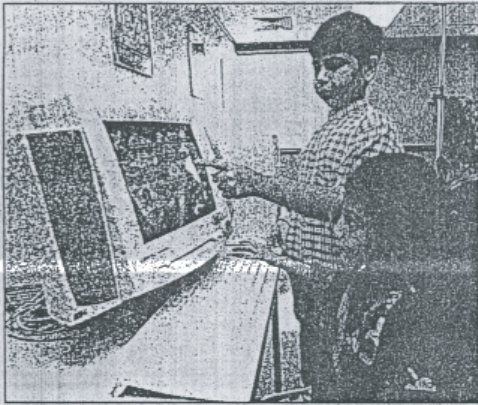


ONLINE GUIDE FOR PUPILS



Malvinder (standing) watches as Reshvinder tries out the Step By Step CD-ROM

FOR Malvinder Singh and Reshvinder Kaur, the computer has become both an everyday toy and tool as well.

A Form Three pupil at Sekolah Kebangsaan Puchong Jaya, Malvinder checks out encyclopaedias on the Internet, enjoys playing *Star Wars* computer games and visiting the Disney website, and even scans pictures and prints namecards on his own.

And six-year-old Reshvinder, like many children her age or even younger, cannot imagine life without a computer.

These are children living in the age of multimedia who are adept at playing with computers from the age of three, using computers by the age of six and programming computers by the time they reach their teens.

These cyberkids are all set for the new millennium, where multimedia is expected to rule the day.

Yet there still exist places where the computer is not such a common tool, much less toy, and where the children are not equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills for this new era.

Most of these children live in rural areas, while there are also some in urban centres without the privilege of frequent access to computers.

During his trips to places like Gua Musang, Kelantan and Mersing, Johor, IT consultant Alvin Lee visited some schools and found them lacking in IT facilities.

He felt that not enough was being done to bring IT

to children in such rural areas.

Lee, managing director of Alvanet Multimedia Services Sdn Bhd, then decided to join forces with textbook producer Mahir Publications Sdn Bhd, to come up with a user-friendly CD-ROM computer software.

The result is *Step By Step English KBSR Year One*, with the content provided by Mahir Publications and developed by Alvanet Multimedia Services.

This package of three CD-ROMs accompanied by a textbook will function as an alternative software based on the curriculum and syllabus being used for the Smart School programme.

It is so easy to use that children younger than the six- to-seven-year-olds it is meant for, or even adults without basic computer skills, may also make use of it.

Lee said the package will be priced as affordably as possible, since it is meant to be the company's contribution to society.

"While children in the Smart Schools are being taken care of, we need to also take care of those in the non-Smart Schools so that they do not get left behind," he said.

"It will help a lot if corporate or government bodies can come in with some financial sponsorship so that the project can be further subsidised and made more affordable to more people."

The *Step By Step English KBSR Year One* is currently being completed for a year-end launch.

However, visitors to the InfoSoc Malaysia '99 exposition will be able to check out the software as developed thus far, and provide feedback and suggestions to Alvanet.

Mega IT expo to boost computer literacy

PEOPLE FIRST is the theme of this year's mega IT event, InfoSoc Malaysia '99, which will be held in Shah Alam on May 20-23.

This latest in the annual Infotech series of conferences and expositions organised by the Government through the National Information Technology Council will be held for the first time outside Kuala Lumpur.

The expo will focus on information and communication technology showcasing how IT works business-to-business and business-to-innovators-to-people.

"We especially want to reach out to the non-literate adults who have yet to embrace IT," said Wendy Liew, deputy

chairman of the Association of the Computer Industry Malaysia (PIKOM).

"For example, we want to demonstrate to housewives how they can do their entire shopping in just a few minutes via the Net using e-commerce."

Organised in collaboration with the Selangor State Government, Subang Jaya Municipal Council, MIMOS Berhad and PIKOM, more than 70 organisations have confirmed their participation in the event.

The InfoSoc Malaysia '99 exposition will be held at the Dewan Jubli Perak in Bangunan Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, Shah Alam, from 11am to 8pm daily. Admission is free.