

IT & TELECOM

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Shakers of 2010



IMRUL KAYES CHOWDHURY

Technology always keeps changing in the ever-changing world. 2010 witnessed some groundbreaking trends in the tech-world that will rule for years. We've tried to roundup the trends that made our tech-life even more smooth, exciting and stylish.

Tablet computing

The concept has redefined the computing experience! The tablet-sized personal computer grabbed the world attention almost overnight. Of course the credit to make it so popular must be given to Apple Inc's revolutionary release of iPad. Apple didn't invent tablet computing, it just pushed it into mainstream. The success of iPad flooded the tech arena with Tabs from different companies. Samsung with its Galaxy Tab is battling with iPad to take the lead. The tablets will certainly rule the world for years to come until even more exciting innovation takes over it.

Cloud computing

Though the concept of cloud computing conceived much earlier, it became popular in 2010 with companies like IBM, Cisco, EMC and VMware scrambling to boost their cloud initiatives. Cloud's success is its service cloud services offer computer power or data storage via the

internet. IBM claims to be breaking new ground in this space with the launch of its Smart Analytics Cloud, a set of technologies for firms that want to compile information across their organisation. And the sector has been gaining momentum with companies like Microsoft and Savvis, which are all pushing the technology as a way for firms to avoid the upfront costs of hardware and software.

WebTV

For the web freaks perhaps the biggest moment of the year was when companies like Google & Apple launched their TVs with the web browsing feature. Tech-savvy couch potatoes can now have their desired web contents onto their televisions. Google has promised

here to stay.

3D television

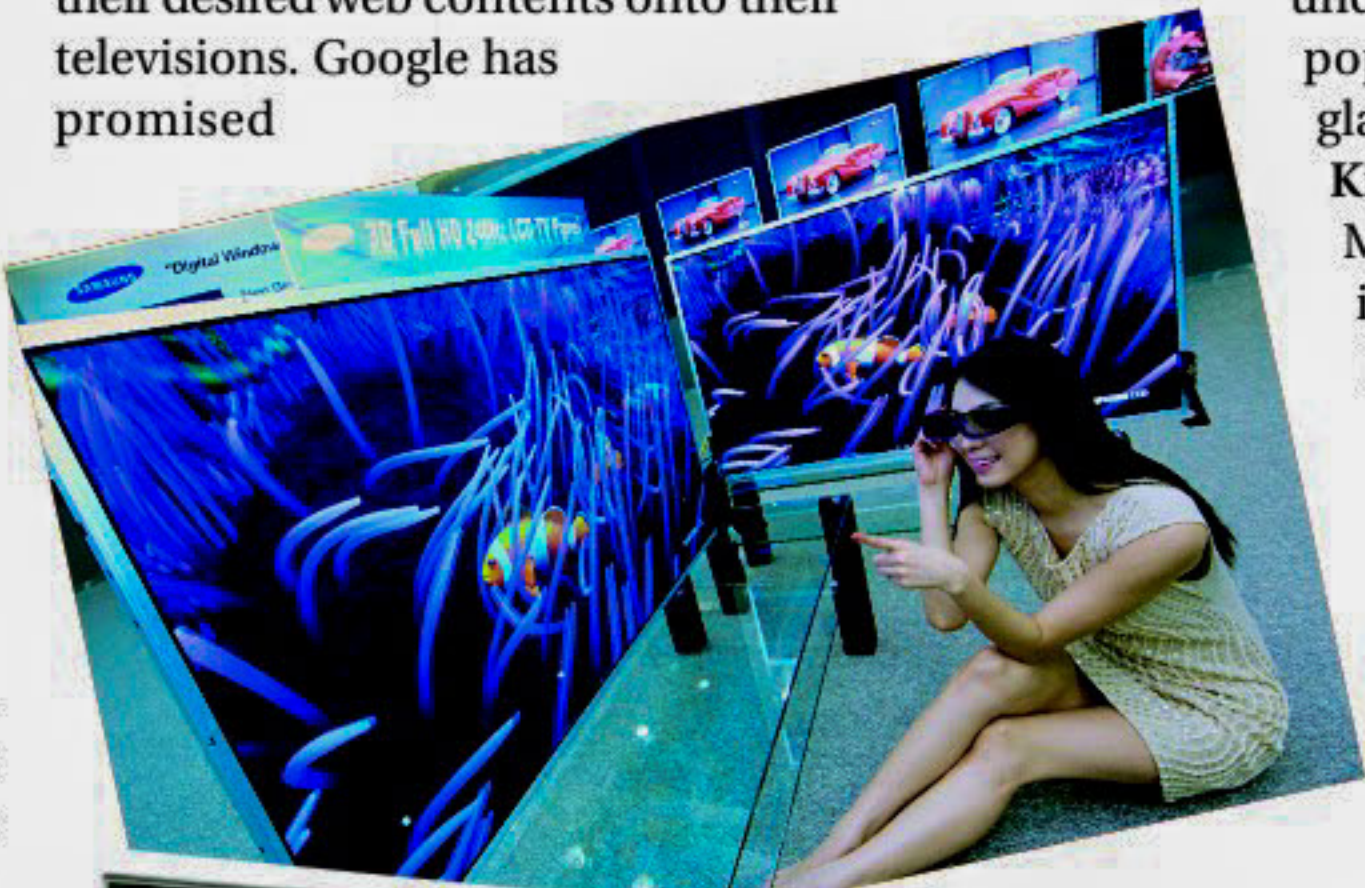
Consumers across the globe witnessed and enjoyed HD, LCD, LED televisions. To give even more exciting viewing experience consumer electronics giants, riding on the back of popular 3D movies such as Avatar and a number of technological breakthroughs in stereoscopic displays, delivered the 3D TVs, boasting the latest and greatest display technology.

First, the manufacturers released the 3D TVs needed to be viewed with 3D glasses. But shortly, they delivered glass-less 3D TVs understanding the possible drop in the popularity with the TVs with 3D glasses.

Kinect

Microsoft changed the way of playing video games in 2010. Through Kinect it gave whole new experience of gaming by eliminating paddles or joysticks. The Kinect is totally hands-free, using a camera to read the player's movements and incorporate them in the game.

From tickling tiger cubs to controlling Harry Potter, Kinect gets gamers off the sofa and immersing themselves in their game worlds.



optimising web sites for TV and striking deals with the likes of HBO, Pandora and Netflix. Google TV has hit some snags though. Several major networks aren't playing along. But with more companies offering similar devices, suggesting that Web TV, in one form or another, is

Best phones and apps of 2010

NAHID AKHTER

The year 2010 was the year of the smartphones, tablets and mobile applications.

Google Android 2.2 OS dominated the scene this year running on most of the newer smartphones and tablets. Android a.k.a "Froyo" brings powerful applications, a good interface and a host of other features such as a flexible browser with Flash 10.1 support, OS-wide voice control and dictation features, and a rapidly expanding app ecosystem.

Samsung launched its reply to the iPad with its Galaxy tablet, but its Epic 4G was voted the best Android phone of the year. Its gorgeous display and Samsung's MediaHub make it the ultimate entertainment smartphone.

The Apple iPhone4 is a stylish, attractive groundbreaker with good software and the richness of the Apple App Store at its command. HTC HD 7, which uses the Windows Phone7 OS has been impressive with its wide display, 16GB memory and entertainment options such as Netflix, Zune Player and Xbox Live.

The Motorola Droid X, successor to the wildly successful Droid sported a wide display and 8 megapixel camera. It got even better with the Android 2.2 OS upgrade, which delivered flash content to its speedy web browser. Speaking of Droids, The HTC Droid Incredible also made an impression with an easy-to-use interface, AMOLED display, and fun Sense overlay.

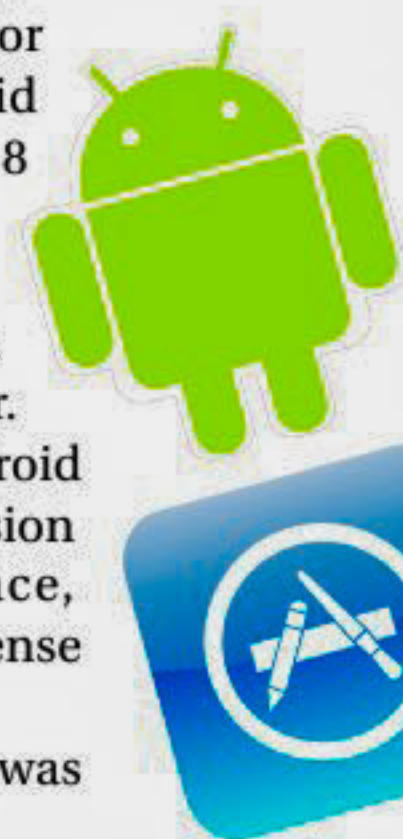
Application-wise, the year was



overflowing with choices. The freeware 'Bump' application allows songs, contacts or even Paypal payments to be transferred instantly between smartphones, simply by bumping the two devices together. It even works between iPhones and Android devices.

Lookout Mobile Security provides triple-threat protection for the Android Phone. The app runs a virus scan for every app you download, helps you track your handset if you lose it, and lets you back up your phone's data.

Besides these, there were applications to monitor your heart rate, request a taxi-cab, help you lose weight and paint on your iPhone or iPad. What next? All you have to do is imagine.



A good year for IT

MEHDI MUSHARRAF BHUIYAN

The country's nascent IT arena was all-abuzz recently. There was news of Bangladesh finding a spot among the annual rating of the top 30 spots best places for IT outsourcing around the globe by Gartner, a leading research and consulting firm.

"Bangladesh, an emerging country from an offshore location, offers a good cost proposition, but ranks poorly in language, infrastructure and data, and intellectual property security," Gartner said.

Sounds like a rational observation, but it was quite heartening to see that global IT giants have finally started recognising the potential of Bangladesh as the next big hub for a digital revolution.

The news caps off an eventful year, which saw some bold steps in taking IT services to the doorsteps of the common people.

"The most significant aspect of the outgoing year is that we have been able to draw the attention of Bangladeshis living abroad," said Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) President Mahboob Zaman.

"In October, the US Bangladesh Technology Conference was held in New York, where we received response from the Bangladeshi IT professionals living abroad."

"Their global exposure, investment, and expertise is invaluable to our sector and in this regard, we have already opened an NRB cell in BASIS," Zaman added.

Software export reaches \$35 million
According to Export Promotion Bureau statistics, the country earned a total of \$35.36 million from the export of software and IT enabled services in 2009-10, while the target till the end of 2010-11 is \$37.48 million.
"One notable achievement is that apart



PHOTO: RASHED SUMON

Country's first software park

from overseas export, a significant domestic market has been created for the local IT companies, thanks to the ongoing automation and digitisation drive," the BASIS president said.

Janata Tower becomes the country's first Software Park

The year also saw the Digital Bangladesh Taskforce, the country's apex body for formulating ICT sector policies, sitting together for the first time in 24 months.

In a significant move, the taskforce, headed by the prime minister, decided to turn the abandoned and much talked about Janata Tower in Karwan Bazar, Dhaka, turn into the country's first software park.

The tower was formally handed over to the

science and ICT ministry and it was inaugurated in December.

The 11-storey tower is now being renovated and is expected to be ready for use by hi-tech companies in nine to twelve months. **BB softens international fee clamps for software firms**

In September, the software and ITES companies were given a green light to remit up to \$1,000 at a time and \$10,000 a year in foreign exchange, without prior approval of the central bank.

The software exporting and outsourcing companies were also allowed to receive payments for their exports and services via internet, V-Sat or other electronic media.

All unions joined the information super highway

Taking IT services to the rural doorstep was a great challenge.

In November, a total of 4,501 Union Information Service Centres (UISCs) were launched across the country.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally inaugurated the service by talking to United Nations Development Programme Chief Helen Clark.

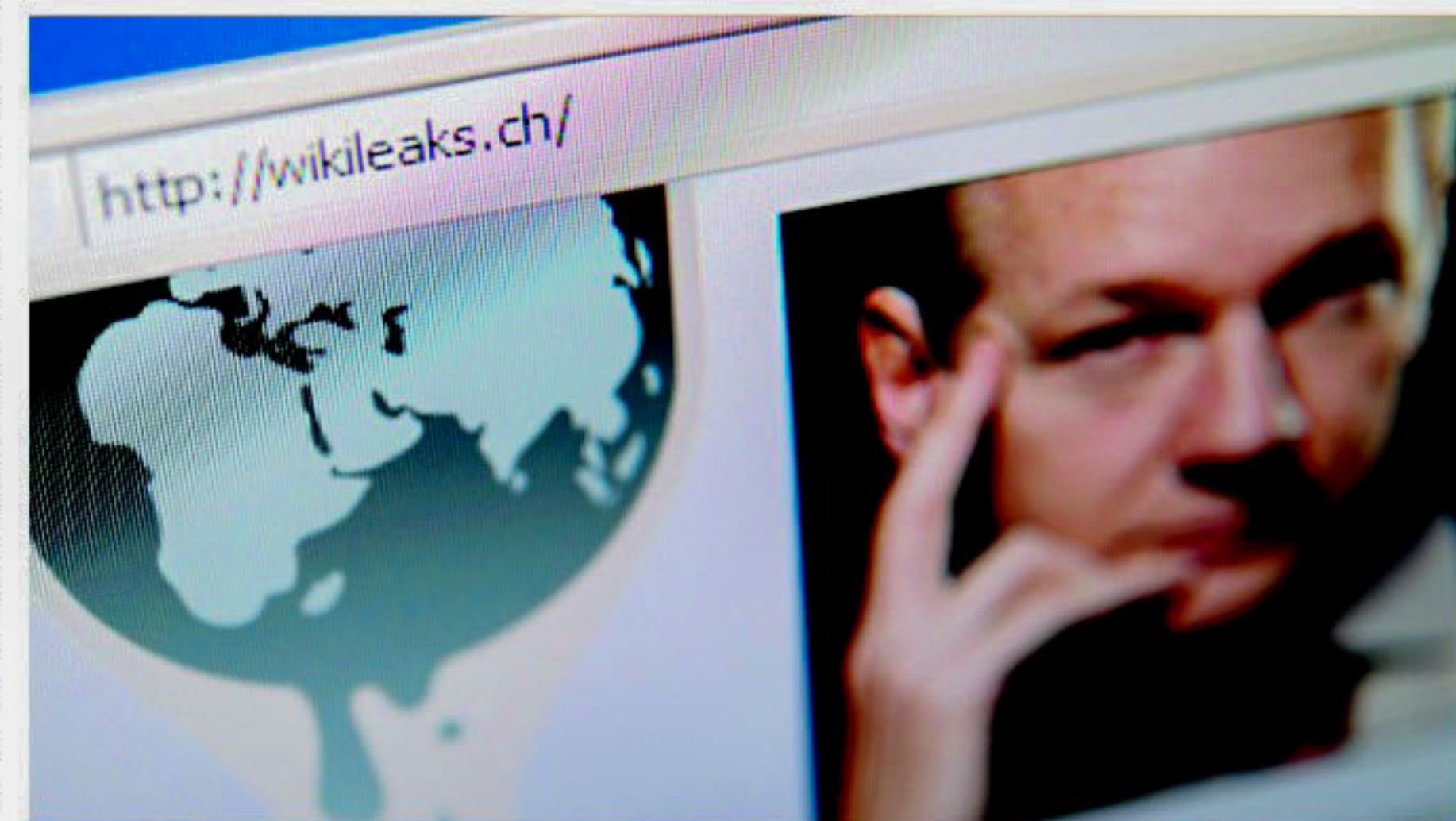
"With the opening of 4,501 UISCs, all unions of Bangladesh will be linked with the information super highway," said Nazrul Islam Khan, national project director of A2I Programme.

USB drives, mid range PCs and dual SIM handsets, all the rage

Significant growth was seen in the sale of ultra portable equipments, such as USB flash drives, MP3 players, digital media players and memory cards. Related accessories, like card readers, USB hubs, data transfer cables and HDMI cables, also witnessed growth.

mehdi@thedailystar.net

WikiLeaks, a Napster-style Internet gamechanger for 2010



AFP, Washington

If 1999 was the Year of Napster in the history of the Internet then 2010 will go down as the Year of WikiLeaks.

Napster, the file-sharing renegade, upended the music industry and copyright in ways still being felt a decade later while WikiLeaks, for better or worse, is likely to have a similar impact on government secrecy and transparency.

For now, WikiLeaks has governments, institutions and individuals around the world searching for answers to difficult questions surrounding US policy, free speech, Internet freedom, privacy, secrecy, transparency and the power -- and dangers -- of the Web.

WikiLeaks has argued that its release of hundreds of thousands of secret US documents about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the inner workings of US diplomacy exposes US military

abuses on the battlefield and "contradictions between the US's public persona and what it says behind closed doors."

Its detractors denounce the release of the documents as a crime carried out by a disgruntled US soldier and abetted by a self-appointed truth-teller in the person of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.

Washington has been infuriated by WikiLeaks and is believed to be considering how to indict Assange over the huge leak.

James Lewis, a cybersecurity expert at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, said any cyber clampdown may prove to be WikiLeaks's legacy.

He noted that Napster was eventually shut down by the courts although it lives on in myriad reincarnations such as The Pirate Bay.

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