Emerging technologies in education

BETT ASIA 2017

Learning used to be about children heading to school, reading from the same set of books and years later trying to fit that limited skillset to a variety of tasks. A bit of a hit and miss affair right there as one size does not fit all. Technology comes to that aid offering customizable curriculum tailored to the unique needs and wants of each individual student. I headed to Bett Asia 2017 recently to find out more about digital transformation in education and if we are really done with books.

What is it?

The Bett Show (formerly known as the British Educational Training and Technology Show) is an annual trade show in the United Kingdom showcasing innovation in educational practises through technology. The first Bett show was held in London, England in 1985. This year, the Bett Asia conference took place in Kuala Lumpur with Microsoft serving as Worldwide Partner.

How is 'digital' affecting education?

Technology has broken down the physical divide. As a result people connect in ways and speeds that were unthinkable in the analogue application of pen, paper and postal waiting times. This rapidly introduces and develops new work skills and outmodes older ones. A World Economic Report stated one third of today's important work skills will be replaced by new ones in 2020. If we do not adapt and learn new skills, our workforce will be outdated before it can even be a part of the system.

What is changing?

Transformation Study surveyed 1494 business leaders from Asia Pacific that included 265 respondents form higher education institutions. It found 87 percent agreed that educational institutions need to become digital to increase growth. It was found 76 percent institutions in Asia are already in various stages of strategic processes.

Engage to learn with Kidzania

I headed to Kidzania to experience one of the ways children can be given experiential insights into how the world works. It is a privately held chain of family entertainment centers operating in over 20 locations worldwide. It is a miniature town complete with municipal and business estab-

Many Microsoft partner organisations showcased their tech and software for improved learning

lishments. Kids can work at a fire station, radio station, automobile dealership, dentist's chamber, movie theatre, magician's stage and too many more to list. It allows children to work in adult jobs and earn currency which they can use for further activities. Learning through experience accelerates their rate of absorption. Will you remember road safety tips better through lines in a text book or by taking a simulated test drive around a computer generated city?

The Microsoft outlook on the future of education

Microsoft is working to bring the benefits of technology to students and educators alike. The goal is to empower more people. Microsoft partnered with education communities to focus on improved learning techniques.

Don Carlson, Education lead at Microsoft Asia Pacific, spoke about

how 65 percent of children starting their education today will end up working in job types that currently do not exist. The simplest case in point is how young people have monetised the act of spreading cultural information with humour known as memes. Less than a decade ago this was considered just 'joking around'.

Learning with games

Mr. Anthony Salcito, the Microsoft's Vice-President of Worldwide Education, spoke about how Minecraft has become an indispensable tool for educators and students alike. Yes, it's that game made of notchy objects where players build complex worlds and objects as part of a survival and maintenance goal. It was published by Mojang in 2011 and was bought by Microsoft in February 2017 for an eye watering $2.5 billion. Why? Because young people catch on intuitively and MIncraft can be used

for coding by children as young as six to ten. Currently, Minecraft: Education Edition has crossed 2 million licensed users.

Then there is the expo

A huge part of the Bett experience involves all the Microsoft partner organisations that were present showcasing their tech and software for improved learning. Math is a fundamental part of any curriculum. It can also be considered a bland subject for many. One such partner, Australia based 3P Learning, has created an online learning tool called Mathletics for a child to learn at home or school using very arresting visuals. They work with Microsoft and UNICEF to run World Education Games. It is the largest free online education competition with more than 6.3 million participants worldwide.

There is ActionTec with their

ScreenBeam Classroom Commander, a device that allows teachers to connect with multiple students and offer them one-to-one guidance without distracting others.

Certiport, a Pearson VUE business, was on hand to discuss potential growth into Bangladesh. They have been offering official certification program for Microsoft Office since 1997. Their professional certificates help students stand out better with demonstrable knowledge, something very important for the massive outpouring of graduates in Bangladesh.

This is only a few of the many organisations that were showcasing their apps to ease early learning, complete LMS software for educational institutions and 3D games that teach you math. More on that later. Microsoft was on hand offering a demo on their latest devices accompanied by a simple robotic hand

School kids were able to experience immersive ed-tech applications at Bett Asia Conference

made of common household objects like drinking straw, tape and wire.

Where is Bangladesh in this?

Transformation in education will not begin unless you start with the educators. The Microsoft Innovative Educator (MIE) Expert program is an exclusive program created to recognize global educator visionaries who are using technology for better learning and student outcomes.

Two such MIE experts from Bangladesh were present at the leadership summit. Mahfuz Ara Sultana hailing from Rangpur represented Carmichael College Government Primary School. Apurba Kumar Das, teaching at Faridpur Govt Boys High School, was awarded Game–Challenger in a Bett event. Both our local representatives have been developing their skills and certification through Microsoft to enhance their teaching capabilities. They focus on engaging the young minds using Microsoft tools easily accessible by everyone.

Self-nominations for the next batch is taking place from April 15, 2018 through July 15, 2018.

Why educators need to be a part of it?

The future of education sees one massive constant: change. Nothing is set to remain as it were. Students will no longer have to lug around huge backpacks full of books. Instead they will get by with everything on an 8mm thick tablet connected to the world. Distance and time become relative as everyone, everywhere can access education tailored to their needs and skills. This is not science fiction anymore but a solid reality. Considering how big our youth population, it is imperative to adapt and adopt better learning technologies.

BY EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

ICT GROWTH IN BANGLADESH

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ICT EXPORT

2017	2018	2021
800 MILLION USD	1 BILLION USD	5 BILLION USD

TOTAL NUMBER OF ICT FIRMS

2017	2018	2021
2500+	3500+	8000+

SKILLED MANPOWER

2017	2018	2021
2,50,000+	2,90,000+	6,10,000+

**Projected growth of 2018 & 2021 based on Everest group report

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TECH HAPPENING

GP WowBox users to get exclusive benefits from Pathao

Grameenphone WowBox and Pathao have inked a strategic partnership through which WowBox users will get exclusive promo codes and offers from Pathao. The agreement was signed at Pathao Gulshan office recently. Representatives of Grameenphone and Pathao were present during the signing.

Seminar on e-Government master plan held during DW2017

Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) and KOICA jointly organised a seminar on "e-Government Master Plan for Digital Bangladesh" at Digital World-2017 on 8 December, 2017 at BICC to showcase the background, objectives & components of the Master Plan project & Pilot project..

State Minister of ICT Division Zunaid Ahmed Palak attended as a chief guest, H.E. Mr. Ahn Seong-doo, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Bangladesh was the Guest of Honor & Mr. Swapan Kumar Sarker, Executive Director of Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) was chair the Seminar. Project Director of "e-Government Master Plan for Digital Bangladesh" Mr. Mohammad Manir Hossain has delivered welcome speech.

The Future of Payments Conference held

M2M Group recently conducted a road-show titled 'The Future of Payments Conference' to showcase their technology products for one stop banking solution. The chief Guest of the event was Mr. Tofail Ahmed, MP, Hon'able Commerce Minister. Special Guest of the event was Ms. Hosne Ara Begum, NDC, Managing Director, Hi-Tech Park Authority along with all top brass of almost 45 private and public banks in Bangladesh, local prominent businessman and some government officials was also present there.

17th APICTA Awards Dhaka 2017 held yesterday

APICTA Award, which is popularly dubbed as OSCAR of ICT in APAC region, was held last night. Department of ICT under ICT Division and BASIS jointly organised the four day-long event starting from December 7th. Every Year Asia-Pacific ICT Alliance-APICTA is developing the ICT sector of Asia Pacific region. Besides, it recognizes potential and successful entrepreneurs, software and information technology services as well as the development of information technology sector. For the first time, Bangladesh organised this event.

Priyo MuktiPin: a new digital archive of Liberation War

Priyo Limited has taken steps to build a digital archive of liberation war. They plan to archive every minutes incident, all in a single map called 'MUKTIPIN'. Priyo has unveiled this 'Priyo Pins' map with a unique feature- "Mukti Pin" in the month of December 2017. People can create pins on the map of Bangladesh to describe the liberation war in any specific location with the help of this feature. The system will allow entering only the events on any spots during the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971. Detailed story is available on Daily Star's website.