



Study: Chrome is now the world's third-most popular browser.



Lenovo is including AMD chips in its laptops for the first time.



IBM has bagged a data centre deal with Karad Urban Co-operative Bank.

Technomics

City firm building the future of books



Founder and chief executive of Impelsys Sameer Shariff (Left) and COO Nizar Jamal has plenty to smile about. In a short time, publishers from more than 40 countries have signed up for the company's online content delivery platform. — Satish B

GOUTAM DAS
BENGALURU

Jan. 4: In a decade from now, a child with a printed text book may be passed off as a bore. He would be smart if his books were in the 'cloud' and he accessed them through a PC, preferably an iPhone, a tablet, or a Kindle-like e-book reader! But before governments host their text books and come up with something like an 'e-reader for every child' programme, a book delivery system has to be readied. Bengaluru-based Impelsys, which is helping publishers devise their e-book strategies, says it could be the crucial link. The firm is talking to state-level governments in India for a book delivery system for text books. With the evolution from print to electronic in the publisher space, the

company's founder and CEO Sameer Shariff believes all government curriculum will also need 'e-support' in the future. He is pitching an idea that may ultimately result in better learning tools, assessments, and collaboration between students and teachers. "We have got some proposals with governments around the world to build book delivery systems. In the next 10-15 years, this is the way to go," Shariff says. Impelsys, in a way, should be better positioned to deliver such a platform — for the last many years, the firm has been working on 'building the future of book'. Traditional publishers understood the print business well but had little knowledge of the electronic world. Impelsys came out with a content delivery infrastructure that can,

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"Initially, we build the platform as a software product and customised for publishers. We were getting wins. But the problem was publishers were still experimenting and the cost of the platform could be between \$20,000 to \$100,000 depending on the complexity and volume of the content," Shariff says. The firm then explored the software as a service (SaaS) model. "Through a self-serve model, we allowed a publisher to come to our website, register, load up his files, and create the access control, the search, the warehouse, and the portal for delivery. No other company has created a solution in the publishing space where someone could do all these by themselves and operate at no cost upfront," the CEO says.

The model has seen great success — publishers signed up from over 40 countries and the company currently has 350 publishers using its system in some form. A monthly fee is charged and when a purchase is made through the platform, a percentage goes to Impelsys. "The commerce transaction is on our infrastructure. We hold it for the publisher. On an average, we charge 35 per cent of the e-book sale," Shariff says. Educational, children's, and professional books are the ones that are accessed the most online. The firm recently signed on Sesame Workshop, a nonprofit educational organisation that revolutionised children's television programming in the US with *Sesame Street*. Sesame Workshop has now launched five digital books and soon would begin offering individual titles for purchase and an annual subscription.

Sesame is a huge influence in the children's book segment and Impelsys expectedly sees an uptake in revenues this year. "Sesame Street sold over 20 million units in 2008. They have been publishing for the last 40 years — so every book Sesame Street has published will be on its e-book store," says the CEO. The 200-people company, still tiny in terms of revenues, eyes \$100 million by 2014. That's possible because e-book as a segment has been rocketing: The International Digital Publishing Forum says e-book sales for October 2009 in the US are more than 3.5 times greater than those of the same year-ago month at \$18,500,000. On this Christmas Day, people bought more e-books than hard-copy books on Amazon.com, the company had noted. Amazon added that its e-book reader Kindle had also become the most gifted item in the Internet retail firm's history. Sameer Shariff likes the arithmetic.



Country's best
Infosys Prize 2009 winners along with Infosys chief mentor NR Narayana Murthy and CEO Kris Gopalakrishnan. The prize, called India's answer to the Nobel Prize, was awarded to K. VijayRaghavan, Thanu Padmanabhan, Ashoke Sen, Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee, and Upinder Singh in New Delhi on Monday by the vice president of India Mohammad Hamid Ansari.

India gaming can touch \$830 million by 2012

New Delhi, Jan 4: The Indian video games industry — minuscule compared to the evolved western markets — is poised to grow 49 per cent to touch USD 830 million by 2012, when the country's overall animation market will scale USD one billion, says a report of software industry body Nasscom. According to the 2008-09 report of the IT-BPO industry body, the Indian animation industry was worth USD 494 million in 2008. Globally, it will grow to a size of USD 100 billion at an annual growth rate of 10 per cent by 2012. The country's gaming industry was worth USD 167 million in 2008. At the global level it is poised for an annual growth rate of 10.5 per cent to reach USD 53.6 billion by 2012 from USD 21 billion in 2008, the report added. "Now, India doesn't have to depend on outsourced projects. In fact, domestic demand pressure is constantly increasing and a dearth of skilled animators is felt at times," Maya Academy of Advance Cinematics (MAAC) EDM Rahul Ebrul said. He said the demand for computer gaming animation, in addition to animation alone, is increasing rapidly, which indicates that a large number of expert computer animators will be

needed very soon. According to Ebrul the Indian gaming and animation industry has flourished despite the global downturn. There was neither much effect of the slowdown on this industry nor cases of job cuts, he added. "In this context I can cite the example of a video game 'Call of Duty', which shattered the records of the movie Harry Potter in the first few days of its release. This game earned USD 550 million in five days itself," Ebrul said. The present scenario suggests that there are golden days ahead for this industry and India will become a center for original animation films, in addition to being one for outsourcing, he said. India can be a large global market for Panchtantra and other such legends, he added. — PTI



Freescal aims at tablet mart

GABRIEL MADWAY
SAN FRANCISCO

Jan. 4: Chipmaker Freescale Semiconductor Inc is staking its claim on the tablet computer market, an emerging product category that will generate plenty of interest in 2010. Although next-generation tablet PCs are scarcely evident on the market, the technology world is abuzz about their potential, as Apple Inc is expected to unveil its offering in 2010. Freescale's announcement comes ahead of this week's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, where rival chipmakers are expected to show off new so-called smartbooks, which aim to bridge the gap between laptops and smartphones. Privately held Freescale unveiled its reference design for a 7-inch, touchscreen tablet running on the company's low-power ARM-based processor and priced at less than \$200. The company said such a device will be able to run either Google Inc's Android mobile software

or Linux, with Wi-Fi and 3G capability. Although Freescale declined to name any potential vendors for its tablet design, it said devices could hit retail shelves as soon as this summer. The company expects to show prototypes at CES. Freescale makes chips for a variety of products, including the automotive market. Its application processor is used in Amazon.com Inc's Kindle. Henri Richard, senior vice president of sales and marketing for Freescale, called a smart-book tablet the "missing link" between PCs and smartphones. "The PC has been stale in terms of its ability to innovate. Smartphones have been making progress... but they have limitations," he said. Qualcomm Inc and Nvidia Corp are also expected to unveil smart-books based on their chips at CES. The devices will seek to break the world's biggest chipmaker Intel's stranglehold on stripped-down, low-cost PCs. — Reuters

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