

Facebook's future - ads and Android

RORY CELLAN-JONES

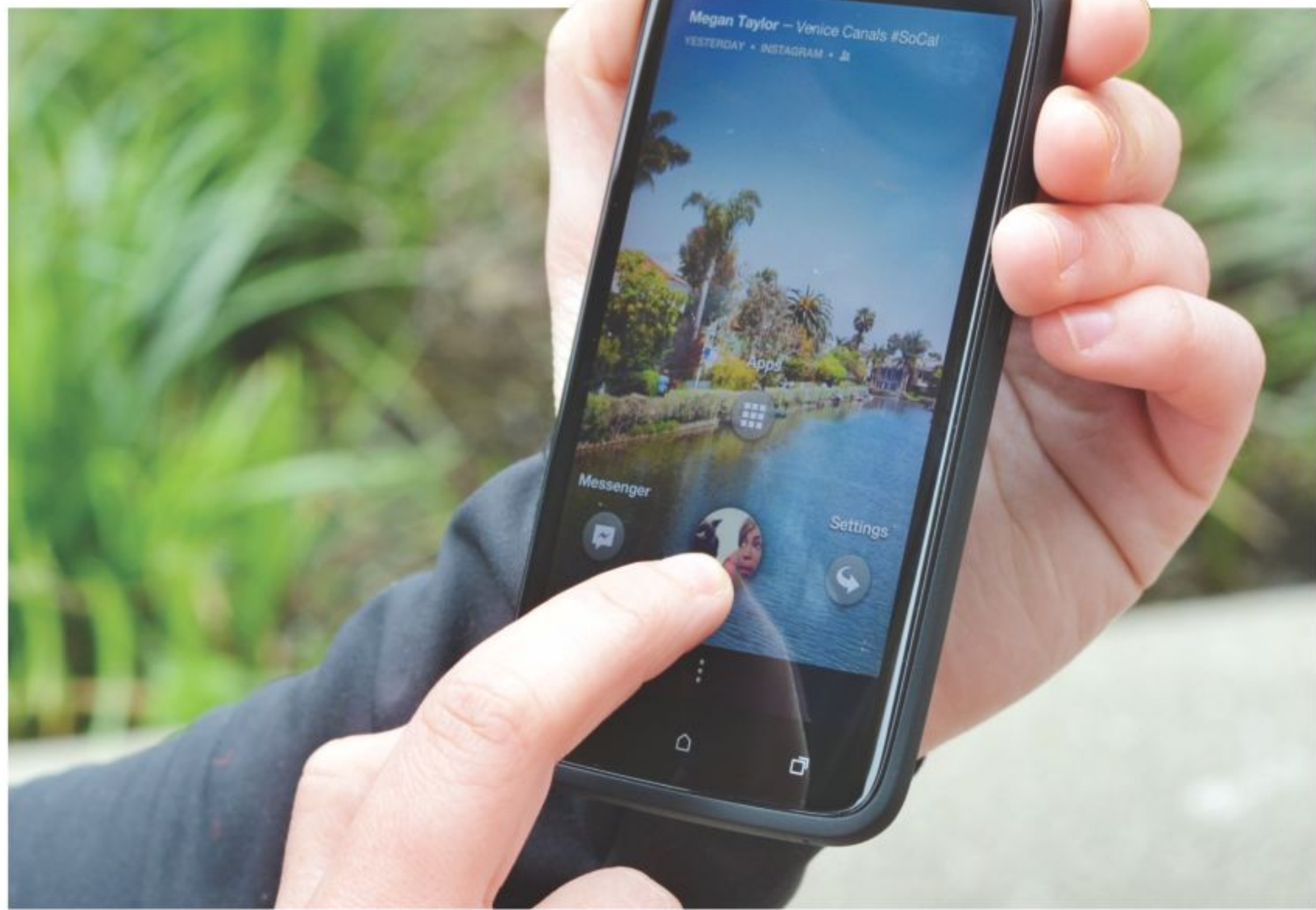
Want to enjoy Facebook in its most absorbing form? Then you need to get an Android phone, though you can expect adverts to be served up along with the experience. That, at least, is the advice of Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook's chief operating officer, who's in London this week.

In a briefing with technology journalists, the woman who is one half of the dynamic duo running Facebook - the other of course being Mark Zuckerberg - made it clear that mobile was now the company's be all and end all.

"To say that mobile is important to Facebook is the under-exaggeration of all time," she told us. For the first time last quarter, users had spent more time with Facebook on their mobile phones than on the desktop.

She admitted that the company had been late to get its mobile operation right and had made plenty of mistakes. The firm got underway in 2004 just before the mobile internet revolution took off - Mr Zuckerberg has said if it had been a couple of years later, he would have started it as an app - and the transition over the past year had not been painless.

"We made a pretty big bet on HTML5, hoping we could build our applications once and it would work on all the different operating systems," Ms



Sandberg said.

But that had failed - and they had to start again building separate apps for Apple's iOS and Google's Android.

Now though, the new Facebook Home - in effect a skin you can install to turn an Android phone into a social networking device - seems to be right at the centre of the mobile strategy. Ms Sandberg said the openness of Android allowed developers and users to tinker with it in a way which was impossible with Apple's operating system, so Facebook Home wouldn't be coming to the

iPhone.

When I asked whether this meant she would recommend users to go for Androids rather than iPhones, she was quick to stress that Facebook still worked very closely with Apple, and we'd soon see some elements of Home in the iOS app. "But we are certainly saying, Facebook Home is the most immersive and best state-of-the-art Facebook experience you can have."

And, as Facebook is an advertising business, the Facebook Home experience will have ads integrated into it - even when

the phone is locked. "Putting ads there is exactly the same as putting ads into your newsfeed," she explained.

And while Facebook prides itself on being able to offer marketers targeted ads - such as 24- to 35-year-olds in Essex interested in motorbikes - she said there was a much simpler proposition behind its mobile advertising proposition.

"The size of the audience makes this - the phone - a mass medium. It's as important to a marketer as TV." She hammered the point home: "This is as important - if not more impor-

tant - than television."

Having noticed adverts becoming more prominent in both the new newsfeed and in Facebook's various mobile apps, I wanted to know whether Ms Sandberg thought there was a danger of users reaching saturation point.

She said Facebook monitored this by having a group which was shown no ads. They were then compared for their engagement with those who got the standard advertising experience. "So far, we're very pleased with the results."

A year ago, Facebook on a phone was an ad-free experience, which was causing some concern to investors. Now the company has become a big player in this new advertising market, but the chief operating officer was keen to reassure users that there were limits.

"Our goal is not to increase the number of ads you receive but to increase the usefulness of those ads to you."

The future of Facebook, then, is as a company fully integrated into your mobile experience, serving adverts that you enjoy as much as an update from your friends. If the Sandberg/Zuckerberg dynamic duo can pull that off, then the huge valuation put on their company last year may not look so outlandish after all.

Rory Cellan-Jones is BBC's technology correspondent.

Infoladies start their journey with bank loans

IT & TELECOM DESK

Sixty-eight Infoladies are going to start their new entrepreneurship with bank loans from this month.

These 68 Infoladies are selected from Gangachora (Rangpur), Gaibandha Sadar, Saghata (Gaibandha), Shariakandi (Bogra), Purbodhola (Netrokona), Kulaura (Moulvibazar) and Anoara (Chittagong).

Dnet, a social enterprise, with funding from development partner Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) have established the Infolady model.

The model has been welcomed and highly appreciated by Atiur Rahman, governor of Bangladesh Bank at a national workshop. At the workshop the governor requested the commercial banks to provide easy loan programs with low interest rate for this ICT based entrepreneurship model for woman.

Later on National Bank Ltd signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to start an exclusive loan scheme for Infolady program with Dnet and Fair Price International (FPI) Pvt Ltd, the franchising partner of the model.

As a part of the Infolady Social Entrepreneurship Program (ISEP), Dnet and FPI started collecting online application through its website (www.infolady.com.bd) from rural educated woman.

During the first phase 683 female applicants submitted their application from eight Upazillas. At the initial stage 519 candidates were shortlisted and later 68 Infoladies were finally selected from the applicant pool.

These 68 Infoladies have received professional service oriented training to improve their efficiency with funding support from MJF.

To observe the activities and development of the Infolady loan program Shukomol Sinha Chowdhury the managing director of SME and Special Program, Bangladesh Bank will visit Infoladies of Rangpur and Gaibandha districts today. During this visit he will hand over loan checks and equipments to 25 Infoladies and inaugurate the loan program formally at the local National Bank Ltd branch.

Veteran entrepreneur launches multimedia messaging app just.me

REUTERS, San Francisco

The crowded, fragmented mobile messaging app market, one of the hottest sectors in Silicon Valley, just got more crowded.

Keith Teare, a veteran Valley entrepreneur, on Wednesday launched just.me, a service that claims to combine email, multimedia messaging and cloud storage in a single iPhone app.

The startup, backed by Google Inc's venture arm and True Ventures, is the latest entrant among a wave of applications, including Whatsapp, Kik, and Tencent Holdings Ltd's Wechat, that is viewed by industry insiders as having the potential to undermine Facebook Inc's position in the social Internet arena and rise to become the next dominant Internet company.

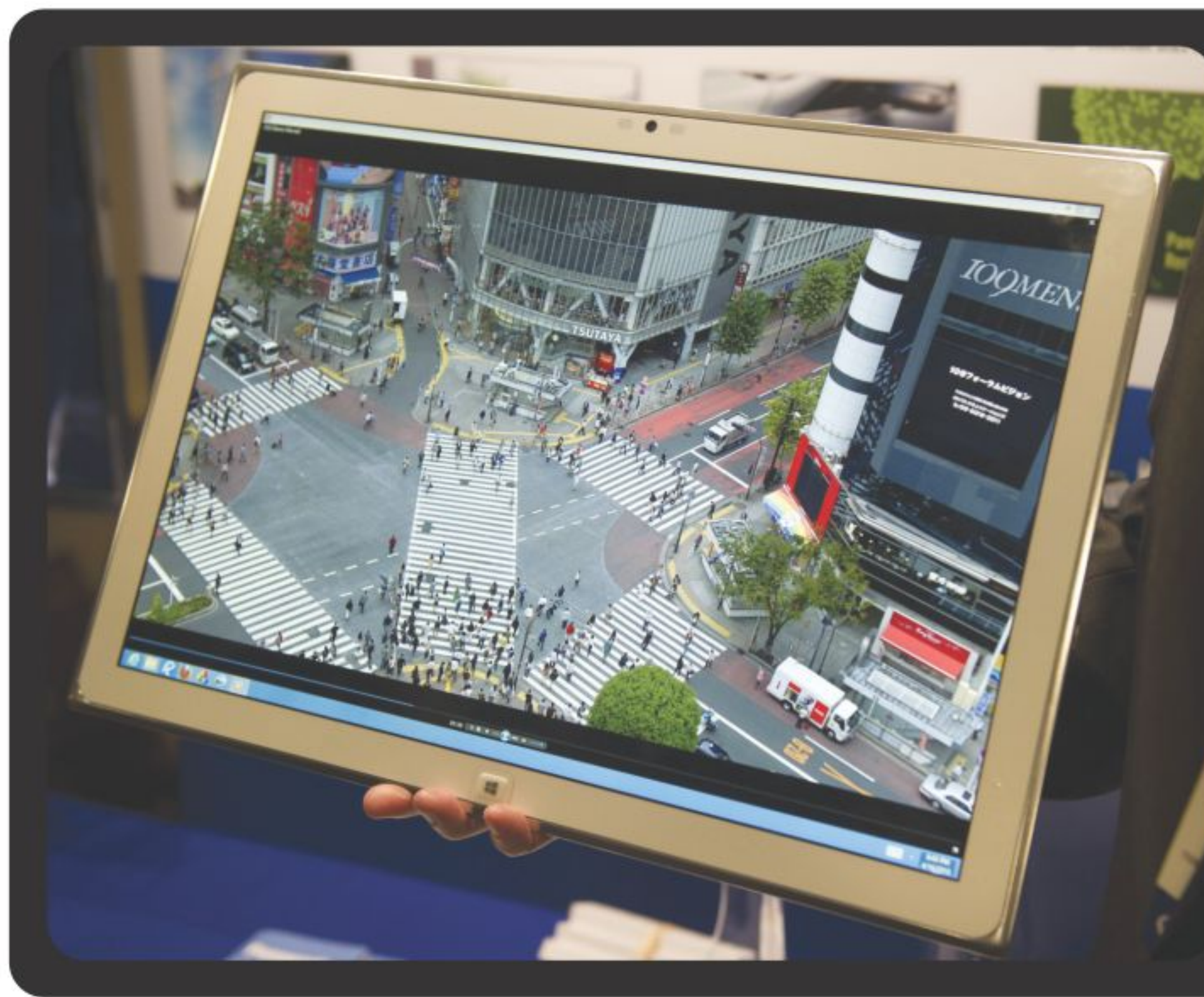
In recent months, both Facebook and Google have sought to acquire offers of more than \$1 billion, unconfirmed reports on tech blogs. Teare, the executive of the Techcrunch, that his competitors who have amassed millions of users before the launch of just.me. But he argued his app, which is integrated with the iPhone's address book, could prevail because its users are able to send messages to recipients who do not have just.me, whereas rivals like Whatsapp require both parties to be customers.

To differentiate itself, just.me will offer users a "private cloud" where they can store their multimedia content. The service will also allow users to broadcast their messages to the public like they would with Twitter or send private messages that resemble SMS texts.

The service launched Wednesday in 155 countries in Apple Inc's App Store.



Whatsapp with founding chief tech blog acknowledged pany is facing entrenched



TECHPHOTO

A technology representative demonstrates the Panasonic 4K tablet, with a 20-inch display, during CES on the Hill on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, on April 16. The Consumer Electronics Association organised demonstrations by technology companies to discuss economic innovation and show their latest products to elected officials and Congressional staffers.

PHOTO : AFP

Samsung says considers Hynix chips for its mobile products

REUTERS, Seoul

Samsung Electronics Co is considering purchasing mobile memory chips from rival SK Hynix Inc for future products including its new flagship Galaxy S smartphone to be launched this month, J.K. Shin, head of Samsung's mobile business, said on Thursday.

A supply deal would be a boost to SK Hynix, which relies heavily on Apple Inc as a customer for its

mobile dynamic random access memory (DRAM) chips.

It also points to tightening chip supplies as mobile gadget makers



prepare to upgrade their flagship product lines with greater variety and increased memory storage capacity.

Prices of mobile DRAM chips have increased steadily since early this year, reflecting a tightening supply outlook.

Samsung, the world's biggest maker of DRAM chips, has largely depended on internal supplies of memory chips for its Galaxy range of smartphones, but the market has expected it may also begin looking to outside chip suppliers to ensure no supply disruptions for key models of its Galaxy S smartphone.

NEW PRODUCTS

Asus X45C notebook

With vivid 14-inch display, Asus X45C notebook offers patterned covers and palm rests that evoke the feel of a classic suit for a gentle urban touch.

Powered by 2.20 GHz Intel 2nd generation core i3 processor, the notebook features 500GB hard drive, 2 GB of memory and integrated Intel HD Graphics, integrated 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi, Use the built-in microphone and webcam, multi-format card reader, USB 3.0 ports and a long-lasting battery.

The notebook has a price tag of Tk 37,900.

Graphics card

The Asus HD7770-2GD5 graphics card's dual-fan design and Super Alloy Power provide coolest and quietest performance that combines great gaming and overclocking performance for the high-end computer gamers.

It is packed with features, like PCI Express 3.0, AMD CrossFireX Technology, ready for DirectX 11.0 support. Powered by AMD Radeon HD 7770, the graphics with its Exclusive GPU Tweak helps you modify and tune clock speeds, voltages, and fan performance via an intuitive interface.

It also features 1020 MHz Engine Clock, 4600 MHz Memory Clock, GDDR5 2GB video memory, DVI output, HDMI output.

The graphics card has a price tag of Tk 15,500.

Tablet PCs

Ipsita Computers PTE Ltd has introduced 7-inch and 9.7-inch Brio brand's 3G and in the local market.

The Tablets come with 1.2 and 1.5 GHz processors, DDR-3 1GB RAM, built-in memory 8GB which can be increased up to 32GB and the Tablets run on Android version 4.0.4 (Ice Cream Sandwich).

The prices of the Tablets are- 3G 7" tablet: Tk 13,000; 2G 7" Tablet: Tk 10,000; and 3G 9.7" Tablet: Tk 23,000/

The devices are available at most of the showrooms of BCS Computer City, IDB Bhaban.



2G Tablet PCs

Qubee now more faster, stronger

IT & TELECOM DESK

Qubee has recently completed a major network up gradation work in the capital and other parts of the country, much to the delight of its vast number of users who will now be able to enjoy the fast world of its 4G network.

Qubee started campaigning regarding

this from April 14 with opening its network to everyone for free trial.

Users with unused Qubee connection are enjoying a 7-day free trial from April 14-21, simply by connecting their unused modems.

Under the campaign Qubee also has special offers post-pay users.

After the trial, if any previous post-pay

users wish to reconnect with Qubee, they will get waiver up to Tk 3,000 from their pending bills.

If any user reconnects during the month of April and pays their monthly bill for May, June and July regularly, they will get 50% discount on their monthly charge for the months of August, September and October.

They can also migrate to any of the existing packages of their choice at free of cost.

If pre-pay users stay active in the month of May, June and July and recharge at least one card every month, they will get 200% bonus on recharge for Tk 400 or Tk 700 cards from August, September and

October.

Active post-pay users will get up to 3GB extra volume over their regular usage limit if they pay their bill by tomorrow. Sky users will get 3 GB more FUP limit over their regular limit.

And pre-pay users will receive 1GB free volume if they recharge Tk 700 or Tk 400 card and remain active until May 1.