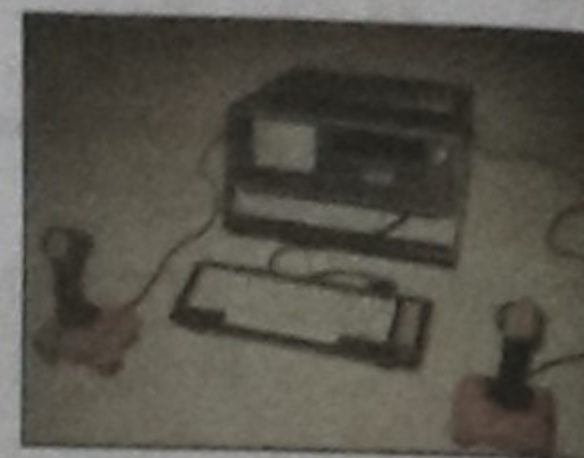


Commodore SX-64

The Commodore SX-64, also known as the Executive 64, or VIP-64 in Europe, was a portable, briefcase/suitcase-size "luggable" version of the popular Commodore 64 home computer and holds the distinction of being the first full-color portable computer. The SX-64 featured a built-in five-inch composite monitor and a built-in 1541 floppy drive. It weighed 23 lb (10.5 kg). The machine was carried by its sturdy handle, which doubled as an adjustable stand. It was announced in January 1983 and released a year later, at \$995.



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Antivirus software dilemma

MUSA IBRAHIM

IT was January 2006. A system analyst joined one of Bangladesh's first ever web-based organisation. He noticed the whole computer network of the office was running under licensed antivirus software. But it came as a shock for the authority when he identified viruses on several personal computers (PC) within a week. He diagnosed the PCs and found at least 30 different viruses. The PC's then had to have their antivirus software changed.

This organisation was one of the first CMMI3 certified company from Bangladesh at that time with around 50 PCs for 137 officers. "If a company such as this is under threat of computer virus, then how are other companies surviving?" he exclaimed.

This has been a common scenario for corporate PC users in Bangladesh till 2009. But, the awareness about the use of antivirus software among companies is higher now than ever before. End-level users, more specifically the home users, are also leaning towards this trend. "The number of PC users hovering around retail markets in search of antivirus software is growing at a high pace," said an employee of RM Systems Ltd at BCS Computer City and retailers at Elephant Road Computer Samity agree.

Market sources say that Kaspersky, Norton, McAfee, BitDefender, F-Secure, NOD32, AVG, Avast, Avira AntiVir, Panda and Sophos are now the noted antivirus software used worldwide. But only McAfee, Norton, Kaspersky and BitDefender are commonly available in Bangladesh's market. Among them, Kaspersky steals the scene. Its marketing policy has helped the company achieve user confidence, both at home and corporate environment. Norton, McAfee, BitDefender, AVG, Avast and Avira AntiVir follow.

There is a common understanding among computer users about the type of harm that computer viruses can do and how it spreads. Earlier, floppy disks were the main hosts for the spread of computer viruses. Nowadays it's the internet and pen-drives

that propel the dissemination of viruses.

Generally, the computer virus, a malicious code, sometimes leaves traces of its presence. Sometimes the virus renames a file or a folder with *.exe (executable) extension file disables the folder option and creates a folder against every folder inside it. For example, NIDTECT.COM is a normal file but NIDTECT.EXE is a virus-containing file.

Some viruses appear as windows files and run as a system file, according to a local software expert. These are called zero-day viruses as they spread widely before the antivirus software companies can release any update for it. The virus is spread through common applications like MS Word, Windows picture, Outlook Express as macros. Virus creators write the virus within the document file or any other file using macros.

The extent of the problem increases as virus authors change intent. Amateur virus writers try to exhibit their performance and allure the spotlight through destructive behaviour of their created viruses or pop-ups. Some do it to compete with antivirus company efforts.

The limit of the problem does not stop here. If a PC runs on less effective antivirus software viruses may sometimes go undetected. According to a software engineer, most viruses appear with a more controlled approach nowadays as they don't cause direct financial damage or overwhelm the internet by flooding. Nevertheless, internet users are more vulnerable to these risks as adware, malware, spyware, trojan, viruses and worms are embedded in the e-mail body itself. Moreover, malware sometimes come disguised as antivirus software themselves. Some of these include WinFixer and MS Antivirus.

All said and done, it is interesting to note that no antivirus software can fully protect a PC, a computer engineer at BCS Computer City pointed out, adding that different antivirus software are good at specific and different cases. A virus removal tool can be used as software to remove specific virus from infected comput-

ers. These tools are also designed to run in places that regular antivirus software cannot.

Moreover, the concern for security is a major aspect to consider as antivirus software themselves can sometimes pose as a threat, owing to the fact that they run at the 'system level'. In addition, recent studies have found that the effectiveness of antivirus software against unknown or zero day attacks has been decreasing. The German computer magazine "Computertechnik" found that detection rates for these threats had dropped from 40-50 percent in 2006 to 20-30 percent in 2007.

Now comes the point. How many antivirus software should be installed at the same time in one PC if a single software cannot provide total protection against viruses? According to a system analyst, computer users -- both home and corporate -- should use only one, since antivirus software reduce the performance of the PC. And if a PC runs with multiple antivirus programs, it can concurrently degrade performance and create conflicts. Sometimes, one antivirus software may seem like a virus to antivirus software and thus conflicts may ensue.

Opinions of computer users
Many such complaints trigger the debate on the necessity of using antivirus software in PCs. Zero day viruses attacks may sometimes go unnoticed by antivirus. These attacks are nowadays higher than ever. And the numbers of complaints against antivirus are more from home users. A Kaspersky user reported that the continuous degradation of his PC's performance compelled him to remove the program from his PC though he bought it only few months ago. A laptop user also mentioned about his growing dissatisfaction with this software. In another case, a student of a private university faced problems with Kaspersky soon after purchasing it from a retailer shop. He had to rush to the distributor's office as the retailer refused to change the CD carrying the generic flaw.

A trader at Bakushah Market in Nilkhet, Dhaka said that his McAfee

antivirus is causing problems as he does not have Internet connection to update the software. The trader admitted using the software without a legal license. But he is aware of the threat of virus. He had to format his PC several times due to virus penetration from pen-drive.

Interestingly, there is no exact figure of complaints for any specific antivirus software. But distributors of Kaspersky termed the antivirus software as the best product in market. They informed that there are above one-lac Kaspersky users in Bangladesh. He saw no problem in service delivery as a Lab was set up at Dhaka to solve any problem at end level. But he admitted the lab only diagnoses PCs in known case scenarios.

When a zero-day virus or an unknown virus infects the PC, then they report the case to Kaspersky's main office at Russia. When asked how they handle countryside user cases, he said the local distribution partners were trained on this issue to serve clients. He expected the 500 percent growth of this software sale in past two years would continue in the upcoming years as it has a tremendous public acceptance.

The reaction of other antivirus software distributors could not be formulated, as there is no support-based retailing trade of that software in Bangladesh. But this is obvious - antivirus software market in Bangladesh is at a boom.

Recommendation from users
A student from a private university said if the antivirus software is sold at a cheaper rate, then they would be benefited. A market analyst said there should be more competition among the antivirus software companies that sell their product in Bangladesh. Then computer users can get better service. A system analyst said service centres should be set up at different places of major cities in the country from where "on demand" solutions can be provided. "As the industry is growing with a highly upward graph, companies can address these issues easily," said a computer businessman.

TECHNEWS

Consumer retail experience with Nokia

ADIL MAHMOOD

I had been wondering for a while; what Nokia, world's leading mobile phone manufacturer, meant by 'Ovi'. Lucky me that I had found out the answer soon enough, thanks to Nokia, before I made a fool of myself in front of the smart-ones for my sheer ignorance!

Nokia arranged an informal 'chit-chat' with the media on August 5, to introduce their latest edition of branded retailing outlet, Nokia Concept Store, located in Gulshan avenue, which began its journey last month.

To enlighten the consumers in a more friendly and comfortable environment about Nokia products, specially the features of different devices with proper information, live demonstration and expert advice, Nokia launched four Nokia stores and 10 Nokia solution partners at different significant locations across the country last year. The number is five and seventeen respectively at present.

Sajid Matin, retail development manager of Nokia Emerging Asia, explained the whole new concept of branded retailing and the aim and achievement of it so far at the event.

"Branded retail plays a greater role in

terms of uplifting the brand, showcasing the features, services and benefits of a particular Nokia device and sets a standard in service for the others in the industry. At the end, a consumer may wish to purchase their choice of device from the branded store or a general shop that is more convenient to their location, time and price wise", he said.

After explaining branded retailing, he then began to describe what Ovi (which I was eager to listen!) actually was with live demonstration.

What I learn from his demonstration is that globally Nokia picked the trademark of their internet-based services from a Finnish word 'Ovi', which means 'the door'. Sajid also showed us live demonstration of services channeled through OVI platform, namely Nokia messaging, OVI mail, OVI Share, Files on OVI, OVI Store and myriads of third party applications catering to different levels of consumer usage.

It's obvious that Nokia aims to achieve the most efficient reach to the market with these branded stores. But other than this, they also ensured peace of mind of the consumers by providing relevant and proper information and assuring the authenticity of the devices and price.



The new Nokia Concept Store in Gulshan offers an exclusive retail experience for the consumers eager to know about the products and services.

TECHNEWS

Toshiba unveils new Satellite notebook

STARTECH DESK

TOSHIBA recently introduced Satellite L510-S401 notebook PC in the local market as a part of unveiling of new series of notebooks, says a press release.

The latest product comes with Intel Core 2 Duo T6500 Processor with 2.1 GHz clock speed, 14.0" display, 2 GB RAM, 320 GB HDD, and high definition audio support.

The L510-S401 is a blend of portability with ample workspace. The notebook also offers a full sized stylish keyboard, on board Wi-Fi m, built in webcam and microphone. It gives users mobility with

ample workspace.

The L510-S401 comes with one year international limited warranty including battery support.



TECHNEWS

Second Cisco national skills competition held



STARTECH DESK

CISCO, world leader in networking, and American International University Bangladesh (AIUB) recently organised the 2nd National Cisco Skills Competition in the capital.

Forty-seven teams across Bangladesh participated in the competition. Winner of the competition will represent Bangladesh at the SAARC Skills Competition scheduled for September 2009.

The competition was organised in order to evaluate students' skills in designing, maintaining and troubleshooting computer network and to ensure the quality of training provided to the students.

Carmen Z Lamanga, vice chancellor of AIUB, inaugurated the competition.

Lokesh Mehra, regional manager, Corporate Responsibility, Cisco South Asia, Jagan Jothivel, area academy manager, Cisco India and SAARC and Rezaul Rezzak, director, Continuing Education, AIUB were also present at the competition.

"After the success achieved at first National Cisco Skills Competition held last year, we are extremely delighted to see the overwhelming response from all academics this year. At Cisco, we are constantly working towards nurturing skilled professionals who can add value with their expertise and flawless technical experience in various roles in the IT industry," said Lokesh Mehra.

Hasanul A Hasan, founder and vice president, Treasury, HR and Administration of AIUB said, "This Competition provides a national competing platform for networking students in Bangladesh and enables them to evaluate their skills. We fully support Cisco's efforts in offering cutting edge technological and industry experience for students in order to nurture their ability and talent for an industry ready environment."

Cisco is making significant efforts in its education and certification programs to equip more people for successful careers in IT networking to help the government in making Digital Bangladesh and to develop an ICT skill workforce.

TECHPHOTO



DRIVERLESS CAR

Children jump from a driverless car during a photocall at the Science Museum in London on August 11. The photocall was held to promote a new driverless vehicle, which is part of a fleet currently being tested at Heathrow Airport before opening to passengers next year.

PHOTO: AFP