Local freelancers flourish online

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Imagine a job where you yourself decide when and how long you will work. Where you don't have to wake up early in the morning and rush through the tiring traffic jam to reach office within the stipulated time and where there is no boss breathing down your neck all the time. Add to that, a great salary. This isn't wishful thinking, but now a possible reality.

The mighty internet has once again shown its worth in bridging the gap between employer and employee, living seas apart. Today, with the help of the internet, a person residing in Bangladesh can work for companies all over the world virtually as if he were physically there, a phenomenon that is termed as Outsourcing or Freelancing.

Freelancers in Bangladesh today are earning thousands of dollars from the comfort of their own homes. Faisal Farrukh, a Dhaka-based freelancer looked to freelancing simply to explore and develop his own creativity. Today, he is providing back-end support, virtual assistance-ship and content development to numerous foreign companies, and now, it is more than just a hobby for him. With the amount money he makes, why would he need a nine-to-five job? "There are numerous companies out there in need of labour at low cost and less time", he says, "These companies or 'contractors' , who, maybe, are short of time to look for a real assistant, may prefer to employ a virtual assistant who can manage their workload for them within the stipulated time. This is where freelancers come in. Still others may need freelance writers (or content developers) to write up a press-release for them. The possibilities are unlimited".

For many, the idea seems far-fetched. The idea of something so simple and easy is sometimes difficult to digest. Many believe that one has to be super-qualified for this. However,

there are a multitude of projects, which do not always require a Computer Science graduate. Shahriar Jahan, who was awarded as a freelancer at the recently concluded BASIS SoftExpo, began freelancing doing data entry jobs, but is now expanding his horizon by taking up other projects like web research, marketing and search engine optimization. He urges beginners to not use these projects for testing. "Unless you are sure you are up for it and have the time for it, you should not promise your services. Since, these are real companies, with real needs. Doing so can cause them a lot of hassle".

It is a well known fact in Bangladesh, that if one is to do big things in life, he or she has to come to Dhaka, the Metropolitan city of dreams. If more Bangladeshis took to freelancing, the population pressure over Dhaka would also reduce. Shabbir Hossain, winner of the BASIS Award, is based in Rangpur and has been freelancing since Grade 9. Today, his workload has expanded so much, that he is working with six others.

After passing his Honors, five years ago, Enayat Husain Rajib started looking for work online, when he stumbled across the website scriptance.com. "There are numerous more such websites, such as www.odesk.com and www.freelancer.com. I started my job with less pay, but tried to do more and more projects, just so that my ratings on the site increased. Sometimes I even worked for free. But soon enough, as predicted, once the number of projects done in my portfolio increased, I got bigger projects and higher pay. In all, I needed about a year to get established".

But many are skeptic about the reliability of these companies. What if I don't get paid for my hard work? "The solution to this," explains Enayat Husain, "is the escrow system. The way escrow works is it puts money in a placeholder

which is not accessible to the freelancer. This allows the freelancer to know that his contractor has the cash needed to start the project. Once money is placed in escrow the contractor is unable to cancel the escrow money or retrieve his money. Then, the contractor will only have the option to release the money to the freelancer while the freelancer will only have the option to cancel the escrow, thus returning the money to the contractor. This shared responsibility protects both parties from being ripped-off." Enayat Husain works on web application development and modification projects using PHP, Joomla, etc.

Mohd. Solaiman, a graphic designer, uses his artistic skills in designing web-pages and doing 2D and 3D animations, using Flash, Corel Draw, etc. "There is a lot of scope in this field," he says, "However, time is very important. Failure to make the delivery on time will cause the country to suffer a bad reputation. Earlier, Indian freelancers were preferred, however, now, one can find numerous job projects that mention 'Filipinos only'. Bangladeshis should create such a name that someday, the words 'Bangladeshis only' can be seen on these websites".

The main barrier that most Bangladeshi freelancers face is in the mode of payment. Due to the absence of Paypal system in Bangladesh, it sometimes becomes a hassle for the freelancers to get their payment, as they have to depend on relatives living abroad or have to go through complex procedures for their rightful earning.

However, barring the slight inconvenience, this is also a great way for qualified women who stay at home to develop their skills and earn some money too. Be it website content for a tourism website, proof-reading, creating a PowerPoint presentation to excel sheet data entry, the possibilities are unlimited.

Kaspersky brings enterprise security solutions

IT.TELECOM REPORT

Kaspersky Lab, a world-leading security solution provider, has launched its latest enterprise security solutions--Kaspersky Open Space Security-- in the local market. It announced the launching at an event at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital on Tuesday.

Jagannath Patnaik, Director Channel Sales, South Asia of Kaspersky at the event said the latest version the corporate security solutions covers a wider range of platforms. He also said with the launching of the latest solutions in Bangladesh, Kaspersky is actually offering a much stronger

protection scheme for the enterprise sector. He hoped that this corporate range of solutions will cement their market position in the country.

Managing Director of Kaspersky Lab Asia Pacific, Harry Cheung in his speech said Bangladesh is their focused market for business as the country is developing in the right direction with the vision of 'Digital Bangladesh'.

NATIONAL DIGITAL INNOVATION AWARD 2011
Deadline looms for nomination submission

IT.TELECOM DESK

The submission date for National Digital Innovation Award 2011 nomination ends on February 28. D.Net (Development Research Network) and Ministry of Science and ICT are jointly organising the prestigious contest in the field of ICT for Development in Bangladesh.
Nominations can be submitted through www.dnet.org.bd.
The contest is being organised for the second time in the country. 'E-content and ICT for Development Award 2010' was the first one to be held last year.

The contest has been restructured

this year in a way that will allow recognising the initiatives by various government agencies and private sectors separately.

Contents, applications and initiatives will also be recognised separately for mobile technology and other cross-media technology.

This year, sixty-eight awards will be given in ten categories. The categories are: Health; Environment; Learning & Education; Entertainment & Games; Culture & Heritage; Science & Technology; Business, Commerce & Finance; Inclusion & Participation; Livelihood; and News & Social Media.

NATIONAL DIGITAL INNOVATION AWARD 2011

Android, video games dominate mobile congress

REUTERS, *Bercelona*

The 2011 installment of Mobile World Congress, which gathered 60,000 professionals from 200 countries, served as the official coming-out party for the next generation of Google Android smartphones and tablets.

Android had a massive, two-floor booth packed with all the new smartphones and tablets shipping in the coming months running off the various Android platforms, including Sony Ericsson's Xperia Play phone, which operates on Gingerbread, and LG's Optimus Pad tablet, which is powered by Honeycomb.

The Android booth featured a huge arcade section where developers from around the world showcased the next generation of mobile games. While graphics and gameplay have improved in the mobile space over the years, the new wave of smartphones and tablets will push the capabilities of these devices to the level of PlayStation 3 or Xbox 360 -- and beyond even the best iPhone 4 and iPad games that are currently on the market.

"Video games drive the mobile business because they're the best showcase of what these new devices can really do," said Gonzague de Vallois, senior vice president of publishing at Gameloft, one of the larg-

est mobile game companies in the world. "Our experience in the console market is helping us deliver quality titles to these new devices for the mobile market."

Gameloft, which previously supported Apple's launch of iPhone and iPad with games, had franchises like Asphalt 6, Let's Golf and NOVA running in autostereoscopic (glasses free) 3D at LG's booth on the new Optimus 3D phone. The company also will support the March launch of Xperia Play with 10 titles, including Star Battalion. And the publisher has recently started developing new games to run on NVIDIA's Tegra 2 dual-core technology.

Tegra 2 brings PC gaming graphics and speed from just a few years ago to the mobile space on new Android smartphones and tablets, which will run 10x faster than the processors in today's smartphones like iPhone 4. The Tegra 2's dedicated graphics processor also delivers 1080p HDTV playback of movies, TV shows and games. On battery life, Tegra's ultra low-power design delivers over 16 hours of HD video or 140 hours of music on a single charge.

"This technology will impact the games we release because it will absolutely increase the available market," said Mike Breslin, vice president of marketing, Glu Mobile.

TECHPHOTO

Taion-heart

A researcher for Japan's mobile communication giant NTT docomo displays a new communication gadget that monitors a users pulse and displays their feelings called a "Taion-heart" at the NTT laboratory's open house in Tokyo on February 22, 2011. The new communication device is equipped with touch and pulse sensors and displays a user's feeling with flashing multi-colored lights and vibration.

PHOTO: AFP