

Social networking made easy

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A Poken device that is used as a social business card. Photo: Special Arrangement

Poken accommodates growing contact details of people

You attend an international conference, network with people from different places, and return home, your pocket full of business cards.

Now you want to take it a step further and 'connect' with your new-found contacts on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr and the umpteen other websites in this age of social networking. Imagine the hassles involved.

You will have to key in all the names in the search boxes of the many social networking sites that exist and then narrow down to the right person before clicking the friend request button. How many times did you wish you could 'connect' a little more effortlessly, perhaps at the click of button?

Well then, it's time to look at Poken, a trendy device fast catching up with gadget freaks. Simply put, Poken is a social business card conceived to accommodate the growing contact details of people in this age of social media networking. In other words, as one blogger Amy Palko put it, it makes it easier for you to link your online profiles with people you meet offline.

Produced by a Swiss-based company Poken S.A., each device, mostly animated toons, comes with a palm that 'high fives' the other Poken devices to exchange their contact cards by holding them about 0.5 inches apart.

Once the data transfer through the proprietary short range high frequency, wireless communication Near Field Communication technology is complete, the palms glow green. Apart from supporting the usual telephone, URL(s), location and email addresses, a Poken contact card could be configured to more than 40 social networking sites. Orkut, India's biggest social networking site, does not figure on the list.

"Although Orkut is not supported with the device initially, it can be configured later," says Naidu Darapaneni, founder-CEO of meraevents.com, the authorised reseller for Indian market.

Palm is the heart

The palm is the heart of the device. Ensclosed in this palm is a USB connector that, when plugged into a computer, connects a user to his/her Poken profile on the Poken web site. Depending on how the device is configured, the contacts can be either synced automatically (in an auto mode) or manually added. Each time a contact makes any changes to his/her profile, the details are automatically updated in your Poken contacts. Further, Poken can also be used to facilitate business networking, Mr. Naudi points out.

The device holds up to 64/120 contacts (depending on the model) at a time. "MNCs like BMW and IBM have used the devices for networking. Even some users at our website, meraevents.com, have used Poken at conferences."

Though the product is a boon to the social media frenzy, it should be remembered that Poken will take off only when it becomes more popular. Both users will require the devices to connect through Poken.

For more information, visit www.pokeninindia.com or www.meraevents.com.

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