Newspaper Clips
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Will Aakash see many takers in India?

India's much talked about Android-based tablet has the potential to reach out to masses with its impressive range of features. However, useful and relevant content for the consumer along with Net connectivity will be the key to its adoption.

Dibakar Dutta

The government's much-hyped cheap computer, Aakash, has created immense excitement in the tablet industry, which is currently raising eyebrows. As per the latest CyberMedia Research study on the Indian tablet computer market, India sales touched 1.58 lakh units in the nine-month period ending June 2011. The study points out that the tablet market has emerged very quickly with 15 vendors lining up 27 models for the consumers.

Though there are enough challenges and competitiveness among tablet makers, analysts feel that coming months will see even more players entering the tablet market, that too at low prices. Ollypad launched the first tablet in India in July 2011. The first major brand to launch followed in October 2011—the Emoving Galaxy Tab. The Apple iPad, the most well-recognized tablet, arrived in India only in January 2011. HCI, Jainsons poured in the bandwagon recently. Step back and understand what went wrong in the past. The Simputer, first released in 2002 was envisaged as a low-cost alternative to personal computers. With initial price of selling 35,000 devices, the project had sold only a few thousand units. The second big hope was the GLPC pilot programme launched in India in 2007 with 20 laptops at a school in Khilni in Jharnaul village in Madhya Pradesh. Although the pilot programme was successful, analysts say that the human resource development ministry was highly skeptical about GLPC, and expressed concerns about the health implications of prolonged laptop use among students. Net result being, the project did not pick up.

Cut to present: Aspirations on Aakash are high. At present, DataWind, the British company manufacturing the tablet has an order supply for 45 lakh units to the government. "The government also plans to sell 10 million tablets in the next 6-7 months and the next tender will come next month," says Ramesh Singh Teli, CEO, DataWind. The government is buying the tablets for ₹2,120 per unit and giving them to education institutions at 60% subsidy.

At the same time, the government is taking a lot of precautions for advertisement for Aakash. It has asked Datawind for a special replacement warranty. The government wants the company not to repair the Aakash tablet, but replace it if any problem is faced, which will be a big cost to the company.

Challenges, opportunity and repercussions:

Teli explains that the focus on Aakash had lesions within the company as well. "There was big conflict at the board-level as we were concentrating on Aakash before getting the tender. At a time when there was heavy demand in markets like the US and UK for laptops, we were focusing on this. But I knew we had to make them happen," says Teli.

Analysts reckon that the Indian tablets market has many more models available with a range of features and at a variety of prices, compared to a few months ago. However, for the tablet to become a common man's device, usage tariffs for high speed data services need to be brought down even further. At the same time, and with a lot of enthusiasm, they also argue that with price, availability and usage of supplementary services, the tablet market is still at an early stage and will see lot of growth.
Antarctic ozone hole is as big as North America

Washington: The first significant ozone hole above the Antarctic is now as big as North America, scientists have claimed.

Spanning about 25 million square kilometers, the ozone hole over the South Pole reached its maximum annual size on September 14, becoming the fifth largest on record, they said.

The largest Antarctic ozone hole ever recorded occurred in 2006, at a size of 27.5 million square km, a size documented by NASA's Earth-observing Aura satellite, LiveScience reported.

The Antarctic ozone hole was first discovered in the late 1970s by the first satellite mission that could measure ozone, a spacecraft called POES and run by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The hole has continued to grow steadily during the 1980s and 90s, though since early 2000 the growth reportedly leveled off.

Even so scientists have seen large variability in its size from year to year.

Intense cold in the upper atmosphere of the Arctic last winter activated ozone-depleting chemicals and produced the first significant ozone hole ever recorded over the high northern regions, the scientists reported in journal Nature.

On the Earth's surface, ozone is a pollutant, but in the stratosphere it forms a protective layer that reflects ultraviolet radiation back out into space, protecting us from the damaging ultraviolet rays. PTI
The dark side of Bangalore Shining: It’s No.1 in suicides in country

SARITHA RAI
BANGALORE, OCTOBER 16

EARLIER this week, India’s most talked about and increasingly feared city, Bangalore, was declared the number one suicide capital in the world by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). The data, which is based on the number of suicides recorded in the city, confirms what many have known for some time. Bangalore is indeed becoming a city of suicides.

SILOAN CITY AS ‘SUICIDE CAPITAL’

According to the NCRB, Bangalore recorded the highest number of suicides in the country in 2010, with 1,215 cases recorded. This is a significant increase from the previous year, where the city recorded 1,051 suicides. The city is followed by Mumbai, which recorded 1,037 suicides.

Every Tuesday afternoon, counsellor Anitha Gracias becomes “Aunt” and works the suicide hotline at SAHAL. “Bangalore has a large population of young people who are under pressure to perform well in their studies and in their work. They ask, ‘Who do I trust? Where can I find a genuine friend?’”

Many callers at the helpline, she adds, die to ask about the most pressing issue of their lives: employment. Bangalore is the country’s third most populous city, but it is also India’s most depressed city, says Gracias.

Dr Mohan Isaac has extensively studied the suicide trend in Bangalore. Now at the School of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience at the University of Western Australia, he points to the data from Bangalore and Kolkata. During the past few years, Bangalore has seen more than 2,000 suicides annually, a rate of 36 per 100,000 population. Kolkata’s annual number of suicides during this time was around 30. Now to moderate, Kolkata has seen the lowest suicide rate amongst all Indian cities, says Dr Isaac.
Destination UK

The UK, a popular academic destination for Indian students, is known for its high standards and performance measures for education. All nationally recognised qualifications offered in the UK are subject to strict quality standards. Whatever course a student chooses in the UK, he/she can expect quality teaching supplemented by rigorous quality assessment.

The UK has two distinct education systems: one for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and one for Scotland, which is comparable with the others.

The Scottish Parliament is responsible for education in Scotland. The broader base of Scottish education may provide easier access for students whose education is not as specialized as is normally required for entrance to the first year of a university elsewhere in the UK.

Qualifications gained at the end are of an equal level and degree of specialisation as those obtained in England, Wales or Northern Ireland — this is made possible by the extra year of study involved in following a degree at a Scottish university. Students could regard this extra year as an alternative to following a foundation programme in preparation for the usual three-year course offered at the majority of UK institutions. UK qualifications are recognized and respected throughout the world. British universities and colleges provide a diverse, creative and inviting environment, which will support a student to reach higher full academic potential.

International Students

Students from overseas make up approximately 20% of all UK postgraduates. With over 50,000 degree programmes and over 30,000 business programmes and with UK universities and colleges boasting of exceptional teaching standards and flexible, cost-effective, study options for students could hardly be broader. Wherever one decides to go in the UK, he/she will have access to modern, world-class qualifications of exceptional quality.

Next week: Teaching and assessment methods in the UK and more on how you can benefit from an UK education.

Your opinion: Why has studying abroad become attractive to Indian students? Give it a thought and post your replies at destination.uk@indiatimes.com

Plant Biology Symposium

The Indian National Science Academy, the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina and the German Research Foundation (DFG) have joined hands to organise an Indo-German Symposium on Plant Biology from October 18-20 in the Capital. It will be attended by 36 leading scientists (10 from Germany, 16 from India) and will start with a lecture on “The role of gene therapy in enhancing crop productivity.” It would also cover presentations in genetics and genomics, plant biology, developmental biology, etc. The 36 lectures will be open to discussion allowing exchange of ideas and development of a roadmap for future collaboration.

Oxford Scholarships

Clarendon Fund Scholarships have enabled 50 Indians to study at Oxford over the past 10 years. It provides around £7.6m in funds, fees and expenses each year to assist the best overseas students in studying for a graduate degree at the University of Oxford. The scholarships are funded by an annual transfer from Oxford University Press and are awarded for academic excellence, with awards worth on average more than £30,000 in funding each year.

Convention

Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) held the National Convention on Oct 10 at Agartala. It was inaugurated by B.K. Joshi, governor of Tripura. Anil Bhuyan, M.P., delivered the valedictory address. About 1,320 delegates and professionals from India and abroad participated in the convention.
Hindustan Times
Title: HRD ministry to take action against its official A HRD ministry official
Author:
Location:
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soup over his remarks against Bhimrao Ambedkar during his visit to Ambedkar University. The ministry is expected to initiate action against him when HRD Minister Kapil Sibal returns from his US visit, where he has gone to participate in the Indo-US Education Summit. Official in concern has been in the ministry for the last few years although he is not in-charge of any important portfolio.

HRD ministry to take action against its official
A HRD ministry official, Anant Kumar Singh, is in a