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HK firm jolts tech space with free PCs

Anticipates Revenues From Bundled Services, Sponsors

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THE CONSTANT fall in the prices of personal computers (PCs) may also see the day when these machines are offered for free with services bundled along with it. These free machines may serve the needs of the business as

well as take up social responsibility. Asiatotal.net, a Hong Kong based technology firm is offering its own brand of PC called "IT" for free and expects to make it a successful business.

Under its business model, Asiatotal.net will scout for sponsors or partners whose logos or information will be instantly available on the PC at the touch of the designated key on the keypad. However, industry observers do not see any lock in value for the sponsor as the user may not use these keys at all. Coupled with

this, the PC is connected to the internet through dial-up modems, when most of Net connections now available are on the broadband route.

Without divulging the price of the PC, Asiatotal.net CEO Judy Chen said its business would work on a revenue sharing model with the sponsoring entities on every PC given free. The criteria of selection will be screened by Asiatotal.net. Its requirements are simple: The user should have a telephone connection, should not own a PC and be from the lower income level. Asiatotal.net has already forayed into

Brazil where it plans to ship 1 million PCs with the first 2 lakh units ready to be dispatched with sponsorship from the postal and telecom departments. It has also entered into China, the firm claimed. The firm is still looking for sponsoring partners.

She added that the company has not undertaken any kind of market research. Asiatotal.net's PCs are designed by Taiwan based companies with the manufacturing done out of China. She said its PCs are designed for Net connectivity and comes with a five-year warranty. This PC will not be available for sale.