Internet trends in Bangladesh

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The rapid growth of digital technology is fundamentally changing the world as we know it. Global internet penetration in 2010 stood at 1.9 billion people and is expected to grow to 5 billion by 2015. It is unsurprising that with this in mind, information in the world (videos, music, documents etc.) that is stored online is also projected to grow from 800 exabytes to 53 zetabytes (eMarketer, 2011).

To put this into context, Google recently announced that there is 60 hours of video (YouTube Blog, 2012) uploaded onto YouTube each and every minute.

Mobile adoption is another factor that is further accelerating access to the internet. The "Queen of the Net" Mary Meeker forecasts mobile internet usage to outstrip desktop/large screen by 2015.

So why is this relevant to us in Bangladesh?

In Bangladesh, with mobile subscribers just over 92 million and mobile internet access over 25 million users (BTRC, March 2012), it is fair to say, that these "pocket computers" will be the first entry point into the internet for many people in this country.

As access to internet explodes, the internet will increasingly become where people, of all ages and demographics, spend their time and as a result it will lead to significant changes in the way we go about our daily lives.

It is second nature for an individual in New York to purchase a flight via the internet and changes such as these are soon to take place here.
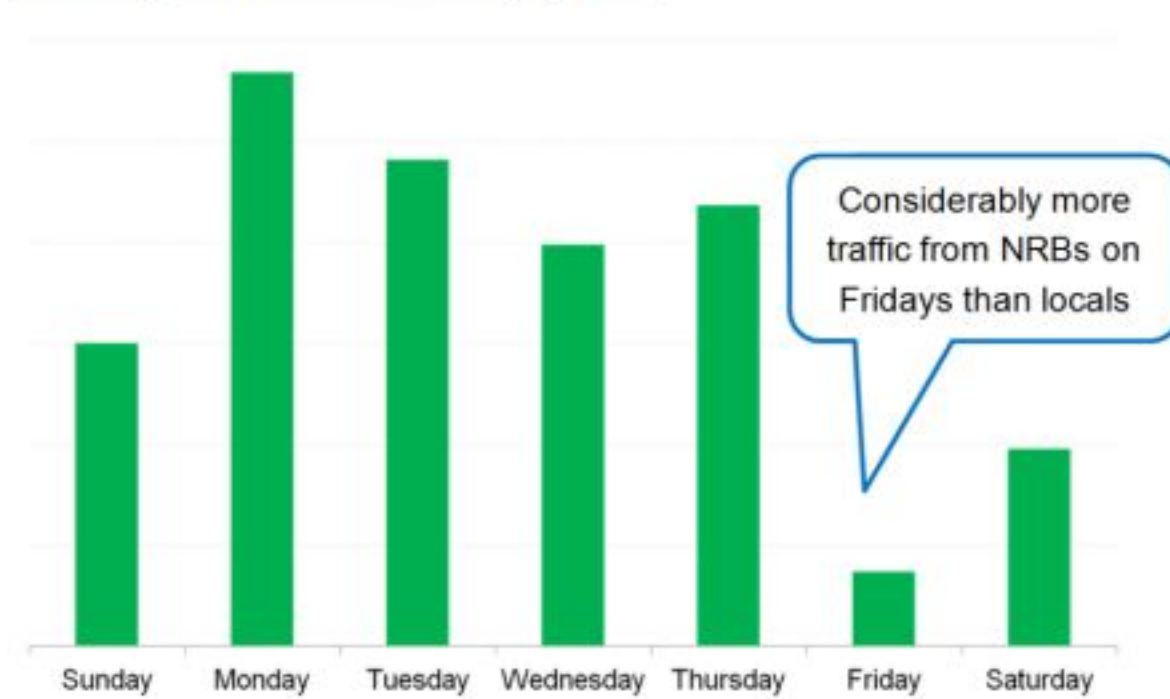
G&R Ad Network, a company that manages internet ad campaigns across over 150 local websites reaching over 90% of Bangladeshis online, has built-up unique insight into how users within the country and abroad browse the web.

G&R analysed millions of data points and put together 3 key trends that can help show where the internet in Bangladesh is going.

1. Internet consumption is accelerating

The internet subscriber base in Bangladesh (excluding mobile) currently stands at just over 1.5 million (BTRC, Feb 2012). However, total desktop internet users in Bangladesh is actually far greater than that number, likely driven by heavy usage in offices, internet cafes and multiple users accessing the internet from a single household.

Chart: Bangladesh Local Internet Users by Day of Week

Considerably more traffic from NRBs on Fridays than locals

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

Local industry estimates suggest that in 2011 access to the web was closer to 8 million users, having grown 300% since 2010 and expected grow a further 500% by 2012 (BCG, 2010). This acceleration of internet consumption is undoubtedly fueled not only by the growth in access, such as through WIMAX modems, but also through the proliferation of increasingly affordable laptops, desktops and tablets.

2. Those with access browse a lot

Until now, it wasn't clear how people in Bangladesh actually spend their time on the web on a daily basis. The data G&R gathered sheds some more light on consumer behaviour online.

The average user accesses the web on 3 separate occasions throughout the day, with usage peaking during the morning hours. In addition, a total of 4 different websites are typically visited during these sessions.

While usage of social networks and email services account for a considerable portion web activity, the data collected by the G&R indicates that Bangladeshis also spend a lot of time browsing the web. Such users are actively seeking information and content online and this is only going to grow further as more local websites and web applications start to enter the public domain.

3. Web usage varies considerably by day of week

Which days are Bangladeshis most online is a question that has been asked a lot at G&R. As visualised in the chart on left , web usage varies considerably based on the day of the week. Internet traffic among local Bangladeshis peaks on Mondays and is generally higher during the working days. Fridays represent substantially less traffic, but it is worth noting that internet consumption remains high for non-resident Bangladeshis visiting local Bangladeshi sites on Fridays.

Final thoughts

The rapid development of the online space in Bangladesh is very exciting and promising. The frenetic popularity of global platforms like Google, Facebook and Twitter as well as the innovation and growth of local websites, Bangla content, localised online tools and ecommerce which indicates that the internet will have an increasingly positive impact on the daily lives of people in this country.

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Airtel gets Opera Mini

Sunil Kamath speaks at the event.

IT & TELECOM REPORT

Bharti Airtel, a leading integrated telecommunications company with operations in 20 countries across Asia and Africa, has announced that it has signed a global arrangement with Opera Software to offer a customised and co-branded version of Opera Mini internet browser for Airtel mobile customers across its operations.

With this, Airtel customers across countries including Bangladesh, India, South Asia and Africa will now be able to leverage Opera Mini's unique proxy-server-based technology to compress data by up to 90% and decrease their data transfer costs.

In line with that Airtel Bangladesh recently held a programme to announce the partnership with Opera here in Bangladesh.

Designed for speed and ease of use, Opera Mini provides remarkably fast browsing on nearly any mobile phone. It makes browsing up to nine times as fast as client-only mobile browsers on both 2/2.5G and 3G networks. With its small footprint and high level of usability, Opera Mini provides a consistent user experience across a broad range of handsets.

"To ensure customers get best quality services that they are paying for this is one of our unique offerings and more to follow," said Abhay Seth, chief sales and marketing officer, Airtel Bangladesh Ltd.

"With Opera Mini, the Airtel customers will be able to browse almost 6 times faster and they will get array of data services," he said.

Opera Software has agreements with 13 out of the top 30 operators globally. Used by over 168 million users, Opera Mini is the world's most popular web browser on mobile phones. Opera Mini's popularity in emerging markets can be credited to its smooth performance on basic and non-smartphones.

"Opera's advanced consumption methodology helps subscriber to save 90 % of his data and it reduces all the hadsets' processing and battery usage while browsing," said Ziaul Haq Shikdar, VAS Head, Airtel Bangladesh Ltd.

"It will give you complete PC-like experience on any data enable handset," Shikdar said.

He said Airtel will give 15 Samsung Galaxy Y smartphones to 15 customers who will browse most using the Opera Mini until July 31.

Sunil Kamath, sales director, India and SAARC, Opera Software, at the event said Opera is very happy and excited to be partner with Airtel.

During his speech he shared Opera's technology and business.

"Bangladesh is one of our fastest growing markets and with partnership with Airtel it will go to a different level," said Kamath.

"In Bangladesh, we currently drive more than 50% mobile web traffic which means potentially one out of two users browses through Opera Mini," he said.

On the technology of Opera, he said it is proxy-based server which means it is a client server browser.

All the Opera Mini clients on handsets take the processing requirements from the phones and moves the web requests to the Opera Mini server and then come back with the results.

Opera Mini servers compress web data by up to 90% which means it compresses web pages.

For example Kamath said "if you go to facebook on a native browser, it's around 200kb, but if you open the same page by Opera Mini, it's only 23kb."

You can download Opera Mini from m.opera.com or visit the Airtel App Store.

New router from Netgear

IT & TELECOM DESK

Computer City Technologies Ltd. has brought Netgear dual band Wi Fi router WNDR3700 in Bangladesh.

The router features IEEE 802.11 b/g/n 2.4 GHz, IEEE 802.11 a/n 5.0 GHz, five 10/100/1000 (1 WAN and 4 LAN) Gigabit Ethernet ports with auto-sensing technology, Gigabit for faster wired connections, Genie - Easy dashboard control for home network, ReadySHARE USB storage for HD video streaming, IPv6 compliant (Internet Protocol Version 6).

The product has a price-tag of Tk 15,500.

D.Net launches audio-visual content for potential female migrants

IT & TELECOM DESK

D.Net, a social enterprise through its research and with active participation of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), Bangladesh and WordForge Foundation, Spain and funding from Spanish Agency for International Development(AECID), has prepared an interactive audio-visual digital content titled " Aparajitar Abhijatra" for potential female migrants of Bangladesh to uplift their competence level for global employment market to promote access to information and knowledge for all citizens.

To launch "Aparajita's Abhijatra", a launching ceremony was held yesterday at Marble Room, Ruposhi Bangla Hotel.

Minister for Ministry of Labour and Employment and Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment, Bangladesh Government Eng. Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, MP was present as chief guest.

Prepared under D.Net's project "Empowerment of Women through the use of ICT in Bangladesh", this content will be available on D.net's Abolombon website

(www.abolombon.org/aparajita) and BMET's official website (Aparajita quicklink) as well as on DVD.

It takes them through the process of preparation, helping them at each step, providing sufficient information for them to make informed choices. It provides vital information on how to apply for passport, visa; how and where to take training; how to proceed at airports and inside airplane. It also informs the prospective migrants on what to expect at overseas workplace, how to make their own living, how to send money back home, how to manage possible risks and crisis, etc. among other issues.

This content will be distributed free of cost among government and non-government agencies, pallitathya kendras, Union Information Service Centers (UISCs), Technical Training centres who are working in this particular filed.

This content has been developed in a way that it can be an income generating source for them by providing administrative services, counseling services, briefing services to women in rural areas who are interested to become overseas workers from Bangladesh.

The event was chaired by Begum Samsun Nahar,director general, bureau of manpower, employment and training (BMET). Dr. Jafar Ahmed Khan, secretary, ministry of expatriates welfare and overseas employment, Dr. Tasnim Siddique, founding chair, refugee and migratory movement research unit and Javiar Sole, president, world forge foundation were present as special guests.

Terming the launching ceremony as a unique event, Dr. Jafar Ahmed Khan said that the content had all the necessary information in it. He requested D.Net to disseminate information and assured that Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment will help D.Net in this regard.

Minister Eng. Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, MP in his speech said that for economic development of the country migration of female worker should be encouraged. He requested D.Net to provide high priority in effectively disseminating this information across the country.

He said Ministry of Labour and Employment and Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment will provide help and support to D.Net in those initiatives.

DUITS-Samsung Campus IT Fest 2012

IT & TELECOM DESK

A two-day information technology (IT) festival from July 11 was held at Dhaka University.

Dhaka University Information Technology Society (DUITS), with sponsored association of Samsung Electronics, organised the festival styled 'DUITS-Samsung Campus Technology Festival'.

Over 12 hundred teachers and students from 30 universities from across the country participated in the festival.

The festival featured project presentation, quiz competition, workshop, seminar, debate on IT, business idea competition and film exhibition.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid attended the inaugural ceremony as the chief guest, while DU Vice-Chancellor Professor AAMS Arefin Siddique inaugurated the festival. Managing Director of Samsung Electronics Bangladesh Branch Choon Soo Moon also attended the event.

Asus' new products

IT & TELECOM DESK

Global Brand Private Limited, the authorised distributor of Asus in Bangladesh, recently unveiled two new models of all-in-one PC ET2410EUTS and ET2410IUTS and A44HR laptop.

All-in-one PC

The two models are equipped with a sensitive display 23.6 inches multi-touch typing which allows a precise and accurate. These PCs allow you to watch TV at full 1080P resolution for having integrated hybrid digital/analog TV tuner with remote control.

Other features of the PCs include 2GB DDR3 RAM, 500 GB HDD, DVD writer, gigabit LAN, WLAN, webcam, HDMI port, USB ports and more. ET2410EUTS and ET2410IUTS

have price tags of Tk 70,000 and 78,000 respectively.

A44HR laptop

The laptop is equipped with Intel Core i3 2.30 GHz processor and comes with AMD Radeon HD 7470M graphics with 1GB dedicated video memory.

The A44HR features 16:9, 14-inch high definition LED panel and Altec

Lansing speakers with SRS Premium Sound for great multimedia experience.

It also features 2GB DDR3 RAM, 500 GB HDD, DVD writer, gigabit LAN, 802.11b/g/n wireless LAN, webcam and more.

The laptop has a price tag of Tk 46,500

Global PC sales flat as consumers eye new gadgets

AFP, Washington

Worldwide sales of personal computers fell 0.1 percent in the second quarter of the year as consumers turned their attention to newer gadgets like tablets, a survey showed Wednesday.

The quarterly report from research firm Gartner showed PC shipments, excluding tablet computers, totaled 87.5 million units in the second quarter of 2012, a small drop year-over year.

"In the second quarter of 2012, the PC market suffered through its seventh consecutive quarter of flat to single-digit growth," said Mikako Kitagawa, analyst at Gartner.

She said that despite high expectations for the thin and light notebook segment known as ultrabooks, this

sector was small and had little impact on overall sales.

"Consumers are less interested in spending on PCs as there are other technology products and services, such as the latest smartphones and media tablets that they are purchasing," she added.

"This is more of a trend in the mature market as PCs are highly satu-

rated in these markets."

Hewlett-Packard continued to be the top PC seller with 14.9 percent market share even though its global shipments declined 12.1 percent.

It was trailed closely by Lenovo at 14.7 percent, with Acer Group third, at 11 percent and Dell fourth at 10.7 percent.

Gartner said in a statement that "Lenovo's aggressive expansion damaged its competitor's performance, namely HP and Dell, by taking shares from them."

In the US market, HP was on top with a 25 percent market share, followed by Dell at 21.7 percent and Apple at 12 percent.

A separate report last week by ABI Research said tablet computers are expected to overtake notebook PCs by 2016 as consumers switch to newer devices like the Apple iPad.