

A Bugs Life

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FOREWORD

The advent of computer has completely changed our lives. We live in a digital world and this article illustrates how computer has replaced man in various areas and disciplines.

The time this article was written computer was slowly making inroads within the Pakistani society and as such, was considered an alien invader. Now we can't live without it. We are all bugs living a digital life.

PUBLISHED: October, 1999

Living in the circuitry of nature man has created the ultimate revolutionary tool, the computer. The computer, as we call it, has opened doors to new inventions and new revolutions. The Internet is one such revolution. In this context it is safe to imply that, the Internet revolution is the brainchild of the computer revolution. For the past few decades computer has been the portion of life for some companies, while the portion of death for others. This Century has witnessed thousands of eye-popping events and computer is one of them. This little peach of invention has attracted thousands of writers and theorists. Much has been said and written about it but still a lot more needs to be said and pondered upon. It is this continuous bewilderment which has made man so inquisitively interested in it.

A Swift Revolution

Starting from the earlier models to the present day hi-tech, computer itself has undergone a sparking revolution. All areas of life have experienced a boom and all of us have felt the aftershocks of this wondrous invention. Doctors, Biologists, Anthropologists, Psychiatrists, Analysts, Researchers, and Archeologists etc. all, consider the use of computer as an integral part of their day to day practice. The moment we gave birth to computers we proclaimed the birth of software. From BASIC to JAVA, software languages have also seen a revolution instilled with creativity, determination and thirst for knowledge and technical advancement.

Nowadays we have families of languages, like the C family (C++, Visual C etc), the Java Family (Java, Java Script, Visual J etc.) then there are others like PL/SQL, Visual Basic, PERL and so on. You may also find product bundling in software packages like the Microsoft family and the Oracle family. All of these, and much, much more promised in the years to come. These languages have undergone some heavy transformation. They follow a definite life cycle and the

notable aspect in most of these life cycles is, that, as the life cycle curve passes its maturity point it becomes the starting point of another. In this way a new life cycle starts and continuous development is possible. We have seen microprocessors make a lot of progress since their debut. Multimedia tools and packages have now made this field into a progressive art form. Video cams have made distant visual communication possible. Now you don't need to travel thousands of miles to conduct business meetings and interviews. Through video conferencing, you can have them right in your office. Just one invention led the way to millions of others. All of these and many other developments have left us with the belief that, there has indeed been a swift revolution.

Rise of the Giants

Bill Gates started Microsoft when PC's came into being. He reengineered it after realizing the true potential of the Internet. Thus a company was erected by a computer and revamped by the Internet. The crux of discussion, companies nowadays have to be on their toes they have to be quick and vigilant in making decisions of strategic importance because technology is changing rapidly and as a result companies focusing on these emerging opportunities are emerging.

Hardware giants and software houses have taken the world by storm. Millions of jobs have emanated. The Internet has been helpful in fuelling the in-streaming of companies. The web, has introduced new opportunities like e-commerce, Web Designing, Web Enhancements, Database Developments, and Multimedia Presentations etc. As a result, vigilant companies stepped forward and availed these opportunities. At the same time those who could not keep pace retreated and incorporated their defeat. Even a giant like IBM fell flat to these pressures. However, a good thing about these companies is their outright determination, they are determined enough to get back on track, to bounce back and to win.

Nowadays, it is difficult to keep pace with technological advancement. It seems as if, technology has surpassed human adaptation and development. Now is the time to think and act in terms of daredevils; daring, agile, shrewd, quick and adaptive. They dare to participate and to adapt, they dare to win and they win it!

Man vs. Machine

When I was doing my MBA I was told to develop relationships with people when I went for my Post Graduate Diploma in Information Technology I was made to develop relationships with machines (Computers). What I have found out, is that, I don't know how to develop relationships with machines but I do know how to develop relationships with those, who know how to develop relationships with machines.

Man has created computer for his own benefits. Unfortunately, there are times when computers have caused more displeasure than satisfaction and relief. At this moment of truth, we may find places where machines have replaced man, its creator. It is now an open competition. Man against Machine! It is an old saying; if you can't beat them join them. I guess it holds in this arena too. Be a value adding part in this technologically sophisticated era. Learn something new, learn something contemporary, and learn the ins and outs of computer. Try to form a blend, suitable to your mood, passion and field of interest. You have a wide range to choose from, hardware engineers, software developers and front-end operators. All of these categories have a world of their own open for you to explore.

There are times when man has to prove his worth. He has to prove that he can do better than a computer. Young or old people are trying to keep themselves abreast with newer technological advancements. They are aware of the fact that until and unless they make friends with this machine they will face a lot of problems in their professional lives. For those who consider computer as their

enemy my suggestion would be; that, in order to defeat your enemy you need to know him inside out. You need to learn about his strengths and weaknesses, learn about them you'll be in a better position to compete. Beat your opponent by learning the rules of the game, and that I may add, can only come when you, yourself know the rules!!

Dream a Dream

The Millennium Bug, computer's worst enemy, is just round the corner. On top of this, we are subjected to millions of other computer viruses; Chernobyl, Mellisa, CIH & God knows what. The Internet is full of it. There are people who seem to love the idea of floating these viruses. The Y2K problem does not belong to a particular segment or country it belongs to all of us. Consequences of Y2K can be dreadful or it may turn out to be an empty threat. Nevertheless, we may find our lives threatened by these bugging threats.

With lightning fast communication, e-mail has come to us as a blessing. The trend of writing emails is catching up. We are facing a change in preferences and life styles. Even where emails are not a necessity people prefer to write them. Hand-written letters are being replaced by computer-printed documents and personalized signatures by their computer scanned images. This computer magic does not contain the same effect as your personalized documents and signatures. They tend to give the recipient, a feeling of falsehood, fabrication and callousness. On the other hand, hand written documents provide you with a sense of personalized attention, a feeling of care, closeness and above all, a feeling of being regarded as an important person.

At times we may feel that our lives our becoming too machinistic and in not so distant future we may find technology, ravishingly entering in all facets of our lives. People are thinking of putting computers in hospitals, thus measuring and minimizing the jobs performed by nurses and other hospitable staff members.

Dream a hospital where jobs like taking blood samples or patient care is performed by machines instead of the caring and concerned rounds of nurses. At the Entrance level one may also find a Kiosk (an information hub operated by the entrant himself) giving directions and other information in a manner as friendly as a machine can be. Where did the human touch go? Computers can never replace the affection and love of these nurses. When entering a hospital or any other place we wish to be greeted with a warm-hearted smile and an affectionate tone, it is a package of softness, tenderness, warmth and compassion which machines can never provide.

What we need to do is, to define our limits and boundaries. We must form the right blend by identifying the areas and extent of computerization and automation. When and where do computers enter our lives is the question. Computers and bugs go hand in hand. There are moments when I feel that we are all living a bug's life. A life created, built and lived around the computer. Just a bugging thought!

The computer came as an alien and brought a list of alien friends with it. These aliens have adapted to our environment. Smoothly, they have become part of our lives. Depending upon the use, computers can be quite useful and quite destructive. The power to choose lies within you. For some, Computer is a parasite, for others, just another friend!