's "friends" have been posted, will also be added to the stream of updates on the

main page in the coming weeks, Cox said.

Improvements were also being made to a new "Highlights" section on the homepage so it will "update more frequently and will show you more content throughout the day to mirror more closely the content that the earlier news feed provided."

The social networking site has ballooned in popularity since it was begun in 2004, and now has an estimated 175 million users.

However, a series of revamps in recent months has left many users disgruntled and



sparked a legion of anti-change groups on the site.

"Redesigns are generally hard to manage, in part because change is always hard and in part because we may miss improvements that any individual user may like to see," Cox admitted.

"With the recent home page changes, we're trying to present the right balance between what's happening right now and what's interesting over a longer period of time."

TECH NEWS

Robot brings hope to kids with learning difficulties

AFP, Maryland

A robot named Cosmo has become six-year-old Kevin Fitzgerald's unlikely ally in his uphill everyday battle with developmental difficulties.

At a strip mall clinic in suburban Maryland, Kevin is at the unlikely intersection of new efforts to treat symptoms of autism, cerebral palsy and other developmental disorders with robotics and computer work.

Here, he scrambles onto a swivel chair to examine a half-meter- (1.6-foot-) tall robot on the table in front of him.

Prodding four brightly-colored buttons near the robot's feet, he directs a cartoon version of the machine around a computer monitor, furtively glancing up at the real thing for encouragement.

At just 18-months-old, Kevin showed the first signs of learning difficulties, which were later diagnosed as developmental dyspraxia.

"It is like having a stroke," his mother Patty Fitzgerald explained. "His brain is intact, but his body doesn't do what he wants it to do."

Some specific skills -- like pronouncing consonants, matching cause and effect or grasping relative concepts like better and faster -- can be depressingly difficult for him to master.

But for the last year, a small blue-and-yellow android called Cosmo has offered some hope. Programmed to respond to body movements, voice activation, or a four-button-panel dubbed "mission control," Cosmo is designed to teach basic behavioral and physical skills.

It can gesticulate, reproduce phrases and move around when prompted. It also cheers and gives clues to help children complete specific tasks. As a piece of engineering, Cosmo is unspectacular. It has just nine moving joints -- a number that might overwhelm robotics buffs. But Cosmo's potential to help children has caught the attention of Minnesota's globally-acclaimed Mayo Clinic. There investigators are conducting a second phase medical trial to see if the robot can help kids with cerebral palsy develop movements -- such as twisting the wrist -- more quickly than traditional methods. "It is going extremely well," said Krista Coleman-Wood, a physical therapist at Mayo's biomechanical and motion analysis laboratory. Wearing a glove fitted with sensors, children are asked to make movements that copy and are copied by Cosmo, building up muscle tissue and improving motor planning. According to Coleman-Wood, it is too early to say if children make more progress with the robot than through traditional physical therapy, but fun levels are clearly in the robot's favor. "Imagine lifting and moving your wrist

repeatedly, it gets boring very quickly... (with Cosmo) there is cognitive engagement the children are engaged," Coleman-Wood said.

Cosmo's designers hope a successful trial will mark a huge leap forward for robot-aided therapy.

The robot's inventor, Corinna Lathan, believes it can vastly improve on traditional and computer-based learning, serving simultaneously as a toy, a friend and a teacher.

"Manipulating a mouse or a keyboard is not the same as directly manipulating your environment," said Lathan, a graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology who also plans experiments for NASA through her research and development firm AnthroTronix.

"There is a lot of research that indicates if you want to learn social skills or spatial skills, that interacting in a three dimensional space, not just on flat screen or computer (is helpful)."

"With the robot you can actually move from cause and effect... to other developmental skills (and relative concepts), you can move it round something, you can move it faster."

According to Lathan, Cosmo can also help improve behavioral problems, such as

lack of focus, which frequently accompany learning disabilities.

"The idea is that rather than hiding in front of a computer you are actually starting to interact with a peer and the hope is that that starts to transfer to other peers, human peers -- adults, care givers, parents," she said. Five years after Kevin started therapy, Patty Fitzgerald says the last 12 months with Cosmo have proven revolutionary. "When we first started there would be times when I could not get him out of the car if he knew it would be something challenging. Now if I mention that Cosmo is going to be here, or the computer, he comes running down the hallway." According to Fitzgerald, Kevin's progress could allow him to continue to attend conventional schools, even if some adaptations are necessary. "We were expecting improvement in behavior, being able to follow the rules, being able to share and take turns, but he has picked up some reading skills and some counting skills and he can write his name."

"Family life is much better, we can go to a restaurant because we can discuss the fact that you don't just throw your silverware on the floor, you do use a spoon instead of your hands," she added.

And her long-term goals are now a bit bolder. "We would love to see him as an adult man, working a job, having a family, that kind of thing, so, as much as he can possibly learn: that is our goal."



Six-year-old Kevin Fitzgerald uses the four-button-panel dubbed "mission control" to direct a cartoon version of robot Cosmo around a computer screen with his therapist Carole Samango-Sprousse at a clinic in Crofton, Maryland, on March 16, 2009. Photo: AFP

PHOTO



ROBOTIC FISH

This file picture taken on October 7, 2005 in London shows a robotic fish swimming around its tank at The London Aquarium. A shoal of robotic fish which can detect pollution in the water are set to be released into the sea off Spain, British scientists said Thursday March 19, 2009. The fish, which are some 1.5 metres long and resemble carp, will be fitted with detectors which can identify the sources of pollution, such as ship fuel or chemicals in the water.