

Xerox Alto

The Xerox Alto was an early personal computer developed at Xerox PARC in 1973. It was the first computer to use the desktop metaphor and graphical user interface (GUI). It was not a commercial product, but several thousands units were built and were heavily used at PARC and at several universities for many years. The Alto greatly influenced the design of personal computers in the following decades, notably the Macintosh and the first Sun workstations. It is now very rare and a valuable collector's item. The Alto was first conceptualized in 1972.



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TECHVIEWS

Making digital Bangladesh: No time to waste



TIM NURUL KABIR

THE present government took office with the vision of creating digital Bangladesh. There seems to be genuine interest for implementing the commitment made by the ruling party in its manifesto. Surely, it is an encouraging sign.

In the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), it was decided that a knowledge-based society would be developed throughout the world by 2015, which is in line with the government's decision of building a digital Bangladesh by 2021.

There has to be a transformation to a digital system in infrastructure, governance and education, the three most vital areas for the growth of a nation. The government has to be prudent in taking steps to empower the citizens. All Bangladeshis must have access to ICT, and the skills to use it, in digital Bangladesh.

To transform the government, we have to have e-readiness. The issues impeding the growth of the hardware and software sectors must be resolved. Bangladeshi businesses, especially SMEs, need to be able to transact through credit card over the internet and/or mobile phone. New technologies such as WiMax can be

integrated into the overall system.

In digital Bangladesh, we envision that the government will have the capacity to deliver services to citizens through the Internet, radio and TV, and also to make its internal operations more efficient and transparent through the use of ICTs. In the health sector, we hope that ICTs will be used for connecting relevant healthcare service providers and for connecting doctors with patients in remote areas.

In the education sector, utilisation of information technologies and communication networks for dissemination and exchange of knowledge must be present. The agriculture sector can grow phenomenally with proper implementation of IT. Land management can be properly done through IT as well.

In digital Bangladesh, we hope a transformation will occur in the realm of commerce and industry. ICT can be used for marketing and promotion of products, for increasing internal efficiency, and for communication and transaction between businesses.

It is essential that the software and hardware industry of Bangladesh becomes a part of the global supply chain for ICT products and services, while serving as a platform for enabling the above goals in the digital age. A communica-

tion infrastructure that allows ICT-based services to be deployed equitably throughout the nation will make digital Bangladesh a reality.

Essentially, there has to be implementation of ICT in virtually every sector -- agriculture to government budgeting, port management to National Board of Revenue's tax management, and media to security management.

In recent times, we have witnessed growing security threats in our country. Information technology can be a very useful tool in preventing a large catastrophe from taking place. A digital database containing fingerprints can be a tool for fighting possible threats.

In order to create digital Bangladesh, the present government can start by looking closely into all the previous ICT policies and take prudent steps. The ICT ministry and its subsidiary, Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC), should be strengthened. Skilled manpower needs to be developed. We need to train our teachers. We need to look at the best practices around the world when it comes to using ICT for development to better understand how we can incorporate those in to our system. Estonia is a great example, which we can follow in terms of ICT usage in different aspects of

government and social life.

The government's promise for a better tomorrow though the promised 'dinbodol' can be fulfilled through an honest desire for the creation of a digital Bangladesh. All the relevant stakeholders must be brought to a common platform. A chief Information officer should be appointed for the proper and successful management of the project.

Making digital Bangladesh will take united effort. The private sector, NGOs and grassroots organisations need to be involved in this endeavour. Only through joint effort can we create a truly digital nation. Public-private partnership must be present.

The Millennium Development Goal of the UN suggests the making of an IT village. In accordance with this goal, we have to be a strong member of the global society. For that, we must synchronise our plans with global initiatives and work hard. Our actions plans need to be time bound and specific, and strong and accountable program management has to be present. The future awaits us with all its wonderful opportunities; the onus is on us to take the right step.

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TECHSEMINAR

HP spotlights tech innovations

STARTECH DESK

HEWLETT-Packard (HP) Imaging and Printing Group arranged an informative session on technology update at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on April 13. Over 170 corporate customers participated in the session.

In the session HP claimed to be the largest IT equipment manufacturer in the world with over \$110.4 billion earned in revenue in the fourth quarter of the last fiscal year.

It also said HP is ranked No 1 in the world in Mono and Color Laser printers, scanners, large format printers, print servers, ink and laser supplies. HP has supplied over 525 million printers worldwide; among them are over 100 million LaserJet printers.

Irving OH, general manager AEC of HP, Shabbir Shafiuallah, country business development manager IPG-Bangladesh, Sarower Chowdhury, partner business manager IPG-Bangladesh gave presentations on how HP is offering their customers more value for money and shared few examples how customers worldwide benefited by using HP.

They highlighted the inventions that HP has incorporated into their products. They also said HP printers use unique print languages in its device drivers, which reduce the load on customers office network and deliver much faster output with superior print quality.

Using HP PhotoREt technology, HP



inkjet printers can deliver upto 1.2 million directly printable colours, which is the highest in the industry. HP Print Cartridges uses unique state of the technology chemically grown toner particles in their LaserJet Print Cartridges, which delivers more crisp, vibrant and live images.

During the event AK Azad, partner business manager and Asaduzzaman, supplies channel development for Hewlett-Packard Bangladesh demonstrated how to check for the anti-tampering seal before buying any HP print cartridges and verify it by logging onto www.checkgenuine.com.

The informative session ended with a lucrative raffle draw. Four guests from the audience received HP printers and all-in-ones by the courtesy of HP Premium Partners Flora Distributions Ltd, Multilink International Company Ltd, Techvalley Computers Ltd and Trust Solutions Ltd.

TECHNEWS

US scientists plan greenhouses on the Moon



AFP, Arizona

ASTRONAUTS' meals have come a long way from the freeze-dried powders and semi-liquid pastes of decades ago: now US scientists want to grow vegetables in mini-greenhouses on the Moon.

Although space fare has steadily improved over time, a team of scientists says the best is yet to come.

They look forward to when residents of future lunar or even Martian outposts can dine on luxuries such as fresh vegetables.

Paragon Space Development Corporation has unveiled what it called the first step toward growing flowers -- and eventually food -- on the Moon.

Paragon, an Arizona company that has partnered with NASA in previous experiments on the Space Shuttle and International Space Station, calls it a "Lunar Oasis".

This is a sealed greenhouse that looks like a bell jar encased in a 1.5 foot (46-centimetre) tall

triangular aluminum frame.

It is designed to safely land a laboratory plant on the lunar surface, and protect it while it grows.

The miniature greenhouse is to be launched into space by Odyssey Moon Ltd, a participant in the Google Lunar X Prize. This competition offers 20 million dollars to any entrant who can launch, land and operate a rover on the lunar surface.

Paragon officials say future testing of the "Lunar Oasis" will be driven by Odyssey's flight schedule, which will not happen until 2012 at the earliest.

When it does lift off the greenhouse will contain the seeds of Brassica, a hardy plant related to Brussels sprouts and cabbage and used in the production of cooking oil and livestock feed.

Because Brassica goes from seed to flower in just 14 days, it can complete its life cycle in a single lunar night.

"Colonizing the Moon or Mars seems so far away, but it is important that we do this research now," Paragon president Jane Poynter told AFP.

"It takes a long time to get a lot of research, and to get integrated, reliable efficient systems" before colonists move in, she said.

NASA, which will retire its Space Shuttle fleet at the end of 2010, has committed to two new goals: returning astronauts to the Moon by 2020, and a manned mission to Mars by 2030.

"I was pleased to see this (project) put together by Paragon," said Gene A. Giacomelli, a professor at the University of Arizona Department of Plant Sciences.

"NASA has pulled back on funding for bio-regenerative life support systems, and most of the centers in the US that had been doing that research had stopped."

Giacomelli and students at the university's Controlled Environment Agriculture Center (CEAC) are working on their own as yet-unfunded lunar greenhouse.



YOUTUBE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Images from videos of musicians are projected onto the ceiling and walls of Carnegie Hall during intermission of the YouTube Symphony Orchestra performance April 15, 2009 in New York. It is the first orchestra to be selected entirely through auditions on-line.

PHOTO: AFP

TECHNEWS

Double A paper now available at CSL outlets

STARTECH REPORT

THE hassle people face to buy printer and paper from two different shops is set to disappear as from now on all the outlets of Computer Source Ltd (CSL) will have Double A paper for consumers.

The frontrunner in introducing new technologies in Bangladesh, Computer Source announced this at its head office in Dhanmondi at a press conference recently.

Mirza Shahadat Hossain, business head of Computer Source Ltd, said, "We received complaints from our clients that they were to go to one place to buy printer and to another place for papers. It would take extra time and efforts."

"To rid the consumers of this hassle, we've decided to be an authorised distributor of Double A and ensure that the papers are available at all our outlets," he

added. "Currently Double A is the most popular brand of paper used for printing both at work and home. The paper is made from farmed-tree in Thailand. Besides, it is completely environment friendly," said AU Khan Jewel, director for accounts, sales and distributor of Computer Source.

Jewel, referring to the dishonest traders, said, "Many of the dealers steal papers from a packet of 500 pieces and charge the customers Tk 300 for 500 pieces. Sometimes they cheat consumers with duplicate papers. I am assuring you this will not happen at our show-

rooms."

He suggested the customers check the batch number written on the front cover before purchasing any Double A product.

Among the others Bangladesh Country Manager of Double A Company, Nadim Adnan Shams, was present at the press conference.

