



Brac boys take PC games to new height

IMRUL KAYES CHOWDHURY

A team of three students from Brac University has developed a massively multi-player online (MMO) game for PCs that can be played by body movements and voice command. They claim that this is the first ever such MMO PC game in the world.

MMO is an internet multiplayer video game which is capable of supporting hundreds or thousands of players simultaneously.

The members - Risul Karim, Imran Farid and Kamran Walilullah - are all doing their 9th semester in Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) Department.

Although they did not finalise any name for the game, they call it Aerial Multi-Player Dogfight.

In a demonstration Karim showed how a plane in the game can be controlled through hand gesture and voice command using a webcam and microphone. You can see the demo at <http://www.pixelizard.com/projectcst/>

The game is built on Java ME 3 engine and they customised the engine to integrate the web cam and microphone.

He also said its voice command input is generic which means it takes command from both male and female.

The team now is working on to make a gaming server. After that they will make the game available for all. Karim hoped they would be able to launch it within two to three months.

Like other online multi-player games, gamers will be able to download them for free, however, for updates of the game there will be



The Trio: Risul Karim demonstrates game controls, from inset left: Kamran Walilullah and Imran Farid.

small online charges. Different other apps using this scheme will also be available online with small download charges.

"Anyone can play the game with Windows XP or later, a moderate graphics card, 2GB or 4GB RAM and of course web cam and microphone", said Karim. He prefers a bit high quality web cam for smooth gaming experience.

Their game will also run on any operating systems such as Mac or Linux.

They started to develop the game 5-6 months back as an undergraduate thesis project. Karim said while developing it, they were thinking how to make it different from other MMO games.

"After doing a lot of online research, we found no MMO games

that take both voice command and body movement instructions together", said Karim.

He also said that although there are MMO games for gaming consoles (XBox- Kinect, PS3 MOVE) using body movements, there are no such games for PCs. Moreover, consoles and the games are expensive for lot of gamers, whereas, their game can be played on any PC with moderate configuration.

Then they came up with the idea of making a PC game that will take command from voice and body movements.

Waliullah did image processing, games and network coding and graphics, Farid did sound, graphics and game coding, and voice processing, graphics and game coding

were done by Karim.

Supervised by Dr Mumit Khan, chairperson, CSE department, Brac University, the project won them 1st prize of National Innovative Project Competition (NIPC 2012), which was held at Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB) on March 15.

Karim said their concept can be applied to many other areas. He said they have plans to develop 'Battle Simulator' for defence and therapy for autistic children with this module.

They are applying this gaming module to make a robot. Karim said the robot will be able to take command from voice and body gesture to execute the tasks given to him. They are already halfway through with the project.

Most of world interconnected through email, social media

REUTERS, New York

Most of the world is interconnected thanks to email and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, according to a new poll released on Tuesday.

Eighty five percent of people around the globe who are connected online send and receive emails and 62 percent communicate through social networking sites, particularly in Indonesia, Argentina and Russia, which have the highest percentage of users.

More than eight in 10 Indonesians and about 75 percent of people in Argentina, Russia and South Africa visit social media sites, the new Ipsos/Reuters poll showed.

Although Facebook and other popular social networking sites, blogs and forums, were founded in the United States the percentage of users was lower at six in 10, and in Japan it fell to 35 percent, the lowest of the 24 countries in the global survey.

"Even though the number in the United States was 61 percent, the majority of Americans are using social media sites," said Keren Gottfried, research manager at Ipsos Global Public Affairs.

The fact that more than six in 10 people worldwide use social networks and forums, she added, suggests a transformation in how people communicate with each other.

"It is true interconnection and engagement with each other. It is not just about a message back and forth

but building messages across communities and only the meaningful messages stick," she explained.

"It looks like a majority of the world is communicating this way," she said, adding the numbers were more than half in almost every country polled.

Ipsos questioned a total of 19,216 adults around the world in the online survey.

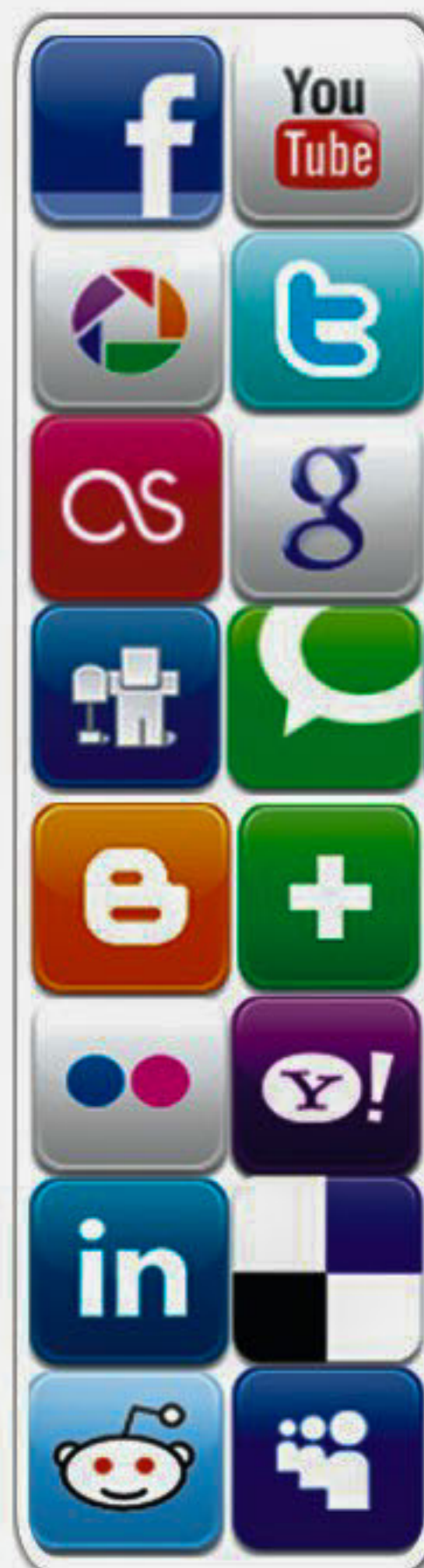
Email usage was highest in Hungary, where 94 percent of people communicated online. The numbers were similar in Sweden, Belgium, Indonesia, Argentina and Poland.

Saudi Arabia, where 46 percent of people said they communicate via email, had the lowest usage, followed by India at 68 percent and Japan at 75 percent. In all the other countries eight or nine out of 10 people were email users.

Although Americans and Japanese are thought to be very tech savvy, voice-over IP (VOIP), audio conversations conducted via an Internet connection, were not very popular in both countries with less than 10 percent of people using the relatively

new technology, compared to 36 percent in Russia, 32 percent in Turkey and 25 percent in India.

Ipsos questioned people in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Britain, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United States.



Knowledge sharing session for BASIS members

IT & TELECOM DESK

A day long knowledge sharing session on 'Financial Reporting' was held on Saturday at BASIS office in Dhaka, says a press release.

GPIT and BASIS jointly organised the session for senior level experienced finance professionals of members of BASIS.

Biswajit Roy, financial management specialist of GPIT conducted the session and shared his knowledge and experiences with the participants.

The session included an overview of basic accounting concepts and principles, financial and managerial reporting, understanding key financial statements, components of an annual report and the auditor's role, financial statements analysis and forecasting, and budgeting and planning.

Nazmul Hasan Parag, deputy general manager of treasury and financial management also shared his knowledge and experience with the participants.

The session was organised to help participants understand the contemporary process of financial reporting and to enhance their knowledge of practice.



Ekattor: Nokia's new app

IT & TELECOM DESK

Nokia launched its new application (app), Ekattor, to celebrate the memories of our independence.

The app has been developed to give our new generation a new way to learn about the liberation war.

The whole project has been developed with full support from the liberation war affairs ministry. And the technical aspect of the app has been developed by MCC Limited.

The app has six categories- starting from pre-war era, then on March 1971, and the 9

month long bloodshed war presenting the whole liberation history like a virtual museum.

The app also has poster and leaflets from war times, and invaluable role of our freedom fighters.

Currently there are over 200 pictures with descriptions.

A new version will also be added soon with famous audio from the war times and the videos captured during the war.

The app can be downloaded from the Nokia store by all Nokia devices that have the access to the Nokia Store.



Zuckerberg's China trip sparks Facebook frenzy

AFP, Shanghai

The sight of a vacationing Mark Zuckerberg in Shanghai has sparked a frenzy of online speculation over the possibility Facebook might return to China, even though the site remains firmly blocked.

Excited Chinese bloggers posted photographs of the Facebook founder and his girlfriend at an Apple store and in Shanghai's art gallery district on Tuesday, expressing hopes it might mean access to the popular social networking site.

"Does this mean... Facebook is preparing to be unblocked?" said Kelisong on the popular Sina microblog service, a Chinese version of Twitter.

Facebook has more than 800 million users around the world and is the leading social network in all but six countries, notably Russia, where local rivals are preferred, and China, where it has been banned since 2009.

Last month the California-based company said it continued to "evaluate entering China" -- the world's largest Internet market -- as it filed paperwork seeking to

raise \$5 billion on Wall Street.

Analysts say Facebook's chances of re-entering the market of half a billion internet users are slim.

"China has always been the centre of attention (for foreign technology firms)," said blogger Qimeng Luosong. "Maybe tomorrow morning when we get up, we can open Facebook."

Beijing attempts to block content it deems politically sensitive through a censorship system known popularly as the "Great Firewall of China". Web users can only access blocked sites through virtual private networks.

Zuckerberg said previously that he was "spending a lot of time" studying Chinese and visited the country in December 2010 with his girlfriend Priscilla Chan, when he met with the head of the country's biggest search engine Baidu.

Analysts believe Zuckerberg and Baidu were discussing a possible tie-up that could enable Facebook to enter China, but were forced to abandon the talks after the Arab Spring protests of early 2011 spooked Beijing.



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