Mothers: savviest internet users!

IVY HUQ RUSSELL

One of the core beliefs shared by myself and the Maya team (www.maya.com.bd), is that women, particularly those we see every day in our country Bangladesh, are like Superwomen. They have a huge amount of responsibilities in their day-to-day lives, and whether they are daughter or mother or sister, their combined efforts result in them practically running the average Bangladeshi household.

It comes as no suprise then that it is indeed women that are controlling over 65% of all global consumer spending, amounting to $12 trillion of a total $18.4 trillion (BCG, 2010). I'm sure that most will agree that the household spending in Bangladesh would resemble this ratio with perhaps even more of the total being controlled by women. With so many responsibilities thrust upon women, not least that of allocating the household budget to purchase the products and services required for day-to-day life, it is clear that in a country like Bangladesh where so much is expected from them, they are largely not getting enough information and guidance to make the best choices. In Bangladesh, where there is a major lack of structured support for mothers and families and this represents a major opportunity for technology to play a huge role. It is a challenging problem however due to the lack of time mothers have at their disposal and when assessing the macro factors such as literacy and access to internet.

In advanced economies such as the UK or USA, women benefit greatly from accessing the internet, from their computers and/or mobile phones, to provide them with utility in their daily lives. It is common knowledge that mother turn to the internet to find what they are looking for and eMarketer (one of the most respected online research firms) states: "Mums online are actually incredibly savvy and influential. Keeping up with their children alone puts them on the leading edge of new technologies and online activities". It is also important to note that mothers are very proactive about sharing their knowledge and experiences and the internet is a fantastic channel for this. Those of you who use Facebook may relate to the following ad-hoc, informal study: I spent some a week last year 'gently' tracking interactions of my Bangladeshi Facebook friends who are mothers and compared that to friends who are not. Interestingly, my friends who were mothers recorded 400% more interactions i.e. status updates, comments and photo uploads.

Mothers online actively seek out content on the web ranging from information about breastfeeding and household product reviews to advice on how to go about finding a school for your children. Of course there are many online services that provide information to women about their health this in particular is a highly underserved area in Bangladesh. Related to this, whether it be content about how to care for a baby or more personal health topics, there is not clear route for a women to find this information beyond their mother or sister and in many cases doctors and authorities remain inaccessible. Women have the right to learn about the facts for themselves and where appropriate learn from others who may have already gone through the same experiences. Technology is already playing a key role here in Bangladesh in empower-

ing. There are fantastic projects already operating in Bangladesh like MAMA that is distributing simple audio and text messages to women through mobile phones and Amadeyr Cloud that is aiming to provide rich audio/visual content to households through the distribution of tablet devices in rural areas. Maya's objective is to give women access to high quality, rich and dynamic information through the website (www.maya.com.bd) and mobile applications whilst also partnering with initiatives across Bangladesh to further extend the reach of such content. Importantly, Maya aims to address the need for women to be able to exchange information with each another in a safe community environment and have already seen hundreds of instances

where a user's query is being resolved by another Maya user or by one of our Community Managers. The most popular query topic from Maya users since launch in September 2011 has been to do with breastfeeding which leads us to believe that women find it difficult to glean the advice they need from other sources.

Many might think that the internet is not a viable channel right now. There are in fact 2 million women with access to internet from "large screen" devices right now in Bangladesh, with many millions more accessing via mobile devices. These numbers are expected to grow 5 times by 2020 (BCG, 2010). Another indicator is the search behavior on Google Bangladesh where on average, there are over 300,000 monthly searches locally (Keyword Tool, May 2011) to do with pregnancy and maternity. This indicates that every single month, thousands of women in Bangladesh are searching on the internet for information on topics that are relevant to them.

Technology is a crucial "enabler" as we look to empower women in this country with access to information. Personal computers, tablet devices and mobile phones are great channels for distributing content at scale and the internet is the ideal platform to generate dialogue, capture knowledge and build an active, engaged community.

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Microsoft gets new logo

IT & TELECOM DESK

For the first time in 25 years, Microsoft has changed its corporate logo recently.

The new logo, which incorporates a multicolored Windows symbol in addition to the "Microsoft" name in straightforward, lighter type, is intended to "indicate the heritage but also indicates a newness and freshness," said Jeff Hansen, Microsoft's general manager of brand strategy.

The new logo features the name "Microsoft" in the Segoe font, a font Microsoft owns and has used in its products for several years. The font also figures prominently in the new Windows 8 user interface.

The "F" and "T" in the name "Microsoft" are connected in the new logo, just as they were in the old. For the first time, the company's logo also includes a symbol, four multi-coloured square tiles.

The colors in the squares, blue, orange, green and yellow, are associated with Microsoft and from which the company's product brands draw.

The colours are also meant to convey "the diversity of Microsoft products and the diversity of people that the company serves.

The new logo also bears great resemblance to, and is an evolution of the Microsoft Store logo, which was inspired by the Windows flag.

The new logo marks the fourth time Redmond-based Microsoft has changed it since the company was founded in 1975 and only the second time since Microsoft has gone public in 1986.

Microsoft's first logo, used from 1975 to 1979, evokes its era, with its disco-y typeface. The multil-ined logo, with "Micro" on the first line and "Soft" on the second, reflects how co-founders Bill Gates and Paul Allen supposedly came up with the original company name "Micro-Soft" something that reflected both "microcomputers" and "software."

The second logo, with some jagged edges and strong diagonals, was used from 1980 to 1981 and reflected the computer and video-game culture of the time.

The third logo, used from 1982 to 1986, introduced a stylised letter "o" with lines through it.

The Microsoft logo most people are familiar with today was the one the company started using in 1987. It featured a slice in the "o," a connection between the letters "f" and "t." Compared with the earlier logos, it looks more solid, stable and corporate.

The new logo will be used on a new wave of global TV commercials in the next few weeks and on the new products being released this fall and into the holiday season.

Acer brings new laptop

IT & TELECOM

Acer has released Aspire E1-421 model laptop in the local market.

Acer has introduced Aspire E1-421 in the local market.

The laptop is equipped with AMD Dual Core E 450, 1.65 GHz processor. It also comes with the AMD Radeon HD 6320M

graphics with 256 MB dedicated memory for better visual performance. The laptop has 14-inch HD Acer CineCrysral LED backlit display.

It also has 2 GB RAM and 320 GB HDD with card reader, webcam, DVD writer, Wi-Fi and more.

The product has a price tag of 32,800.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Bantel Ltd., a recent winner of Interconnection Exchange (ICX) Services license signed an agreement with IBCS-PRIMAX Software (Bangladesh) Ltd. to develop and implement their ICX Billing System. The ICX Billing Solution includes Mediation, Rating and Billing, Alert system, Payment System and Reporting modules.

Samsung Galaxy Y top selling entry level smart phone: research

IT & TELECOM DESK

The handset usage trend in Bangladesh has taken a sharp turn as users are getting more inclined to using smartphones. Among the top choices, users are more interested in using the entry level smartphones because of their affordable prices.

Recently, one of the biggest research organisations in the world GfK Group conducted a research regarding the entry level smartphone sales in Bangladesh. According to their research, Samsung Galaxy Y is the highest selling entry level smartphone in the country. Built on Android Gingerbread and powered by a strong processor, Samsung Galaxy Y provides efficient Smartphone performance.

Big display and sleek look give them a stylish appearance. Free 2GB micro SD card, which is expandable up to 32 GB, boosts memory capacity.

They come with Play Store so users can download 600,000+ fun games, utility apps, and more.

IM via Facebook or Google Talk, easy sync with Facebook and Twitter, free 'ChatOn' service will meet the diverse demands of current and potential smartphone users. Samsung Galaxy Y is available at Tk 12,900. The GfK Group, established in 1934 as Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung, (Society for Consumer Research) is Germany's largest market research institute, and the fifth largest market research organisation in the world, after Nielsen Company, Kantar Group, Ipsos (incl. Synovate) and IMS Health. It was founded by an association of university teachers. GfK Retail and Technology tracks sales data in consumer goods and entertainment markets worldwide. It has branches in 15 Indian cities as well as an office in Bangladesh, and is particularly active in the areas of consumer and social research.

Kaspersky launches new AV

IT & TELECOM DESK

Kaspersky Lab has launched its latest 2013 editions of Anti-Virus and Internet Security software in Bangladesh.

Officextracts, the distributor for Kaspersky Lab in Bangladesh and Bhutan introduced the latest 2013 product line from Kaspersky Lab which comes with stronger features and innovations.

Asus' new products

IT & TELECOM DESK

For the PC Game lovers, Asus brought a new gaming graphics card, Asus HD7850-DC2. This card comes with 28nm GPU advancements to a very cost effective segment that combines great gaming and overclocking performance with the value sought by high-end computer gamers. It is equipped with ASUS DirectCU Thermal Solution, which utilises direct-contact GPU heat-pipes for 20% cooler and significantly quieter performance than reference.

This graphics card features PCI Express 3.0 which delivers double the bandwidth per lane of PCI Express 2.0 for faster GPUCPU communication.

The AMD Eyefinity technology extends users' viewing landscape across multiple monitors. Asus Exclusive GPU Tweak utility will allow users to modify its clock speeds, voltages, and fan performance. Moreover, 870MHz Engine Clock, GDDR5 2GB video memory, HDMI out-

put interface and Microsoft Windows 7 compatibility of this card will bring better performance and outstanding gaming experience to its users.

The card has a price tag of Taka 26,500.

Asus has also brought a new Eee PC netbook in the local market. 10.1 inch and 1024 x 600 pixel display enabled this Eee PC X101CH is powered by a 1.6 GHz Intel Atom

N2600 dual core processor. It's 1MB of L2 cache support for hyper threading and a maximum Thermal Design Power of just 3.5 watts. It also comes with 1GB of RAM, 320GB hard drive, a webcam, a micro SD card slot, 802.11 b/g/n Wi-Fi, one HDMI, two USB 2.0 ports, and a 3-cell battery. The product has a price tag of Taka 25,000.

Location based new IT domain launched

IT & TELECOM DESK

kothay.com, a location based website, has recently been launched aiming at bringing newer and unique services in the IT domain in Bangladesh. It hopes to be the ultimate entertainment and amusement hub for all who will get all the information just on click. However it does not matter if one is in a laptop, computer or a mobile phone.

Kothay.com is the place where one can connect oneself to other services through maps derived from the word "Kothay?" He or she can also locate, post, share and earn points from all the activities using this website.

Points will be piled up by posting location on the map, advertisement on locations, writing a blog, posting a review of a restaurant or a nice place and a shopping mall or whatever based on locations. The point earner will get the opportunity to spend points by posting ads like to-let/rental, tuition, sales/resale, property/land/flat sale and many more in the Kothay website.

Samsung unveils voice-controlled camera

AP, Berlin

Samsung has unveiled a voice-controlled camera as part of a fall lineup of consumer gadgets aimed at setting itself apart from rival Apple.

Samsung's Galaxy Camera runs Google's popular Android operating system, giving it features previously restricted to smartphones or tablet computers such as photo organizing, photo sharing and voice-control.