



BYTES

Is Your Browser Smart Enough for Your Phone?

In this issue of 'Bytes', we are putting an end to a highly disputed matter: 'Which internet browser is best for Android (as of now)'. We are going to review the most popular browsers, their features and conduct some simple speed tests of our own. We asked out the users, tallied their votes. Considering these factor's we will announce the name of the 'Victor'.

Google Chrome:

The first contender for the title of best browser is Google Chrome. It comes with the Stock browser of android if your device has a Jellybean OS. Like its pc counterpart, it's smooth to browse and swift in loading pages, especially the ones in HTML 5. It has animations that are intuitive and a bit groovy; which we like. For example you can jump around tabs just by swiping from left to right. If you are logged onto your pc's account, all the bookmarks are added to your tab/phone's browser. Moreover, by enabling the sync feature you can access the pages of your cell-phone on your tab or pc. To me this is the best feature of all' says Syed Musaddeq Anwar Al Abedin, Lecturer of Engineering at IIUC. 'I use Chrome in both my Xperia Ray and iPad' he added.

- Pros:**
- i. Support an incognito mode to ensure your privacy
 - ii. Smart suggestions and fast loading of sites
 - iii. Can easily switch between the mobile sites and regular desktop sites.
 - iv. Voice activated command with Google Now
- Cons:**
- i. Kills good amount of RAM
 - ii. No Adobe Flash support (most disheartening of all)
 - iii. Many of the tweaks and features are hidden under the hood. So some digging required
- Our Score: 8.5**

Firefox for Android:

Next on list is Firefox. Fast and simple learning curve is a good part of Firefox (at least to us). It does have a smart search feature to keep your favorite sites even

closer. The greatest features of using Firefox are you get access to vast array of add-ons. Adobe Flash support, a feature that many browsers are discarding now-a-days, can be found in Firefox. The worst part of Firefox is its User Interface (UI). Like many others out there, Tanver Ahmed Ovi, Director of GREENengine finds Firefox 'the best browser for both on PC and phone'. 'It has some spectacular add-ons and the pages loads fast too' he added.

- Pros:**
- i. Supports anonymous browsing
 - ii. Supports vast array of add-ons
 - iii. Adobe Flash Support is there
 - iv. Runs most popular video formats
- Cons:**
- i. The User interface is not at all foxy; rather, it's quite hideous
 - ii. Hogs RAMs
 - iii. No gesture support
 - iv. Reader mode is not what we expected
 - v. Unresponsive when multiple tabs are loading simultaneously
- Our Score: 7.0**

Opera Mobile:

The second contender on our list is Opera mobile. It's very popular amongst users for better speed and saving bandwidth (especially if you are on internet with limited bandwidth). We are reviewing the latest version of Opera mobile (V. 14) which many of you might not be familiar with. Opera opted for the Chromium layout engine (officially known as Webkit) and retired its old Presto engine. As it is going to run the hood more natively on the Android Platform, many will notice the differences very quickly (at least that's what Opera says). The new interface, smart rendering and zooming features has impressed us. Shuvo Roy, an executive in bKash, finds



IMAGE: CATNINJA DESIGNS

Opera the friendliest browser. "I am an Opera user for the last 4 years. It offers speedy loading of webpages, saves my bandwidth and supports multi-tab. Back then it was the perfect companion for my Music Xpress 5630 and now for my Samsung Galaxy Y" he says.

- Pros:**
- i. Fastest loading out of all (thanks to the server side compression scheme 'Off-Road Mode')
 - ii. Consumes less bandwidth
 - iii. Has customizable start-pages and better text wrapping
 - iv. Offers find in page options, news accumulator etc
- Cons:**
- i. Some unique features dropped (due to technical reasons)
 - ii. Requires many unnecessary

presses associated with the new interface.

- iii. Crashes some times and refuses to respond occasionally

Our Score: 8.0

Stock Android Browser:

Last but not the least is the Stock Android Browser. Though it is mundane and not a fancy looking browser, many favor it over other third party ones. It has some features very similar to Chrome. It takes around 12-15 MBs and can be shifted to the external storage. Farhana Rahman, an MPhil student in Dhaka Medical College, feels most comfortable using this

stock browser. 'It's great. It supports multiple tabs, page loading is decent and I can switch to the desktop sites easily' she says. Though it did have some eyebrow raising features when it first came out, we are not so fond of it. If you are the kind of person who browses in multi-tab too (like us) then this browser is simply not for you.

Pros:

- i. Supports full screen viewing
- ii. Great text wrapping
- iii. Can request desktop sites

Cons:

- i. Support only two pop in a row
- ii. Slower than most browsers

Our Score: 7.0

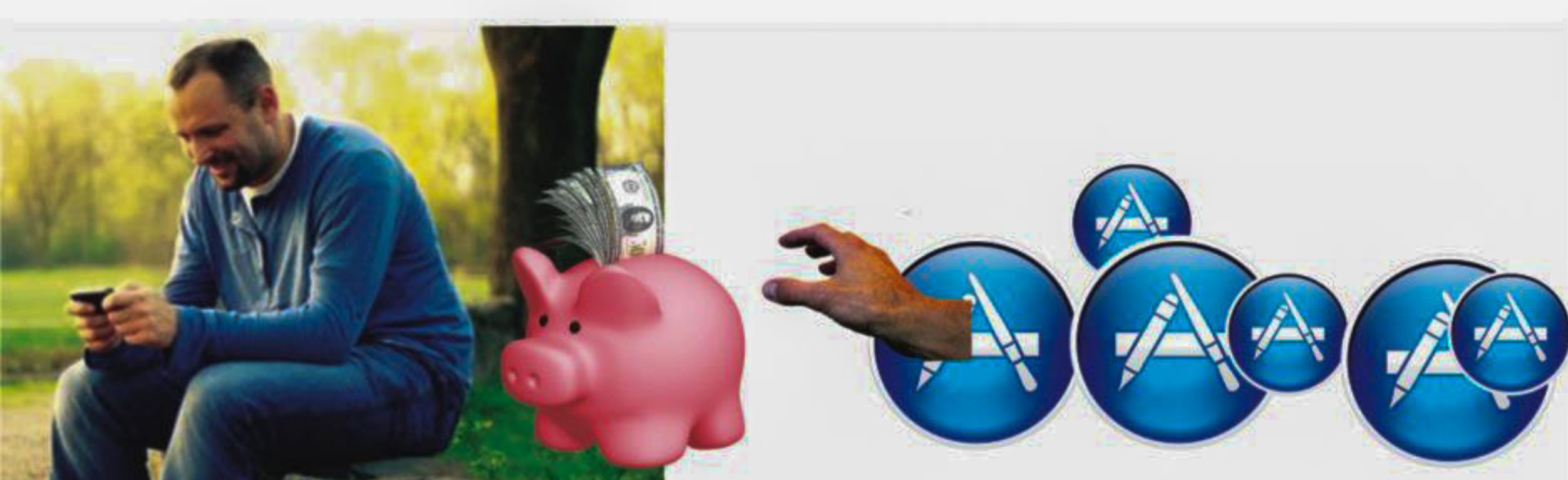
The Final Verdict:

To really check out whether the browser works the same way as the developers claim, we ran a simple speed test.

But first, let's see which browser the users prefer most. We asked around 50+ people from age group of 16 to 51 almost everyone having diverse professions; from high school graduates to directors of large companies. The result that came in was not shocking at all. In fact, the figures are what we anticipated: Opera for mobile got most votes with a whopping 50%; second was Chrome with 26%; the Stock Android Browser was third with 14%. Firefox and others (mostly Dolphin and One Browser) got 6% and 4%, respectively.

We also wanted to do a test drive on ourselves. We used Xperia P, Samsung Galaxy S3 and HTC Desire as our platform. All but the HTC Desire (which was running on Gingerbread) were running on Jellybean. We visited two sites, both of them heavily loaded with content. As for the internet, we used a stable 512Kbps broadband internet with pings of 84ms. We hooked the devices on Wi-Fi and ran the simulations one at a time. The results were indeed reflection of the polls. Opera had a blazing speed in loading these sites making it the fastest of all. Firefox and Chrome were 2nd and 3rd respectively. Stock Android browser lagged far behind; took almost double time than Opera to load the sites. Detailed results can be found in our facebook page: www.facebook.com/thedailystar.bytes Keeping in account standard deviations and other statistical mumbo-jumbos, from the results we can see: Opera, Chrome and Firefox have more or less similar performance while the Stock browser, which got a juicy 14% user vote, performed worst of all. So considering all the specs, performance and public choice; we, without any hesitation announce Opera to be the best browser for Android (as of now).

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN



Apps: here to take your money

Let's get the facts straight -- Apps and applications are not the same. One is a money making politics carefully devised to make your kids spend enough in a month to make you sell your car (just ask Lee Neale, whose 8-year-old daughter Lily spent close to £2,000 in just six days through in-app purchases!). The other is a thing you can download a pirated version of (obviously for free) from the internet and write this on.

So what do developers want to make? It's a no-brainer -- apps. Look no further than gaming giant EA. Just last quarter they made nearly two-third of their gross profit from digital revenue (Smartphone and Tab Apps). With the regular PC and console gaming industries in decline, apps have been the way to go for companies like EA.

This has also seen the re-emergence of popular PC and console titles such as GTA 3 and Max Payne getting mobile versions. This trend is going to increase simply because there is money to be made. EA may be the first but won't be the last. Rather one of many that will start shifting their

business towards mobile gaming.

But the hottest new thing in the valley is actually: Freemium. What does it mean? Glad you asked: Suppose EA is giving away a big title game such as Crysis for free. Why so?

To abolish piracy even Micorsoft has taken a turn to the dark side with Microsoft Office 365 going into a subscription basis. Then there is the soon to be released Xbox One.

Because the game is designed in such a way that makes in-app purchasing almost necessary to progress further. And trust me, the games are addictive. Sounds like a smooth play to rip you off? It is.

Now in no way am I encouraging piracy and to the average Bangladeshi PC user it may be the norm. But having in-app purchases springing up at the end of every level in children's apps sounds every bit as illegal.

Which has exactly been the case for Australian company CommandM's advertise aimed at improving battery life in children's game: ABC Match. CommandM's battery app containing a fee of £4.50-a-week 'mislead' many kids into downloading it. A £250k fine has however been slapped on CommandM by premium-rate telephone watchdog PhonepayPlus.

To abolish piracy even Micorsoft has taken a turn to the dark side with Microsoft Office 365 going into a subscription basis. Then there is the soon to be released Xbox One. Microsoft may have lost the majority of the potential Bangladeshi Xbox One buyers but this decision might bear fruit in its financials.

Dark days await for application lovers as apps take over, along with your money.

SHAHNOOR RABBANI

JUST IN

Global Brand Launches ASUS S56CB Ultrabook

Global Brand Private Limited is shipping in Asus' premium Zenbook range product: ASUS S56CB Ultrabook. A strong graphics unit, an elegant aluminum finish and a powerful processor-it has it all. It's fired by 1.9 GHz Intel 3rd Gen Core i7 processor. Moreover it has a 15.6-inch HD LED backlight display, NVIDIA GeForce GT740 supported by 6 GB RAM, 24 GB SSD, USB 3.0 etc.

Price: Tk. 73,500.



Eid Offers of Global Brand

Global Brand Private Limited has special offers on ASUS, Dell (Laptops) and Lenovo (notebooks, PCs, Tabs) on eve of Eid-ul-Fitr. Under this promotion, customer will get Tk. 500/- gift voucher of Aarong fashion house with every purchase of ASUS notebook and net book. Dell notebook purchaser will get gift voucher of Aarong or Cats Eye fashion outlet, mobile phone etc. The offers are valid up to the day before Eid at Global Brand and their all countrywide dealer houses.

ASUS Crosshair V Formula-Z Motherboard out in Dhaka

With Crosshair V Formula-Z, ASUS has entered a new territory in Bangladesh. This motherboard, brought by Global Brand Private Limited, is equipped with AMD® 990FX Chipset and supports latest AMD® Socket AM3+ multi-core processors. The board's components are of the highest quality, to deliver ultra high over-clocking ability with enough options to keep the most hardcore overclockers busy for weeks. It features AMD® Turbo CORE Technology 2.0 and accelerates data transfer rate up to 5200MT/s. The board also features SLI™/CrossFire™ or 3-Way SLI™. Price: Tk. 23,000.

ZyXEL ADSL Routers Available Now In Dhaka

Computer City Technologies is now bringing in Taiwanese Brand Zyles' P660HN-T1N ADSL router. If you are using BTCL's ADSL internet connection then check out for this router. It has 1XRJ-11 and 4XLAN ports. It does supports 802.11/n 150Mbps at 2.4 GHz spectrum.

Price: Tk. 3,600.



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