

Snapshots

Our midsems issue! Read it during a study break, tell us what you think!

Optical Illusions

How can pictures trick your mind? Find out in PopSci-page 5

Social Service

Want to do your bit for society, but don't know where to begin? Former InsIghT editor Akshay Saxena has some suggestions -page 8

Leisure Spread

Finally we've done it! And the timing couldn't be better. Chuckle through the midsems while reading our two page leisure spread. Then head over to our website for even more fun- pages 6,7

Entrepreneurship

Times sure are tough, but that isn't stopping these people. Find out how some IITians have gone on to become entrepreneurs featured in Outlook -page 4

Podcasts!

IITB Racing adds yet another extremely prestigious feather to their cap -page 2

Hostel Allocation

The burning issue on every thirdie's mind. We address it with a discussion with the GSHA. Read what he had to say. -page 4

Hostels 10, 5 and 2 welcomed the new year with computer room thefts. CC had given the hostels new LCD monitors (costing Rs. 10000 apiece) at the end of the last semester and one monitor was stolen from each hostel. The Security Office has been taking these cases very seriously and has several leads, which it would not like to publicise at this stage. They have narrowed down the trail to a few suspects and expect a breakthrough in 10 days or so. The officer-in-charge believes it could be the same group/person involved in both the H10 and H2 thefts.

The thefts have been placed between the end of December 2008 and the first week of January 2009. In case of H5 and H10, students and security officials searched the rooms of all hostel inmates as soon as the theft was discovered.

Computer theft is not uncommon in the institute. Only recently the thief behind a series of laptop thefts was nabbed. The thief, who looked like any other student, was from Nashik and it seems he had intimate knowledge of IITian carelessness. He was spoilt for choice when he encountered plenty of unlocked rooms with all sorts of booty. What takes the cake, however, is

Is your property safe?

Archana, Aditi and Harish tell a cautionary tale of thefts on campus

that one student was not even aware of the theft of his laptop and was convinced the security officers were pulling a fast one when they asked him to check if his laptop was missing. The officers who cracked the case were felicitated at the Republic Day function in the Institute this year. They say the thief managed this far only because he looked like a student.

Thefts: an overview

Most thefts on campus are by insiders. The Security Section has a (private) database of potential trouble-makers and habitual offenders, which include some staff and some children of staff. As a matter of policy, however, the photographs of campus insiders caught for theft are not displayed to the public (the pictures of thieves outside the Security Office are mostly outsiders). Even after arrest, they are rarely kept jailed for more than a few days. Students have also been known to engage in theft but they are the last to be suspected in any incident. A typical case that involves a student is illegitimate ATM withdrawal.

Most commonly stolen items on campus: cycles, taps and cell-phones. An interesting point about cycle theft: very often, the 'theft' is actually someone taking the cycle away because it looks just like his and the key fits in, or because he's plain lazy.

Shortage of Manpower

Until 3-4 years ago, hostel area security was managed privately with about 115 watchmen operating in 3 shifts. When the institute took over hostel security, they could manage only 65 watchmen for the hostel area. Checking 400 students + 40 staff is, therefore, not feasible. The Security Officer concedes that a watchman is 'more of a receptionist'. There is also great pressure from the management to cut down on employees to conform with the MHRD's guideline of 1.5 employees per faculty (we have about 400 faculty and 1200 employees).

(Continued on page 2)

Get ready to live in a hostel plush with top class facilities inmates would crave for. In a landmark judgment, a record amount of Rs 50 lakh has been allotted for all the hostels in the institute with the average per hostel amounting to an impressive Rs. 4 lakh. The laudable and consistent efforts put in by the Hostel Affairs Council have vivified the stodgy scene of hostel facilities.

But how did all this happen? Is this a god-send? The hostels we live in have been devoid of facilities many students have wished for, for a long time. The dilapidated hostel buildings, especially those of hostels 1-11, terribly needed a facelift and basic facilities which prompted the hostel affairs council to swing into action and press for funds. The primary reason behind this was the slow and lackadaisical approach of the estate office towards repair/construction work. All hostels were directed to assess the current

The Grand Hostel Spruce-up

R. Karthik gives you details about the record fund allotted to the hostels this year

procurement of equipments like water coolers, geysers etc.

The work started in September and lists from all hostels were collected by the end of November. In the meanwhile, the GSHA had already approached the DD (FEA), Dean RM and the Dean SA and discussed issues. The current needs and future requirements were taken into consideration as the population of the institute would increase by about 54% by the year 2010. Then the matter was presented in the bi-annual SAC meeting along with some additional points in December. It was then discussed and approved.

Finally after negotiations and discussions an amount of Rs 50 lakh was allotted for hostel redevelopment. This huge amount is divided into the planned and non-planned segment. The planned segment includes material purchases such as geysers, water coolers, washing machines, and luxury items like pool tables, plasma TVs, lounge items and many more. The non-planned segment includes spending on repair, renovation and so on. Hostels 1 through 11 will get Rs 4 lakh each while 12 and 13 will get Rs 2.75 lakh each as they are relatively new hostels. These funds are thrice the demands of the hostels. Now, hostels can finally fulfill their demands on their own without any interference from the estate office.

The issue of the shabby state of hostel grounds was also brought up in the SAC meeting, which resulted in hostels being allowed to employ private horticulturists to enhance the aesthetic appeal. Again, the Estate Office has been bypassed; a

renowned horticulturist from Dubai has been appointed by the Hostel Affairs Council for the same. Hostels are busy preparing a WishList for a complete makeover.

Also, students are requested to forward ideas to their respective councils.

This unprecedented windfall is sure to change the face of our hostels. Thanks to Prof. Gopalan, Dean SA, Prof. Shevgaonkar, Dean RM and the Hostel Affairs Council, your hostel will soon be a much better place to live in.

Kudos to the Hostel Affairs Council – this is definitely a landmark achievement.

A few items that are part of some Hostel WishLists, along with their approximate costs

- Fridge (for mess) – Rs. 12,000
- Washing Machine – Rs. 11,000
- New PA system – Rs. 20,000
- Handycam + Digicam – Rs. 30,000
- Foosball table – Rs. 11,000
- Tech cupboard – Rs. 15,000

(Karthik Ramesh is a third year student of the MEMS Department. He can be contacted at rdotkarthik@iitb.ac.in)

The Polt God- by Srivathsan



Is your property safe?

(Continued from page 1...)

Security at Main Gate

At present, security is a mess, especially at the Main Gate. Ever since the right turn at YP was banned, all vehicles from Kanjurmarg must enter at the Main Gate, effectively doubling the load. It is impossible to check all vehicles entering the MG; in fact, only about 50% of them are recorded in the register.

The pedestrian load comes in pulses, and is especially high when the signal outside is red. Checking everybody would cause bottlenecks. The narrow road outside doesn't help the situation either, since traffic jams

are frequent and the crossroad right outside the MG is extremely busy.

An MG upgrade has been postponed for the past 10 years and is expected to happen anytime soon since the road widening (which has to be completed for the work at MG to begin) is finally underway.

After upgradation, things should be more streamlined,

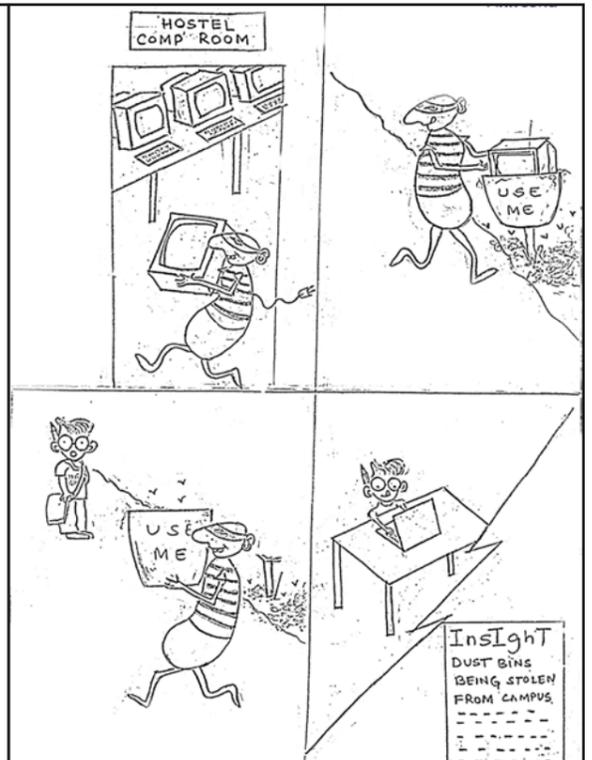
and a greater proportion of people and vehicles can be checked.

Security Officer's advice to students

- Report all suspected thefts, however minor. They usually form a pattern, and the greater the number of reports, the easier it is to investigate.
- Do not leave valuables lying around in the room, especially an open room.

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Noticed the dustbin shortage? -Anwasha



GCs through the ages

Arvind talks about how the Cultural GC has evolved over time

Legends speak of the time when 8 – 11 GC events used to take place for every genre of cult prevalent in the institute. There were less open events – Annual Production still implied the total output of a manufacturing firm and AIDS was, well, AIDS. Minstrels sing about the tribal allegiance and raw energy associated with the General Championship, which was fought with the zeal and enthusiasm of the Spartans defending their kingdom against Xerxes (minus the leather skirts and eight packs, though).

The Dark Side

But the picture was not as rosy as it seems and all was not necessarily well. The abundance of GC events put a lot of strain on the hostels – especially the dramatics and music events, which required a lot of preparation on the parts of the hostels participating. Also, each hostel hand-picked the events in each genre at which they excelled and the other events had to suffer due to mediocrity of participation. This resulted in a decrease in the level of competition and the overall quality of the events in each GC suffered.

Things had come to a point where something had to give. It was the end of an era and conditions were ripe for a new order to replace the old, crumbling empire. The GC culture then slowly but surely gave way to club culture. The Club scene can be broadly differentiated, for academic interest, in two categories – open events and flagship events.

Club Culture

This new idea of a universe which consists of clubs dominating the cultural scene has its own personal concept of heaven and hell. Clubs provide a certain diversity and independence which were somehow missing when GCs held sway. Innovations are accepted easily, since clubs are individual concerns unlike GCs, where each hostel resists a certain new event or practice if it deems it unsafe. Cases in point – the new clubs which have mushroomed in the past few years such as the dance, film-making and photography clubs, which had few takers under the GC scheme of things. Another feather in their cap is the workshops and classes that are held under their supervision which helps foster new talent, something the GCs fail to do.

This does not mean GCs are a lost cause; quite the opposite. The GCs even now serve the higher purpose of providing a

platform for competition between different hostels. This in itself is reason enough for the GCs to exist and command a respectable place in the cultural landscape of the institute. As soon as we enter the institute, we are inundated by a flood of cultural choices and avenues we would like to pursue. In this case we naturally gravitate towards stuff we are good at or at least have previous experience at, preventing us from trying out untested waters. Some people are born great, while most have greatness thrust upon them, which is precisely what a GC does. We are called upon to put our dignity in the line of ridicule for the hostel's glory and find out, to our great surprise, that we are not half as bad as we dreaded. In fact, some of us find our true calling this way and this phenomenon gives rise to heroes. Most such stories may be exaggerated to breaking point through repeated telling, but they do provide a great source of inspiration for generations to come.

The Bright Side

Another concept from the era of the GCs is that of anti-cheering. Though considered a malpractice among the patrons of art today, it was the experience of a lifetime performing against a crowd baying for your blood, say the old-timers with a hint of nostalgia. Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger, and anti-cheering definitely didn't kill. The amount of pressure created in such events was immense. Students would show their allegiance to their respective hostels by crying their hearts out at each point gained and by raising creative suspicions about the opponents' genealogy.

The repercussions of GC culture were profound in other areas as well. Enthusiasm for hostel activities was at its peak and allegiance to the hostel was regarded above all else. In the institute elections, students' votes were biased towards their hostel to a really large extent. The sense of belonging led to a whole new level of bonding. Even today, the alumni are interested in the GC tally to see which hostel beats all else to win the coveted General Championship.

All said and done, GCs have always been an integral part of our lives and will continue to be a part of the cultural landscape, though in what capacity and purpose only time can tell.

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Director's Cut

Tanuj interviews Prof. A. K. Dey, IITB Director, 1974-84

Q. What was IITB like during its infant years?

I have been part of the IIT Bombay family since 1958, when it all began. Initially, there were only a 100 students in all branches of IITB put together! The entire Mechanical Department consisted of just 5 professors. And there were only 4 branches of engineering. In the early years the PG Courses were taken up completely by faculty from the USSR. But we were insistent on the UG courses being taught by our own Professors. And this has paid off as you can clearly see.

Q. What were the problems you came across back then?

I remember the initial problems we faced. Equipment had to be brought from the USSR. It was heavy, huge and not good for general laboratory work. The Institute had to buy equipment on its own. But a lack of availability of foreign exchange prevented this. UNESCO had once complained that equipment meant for our labs had arrived at the dock, but was not being transported to the institute. We couldn't because we lacked the infrastructure and the funds to get it here. In fact, most of our problems arose due to the lack of the right equipment and the lack of finances to acquire them.

Q. Computers have become indispensable today, but what was it like during your time as director?

There were no personal computers at that time. IN 1974, They had one MINX which was slow and inefficient. It was more of a bottleneck than a helpful tool. Sometimes students had to travel to TIFR to do their computation on their computers. This was a great handicap and we knew that computers would become essential. We looked to import computers but this was the time the government had banned IBM, Pepsi, etc. Institutes like IITK had support from the US, we received no such generosity from the USSR.

Q. But IIT Bombay managed to get through all of those problems and reach where it has today. What do you think is the reason for this success?

Two things mostly. First, it's the wonderful Alumni. When we tried to contact the alumni for help back in the 60s, they were not in very glorious positions. The maximum we

could garner from anyone was about 100\$. Today money comes in millions of dollars and KreSIT, SOM, H12 and H13 are testimony to the same.

Second, we have a strong Value system and its very essential that we uphold it. I remember In 1982 4 students were rusticated because of their poor academic performance. There were 2 Malaysian and 2 Sri Lankan students who had failed to clear their backlogs. In protest, some of the students had gheraoed me. The Institute had to be shut down for 3 weeks to settle the unrest. But I was adamant on this decision even in front of the senate. One needs to be strong to run an Institute of this calibre.

Q. What about changes you brought about? Were there any that might have been met with skepticism then, but have gained acceptance now?

Getting good faculty was always difficult. Class capacity was 60 students at most. And even then some Professors thought the "personal touch" was missing in a class of that size. In my tenure I decided to revamp the Recruitment Process. We started advertising abroad too.

Instead of just one interview with a board of interviewers, prospective faculty were invited to the Institute 2 days before the interview and encouraged to interact with everyone in the department. Then a seminar was held where all the Professors as well as the Assistant Professors gave inputs. Only after this was an interview conducted. This ensured that the department was more than a collection of good individuals but a family of similar minded people.

Also, the Teacher evaluation was started during my term as Director; this didn't gain a lot of popularity with the faculty initially. But I believed it was important if continuous improvement and growth were to be our objectives.

For the full interview, check out our Golden Jubilee magazine, out on March 14th.

Editorial

Quality vs. Quantity

Which of these words appeals more strongly to you?

It is an established fact that most IITians are too busy doing something (and doing nothing as well) to stop and think for too long about why they're doing it or how they're doing it. As a result, we sometimes end up doing a thing without really exploring everything else that's out there, or without ensuring that we're doing it the best possible way.

So we get back to the eternal question: should we do a thousand things (as most of us do) or should we do one thing and perfect it?

Proponents of the doing-a-thousand-things theory will no doubt say that it helps them learn time management skills and that it diversifies their portfolio. Also, the exhilaration of pulling something off that ought never to have worked pays for all the tension that comes with almost not pulling it off. In the corporate world, they call this the 'student syndrome' - it's a known fact that no matter how much time a student is given to perform a task, the actual work will be done in the last 15% of that time. Were' all guilty of it.

However, the detractors of this method of doing things feel that one can never really enjoy oneself if always hopping from deadline to deadline, and that the resultant loss in quality ensures that one can never really do justice to one's potential - one might

be called a 'God' in IITB, but the real world might be less tolerant.

We've all heard the nursery rhyme- 'One thing at a time and that done well'. People who swear by the 'do one thing well' rule say that it is the only way to go if one wants recognition or to achieve something lasting. They say that only sustained effort can lead to success, if not necessarily popularity and public visibility. The downside, as portrayed by their critics, is that one never really explores one's full potential if doing only one thing, because that thing is usually something one would have explored before coming to IITB. Then on, it is just perfection of a talent that has already been honed.

Finally, a judicious mix of both methods might be a good one to try - where one explores two or three things in one's first year. (while, of course, exploring acads - the prime motivator - as well.) After that, it might be good to settle down to one thing, and try to rise to the top in it, instead of forever trying to be a jack-of-all-trades.

This is the age when we have the time and enthusiasm to experiment. So tell us, what works for you?

PG Cult 2009 – Phase 1

On 1st January 2009, the institute cultural council started working on the much talked about event to be organized for the first time in the history of IIT Bombay – the PG Cultural Festival, a cultural extravaganza exclusively for the Post Graduate students of the institute. Not even in their wildest dreams did anyone think that more than 400 students would register themselves for the first phase of PG Cult 2009.

PG Idol Eliminations

The journey started with the PG idol eliminations on 30th January. More than 70 singers, most of them very talented, from all the departments of the Institute took part. It was initially planned to select 10 finalists from the first round. However, due to the high quality of the participants, it was decided to select 27 participants and have a second round before the finals.

Hindi/English Elocution

"Should we put constraints on media for National Security?" – This subject related to the recent terrorist attacks on Mumbai, made students give up their Saturday afternoon naps. Again, 35 participants from almost all the departments came forward to express their views. One of the judges remarked that he had never seen this amount of preparation going into an elocution competition even amongst the UGs.

Mr. & Ms. PG

Many preconceived notions were shattered by the 80 online elimination entries for Mr. & Ms. PG, IIT Bombay. Questions on UGs, Placements, Barack Obama, Hostel 11 were posed and the participants broke all bounds of wittiness and creativity. Finally,

after a rigorous round of GD/PI, 6 participants moved on to the finals, to be held in the second phase of PG Cult 2009.

Rang De IIT

The most beautiful location on campus, the lakeside, just got more colorful, with sketches, paintings and drawings depicting IIT Bombay exhibited on the afternoon of 31st January. The number of teams taking part was equivalent to that in any recent FA GC event; 35 two-member teams took part.

General Quiz

The General Quiz was a big event of Phase I of PG Cult 2009. It was a heartening sight to see more than 130 PG students on a lazy Sunday morning in a quizzing event. The Questions were probably slightly on the tougher side but still the highest score in the elims was an unbelievable 29 on 30.

Click IT!

Online entries of self clicked photographs on the theme, "Indian Culture, Heritage and Travel" were invited for the photography event 'Click IT'. 250 photographs were registered. The results for the event will be declared soon, and the themes for the next week are already up.

On the whole, Phase 1 of PG Cult 2009, which included most competitions in the non performing arts category, was a grand success. It was made possible because of the hard work put by the Institute Cultural Council and the organizing team of PG Cult 2009. The next phase of the event is slated to be held on March 7th and 8th 2009.

The IIT Bombay Racing team has done it once again!! Their very first all terrain vehicle, Prithvi, was the cynosure of all eyes at the Baja SAE India competition held at the NATRIP testing facility near Indore. The event, held from 28th Jan – 1st Feb 2009, marked the peak of their success in student motorsport competitions.

58 teams participated in the competition where IIT Bombay won accolades for Best Engineering Design, Top Speed, Acceleration, Cost Effectiveness (2nd) and Hill Climb (2nd). Consequently, they were at pole position at the Endurance Race. Previously, they had won the SAE Perseverance Award, given to the best rookie team, at Formula SAE 2008 held at Michigan, USA in May 2008, which saw participation from over 120 top universities across the world. Some of these top teams have been participating for over a decade, developing their cars and intro-



IIT Bombay Racing Triumphs

The team returns victorious from the BAJA SAE challenge near Indore. Tarun and Gautam trace IITB Racing's journey...

ducing cutting-edge techniques every step of the way. Clearly, events like the Formula SAE make for great learning opportunities.

Next on the calendar comes Formula Student UK to be held at the Silverstone track. Confident from past achievements, the team aims at doing well at FS-UK. Every new competition entails designing and manufacturing a car from scratch. Apart from that, driving, marketing and publicity take up whatever time remains. Arguably, it is the most glamorous technical activity on campus.

The technical team, divided appropriately into engine, SSB (Suspension,

steering and brakes), electrical and bodyworks, designs the car from scratch. This includes the chassis, suspension, engine manifolds, brake lights and so on. Many

facturing starts once the designing is



complete, and the various parts are either made within the institute, or specifically selected and procured from abroad. This is the part where the car moves out of the computer screen to a life-size car. The car is then tested on appropriate terrain. You might have seen Prithvi, the all-terrain vehicle being test-driven on a track behind the SAC. Of course, while all the technicals are catered to by the technical team, the non-technical team strives to get sponsors for the car, among other things.

With an eye to the future, a number of projects have been initiated to con-

duct studies and research for better and more cost-effective options. Some advanced technologies such as electronic gear shifting, variable suspension behaviour and advanced engine tuning are set to be implemented in

forthcoming cars.

In a nutshell, IIT Bombay Racing has shown perseverance, dedication, and a sense of ambition to improve its cars every passing season. All said and done, there is still considerable scope for work for people from various departments, experience no bar.

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Every profitable business was once just an idea. An idea thought of, perhaps, while ideally sitting under an apple tree, while working in a patent office or while daydreaming in the Convo during IC102! Irrespective of how or when you got the idea, the most pertinent question is whether to follow it or not. And, if yes, then how? The decision might not be so tough when you work at an established incumbent firm but it certainly is a challenging one when you are, well, just another student!

Growth of interest

In spite of this fact, many leading schools around the globe have seen a consistent rise in the number of start-ups by students still enrolled in universities or just passed out from them. IITs and IIMs back home haven't been left behind either. Student start-ups are not a new concept for these institutes, but what is new and impressive is the increasing popularity and success gained by these ventures of late. Two of the IITB students' start-ups – Hellointern.com and TRI – featured in the latest issue of Outlook Business in an article about budding entrepreneurs. Even the placement season this year saw a couple of companies started by IIT alumni – like I-runway, Axiom Education and Chaupaati-Bazaar – as bankable recruiters.

In keeping with the growing interest in en-

Hellointern.com

- Founded in 2006 by Raviraj Jain (BTech, Batch of 2008), Abhishek Sharma, Jatin Jindal (DD, Batch of 2009), and Snehal Nimje (DD, Batch of 2010)
- Winner, 'Creme-de-la-Creme Business Plan Conclave' at the Pan IIT Global Conference 2008 held in Chennai
- Winner, "Best Student Enterprise Contest" organized by CIE (Centre for Innovation & Entrepreneurship), NITIE (Ranked 1st in 2007, Ranked 2nd in 2008)
- Winner, IDEAZ 2008, organized by E-Cell, IIT Bombay
- Registered companies: over 200; Registered students: 12000 (approximate figures, so far)

1. The situation so far: 1st Year UGs, 2nd Year UGs, 1st Year MTechs, 1st Year MSc students share accommodation.

2. What the Hostel Affairs council is looking to do:

- Pair up all 3rd Year UG and 2nd Year MTech students.
- Not allot H13 to any freshie this year and thereafter and eventually convert H13 into an entirely PG Hostel.

SOM students remain single due to the high accommodation charges in their revised fee structure. Most of these students will be assigned H13.

3. Philosophy behind no sophies being allotted H13:

- Space crunch: There are currently about 5500 students in IITB. 43% UG and 57% PG. This number will go up by roughly 50% to implement the quota.
- People who can be doubly accommodated occupy single rooms in H13, and people who are singly accommodated

Start-ups by IITB students and alumni have recently been featured in leading magazines in the country and are gaining huge popularity. Deva-sheesh and Palak spoke to the founders of three start-ups set-up by IITB students and the CAO of Sine, Ms.Poyni Bhatt, to learn some tricks of the student start-up trade.

Entrepreneurship among both current and passed-out students, IITB took an initiative in 2004 to set-up a Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SINE). It serves as an incubator for technology based business start-ups founded by IIT alumni. It has helped in incubating over 30 student start-ups since it was started at KRESIT. Ms. Poyni Bhatt, CAO of SINE, explains, "Being incubated at SINE, IIT Bombay, the visibility of these start-ups gets enhanced manifold among industries and corporations, which further helps them to fetch funds and expand their teams." Gagan Goyal, co-promoter of TRI Technosolutions Pvt. Ltd., states that SINE helped them convert their idea into a business which is flourishing and rewarding now.

Problems

The biggest hurdle that the start-up firms have to overcome is the problem of initial funding. Ankit worked in a leading marketing consultancy for few months to earn the initial amount of money needed to get started. Gagan also worked in an oil company for about 18 months before he started TRI Technosolutions and used his savings, along with a bit of help from his friends, to start the firm. The founders of Hellointern.com, on the other hand, came up with an ingenious method of getting the money needed to start-up their portal: winning business plan or student enterprise competitions! Abhishek Sharma, co-founder of Hellointern.com, explains that Hellointern.com got its first break at the Summer

Founders' Program, an event organized by E-Cell, IITB, in 2006.

Though it may not be easy to find investors or mentors during low economic times, but as many management gurus claim, recession is the entrepreneurs' heaven! Having low base costs and self-sufficient and efficient employees, young start-ups can play the ground safe and continue growing while the incumbents find ways to reduce costs and slash jobs. The current placement scene also proved how recession is a blessing hardly in disguise for the upcoming start-ups. While a regular employer like Schlumberger just made just one offer, an upcoming firm like I-Runway went away with 8 undergraduates, 4 of them being among the top 10 institute rankers.

Current relevance

Ms. Bhatt also agrees that in times of recession, starting your own firm is a viable option available to students. She expects more and more students to consider this option especially since the industries are hard pressed for innovations! She remarks "...software days are gone; IITians should turn any business idea they have into an invaluable technology firm!" On the other hand, Gagan points out that an economic slow-down should not be a basis to start up a business. The motivation should only be the passion to do something on your own and produce something worthwhile for yourself and for society.

Coming up with an idea, arranging for the initial finances and getting started are just the first few steps for a new venture. Beyond these steps lies the tougher task: the task of surviving! As Ankit explains, "It's a very hard job. There's no free lunch. That's something you learn after you get into it." When asked to list some of the major achievements of ideaForge, he replied, "One of our biggest achievements is that we

ideaForge Technology Pvt. Ltd

- Started in February 2007 by Ankit Mehta (DD, Batch of 2005), Ashish Bhatt and Rahul Singh (Batch of 2006)
- Innovated walls-free charging in the form of a mechanical charger, a USB charger, a car charger and a bike charger
- Their product is the world's first truly sustainable hand powered mobile phone charger.

have survived so long!" He says that for a start-up firm the trick is to divide work and get it done as efficiently as possible till you reach that critical growth where you can employ more people to delegate tasks and

concentrate on innovation and product-development.

Recession or no recession, meltdown or no meltdown, both Ankit and Gagan always wanted to start their own businesses. Being actively involved in the technical scene at IIT, it was the only natural choice for them. Abhishek, Jatin and Snehal, on the other hand, want to make it big in the business world while taking Hellointern.com to new heights.

TRI Technosolutions Pvt. Ltd.

- Founded in November 2005 by Gagan Goyal and Abhishek Biswal (Batch of 2004)
- Amongst the "Top 25 young entrepreneurs in Asia" as listed by Business Week in 2007
- Named "Best IT Business Start-up" by ISBA in 2009
- Runner up at ET-Wharton B-Plan competition in 2006
- Conducted more than 120 robotics workshops catering to over 15000 students across the country

As a budding entrepreneur once commented, "Entrepreneurship is living a few years of your life like most people won't, so that you can spend the rest of your life like most people can't." Time alone will tell how many more IITians decide to start-up that life.

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Hostel Allotment

Tanuj interviewed the GSHA, Ashwin Soni, about next year's allotment of students to hostels. A few interesting points from the interview follow

are occupying rooms in other hostels which can take 2 people.

- Earlier, sophies going to H13 got single rooms even though their peers in other hostels didn't. But this was only slightly unfair as people in other hostels got single accommodation in their third year. Now if sophies continue going to H13, they will remain single throughout their stay, whereas people going to other hostels will remain paired up till the third year of their stay.

4. On the other hand, the new Girls Hostel coming up behind H10 will see an end to all problems for female accommodation in the Institute. Currently, some 20-30 girls occupy the Staff Quarters behind H11.

5. Regarding the Sophie Allocation, a meeting to decide the final details is scheduled for the 19th of February. However, it is known that, unlike last year, H4 students will not be going to H2 or H3; H2 students

will not be going to H3 or H4, and so on.

6. The hostels will not be allotted preferentially under any circumstances. Ashwin remembers the excuses he got during his tenure as GSHA. He would like to reassure the current freshies that even if you only eat Jain food or if your brother is in a particular hostel, your allocation will not be changed.

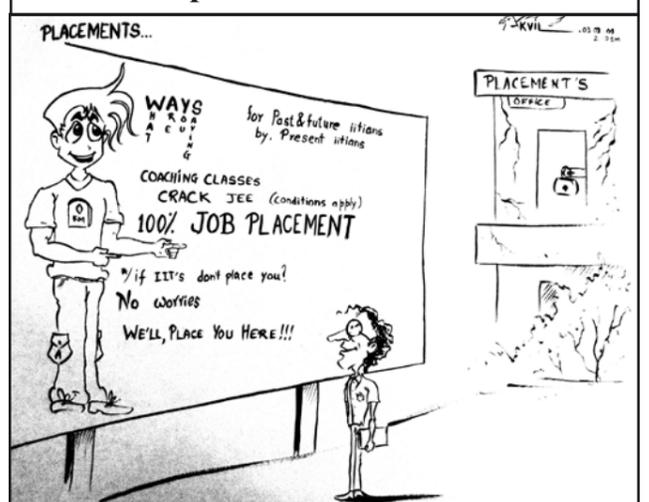
Contrary to rumour, people currently residing in Hostel 13 will not be given the option to shift out at the end of the year.

7. So when will the Institute see more rooms? If you don't count the new girls hostel (expected to be completed in June), not for another two

years at least. Even those will be extensions to H12 & H13. No new hostels are currently in sight.

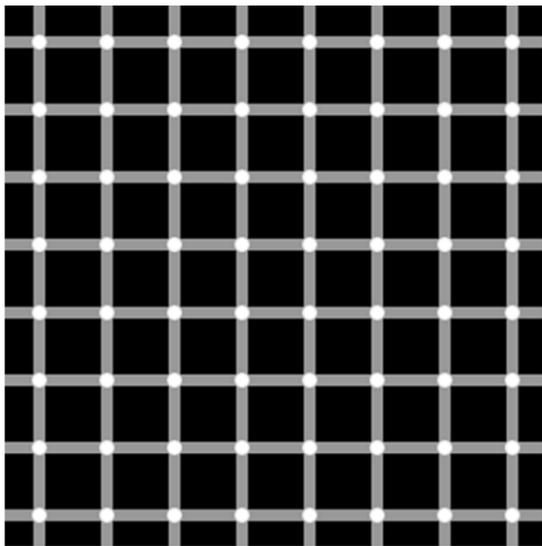
(Tanuj Bhojwani is a second year student of the Chemical Engineering Department. He can be contacted at tanuj.bhojwani@iitb.ac.in)

Career Options in a Recession- Akvil



An optical illusion, simply put, is when what you perceive visually is different from reality. Very often, this is a result of your brain being subjected to 'unnatural' environments, and trying to fool you. For the purposes of recreation (and sometimes for high-school projects) certain illusions are engineered to fool your brain. Here, we try to analyze a variety of illusions, and bring to you the science behind creating them. Read on, till you are convinced that seeing isn't really believing.

The simplest of such illusions are physiological illusions. These are caused by the effects on the eyes or brain of excessive stimulation of a specific type such as brightness, colour, motion etc. The photoreceptor cells in our eyes (primarily cone cells) get saturated by overstimulation and lose sensitivity. The eye actually tries to deal with this situation by rapidly oscillating in a jerk-like manner. However, if the image responsible for the saturation is large enough, the cones eventually tire out. Consequently, after a while, when you move your eyes away, the cone cells continue to send a weak signal to the brain, resulting in the formation of an illusion. Observe the scintillations in the following 'grid illusion'.



Now that the PAF dates have been released the atmosphere in the hostels is gung-ho with PAF theme discussion sessions. Long debates, many of which end up in heated arguments, happen every day about what should be put into a PAF to make it a successful show. Is there a so-called 'winning formula'? In this article, we try and analyze this by giving the opinions of a gamut of people directly or indirectly associated with the PAFs.

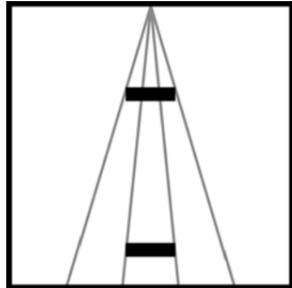
According to GS Cult, Sajid Shariff, the official judging procedure of the PAF consists of eight main points - script, prod, acting, voiceovers, choreography, music, lights and costumes. The weightage for each of these is decided every year in a PAF committee meeting. This year's meeting has not taken place yet. A list of judging guidelines based on the weightage and other clauses in the rulebook is provided to the judges at the time of the PAF. However, according to Sajid, these guidelines are not strictly followed. The final decision is solely based on a discussion between the judges at the end of the last PAF.

The Theme

Here is a list of the ingredients of a winning PAF according to the PAF OCs whom we interviewed. According to some PAF OCs, it is the theme of the PAF which is the most significant element, which is chosen with the aim of appealing to the judges rather than the audience. Yet, this has been only a recent trend of making PAFs based on socially relevant issues. Prior to 2002, most of the PAFs were outright entertaining with little or no appeal to one's social conscience. But, from the trend of the last 4 years' winning PAFs - Dastak, Déjà vu,

Now you see it. Now you don't

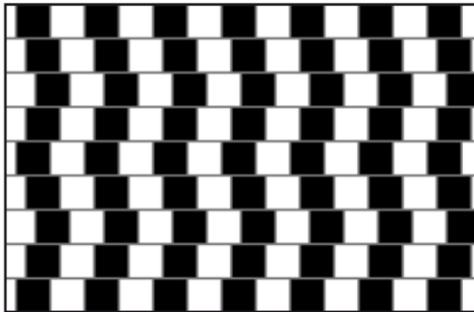
The more interesting forms of illusions are the 'cognitive illusions' which have more to do with the brain, rather than the eye. They arise due to some of the 'unconscious' assumptions and inferences we make, in the process of perception. In order to make sense of what we see, our brain tries to organize sensations into information which is meaningful and the things that are meaningful to the brain are things that the brain is already aware of. In simple words, the brain tries to associate and link every sensation with something already recorded in its memory. It has a certain set of rules by which it tries to make sense of every image formed on the retina. Let's take the case of a *Ponzo illusion*.



Certainly, you are aware of the fact that in the image

above, the two horizontal lines are of equal length. Let's try and understand why we perceive a disparity in their lengths. Since our retina is only 2 dimensional, when we see an image of a certain size at what we believe is a great distance, we deduce that it's bigger than an image of the same size seen at what seems to be a lesser distance. This is a simple rule followed by the brain in the analysis of every image is responsible for the Ponzo illusion and other depth illusions. This is also the reason why the moon appears to be larger when it is close to the horizon.

The motion illusion responsible for animation is also based on the fact that our brain tries to link the various still images to generate the perception of motion. One can also use similar ideas to explain the origin of various distortion illusions such as the well known Café Wall Illusion (The lines in the image are all straight).



A discussion on optical illusions would be incomplete without a reference to the pioneer of this field Escher, who utilized the principles of cognitive illusions (depth illusions to be precise) in the creation of what are popularly known as 'impossible images'. The 'water-fall' is one of his masterpieces creating a 'paradoxical illusion'.

After-images exploit the persistence of vision of the human eye, to create



negatives of images after the viewer has turned away from the image. If you concentrate on a particular part of the next image for about 30 seconds, and suddenly turn to look at a blank white wall, your eyes' photoreceptors will overcompensate for the sudden change in environment, and create a negative after image.

Though the most interesting use of these phenomena is unarguably gaining popularity among friends, there are several organizations who employ these same principles for good. The military researches extensively on camouflage; NASA attempts to undo the effect of natural illusions; And of course, magicians use illusions to make their bread and butter. For some more interesting optical illusions (including some that involve colour) visit <http://gymkhana.iitb.ac.in/~insight>.

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A Winning PAF

Namrata, Gauri and Teja look into the ingredients that go into making an impressive PAF, and discuss their relative importance

Saare Jahan Se Accha and 1984 - it can be clearly observed that a sentimental theme which conveys a social message is more likely to be successful.

Next comes the script, which is extremely important because it has to aptly convey the essence of the theme in a window of 45 minutes. Many of the scripts of the recent winning PAFs have been inspired by obscure movies or plays; this has most probably gone unnoticed by both the judges and the audience.

The Prod

Some other PAF OCs claim that a good PAF should have ample scope for a grand prod. Almost every PAF team acknowledges and avows the fact that a great prod is essential for a good PAF. This makes the 'scope for prod' parameter generally the first point that needs to be checked before the script team starts debating over a suggested theme. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that some themes are shortlisted for the final discussion only because of the unlimited scope for prod. Though, the buzzword is that this year there is going to be more weightage for a relevant prod rather than a grand prod.

However, all these OCs unequivocally avow the fact the any PAF in all its grandiloquence and moral appeal should be executed perfectly in order to crack the overall trophy. The key here is to have at least two complete run-throughs before the D-day, or at least the D-hour. The choreo, music and lights should flow with the story and should not look out of place.

Awe moments

Another important aspect the PAF teams concentrate on is the presence of the so-called 'awe moments'. These are scenes which leave a big impact on the audience. A PAF generally has 15-16 scenes of which 4-5 scenes should be such that they keep the viewers glued to their seats.

The prod of a PAF, typically, leads to a lot of 'awe moments'. In fact, most of the prod components are visible even as the PAF starts and thus are responsible and critical for the first impressions. For example, '1984', the winning PAF last year had an 'awe prod moment' - the superb recreation of the Golden Temple complete with the water surrounding it. One of the most amazing moments of the very popular PAF 'Déjà vu' was the deft choreo putch cover up. And then there was the giant skull on

the main stage that mimed the actions of and even bled with the main character in Shanti Mrigam. Such stunning scenes can also be inspired by other departments like the voiceovers from PAFs like Kharashein. Last, but not least, come the freshies, who constitute a major part of the workforce and play a deciding role in the making of a victorious PAF.

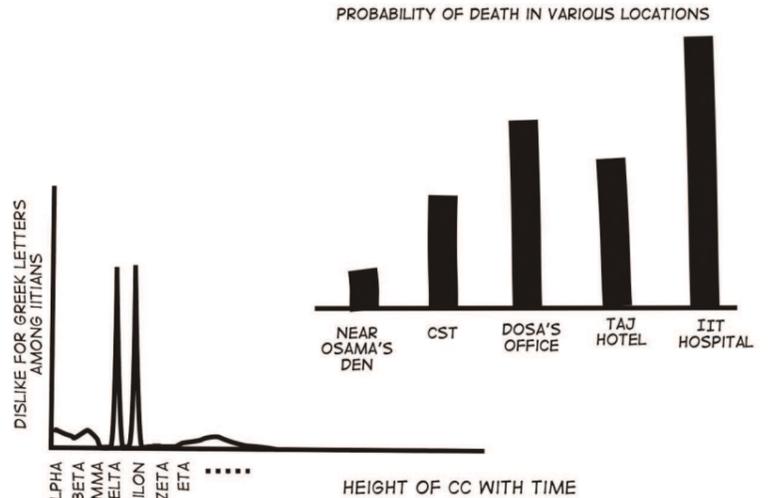
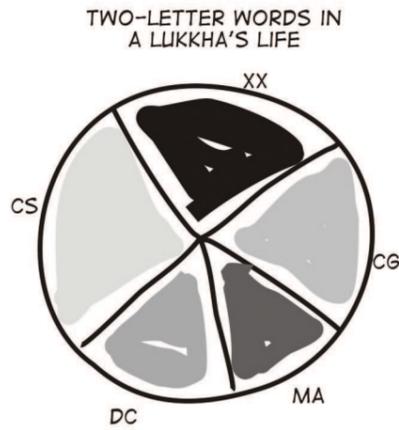
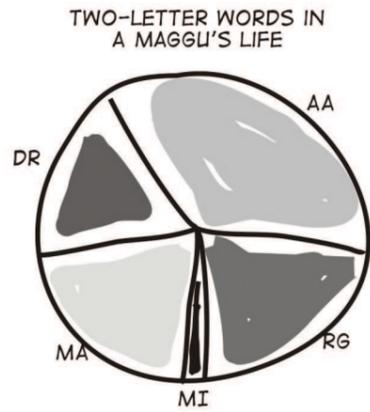
Essentially, a PAF is all about the overall experience. It is very different from a dram event. A beautiful theme, a flawless complete script, practised actors, synchronously gyrating choreo junta, well-timed lighting effects and well placed prod, scintillatingly relevant music and clearly audible orators with over a hundred grudging freshies and a few good men, a great PAF is all about that unforgettable nostalgically beautiful experience. Déjà vu anyone?

(Namrata Bandekar and Gauri Joshi are respectively fifth and fourth year students of the Electrical Engineering Department, and N. Sri Teja is a third year student of the Mechanical Engineering Department. They can be contacted at namrata@iitb.ac.in, gaurijos@iitb.ac.in and [iamteja@iitb.ac.in](mailto:ianteja@iitb.ac.in) respectively.)

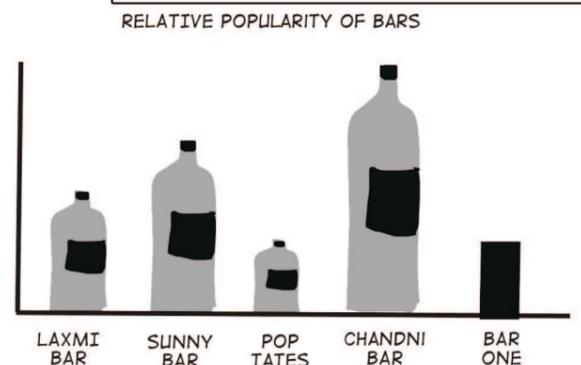
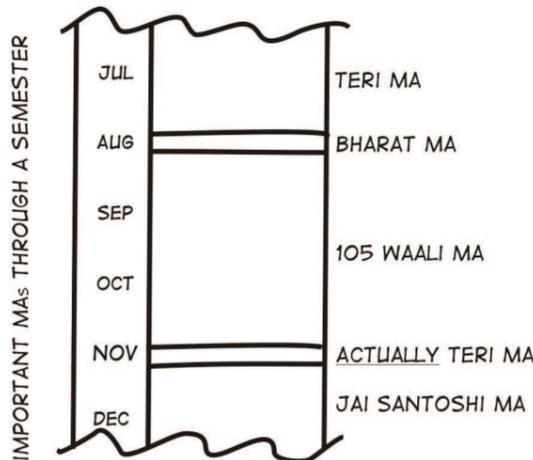
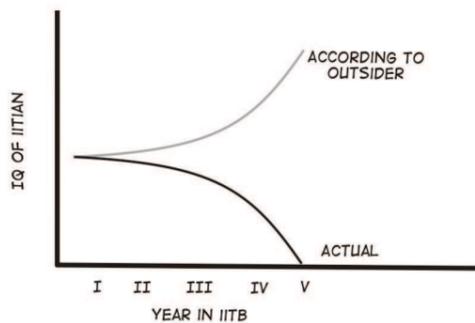
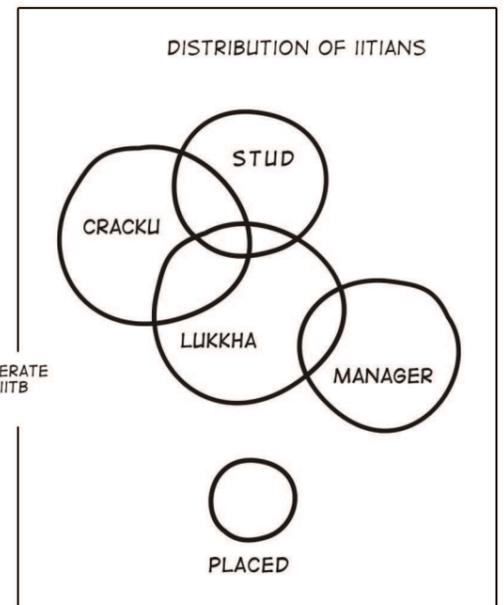
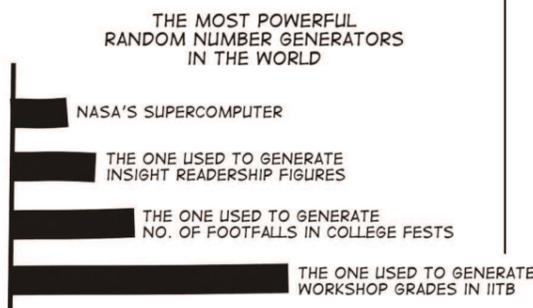
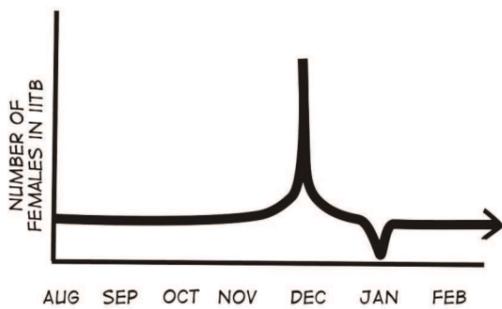
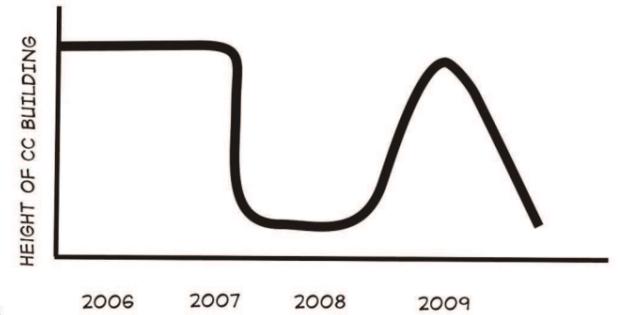
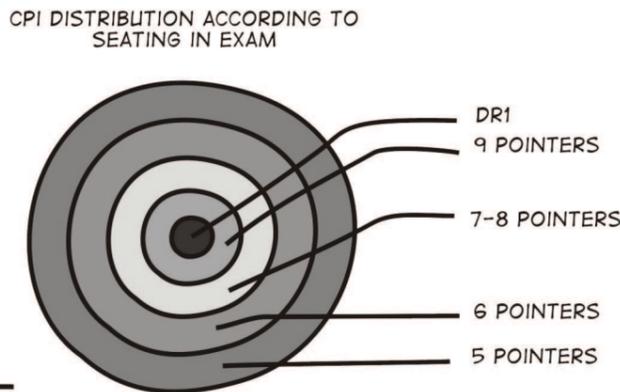
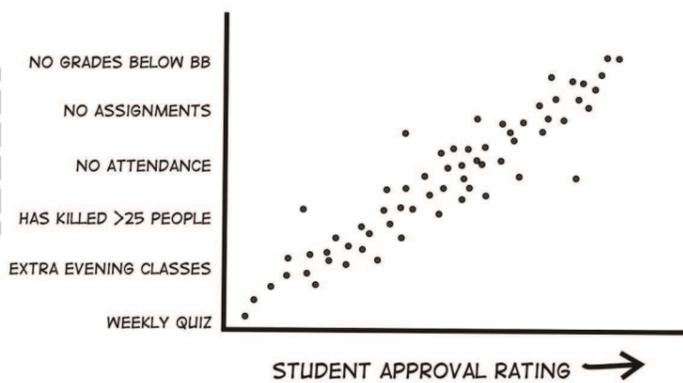
GRAPH-FIX

A wise man once said, "A picture is worth a thousand words." So we'll just shut up, and let the graphs do the talking.

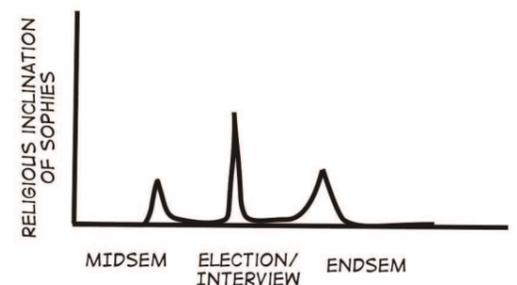
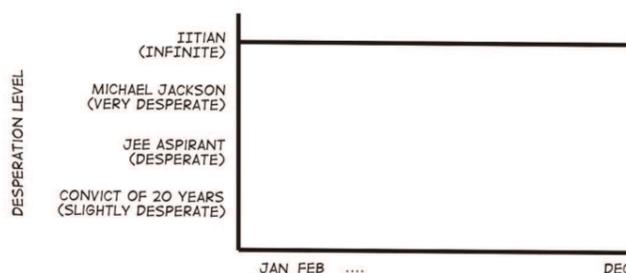
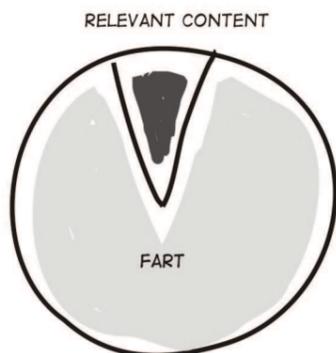
More graphs on <http://gymkhana.iitb.ac.in/~insight/leisure.html> (Honestly! We aren't lying!)



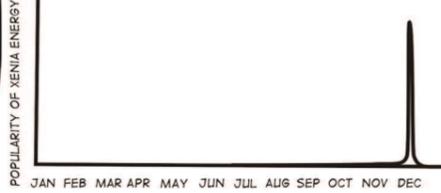
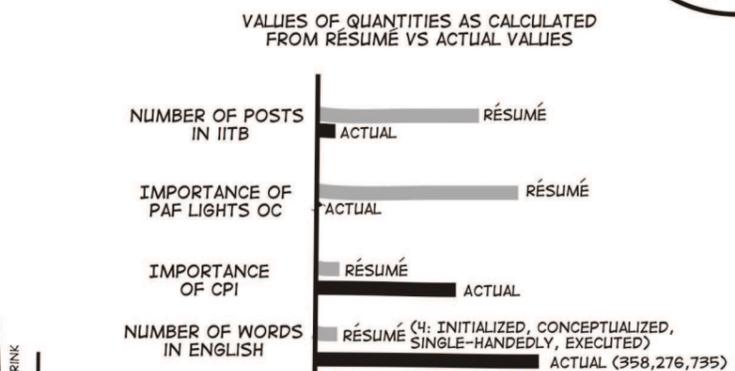
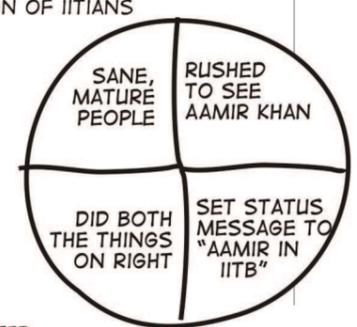
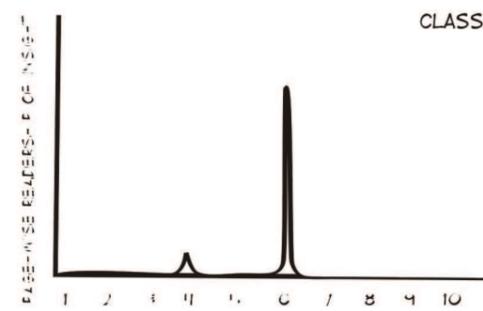
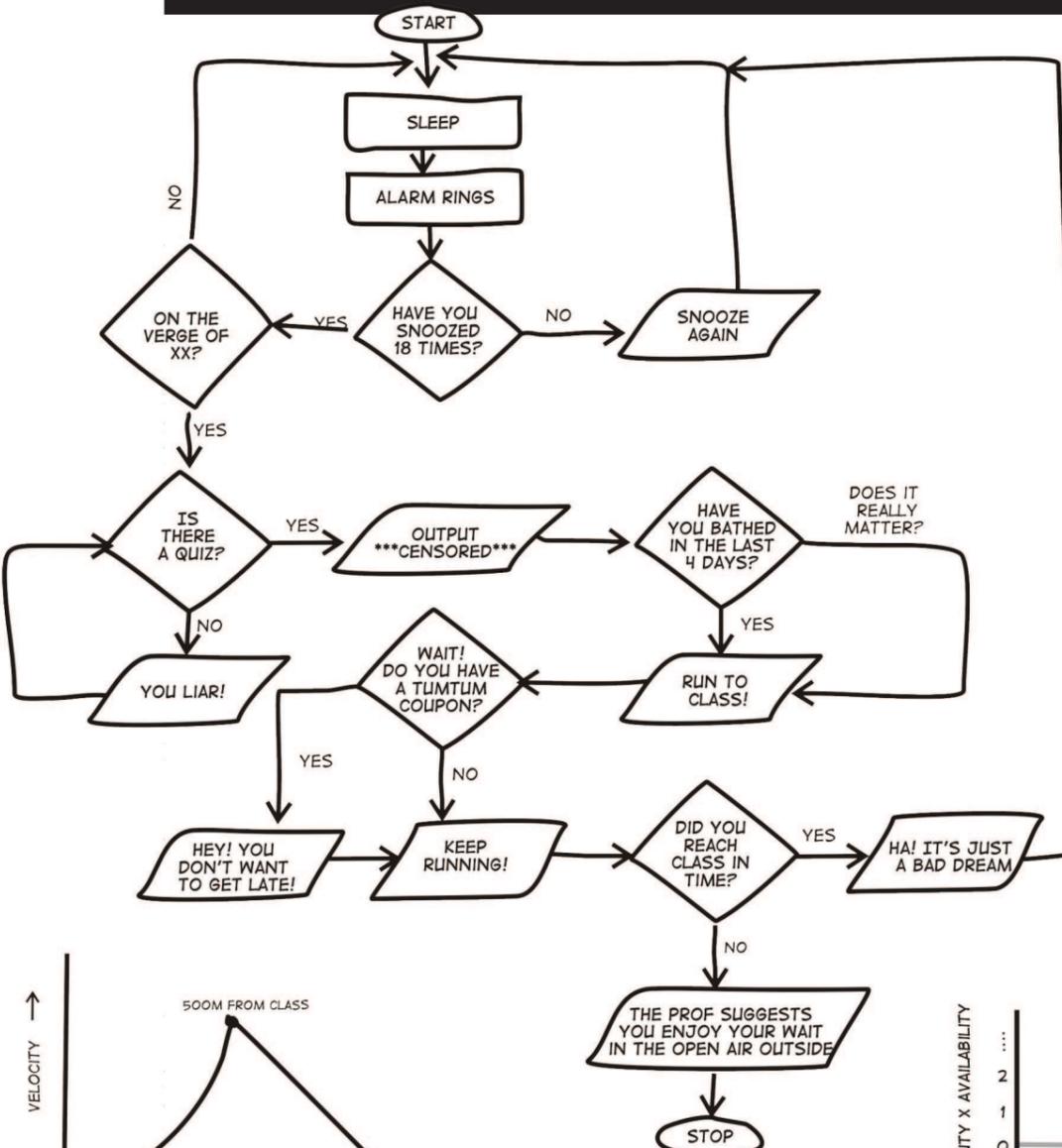
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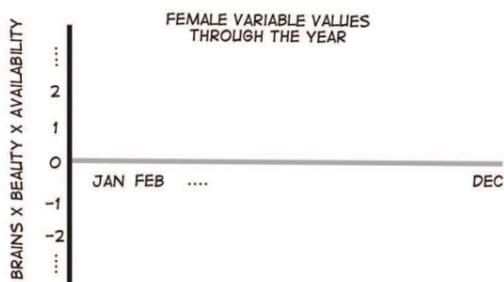
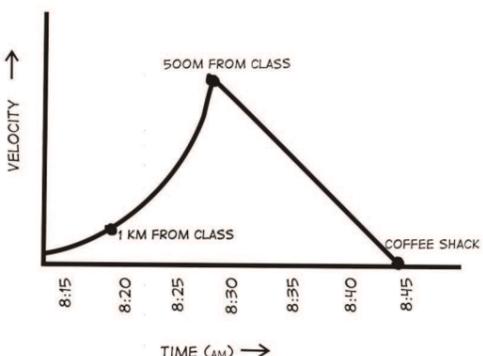
CONTENT IN INSIGHT



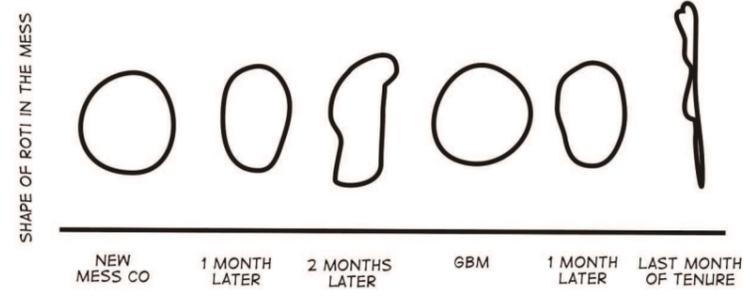
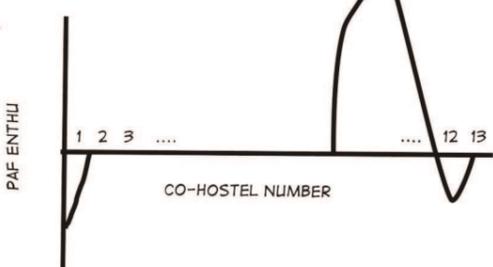
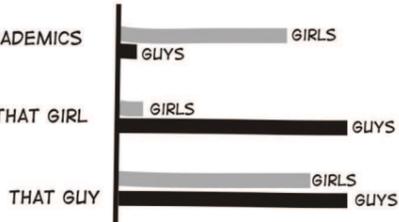
Credits: Eeshän, Shréyas, Râveesh, Nikünj, Arvînd, Mukùnd, Mayànk, Vishäl
Audits: René Descartes, Steffi Graf



DISTRIBUTION OF NON-HUMAN POPULATION OF IITB



THINGS THAT INTEREST THE AVERAGE IITIAN GUY/GIRL



Where's the Party Tonight?

Ritika and Kanchana examine how treats have changed and evolved over the years

Right from shack treats to posh treats at high end restaurants, treats for full marks in a quiz to placement treats, treats are an integral part of the life of every student at IIT Bombay. Let's take a sneak peek into the culture of treats through the ages.

Treats of Yore
Treats in the early eighties were a pretty tame affair. The most common venues for treats were hostel canteens as the area around the campus wasn't developed back then. Also, the amount of money that people were willing to spend on treats wasn't too high. Thus, that was the era of economical treats that were easy on the pocket. People used to venture out for dinners very rarely, but when they did, the favorite destinations were the Vishwakiran restaurant in Powai and the Radhakrishna restaurant at Vikhroli.

According to Prof M.B. Patil, EE B.Tech 1984, "Reasons for lavish treats were mostly a placement at Schlumberger's or a call from a esteemed foreign university for higher studies." However, smaller treats used to happen for various oddball reasons. "Once a friend of mine returned someone's lost calculator and managed to get a milkshake treat at the canteen for our entire wing", Prof. Patil reminisced. Going for movies was a popular alternative for treats during that period.

Cut to the late nineties...

Parties of the Nineties
The reasons for treats remained more or less the same but the number of treats for frivolous reasons increased quite a bit. The outlet of Vadial ice cream outside the main gate of the campus was a popular hang out. Since students didn't carry mobile phones and emails weren't very common either, friends in other hostels were intimidated about treats beforehand in classes and labs. However, students were unwilling to spend much on treats. Money was saved during the week so that an ice cream could be had over the weekend.

Chakras restaurant at Saki Naka was considered the ultimate treat destination. All big treats like job treats used to happen there. The way job treats used to happen was also pretty different then. They used to happen only after the placement season was over and all placed people of a hostel, say, used to pool together money to give one grand treat. The other restaurant which was popular for treats was the Akarshan restaurant at Vikhroli.

Then came the era of motorbikes.. The craze took off around 2001. That was the time when lots of people in the institute possessed bikes. Students started exploring the city and checked out new eating places. People ventured further away from Powai for treats. Thus, the present trend of treats at varied and far off places took off.

And Now...
It gets big: Today, a birthday treat could take you anywhere from R-Mall in Mulund to Happy Singh in Saki Naka. Parents often give special birthday allowances and the meal kicks off right from mocktails and starters down to a sumptuous dessert. Nearby eating places like Gulmohar or Lakshmi which are the best to vent sudden desires for outside food are however a big no-no for 'good' treats. An announcement of a treat here is usually met with let-down expressions.

And bigger: Wing treats – the tradition of sophies entering new wings pooling in so the whole wing can make merry – still continue today; hitting a place like Pop Tates or Mantra being the norm. The bottom line is of course to improve bonding between wingies and have a blast although next morning very few remember what really happened!

Then the ultimate: As jobs get bigger, so do treats. In placement treats, even 5 star hotels like J. W. Marriott and Rodas are within reach. Placements aside, what can be bigger than 'Asia's largest cultural festival'? Mood Indigo treats are a grand affair with a recent trend of booking a discotheque complete with a DJ for the night.

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Alumnus Article: How We Can Help

Akshay Saxena talks about career opportunities in social service

on paper. To me that is a big part of what makes these opportunities exciting.

How to apply

It is however, fairly difficult to

come across employment opportunities if you're not looking.

Charities do not recruit off campus (they can't afford a re-cruiting budget) and advertise positions very rarely. The best way to find opportunities to work in the sector is to know someone in the sector. However, in the absence of connections, the best and often only way is to trawl their websites and look through the job opportunities section.

In addition to charities, an increasing number of social entrepreneurs have now grown their businesses enough to start hiring. Other organizations such as Ashoka (www.ashoka.org) provide opportunities to work in a venture capital firm with a very strong social conscience. The United Nations organizations offer several short and long term positions (though once again, you won't hear of them if you aren't looking) and the World Bank runs a Young Professionals Programme (<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTHRJOBS/contentMDK:20519630~menuPK:1477630~pagePK:64262408~piPK:64262191~t heSitePK:1058433,00.html>).

Most multinational companies have long standing associations with charities and allow for secondments or leaves of absence. For those moving into the corporate world in June, these options are worth watching out for in the short term. They offer perhaps the most risk free way to experience the sector.

Conclusion

At the risk of repeating myself (and that's exactly what I am doing), you will not find these opportunities if you don't keep your eyes and years open. There are several options in the social sector other than the ones I've mentioned above and as the sector involves, there will be other organizations like Ashoka or Grameen bank. The information I've shared through this article is what I've learnt over the past six months. It is not comprehensive and is not intended to be. I hope that reading this has helped demystify social impact work and perhaps even encouraged you to consider acting on the next time to have an impulse to change the world.

(Akshay Saxena was editor of *InsIghT* in 2004-05. He is a Senior Associate with the Boston Consulting Group and is currently on secondment to the International Save the Children Alliance in London.)

A large number of my peers, juniors and seniors at IIT have expressed at least a passing interest in working in social impact. They write about it in SOPs, in business school applications and talk about it to women (not an effective pick up line... but they try nonetheless). Yet, the number of IITians working in the social impact sector is remarkably low.

NGOs, charitable foundations and trusts account for billions of dollars in spending each year. They employ thousands of people; accountants, lawyers, business school graduates, engineers and even doctors. Over the past six months, I've been fortunate to gain some exposure to this world. I have finished six months of a one year secondment (deputation) to the International Save the Children Alliance in London (www.savethechildren.net).

How different?

Having worked as a management consultant for two years, Save the Children seems almost like a parallel universe, similar to the corporate world, but mellower.

Oddly enough, when I compare my workday at BCG with that at Save the Children, the first thing that comes to mind is my attire. No suits, no shirts (read no frantic ironing) and no uncomfortable leather shoes.

Attire aside, the biggest difference is that NGOs are "not for profit". This translates to lower salaries and a big difference in how the organizations are run. The workday starts at 9 and truly ends at 6. There are no performance bonuses and career paths are often vague and involve moving across organizations in the sector.

NGO jobs offer a slower, but some would argue a more fulfilling life than the average corporate job. Unlike corporate jobs, (where the best outcome of a long night's work is a stronger bottom-line and perhaps a fatter paycheque) each day's work in the social sector impacts the lives of the poor, educates children and improves the environment. Utopian as it might seem, this is and needs to be the only incentive to do these jobs.

From the economic point of view, while salaries are lower, they are adequate to lead a fairly comfortable life. At most international NGOs, an analyst would earn 20% more than a software engineer at Infosys. The fact that offices are short staffed allows employees to dabble in multiple roles. People jump profiles (and organizations) fairly frequently and move into new roles more often than the corporate sector.

While the pros and cons don't perhaps add up to a life long career for most of us, they do make a short stint at one of these organizations an interesting option. A large number of my colleagues at Save the Children made the transition from the corporate world to NGOs late in their lives, some driven by the urge to "change the world" and others by the very simple need for time with their families and children. It makes a lot of sense to experience the sector for a short while when you're young and be aware of the tradeoffs if and when you choose to trade in your suits for jeans and sneakers.

These opportunities also provide an excellent segue into careers in politics, policy work and for the corporate-minded - business school.

What's out there?

Work at NGOs can broadly be classified into fundraising, programme implementation, advocacy and support functions. The fundraisers (yes you guessed right) raise funds. They talk market share, top line growth and market share, much like marketing and sales staff in the corporate sector. The programme implementation staff live in difficult parts of the world and spend the money raised from donors in keeping with the NGO's objectives. The advocacy wing helps draft and push legislation and UN resolutions in favour of the charity's cause. They organize the rallies, protests and create public opinion.

In addition to NGOs, there are some very prominent foundations which are tasked primarily with funding and running social initiatives. The most popular include The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (www.gatesfoundation.org) and The Clinton Foundation (www.clintonfoundation.org). Charitable foundations do engage in fundraising but their primary thrust continues to be on developmental work (read spending).

The charity sector is fairly small in India with most international NGOs just starting to tap into the country for fundraising. That said, the sector is likely to grow rapidly over the next few years creating a large number of job opportunities.

As engineering students, IITians qualify for full time analyst roles and short term internships at most NGOs and foundations. When you look at the job descriptions advertised on websites, do remember that at charities, the variety and nature of one's work will encompass a lot more than what's

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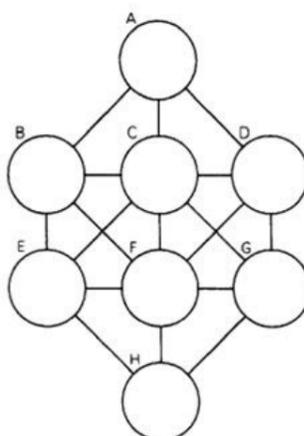
1. A question from a placement test:

There is an infinite chess board, a chess piece (the King), and two players – an Angel (A) and a Devil (D). They take turns to play. A moves the king according to the rules of chess (that is, the king can be moved to any of the 8 adjacent squares in each move). Each time D plays, he destroys a cell on the board, so that the cell is inaccessible to the King. The king is at (0, 0) at the start and A makes the first move. What is the minimum b, such that the King can be constrained to remain in the half plane $X \leq b$?

2. The numbers 1, 2, ..., 6 are written on the 6 faces of a cube. Then you replace the numbers on each of the faces by the average of the numbers on the 4 neighbouring faces simultaneously. For example, in the first step, the numbers 1 – 6 get replaced by the averages of the six different four-tuples that can be picked without replacement. If you keep doing this, what would the numbers on each face approach? Can you describe what happens at each step?

3. The digits from 1 – 8 are to be placed in the eight circles shown below, such that no two consecutive numbers appear next (next = separated by a single line segment) to each other.

(Mail your answers in to raoanupb@iitb.ac.in. Early and correct birds shall receive treats at the coffee shack!)



Announcements

Podcasts

We've started putting podcasts on the InsIghT site (<http://gymkhana.iitb.ac.in/~insight> and <http://insightiitb.org>), which are another way for us to give you constant news updates and audio features. Till now, we've focussed on weekly news bulletins, but we would love to expand. Do send us ideas (at insight@iitb.ac.in) for more cool stuff we can do with podcasts - for example, you could request that we interview somebody, or do a podcast on a PAF. We will also be starting podcast subscriptions and an RSS feed in a week or two - watch your friends' gmail status messages to know when that happens - and do send us feedback.

The Golden Jubilee magazine

InsIghT and Aawaaz join hands to bring out a bilingual magazine commemorating the 50 years of IITB from a student perspective. This will be released on the 14th of March. We have featured some content from the magazine in this issue - the articles on the evolution of GCs and treats are samples of what you can expect three weeks from now. There are many other articles as well - interviews with students from every decade of IITB's existence, interviews with past Directors and so on. Do grab a copy of the magazine when it is released.