HP launches IT lab in India

Our Bureau
BANGALORE, Feb. 25

HP has announced the launch of HP Labs India in Bangalore, which will develop low-cost innovative solutions for the local market. HP Labs India is the seventh such centre in the world and is part of the company's worldwide strategy to take IT to communities, which are "technologically excluded".

HPI will start with a 30-40 strong team and will leverage on HP's technologies to develop unique solutions for the Indian market. Technologies for the inkjet printer, the 64 bit PA RISC architecture and the LED originated from the labs, said Dr S Ramani, Director, HPI.

Other innovations, which have yet to be productised include the four in one PC, which has four monitors, four mice and a single CPU costing significantly lesser (around Rs 8,000) than a normal PC.

The Labs focus on language technology which does not restrict the usage of IT to people who know English. One solution, for instance allows users to download Web pages in any language and listen to its transcript in the local language. Making the interface easy is also one focus area for HPI, Dr Ramani said.

Other areas of focus for HPI include access devices to provide Internet access at low cost; communication concepts and techniques relevant to the environment of small towns and rural areas in developing countries; and understanding the relevant socio economic context.

The first HP program under the e-inclusion scheme to bring IT to new users was launched in Kuppam recently. Around $ 1 million is expected to be invested in the project over the next two years.

The company is setting up a digital network to provide various services starting with the Government services such as land records, birth and death certificates and bill payments online.

INNOVATE WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES, BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE, EXPAND MARKETS

HP to set up research lab in Bangalore

Times News Network

BANGALORE: The Hewlett-Packard Company, more in the news for its $ 21 billion merger with Compaq, will be inaugurating HP Labs India on Tuesday - its sixth industrial research lab in the world. The labs, dedicated to generating usable, economically sustainable technology solutions for emerging markets will have about 40 researchers in the first phase.

LAP IT UP

Essentially, the Labs have a three-fold mission.
- To derisk the future of the corporation by working on disruptive technologies that may open-up vast markets.
- Undertake exploratory and strategic programmes which will ultimately prove to be beneficial to HP.
- To harvest the knowledge gained so that it can be deployed within the corporation as a tangible action plan.

From left: Per-Kristian Halvorsen, director, Solutions & Services Technology Center, HP Labs; Debra L. Dunn, V-P (Strategy & Corporate Operations), HP Co; Dr. Srinivasan Ramani, director, HP Labs India, Arun K. Thiagarajan, president, HP India, at a news conference announcing the opening of the lab in Bangalore

Debra L.Dunn, vice president, Strategy and Corporate Operations, HP did some plain talking: "The initiative is not a philanthropic one. We will look at creating a sustainable business model. The idea is to close the gap between technology empowered and technology excluded communities by creating market opportunities."

Apart from creating a viable business model, the Lab will aim to invent, pilot and evolve useful and significant IT solutions that create value in these markets.

Dr.Srinivasan Ramani, director, HP Labs India says: "The Lab has been established in Bangalore with the aim of generating innovations targeted at the world's emerging economies in the context of relevant social, cultural, economic and technological drivers. The research will help HP's e-inclusion efforts, a business initiative with a social mission."

Other labs spread across the globe include one in Bristol, Cambridge, Grenoble (France), Haifa (Israel) and Tokyo.

Per-Kristian Halvorsen, director, Solutions and Services Technology Center, HP Labs says that there will be separate teams to work on two crucial areas.

One will focus on language technology, including speech communication interfaces for computers. The other critical area which will be addressed by another team is to innovate appropriate access devices to provide Internet access at low cost, equipment and software that can be used in a shared mode, to enable the benefits of IT to reach the underprivileged.

HP TECH SYMPOSIUM

To mark the inauguration of its labs, HP is hosting a major technical symposium February 26, at J.N.Tata auditorium at the IISc.

Over 500 people from the academia, industry, NGOs will deliberate on innovation for emerging markets. Dr.Ramani will host the events.

Prof.V.Rajaraman, honorary professor, IISc, will deliver the keynote address on making computing widely available to all people. Dr.Colin Maclay, deputy director, Harvard Center for International Development will speak on economic sustainability for information and communication technologies (ICT) solution; Dr.Ashok Jhunjhunwala, IIT Chennai on the communications revolution in India; Dr.Ranjeev Sangal, IIT, Hyderabad on languages IT and Ranjit Makkuni, director, Crossing Media Labs on technology, art and user-centered design.

A variety of demonstrations scheduled for the event will include examples of enabling technologies, such as a low-cost e-mail appliance, public kiosks for access to IT applications, connectivity solutions and speech interfaces designed to work in local languages.

HP Labs to open today

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HP allies with southern Indian government

John Ribeiro, IDG News Service\Bangalore Bureau
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Hewlett-Packard Co. (HP) has announced a three-year alliance with the government of the South Indian state of Andhra Pradesh to build an HP i-Community in Kuppam town in the state's Chitoor district. The alliance aims to accelerate socioeconomic development in Kuppam by using IT and communication technology.

HP also formally inaugurated its HP Labs India in Bangalore today. The research conducted there will be in the area of HP's e-Inclusion initiative to extend HP's business focus to traditionally underserved markets.

HP Labs India is collaborating with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras in Chennai to set up a joint research facility. The IIT has a strong track record in developing information and communication technologies suitable for developing economies, including a low-cost corDECT Wireless Local Loop (WLL) solution, based on the micro-cellular, DECT (Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications) standard proposed by ETSI (European Telecommunications Standards Institute). The first implementation of this WLL in a rural environment in India was at Kuppam.

"This alliance will accelerate our mission to reap the immense opportunities of the information age," said Chandrababu Naidu, chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, commenting on the tie-up between HP and his government to set up an i-Community at Kuppam. "We hope to replicate the HP i-Community solutions across several districts in Andhra Pradesh."

The HP i-Community in Kuppam is part of HP's business focus on developing sustainable solutions for the world's underserved markets, according to Debra Dunn, vice president of HP strategy and corporate operations.

HP will collaborate with key private and public sector partners and the Kuppam community. The services the HP e-Inclusion Community project expects to provide include e-government services for land records, birth and death registration, bill payments, connectivity to local schools, colleges and hospitals, youth educational services and vocational training through direct and distance learning.

For its part, the government of Andhra Pradesh will help establish the necessary information technology and communications infrastructure in Kuppam.

HP, in Palo Alto, California, can be reached at http://www.hp.com/.