

### English and ICT Services

This Special Issue of the Science Magazine is dedicated to Information and Communication Technology, in commemoration of the Year of English and ICT Services declared by the Government for the Year 2009.

Although language is no longer a barrier to indulge in ICT applications, there is no doubt that a good knowledge of the English Language could open the flood gates and stimulate the inquiring young minds to probe into the many facets of Information Technology. It will also enhance the capabilities of enterprising young people to make innovative inroads into a host of new fields.

ICT has come a long way from the concepts of CAD/CAM applications that were intensely solicited in the early 1980's, as the pathway for industrial development. In fact, a field study initiated in the mid 1980's, under the auspices of the Natural Resources, Energy and Science Authority (NARESA), the predecessor of the National Science Foundation, surprisingly showed that quite a number of Sri Lankan firms, which included a well known garment factory and a water pump manufacturing industry were already in business with CAD/CAM based products and systems. This shows that given the lead and opportunity, Sri Lankan institutions, and people who run such institutions will not hesitate to take the initiative to be in the forefront with new technologies.

Today one sees ICT taking a lead role in practically every sphere of human existence, and in all segments of the country's national development strategy, as explicitly articulated in the articles subscribed to this volume of *Vidurava*.

However, as with most other modern developments, ICT is not immune to abuse by unscrupulous agents, as the country has painfully experienced at the tail end of the war on terrorism, when sophisticated "Cyber-attacks" were launched on a national Web site. In this context it may be relevant to quote from an article titled 'Software Crackdown' published in the Newsweek Magazine of 3rd August 2009, which reads as follows: "A few weeks ago malware known as Zero Day was found to have exploited a vulnerability in Microsoft's Windows operating system that could allow online criminals to take control of a computer anywhere in the world without being detected". Fortunately, we know that Sri Lanka has already been awakened to this reality, and is said to be in the process of taking preventive measures.

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