VITALY GIL

Constant traffic is more in demand

Belarus among top twenty states for rapid growth of Internet users

According to *Information Economy Report-2011*, 32 percent of our citizens have access to the Internet. Over the last year alone, Bynet has gained another 500,000 users, to reach almost four million subscribers. However, compared to other countries, there's still some way to go. In France, 80 percent of residents have Internet access, with the same figure observed in the United Arab Emirates. In the Czech Republic, Qatar and Ireland, 70 percent of people have access.

Some doubt the accuracy of the research, as it is based on data from the Ministry of Communications and Informatisation and from the National Statistical Committee. The former calculates using the number of ports while other sources rely on polls. Moreover, small children are included in the head count, even though they are too young to use the Internet. Gemius Agency offers another approach, ignoring those aged under 15; it states that over 47 percent of Belarusians use the Internet.

Those aged over 45 are the least well represented, as we might expect. Some countries are promoting Internet skills via special courses for the over 55s. Some services are also offered online, increasing convenience. For example, in Italy, the top national TV channels can be viewed online, allowing citizens to watch their favourite TV programmes or an important football match regardless of their location worldwide. Public access points also improve people's ability to go online, especially where services are provided free of charge. In Belarus, wireless Internet connections are still in their infancy, and require payment. Less than half of our libraries are equipped with Internet access while only 3.46 percent of users bother with Internet cafes. Most people still tend to log on at home: 89.99 percent.

Mikhail Doroshevich, the Head of Gemius Belarus, notes, "The number of those using a modem connection is falling, while the number of those using wireless signals has risen. Other regions of Belarus are catching up with the capital regarding their share of users."

The Internet is a useful tool but remains expensive. However, although many technical components are imported, tariffs have only risen slightly, with the biggest price hike standing at just 15 percent. Since the beginning of this year, currency prices have tripled and, of course, no one provides services at a loss. Does this mean that, a year ago, we were paying too much for the Internet?

Of course, the development of the Internet should not lag behind the needs of society, the state or business. It needs to stay one step ahead, while stimulating the intellectual and technological development of society, the state and business.

Kirill Shimko of Belarus pulls new 55 tonne BelAZ vehicle

By Taras Vertinsky

On Sunday morning, a section of road near the Minsk — Hero City Memorial in Masherov Avenue was closed off to allow Kirill Shimko to set a new Guinness record. He pulled the new 55 tonne BelAZ vehicle in the sunshine before a large crowd

BELTA

Kirill Shimko sets record at third attempt

An impressive gathering of people were ready to witness the event by noon — comprising not just those keen on weightlifting, but an assortment of men, women and children. All were keen to see Shimko succeed in setting the amazing record, as it usually takes ten strong men to move such a truck even a millimetre. For the fun of it, all the men present were invited to try their hand but there were no bravehearts in the crowd, understandably! Even the wheels of the gigantic vehicle are of human height.

The host announced that the time had come and broad-shouldered Kirill stepped forward, adjusting his overall which bore the BelAZ logo. With Olympic calm, he checked everything again and approached the vehicle without hesitation. Besides seven years of training, he also has outstanding determination and strength of character.

"I hadn't especially prepared for the record," he admitted sincerely. "However, I had visited BelAZ to practise pulling a vehicle. I succeeded, although I tore a ligament in my leg."

During the wait, the truck had sunk slightly in the warm asphalt, so it was necessary to move the gigantic vehicle a little. It took Kirill almost half an hour of attempts before he managed to pull the Zhodino giant nearly a metre, to noisy shouts of support from the crowd.

In the summer of 2007, Kirill was joined by Pavel Soroka in pulling a 150-tonne IL-76 transport plane across three metres. Meanwhile, in May 2008, the two men dragged a 30-tonne T-34 tank the grand distance of five metres. The achievement also includes pulling of a 250-tonne train with five passenger carriages.

Kirill has promised that he won't rest on his laurels but we can only guess at what his next challenge may be.

Old legends of voiceless silence

B Matvey Kireyev

Remains of 1812 war soldiers unearthed by military researchers in Saltanovka village, near Mogilev

Early in the Napoleonic campaign, a fierce battle took place nearby the village, resulting in the deaths of thousands of French and Russian soldiers. For the first time, their remains have been officially unearthed from the site.

Three years ago, a group of people organised a picnic to a picturesque river bank near the village of Saltanovka. When they began burying their rubbish, they came across evidence of the battle and reported it to the authorities.

Nikolay Borisenko, the Head of Mogilev's Vikkru Historic-Patriotic Club, tells us, "We immediately addressed various institutions to attract public attention, organise digs and conduct official assessments of the remains and fragments of ammunition. We heard nothing for a long time and unofficial 'treasure hunters' began turning up, so we wrote to the Defence Ministry. A search department then arrived to unearth the remains of the soldiers, also finding bullets and uniform buttons. We hope that endeavours will continue to honour the site properly; it could perhaps become a tourist destination, if major digs can be arranged. Historians are sure to discover much of interest. We could then construct a small memorial near Saltanovka, with accompanying infrastructure. There would be so much to show and tell tourists."

A beautiful legend is associated with the battle near Saltanovka, passed down through the generations. It is said that, at a critical moment, General Raevsky led his soldiers into attack himself. His two sons, the younger of whom was just 11, are also said to have taken part to raise the spirits of his soldiers. The dramatic moment was famously depicted by Russian battle painter Nikolay Samokish. Later, the legendary military commander denied that his younger son had taken part, stressing that he had been at his headquarters. However, his older son, 16 year old Alexander, really did fight on the battle field.