



SoftExpo running strong



PHOTO: RASHED SUHON

ADIL MAHMOOD

I knew I was in big 'trouble' when I was assigned to cover 2011 edition of BASIS SoftExpo, the flagship software exposition in Bangladesh! Sounds weird, doesn't it? If anyone follows SoftExpo since its inception back in 2003, he or she would find that it has not only matured as the largest showcase for software products, IT enabled services and ICT system solutions in the country, but also became the platform of learning what technologies and products are forthcoming, to rock us, especially the business world.

In my experience, this year's exposition has grown bigger and better than ever before. With the current background of national level strategic initiatives for 'Digital Bangladesh', BASIS (Bangladesh Association for Software and Information Services) has put its highest efforts to host a spectacular and grand event to showcase the strength of the ICT industry.

About 110 local and 10 European companies are participating at the five-day event that began on February 1 at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital. So, what can be found in the exposition?

The fair has been designed keeping the focus on the potential enterprise clients and their necessities in mind, said Rafiqul Islam Rubel, assistant director of the IT department of Daffodil Group, a participant of the event.

Their featured products include enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions ERP v.10 and JTS v.20, an employees' task management software that manages company's human resources, job tracking system and attendance.

Leads Corporation, one of the largest software solutions providers in the country, mostly focused on two of their products this year, which have been developed for the capital market-related organisations. mBank is a portfolio management solution while the other is a broker back office solution called BlueChip.

"mBank has been developed for the merchant banks operating in the stockmarket to manage portfolio of the margin loan takers from the institutions. On the other hand, BlueChip has been developed for the brokerage houses to manage their investors' portfolio", said Nasr Ullah Md Dilir Khan, a marketing executive of the company.

Grameen Solutions, a sister concern of Grameen family, is participating in the fair

mainly with solutions such as business consultancy, skill enhancing programme, business process outsourcing and job placement portal.

"We have launched a new job portal gjobs4u.com ahead of the fair and we are mainly focusing on skill development and job placements in the fair", said Nasir Zishan, a sales executive of Grameen Solutions.

Apart from the showcasing of products, services and solutions, SoftExpo also hosts a range of sideline events including seminars and roundtables on policy and strategic issues, technical workshops, product presentations, contests for young talent search, IT job fair, business match making with foreign clients and many more.

Reve Systems, a renowned VoIP products and solutions company, held a seminar on February 3 where speakers discussed on the great potential that lies for Bangladesh to embark on the billion dollar VoIP outsourcing business.

"Bangladesh has been listed as one of the top 30 global outsourcing destinations by Gartner. The country has the right skilled manpower in the IT/ Telecom domains and is very well placed to tap this opportunity", said Habibullah N Karim, former president of Basis at the seminar.

Bangladesh Women in Technology (BWIT) organised a seminar on 'Leveraging the Potential of Women in Information Technology - inclusiveness under Digital Bangladesh and RTI Framework' was also held on the same day.

State minister for Science and ICT Yeafesh Osman was the chief guest while Dr Suraiya Pervin, chairperson of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, University of Dhaka and vice president of BWIT was the keynote speaker.

Luna Shamsuddoha, president of BWIT spoke about the importance of women in the technology industry while Sonia Bashir Kabir BWIT vice president moderated the session.

The most attracting sideline event of the SoftExpo, 'BASIS Freelancer of the year 2011' will be held today at the fair. From a total of 140 competitors, Basis will award 12 freelancers for their contribution to upholding Bangladesh's image in the global IT outsourcing arena.

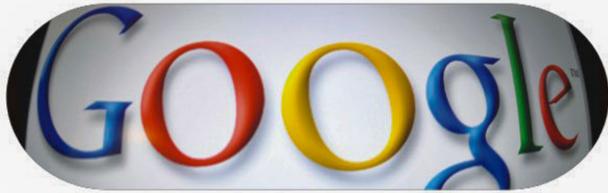
Google rolls out Android Market for Web browsers

AP, California

Users of phones running Google Inc.'s Android operating system are getting more ways to browse and buy apps for playing games, reading the news and other tasks.

The internet search leader announced its Android Market Web store Wednesday. The store lets users choose apps through a Web browser and have them installed remotely to their smart phones and tablets. Previously, the Android Market was only available on Android-running devices.

Chris Yerga, director of engineering for Android cloud services, said the move is meant to give users



more ways to find and install apps on their Android-running gadgets. It also gives developers more control regarding the promotion and sale of apps, he said.

Like the Android Market app, the Web store allows you to look for apps by category or browse featured or most popular ones.

The announcement of the store,

at market.android.com, came at a media event for a new version of Android. Called Honeycomb, the new software is geared toward tablet computers, which are growing more popular amid Apple's launch of the iPad last April.

Also Wednesday, Yerga said Google will start supporting in-app

purchases, which means that Android app developers could make it possible for users to buy virtual items such as additional levels or features within games. This is a feature Apple Inc.'s iPhone already has.

Bart Decrem, general manager of mobile for The Walt Disney Co., demonstrated that feature on the popular music game "Tap Tap Revenge." In the game, which has long been available for the iPhone, users buy songs and then tap along on the touch screen in time to the music to score points. The game has been downloaded more than 50 million times so far.



TECHPHOTO

Digital cheese with iPad

Japanese magician Shinya Uchida "pours" milk into an Apple iPad to make a digital cheese at the press preview of the 14th Japan Media Arts Festival at Tokyo's National Arts Center on February 1. Uchida received the Encouragement Prize in the government sponsored festival.

PHOTO: AFP

Macworld shines without superstar Apple

AFP, San Francisco

From star-gazing iPad applications to crystal-encrusted iPhone cases, a universe of products spun off of Apple gadgets flourished at Macworld Expo despite the absence of the sun around which they revolve.

Attendance was on track to hit 25,000 by the time the annual gathering of Apple faithful ends on Saturday.

The crowd was down from the 40,000 to 50,000 people seen in years when Apple took part and chief executive Steve Jobs starred in presentations that included unveiling hot new gadgets like the iPhone.

Apple pulled out of the show in 2010, but engineers from Cupertino, California-based company still make pilgrimages to Macworld to see what fans and entrepreneurs are making of their products.

"The energy is still really high," said Anna-Maria Pardini, who works for Hewlett-Packard tending to its relationship with Apple.

lets people use iPhones to command telescopes to automatically find celestial objects.

The array of iPhone cases included Luxmo designs coated with Swarovski crystals glued by hand in tiger, parrot, skull, frog and other patterns. Prices ranged from \$300 to \$350.

"Apple people enjoy making a statement," said David Fung of Luxmo.

US+U claimed to have the most functional iPad case, with a cuff on the back as a handle so people could hold tablets single-handed in a fashion similar to paint palettes.

A Waterproof Dry Case was crafted to vacuum seal smartphones in plastic while letting users still plug in headsets to listen to music.

"You could be in a sandstorm or out in the water and not have to worry about it," Jordan Messick of US-based Dry Corp told AFP. "If nothing else survives, at least your iPhone is going to."

A Boom application that beeped up sound coming from Macintosh or iPad speakers was among ten products



PHOTO: AFP

Sam Herman, 7, draws on the SMART Board 885, an interactive whiteboard system that uses multi-touch technology, at the Macworld 2011.

"The nature of the show has definitely changed," she continued, noting she has attended Macworld Expos for more than a decade. "Eleven years ago there was no iTunes, no iPhone, and until recently there was no iPad.

"You've seen Apple expanding and changing markets, and changing the way we do things," she continued. "It is like never stepping into the same river twice."

Computer titan Hewlett-Packard (HP) makes hundreds of monitors, printers, hubs and other products compatible with Macintosh computers.

Interest was high in HP technology that let people wirelessly connect with printers from Apple gadgets.

Offerings on the crowded expo floor ranged from data storage devices and computer security services to applications for playing or working on Apple devices.

SouthernStars.com showed off Sky Safari software that essentially turns iPads into windows into the night sky. A freshly-launched Sky Wire cable

awarded "Best of Macworld" honors on Friday.

Another winner was Ten One Design, a startup that invented Fling joysticks that stick onto faces of iPads with suction cups to provide videogame console style controls.

The company behind Invisible Shield film that protects touchscreen gadgets from scratching took a best-of award for a Zaggmate aluminum iPad case with a wireless Bluetooth-enabled keypad.

"Zaggmate converts iPad into a netbook of sorts," said Jason Melville of Zagg, adding that the company name is an acronym for 'Zealous About Great Gadgets.'

He closed a co-worker's iPad into the case and dropped it to the floor to make a point about the 99-dollar Zaggmate's ability to protect tablets.

Banners reminded people to mark their calendars for next year's Macworld event in a clear sign that the independently run event was continuing undaunted without Apple.

Samsung to unveil Ch@t 322

IT.TELECOM DESK

Samsung Electronics is going to release its new mobile phone set Samsung Ch@t 322 any time this week in the local market, says a press release.

The Ch@t 322 gives facility to use Dual SIM cards on standby mode and has QWERTY keypad that works with intuitive optical trackpad. It has a dedicated key to switch between the SIM cards easily. And its QWERTY keypad allows having quick menu access, easy web browsing and smooth e-mail experience.

It also features 1.3MP camera, music player, video with recording, 3.5mm jack,



internal memory of 54MB expandable up to 8GB, e-mail.

The Ch@t 322 comes with pre-installed instant messengers like MSN, Yahoo! Gtalk which enable users to stay in touch with friends anywhere. It automatically notifies users of updates from facebook and twitter. The social networking sites also come pre-installed.

It has considerably long battery life with 11 hours of talk-time. 1GB memory card comes free with the product.

The Ch@t 322 has a price tag of Tk 7,490 and pre-booking is on now.



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