

**PLATO**

PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations) was the first generalised computer assisted instruction system, and, by the early 1970s, comprised some 1,000 terminals worldwide. Originally, PLATO was built by the University of Illinois and functioned for four decades, offering coursework to students, local schools, and other universities. The PLATO project was assumed by the Control Data Corporation (CDC). CDC President William Norris planned to make PLATO a force in the computer world; the last production PLATO system was shut down in 2006.



startech@thedailystar.net

**TECHINTERVIEW**

# Cisco seeks to widen reach

NAFID IMRAN AHMED

CISCO, one of the leading networking, communications technology and services companies in the world, seeks to strengthen its foothold in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing segments for many technology and telecommunication companies, such as Cisco.

According to Amit Malik, vice president - East, Cisco India and SAARC, who looks after the company's business in this region, there is a lot of activity happening here. During his recent visit to Dhaka, in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star, Amit spoke about the future of this market and his company's vision.

"The growth rate here is higher than in any other region at the moment. From a technology adaptation standpoint Bangladesh is at the forefront of adopting technology, which is a very interesting sign," Amit said.

"We are seeing a leapfrog in terms of technology adaptation, whether it is a new age contact centre, IT solution, voice solutions, unified communication, IP telephony."

Cisco has recently completed and is working on some large projects in Bangladesh.



No need to travel. Telepresence makes high definition virtual presence in business meetings, it's just like sitting face to face across the table.

trum from SMBs to enterprises all across the pyramid. Before, we used to say we have end-to-end solutions and we play across the network, now we play across the pyramid as well.

train our partners and get them certified for SMBs," he said.

"SMBs are a different breed, you need to understand them much better. They might have enterprise

"For the video solution perspective, we have an entire portfolio right from a low end desktop telephony to high definition Telepresence. So there are many solutions for the customers to pick and choose."

Cisco over the last few years have been moving more into solutions approach, going more of an architecture level approach, so today they have solutions for all kinds of customers and going into transformation. One of the transformation projects is Connected Communities.

"If I have a crystal ball and gaze in what would be a vision for Bangladesh, I am sure Dhaka is going to be so choked there is going to be new cities developed. Even there is a huge movement in urban areas and lot of new cities are coming up," Amit said.

"So when I say smart cities, the entire city is connected and everything can be controlled starting from the sewerage, traffic, electricity, water supply everything is centrally managed."

This may sound a little futuristic now, but when we talk about it couple of years from now it becomes a need. Cisco is also trying to work as a consultant and one of the arms that are doing that is Cisco Advisory Services.

One of the new areas that Cisco is focusing on and will make a big impact in the years to come is the IP surveillance. For example, what happened in Mumbai is what happens when your CCTV footage is local. So nobody in the outside world would know what's happening. But if it on IP, you can give it to the police, armed forces, special securities or headquarters so that anybody can observe given the rights from a remote area of what's happening. So anybody who's coming to rescue will be well informed before they enter the premises.

In India police departments in many cities are talking about using IP surveillance now. This may also be adopted by Bangladesh.

Amit Malik, vice president, East, Cisco India and SAARC



"We are working with some of the large banks here with our contact centres solutions, voice and IP solutions which have been widely accepted not only in banking sector but also in the education segment," he added.

Amit mentioned that Cisco has been doing good in the banking and education sector and they are also working with the government and the telecommunication sector. He also sees Bangladesh as a very big SMB (small and medium business) market.

"There are so many customers here that are going to be the large enterprises of tomorrow. The manufacturing sector has still not taken up where we would expect them to be on the verge of taking off," Amit said.

Cisco's approach for the SMB market is a little different from their competitors where most of them scale down their enterprise class products Cisco believes in bringing products ground up. Cisco spends approximately 4 billion dollars in terms of research and development only to build SMB products. Last month Cisco introduced a range of products for the SMB market.

"We are playing across the spec-

Right from the small business solutions to the top notch enterprise solutions, we've got everything to offer," he added.

"No one knows the total size of the SMB market, but it's huge. When you are going for such a large market, marketing is probably the best we got and one of the things that can be mentioned here is the Cisco Network on Wheels (NOW), which we have introduced in India," he added.

The NOW is a 25-foot mobile van equipped with the latest SMB customised Cisco networking solutions including advanced technologies such as Security, Wireless and Unified IP Communications aimed at helping Indian SMBs leverage the power of networking technology for business growth.

"From a Bangladesh perspective immediately we are not leveraging that because the NOW helps when there is a wide spread of geography, the business here is very highly concentrated in Dhaka and we are seeing Chittagong coming up. There are various other campaigns we are running, like the SMSO, a strategic marketing programme where we

aspirations but their needs are different from enterprises. They want plug and play solutions more hand holding. That's why we introduced a new certification called Select Certification," he added.

Another technology that Cisco is pioneering is Telepresence, which is a technology that allows a person to feel as if they were present at a location other than their true location with the help of hi tech seamless video conferencing.

"Telepresence is definitely on the plate but there are bandwidth constraints and that is the bottleneck, whether the customers need it, yes, and probably the customers are willing to pay for it. But what they definitely want is video," Amit informed.

The present traffic condition is creating that demand, because it takes 2-3 hours to commute only 10-20 kilometers. So there is a demand for conferencing solutions, but solutions that are not too much bandwidth demanding have to be looked into. Cisco also provides bandwidth optimisation solutions, by which we can practically leverage 2 times the existing bandwidth.

**TECHNEWS**

## Facebook tops 350m users, tightens privacy



AFP, San Francisco

FACEBOOK is enhancing privacy controls and eliminating its regional framework for online communities as the Internet's most popular social networking service tops 350 million users.

Facebook founder Mark

Zuckerberg announced the changes and the milestone in a blog post late Tuesday, saying new privacy features will let users determine who gets to see pictures, comments, videos and other material in profiles.

"We're adding something that many of you have asked for -- the ability to control who sees each individual piece of content you create or upload," Zuckerberg said.

"To make this possible, we have focused on giving you the tools you need to share and control your information."

When Facebook launched in early 2004 as an online network for college students to stay connected, the model

centered on sharing information with "networks" of school friends.

That online community model endured, being expanded to companies and geographic regions.

"Some of these regional networks now have millions of members and we've concluded that this is no longer the best way for you to control your privacy," Zuckerberg said.

"The plan we've come up with is to remove regional networks completely and create a simpler model for privacy control where you can set content to be available to only your friends, friends of your friends, or everyone."

## HP awarded top achievers of 2009

STARTECH DESK

SPEED of execution, teamwork and technology these three are the Hewlett-Packard's (HP) winning formula. The company also serves the customers with products developed in environmentally responsible manner, said the speaker at Grand Reseller Meet and Top Achievers' Award Ceremony, recently held in Dhaka, says a press release. More than 200 HP resellers and renowned information technology personnel of the country took part in the ceremony.

Irving Oh, HP's Asia general manager hosted the meet and awarded the



M N Islam receives 'Business Leader of the Year' award from HP team.

top performers of the year 2009. The top achievers were MN Islam, chairman of Flora Limited, Akhter Hossain of Sys International, Aslam Chowdhury of Advance Computer Technology, SK

Biswas of Multilink International and Humayun Kabir of Flora Limited and Trust Solutions.

In the inaugural speech, Shabbir Shafiqullah, country business development manager of Bangladesh said this is HP's way to thank the deserving partners for their dedication, effort and hard work. In a presentation, the invention of instant on technology was described. Among others, Sarower Chowdhury and AK Azad from HP, Aslam, CEO of Advance Computer Technology and Matur Rahman, CEO of Reliance Technology spoke in the ceremony.

**TECHNEWS**

## MJ ruled Internet in 2009



AFP, San Francisco

THE late King of Pop Michael Jackson ruled the Internet this year, with his name crowned the most popular search term at Google, Yahoo! and Bing.

Jackson dethroned pop princess Britney Spears, a controversy plagued music star that had reigned supreme in annual Top 10 search results at Yahoo! for the previous four years, the California-based Internet firm

said Tuesday.

Spears was the fifth most popular search topic at Yahoo! in 2009, ranking behind Jackson; teenage vampire book and film series "Twilight," World Wrestling Entertainment, and rising star Megan Fox in that order.

"We saw consumers escape to the Web hoping to pursue news and their guilty pleasures: vampires, political implosions, how to moonwalk -- you name it, people went online to find it," said Yahoo! trend analyst Vera Chan.

Jackson was also king of Google's list of fastest-rising searches this year, which included social networking websites, "Twilight," and US singer Lady Gaga.

Facebook came second on Google's "Zeitgeist" list, released by the California-based search engine, followed by Facebook's Spanish-language counterpart Twenti in third place and micro-blogging site Twitter.

Microsoft, in a blog post late Sunday, said "Michael Jackson," "Twitter" and "Swine Flu" were the top three search topics of the year on Bing, which launched in June.

**TECHPHOTO**



**TRANSFORMERS**

A model displays a 2GB flash memory "Transformer devicelabel" by Japanese toy manufacturer Tomy, in Tokyo on December 2. The device can also be transformed into a robot toy.

PHOTO: AFP