

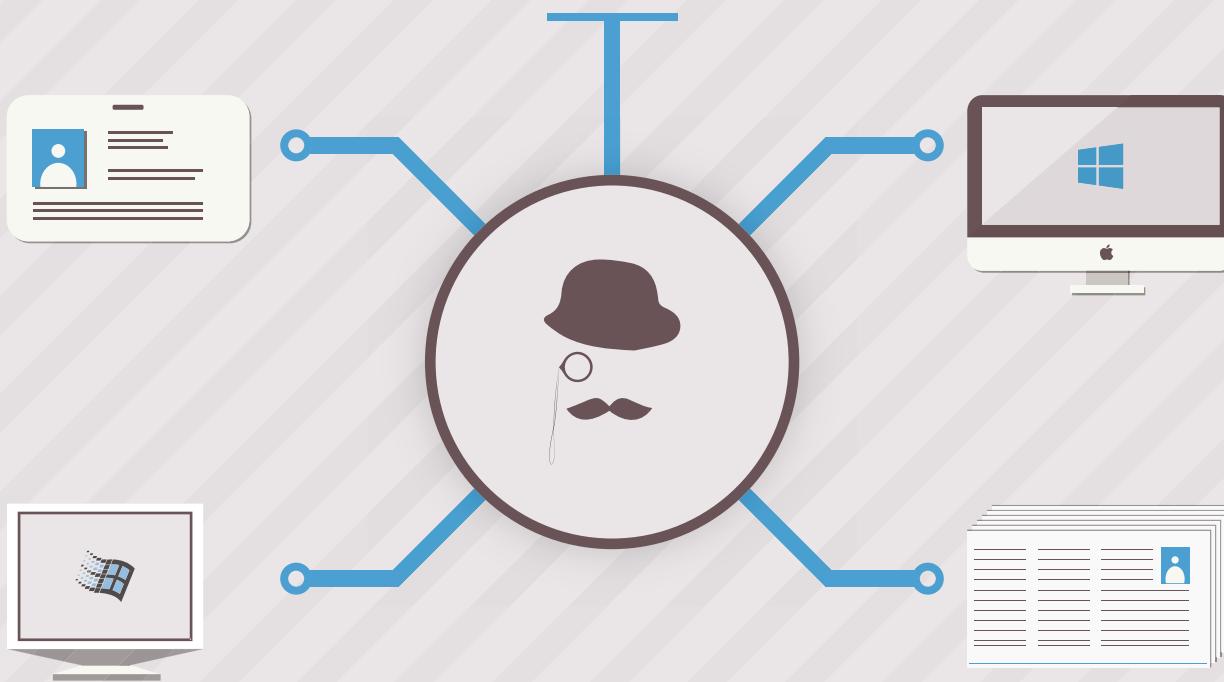


WATCHOUT!

Student's News Magazine



THE CURIOUS CASE OF MISSING TECHNOLOGY



Cover Story

**The Curious Case of
Missing Technology**

Big Story

**Where's The Light At
The End Of The Tunnel?**

Verbatim

**Professorship
A Career Option?**



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What Makes Us A Pirate?

The Winter's Tale

I, for one, am particularly fond of the quiescence brought by the first chill of winter sothing past my window. So obviously, I am anything but pleased at the idea of nestling into blanket with a pile of derelict books gnawing at me when my attention should be divided solely between the peeking winter and my own musings about more important things in life. After all, the winter chill accompanied by thick fog hanging over the proud main building is precisely the phantasm that comes to my mind when I wonder whether and how I shall feel nostalgic about college a few years down the line. True, the last semester was just about as short as this one, but I still don't understand how the end term exams are looming so close already. On setting out in a rather petty search of reassurance and vindication from a very cleverly selected microcosm of students, I learnt that many other people don't understand this either. That settled, I decided I could allow for a short saunter into the setting fog.

During the course of sauntering and musing about important things in life, it occurred to me how eager many of us are to welcome the ennui of winter, metaphorically as much as literally. In all sanctimony, I thought of possible explanations- nihilism, complacency, apathy, geographical disadvantage and so on. Out of sheer boredom of attributing everything about the institute to geographical disadvantage, I struck off this explanation before proceeding. While it may not be fair to compare, as we constantly do, our institute with its older counterparts, it is natural to wonder whether, in all these years of being an IIT, the institute has evolved enough to vindicate its own stature.

Speaking of evolution, in this issue WONA has attempted to answer this question by uncovering the technological aspect of it and shedding light on the advancement, rather the lack of it, in methods used for registration, attendance, identity verification etc. We have tried to put in words, as adequately as we could, the displeasure of students at having to start every fresh semester by jostling their way into never ending queues leading to those six hopelessly mundane cards whose existence does not seem to have been explained by any teleological argument so far. Also in focus is the state of laboratories and the malfunctioning machines that adorn them.

This apart, we have dutifully played the role, bequeathed to us by our ancestors a little over 25 years ago, of the arbiter of general issues concerning the campus. We have tried to reason out a few quirky placement policies and examine the functioning of the placement cell. As opposed to the highly conspiratorial connection between our placement policies and the forlorn placement scenario that I hoped to reveal in this issue, we found that a lot of rules are underlain by perfectly prosaic, if slightly parochial explanations centered on pleasing the recruiting companies. Additionally, we have voiced general disappointment at rules chafing the Hobbies Club and obviously talked about the mess standards that led to the outbreak of food poisoning. Elsewhere we have paid a strictly obligatory tribute to the batch of 2012 and presented, against the somnolent mood of winters, an average IITian's rant about the pursuit of one's dreams among a plethora of other articles, cartoon strips etc. Here's hoping that this read makes for a good, well timed break from the utterly ill timed stress of end terms.

Cheers!

Visit us at www.wona.co.in

Heart to heart with a faker at IITR

Faking News at IITR: One of millions of pages on a website most of us spend twenty six hours a day on. A page (in)famous for putting up outrageous photos and posts; most of them a bit too close to reality for comfort. A page whose Facebook description says, “Satire on the life, events and happenings at IIT Roorkee”. A page, whose admin’s identity is kept secret, maybe for creating an enigmatic illusion of some genius at work (or maybe just to avoid any disciplinary action by the They-who-shall-not-be-named of R). A page, whose sole purpose is to enlighten and amaze its audience with a tickle of comical irony to the everyday happenings here at R. A page, which strangely enough, half the students don’t yet know about. But, a pretty darn cool page, nevertheless.

When WONA first tried to contact its admin, he simply told us what Wolverine tells the Professor and Magneto to go do when they approach him in the last X-men movie. However, after sincere requests from some of our female members, he finally agreed to give an online interview, subject to two conditions:

- We would not ask him anything personal that would give away, or in any way endanger the secrecy of, his identity.
- The interview needs to be conducted, in its entirety, by girls, and girls alone. (How does it even matter when it’s online (Beats us!)

We agreed. But just so you know, we didn’t follow the second condition. Now what do you say, Pheker?! (Also dear readers, Pheker, we realize, sounds very wrong if mispronounced. Let’s just call him ‘X’ from now)

WONA: The standard question. Your first crush on campus?

X: Same as everyone else. I cannot dare pick anyone other than Abhidior Fool. But for my current favorite, let’s just say ‘WoMansha’ had me swooning after her walk at Vogue. (Chuckles at his own joke)

WONA: Now that we are done with the standard question, tell us why you insisted on being anonymous even though you recently posted that Sid-dearth Saxena and Bunkit Khaitan are behind the page?

X: Do you know how Inception ends? Nolan shows you the totem, not the ending. Sid-dearth and Bunkit craved some attention, I gave it to them. I am a large hearted person. Since they were incapable of doing anything attention worthy and reaping any of the associated benefits, I gave them their shot at fame.

WONA: But..

X: Not buts Miss Woe-na, no buts!

WONA: Ok, so how interesting do you find IITR and its junta?

X: The same as you find my news reports, relentlessly gripping! There’s gossip and drama everywhere, people here enjoy flaunting stupidity. You guys know who you are, and personally I love you, my life could have been like yours had it not been your sheer determination to outperform me. I urge IITR to embrace such people with joy and not mockery (like I do), for life at IITR would truly be boring without them.

WONA: The stories you put up are too close to reality. How exactly do you get the stories?

X: Attending DP’s (Dance Parties, I mean) and restricting myself to Sprite is how I roll. It’s amazing how much people divulge when they are ‘dancing’. And their ‘performances’ after they’re done ‘dancing’, you guys should’ve been at the Cogni DP. (Our guys attend the ‘weekly’ civil DP’s, sadly though they are the one’s performing)

WONA: It has been quite a hectic time for Facebook, what with the confessions and proposal pages. How come no faking news was put up about them? Or maybe a witty fake confession?

X: Oh the answer to that is very simple. There’s more to life than love. As for the fake confessions, it would be against my fundamental morals to lie, let alone on the confessions page.

(So now you want to be the role model? Like that’s gonna happen!)

WONA: How do you find Watch Out? Hardly ever mention us?

X: Bhai angrezi toh mai bhi likhta hu, par wo sabko samajh aati hai. Your writers are welcome to come take tips from me, English for the mango-people. You know, aam-aadmi? Saif Kha-ali Khan? No. Doesn't matter. Also speaking of phek news, people will be much more interested if it were more about actual people. It might just increase your popularity, without of course reducing the quality. Maybe you could pay me to write?! (Of course we could. But unfortunately the government stopped minting 10p coins.)

#editorial

Carpe Diem

When Thorace was giving the world two of the most beautiful words to live by, he perhaps did not foresee how the profundity of his thought could lie so overshadowed by the poetry of his phrase.

The ideology that lost itself somewhere beneath the romance of the words “Carpe diem”, correctly translated as “Seize the day, trusting as little as possible in the next day”, was to find your one true passion and then follow it through. After 2000 years of Chinese whispers, however, all that remains of it is a fey and clumsy, yet widely followed, misinterpretation that only furthers indolence in character and beckons it away from effort and responsibilities towards finding easy ways out.

What now seems as impractical and nebulous and obviously riddled with uncertainties was in fact, to begin with, a most pertinent concept of following your heart into something that truly stirs your interest. It was the idea of sallying forth to find and honor your calling and then keeping at it with conviction in self. What Thorace really wanted us to do, then, was to find our way out of the fray as much as we worked our way to the top of it.

Our strange liking towards the convention of being unconventional demands that we do whatever it is that tickles our fancy, be it studying the chronosynclastic infundibulum, whistle blowing, playing pen carom or even mass e-mail spamming. Many a great man has and many will indulge in such philosophical posturing as to eulogize the courage of treading these paths. The gravity of this thought, though, ought to lie not in the treading of the path with blithe carelessness towards the consequence but seeing and working it through to the end of it. If blithe carelessness it were meant to be, how then would one tell truancy from true pursuit? And yet, if we were to labor through to the end, an overriding of drudgery over passion it would be. It seems fair then that the metaphorical presence of poetry in one's life be welcome so long as a worldly sense of direction stays in place. Where complacency does not mix with the quest to follow one's passion, nor does compromise on one's passion, with a desire to be rewarded, there, perhaps will be reclamation of a correct construe of Thorace's wisdom. Whether there is a need at all, however, to shy away from either a complacent disregard for the end or from a submissive compromise on passion is for no one to tell. It was after all always a poet's business to ask questions; never to expect answers.

From "Thomso who?" to Thomso!

Thomso, the annual cultural fest of IIT Roorkee, started off with a backdrop of numerous rickshaws taking R junta to the railway stations since many decided that the comfort of home for 3 days sounded like a better deal than the cultural festival. But it turned out to be their loss ultimately, thanks to the pretty impressive pro-nites. Nobody is naive enough to claim that Thomso is back at the level of last decade or that it can match the Mood Indigos and Rendezvous of cultural festivals. Regardless, even the staunchest of sceptics will agree that the quality is improving, albeit at a slow pace.



Amid much fanfare and enthusiasm, Thomso commenced on 3rd October. The extravaganza had a footfall of more than 2000. We are told that 400 colleges were invited though it felt like only 2 were present.

The much awaited fest saw four grand pro-nites. Thahake, the first pro-nite, seemed to prove right the naysayers. Ahsaan Qureshi turned out to be big disappointment for many, if not most. The second pro-nite was the much anticipated Vogue which strangely is billed as the fashion show, seeing as how there was less of designer and more of just ramp walk. While the glam quotient soared with every college's performance, the lack of a creative theme in IITR's performance was glaringly evident. The third pro-nite, Wargasm, had Eka-The Band perform live in the campus. Playing the crowd's favourite numbers, this bunch surely knew how to get people dancing and grooving. Finally, the day arrived that had sent out palpable waves of excitement throughout the campus ever since its announcement. Amidst roof raising cheers, Farhan Akhtar took the stage by storm, an hour late, in Xhileration, the final pro-nite. Farhan Akhtar also paid a visit to Anushruti, the social initiative by IIT Roorkee for deaf and dumb children and distributed goodies in a most heart warming gesture.

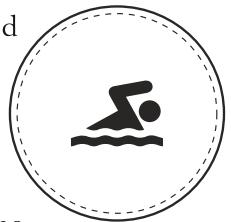
Apart from the pro-nites, the other events too saw decent participation as the R junta decided to venture

out of their rooms. The best performing college was Dayal Singh College from Delhi University which took home the Thomso Cup. While this year's event was undoubtedly better than last year, a lot of effort and support is still needed from the R administration before Thomso becomes a dorm room name throughout the country, if ever.

Inter IIT Aquatics meet

The Inter IIT Aquatics meet proved to be extremely rewarding for the women's team as they bagged five gold medals and one silver contributing a lion's share in the final points tally. Nivedita Sharma deserves a special mention for her terrific performance as she won all four strokes and 100m freestyle medals for which she was awarded the best swimmer's trophy among the ladies. IITR managed to secure the women's championship for the third time in a row with 32 points. Having won the trophy thrice now, IITR now owns the trophy making this victory a special one. IITB followed very closely with 29 points but the R's better endurance and nerves prevailed over B.

Male swimmers on show elicited disappointment, leaving the audience confounded especially after the brilliant performance by the girls. The water polo team painted a sorrowful picture, bidding adieu in the first round itself, having been at the receiving end of a sound thumping. The talk of the town, however was the rumoured Asian games participant, Akshay Krishna of IITM, who lived up to the hype, breaking all existing records with impeccable ease. (5 golds in individual events and 2 golds in team relay). The tussle for the championship resulted in IIT KGP locking horns with Madras, with the guys down south emerging victorious by a margin of 3 points. (KG-50; M- 53). Jacob Mathew who stood tall amidst ruins deserves high praise. He was the only medal winner

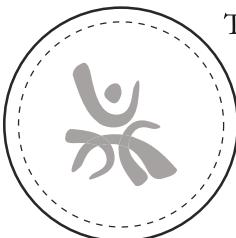


among the men (gold in 100m butterfly) in what was his swansong appearance for IITR. His tally of 11 medals during his 4 year tenure with the team scripts a legacy in itself.

The focus now turns to December when Inter IIT Sports Meet takes place in IITG, with the hope that R improves on last year's 3rd position to bag the general championship.

Udghosh 2013

Udghosh, the annual sports festival of IITK, is regarded to be one of the most prestigious and competitive sport meets with participation from a large number of technical institutes of India. This year's edition of Udghosh was held between 26th and 29th of September. Along with all kinds of sporting events, a host of informal events like treasure hunts, sports quiz etc., the festival was perfected to cater to the sports enthusiasts.



The Taekwondo team from IITR were the stars of the festival, bagging a whopping 30 medals out of the 36 that were available. The other teams from IITR sadly did not fare so well with only the basketball girls team winning the silver medal and the weightlifting team with a few medals. The people who attended the events were impressed by the arrangements and the sports facilities provided by the institute. Particularly, the 24x7 sports arenas and the sheer openness of the facilities induced envy among the students of our institute. In addition to these, interestingly, a few movies were screened, supposedly to inspire the contestants. So much, for a sporting event!

As is the case with all events and festivals, Udghosh was not entirely free from allegations of corruption and petty partialities towards the home team. Nevertheless the event was a decent one with a lot of memories to take back, according to the participants. Udghosh is seen as the practice tournament before the run up to the main

event, Inter IIT Sports Meet, held in December. Hopefully, the teams can learn from their mistakes and put up a stronger performance in Guwahati.

Arunima Sinha : Guest Lecture

It is very easy to lose touch with the real world during our stay in the campus of R. Protected from the negative elements of real world, behind the walls of a national institute, many tend to forget about the evils still existing in the Indian society.

On 9th October Arunima Sinha, a national level volleyball player, delivered a lecture on "Triumph of Willpower atop the Mt. Everest." This may not sound impressive if you take a look at the incredibly long list of Everest conquerors but she isn't like the majority. In 2011, Ms Sinha was pushed out of a running train when she tried to resist an attempted robbery. One of her legs had to be amputated below the knee as a result. Despite the injury, she resolved to climb the Mt Everest and in the process she achieved the distinction of being the first lady amputee to climb the Everest.

Before delivering her lecture, Ms. Sinha met the kids of Anushruti, the school for the differently abled. The children welcomed her warmly with excitement. She was delighted to meet them and appreciated their talent and the display of their creative works.

Ms Sinha mentioned in her lecture that she was determined to fight for the rights of women and physically disabled along with the less fortunate children. In very little time she connected with the students and narrated how irrespective of the struggle she had to face in her path, she managed to attain her resolved goal.

Where's The Light At The End Of The Tunnel?

A look at placement rules and regulations of IITR

For its self effacing, almost nondescript exterior, the placement cell appears uncannily tall and imposing around this time of the year. Although the exact happenings within the walls of the placement cell remain elusive and delightfully subject to wide conjecture on part of the students, it has not gone unnoticed or unacknowledged that the last few months here have been particularly hectic, frenetic and bustling with activity. Several calls have been made and several mails dispatched. While those several companies are still scuffling amongst themselves to lay hands on the coveted train tickets to R land, WONAT attempts to uncover the inside of the placement cell, its functioning, its flaws, its policies and the rationale behind them.

Expectations and beliefs

Once upon a time, a B.Tech degree was deemed enough. Nowadays, it is considered the bare minimum qualification. For some this leads to Masters in the foreign lands. For some the B.Tech degree is an extra with the IIT tag as they move on to MBA. And for others this is it for now, as they don their best piece of suit in their quest to impress the other side of the table.

IITR's placement team is composed of students mainly with a professor in charge. So naturally, a lot of blame gets shifted on these students, be it a mishap with the letter sent to a company or in any of the numerous other steps needed, when some of the major companies decide to skip Roorkee. One of the most common demands of the students in R is to have a professional

placement agency at the helm of affairs. Many students feel that a professional firm, unfettered by lack of either contacts or experience, would translate into a much higher turnout of companies.

Surely if it were so logical then we should have had one a year ago itself. Dr. N.P. Padhy, professor in charge of the placement cell, says "Students are reluctant to pay Rs 500 for placement cell registration and Rs 100 for soft-skills training. Do you think they will shell-out Rs 20,000 for outsourcing the placement cell?" While the issue of spending 20k can be sorted out by spreading it over the 4 years period, what puts the final, irrevocable damper on the plan is the issue of sharing the database with a third party. Dr. Padhy raised a valid issue against outsourcing asking a rhetorical question, what happens when the contract expires with one agency? How will the institute guarantee that a proper database will be handed over to the next one? Turns out outsourcing placement agency's work isn't quite the silver bullet.

Rules and Regulations, and some more rules and regulations

Even as we find ourselves begrudging the placement cell its very existence with its draconian rules on occasions of an inner conflict between attending the ppt and doing anything but spend two valuable hours on a PPT, the placement team finds it only reasonable that recruiters be offended at a tepid initial response from students. "When a team of recruiters travels all the way from say Bangalore to Roorkee, the least it expects is a good

response from students and sizeable number of them at the pre placement talk,” says a senior member. While this may be a valid reason, the drastic response taken against offenders of being barred from the next three companies seems to be harsh. IITD uses monetary fines as the deterrent starting from Rs 500 and sum goes up as the number of defaults by a student increases. IITK also follows similar rules.

PPT rules, while irksome, are not the most contentious ones either. Getting selected in multiple A list companies would be a dream come true for many. But with rules of R, this is simply impossible. In R, if two companies release the selection list on the same day and if a student gets selected by both, he is forced to accept the offer of the first one, regardless of the student’s priority. When compared with other IITs, this rule seems unexplainable. In IITD the student gets to choose in case of such a situation while in IITM a priority list is taken in advance. Surely we can have a similar model too?

PPOs present another questionable rule. In case a student rejects a PPO offered to him, he is only eligible to sit for companies that offer a CTC greater than the one that offered him a PPO. What explains such rules as these and whose interests they cater to is rather difficult to fathom for an average student. The placement team, however, seems set unwavering on its stance as is clear from Dr. Padhy’s take on stringent rules- “I will opt for 0% leniency if it helps IITR get one more placement.” Rules and regulations, even ones greeted with skepticism and indignation, are crucial to ensuring a smooth placement climate for now as well as for posterity. “Rules are often flouted by people who are to be least affected by them, such as those set on pursuing higher studies. The brunt of a company’s displeasure is usually borne by an average student and would persist when you, your batch and I have left and while the system still remains.”

Unsatisfied Students, unsatisfied companies

People outside the IIT system imagine it to be a place where companies are clamoring to find its new recruits. The situation turns out to be a little different on the inside. Apart from Computer Science, many branches do not see enough core companies turning up to cover majority of the batch. The companies that do turn up for recruitment often remark that the quality of students at R is not at par with other IITs. The apparent contrast in terms of number of jobs offered vs the number of students looking for a core job is often blamed on geographical location. This could have been the accepted reason if only IITKgp was facing similar problems. But by the looks of it, they don’t.

Dr Padhy, does not deny that location may only be a small factor deterring companies from recruiting from a campus. It pays to have students trained well in soft skills so they are better armed to face the interviewers with all their fabled quirks and foibles. “Students here are emotional. They do not understand the psychology of the interviewer. They don’t know how to react (to certain situations in an interview). Top professionals in the field have therefore been recruited to train students. Efforts are being made to have training sessions every 15 days.” Initiatives like these coupled with initiatives taken by more aware student community could solve the issue of unsatisfied students.

At the end of the day

Problems are in plenty and the culture in IITR is so that most of the first years are made aware of the situation right after their orientation program, and this maybe the reason behind a general negativity that persists. But on the brighter side, awareness of the problems is the first step in redressal. With Dr Padhy at the helm of affairs, we have heard a lot of reforms are going to announced for next year. Whether they will be enough and in time for our readers is a question that only patience can answer.

The Starry Eyed Baba, Ashmeet Singh

For a long time the Astronomy section, officially recognized as Stargazing section, has lived in the shadows of the other arguably more technical sections. All that seems to have changed now with the section conducting some of the most popular events in the campus and the credit for this is given to the most soft spoken, well natured and non muscular sardar you will ever come across in R, Ashmeet Singh. He is known for his academic brilliance and intellect which landed him the prestigious DAAD summer intern, but he is most proud of his work in the Stargazing Astronomy section and he believes 'Astronomy is not a hobby, it's a way of life!' Now it's time for his real test.

WONA: Can you crack a joke?

Ashmeet: You wouldn't talk to me again if I did!

WONA: Now that it's settled, let's begin the drill. First crush?

Ashmeet: I thought this interview would be rather intellectual, but it doesn't really seem to go that way. It was in my first semester. It never really came out. Her name was Priya. I just liked her entire demeanor and was very impressed. But now I am out of the game!

(we bet the telescopes helped!)

WONA: How did you get your nickname, Baba?

Ashmeet: In first year we used to gather in the RJB lawn at 9PM for our attendance. I was talking to Kshitij Awadhyा about spirituality and about right and wrong; I am a man of principles in that sense. I was explaining something to him, "Kshitij yeh galat hai yaar, aisa nahin hona chahiye," and I started giving some fundas about God. At that time someone overheard me, Animesh Mishra probably, and said, "arey tum toh baba ho yaar!" So that's the story behind 'baba'! It became pretty popular among my friends, so much so that there was a time when my actual name was completely forgotten. Thankfully it's back now!

(whatever happened to creativity in nicknames, sigh)

WONA: What got you into astronomy?

Ashmeet: It started when I was in class ninth. It was more of a distraction offered by my mother to get my mind away from cricket as I was a sporty guy playing day and night. She wanted me to be focused towards something more academic and so I joined the astronomy club of my school.

(and rest, as they say, is history!)

WONA: So what's on your things-to-do-before-leaving-Roorkee List?

Ashmeet: There are multiple tanks in the campus. I want to climb one some day! The Astronomy club is very close to me, so I would want to make it reach new heights. A few years ago people had this mindset that 'star gazing toh chill hai', but my year has worked a lot. I want that whenever people think of astronomy, they think of a very beautiful science and remember that I contributed to this section. I want to make this difference when I pass out.

WONA: You have a very nerdy image. Have you ever done anything contrary to that?

Ashmeet: I really can't think of many, there is one instance though. There was a professor whom I liked very much, but he chucked me out of the class along with some of my friends because we were late. A few of us tried to deflate the tires of his bike with a guard on our side. I am not saying we actually did that.

(yes, of course!)

WONA: Your thoughts about WONAs?

Ashmeet: I am not into buzz magazines but you are doing a good job. I like the way you spice up things and your interpretation of everything seems cool to me. Moreover, I am really impressed with the way you add wit to stuff. (woot!)

Six Faces of R



Stoner

Happiness, sadness, motivation, satisfaction-they're all states of mind. When you let go the reigns of your mind is when you experience peace, because peace is absolute!



Cynic

Group recruitments are all a sham. Everything's easy for you if you're a girl. Thomso and Cogni are organised only so that a few people at the top can fill their pockets. I bought the lipsticks for Thomso'10. They still haven't reimbursed me for that!



Entrepreneur

A lot of booze sweat and tears have gone into building my start-up, kid. And now it has an annual turnover of 5 crores..umm..at least according to EDC.

Phoren Intern

Application sending is a really important skill. Do you know how many applications I sent to secure my intern in Bhutan? 5,45,372! But you can only imagine how jealous everyone must've been when I flooded their notifications with my intern pics..



DOC

Hurry up kid! Are you gonna buy anything or are you just gonna stare? Make it quick, Cogni season is coming.. lot of certis to print!



Poli

Just tell me what post you wanna contest for and I'll manage the rest. All the votes will fall into your lap. Just stick with me kid and you'll be a king-maker one day!

The Obligatory Tribute



Saarthak Mindblewri

25 minutes ago near Roorkee



Fact 1: People in colder areas are more intelligent

Fact 2: There's fog when it's cold

From one and two, knowledge transfers via fog. Now where's my Nobel Prize?

Ayush Agarwal and Mrigaunk Pillai like this.



AshWins AbraAndHam

So technically, cyclists are supposed to be more intelligent than others in those area. We take in more of the fog than others. Good thinking man!

HEC likes this.



Shant-nu Vishnoi

We should have this in the mag. It is perfect for Techila!

Let me jot this down in my orange phone

Aditi 'First Lady' Bhagat likes this.



Abhinahin Gopal

True true but I can't illustrate this. As the Chief Design Coordinator, I have to veto this.

Manik Bansal and Chetty Arun like this.



Raving-nish Bagga

Oye, everything is not for cartoon strip. But I think you can illustrate that one time when I scared a tiger by running towards it.



Shobhitwa

Yes!! Finally I know why my father used to keep me out of the house in winters! Bihar winters are foggy, you see!

Meet Mukesh likes this.



Raving-nish Bagga

Oye, everything is not about your life. But this does remind me of that one time when I killed a fish with a dagger.



Mrinal Trytalking

How does this remind of you that?!

Sidharth Sadani, Shashank Mehta and 42 others like this.



Shobhitwa

Hey! Somebody stole my bottle when I was typing the previous comment!

Jugbeer Gandhi likes this.



Jugbeer Gandhi

Quick as a cat, mad as a hatter! @shobhitwa, *winks*



Varun Arasue

We are definitely not doing this in the mag. Have you guys lost your mind? There's not one Pulp Fiction reference here. Not happening.



Wignesh Ramani

Yo dude! Did somebody just mention my bro Samuel L Jackson? Here, take a finger!

Aditya Gokhale and Dhanush Hangal like this.



Watch Out News Agency

April 2012. When the whole world slept, we woke up to freedom, freedom from this batch!

The Curious Case of Missing Technology

While pointing out the dependence of our lives on technology seems as banal a statement as could be, pointing out the ubiquity of it on the hallowed campus of Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee seems nowhere as close to stating the obvious as we would like it to be. What it does seem like, in fact, is a desperate cry for the institute to evolve from being the bastion of ancient methods and procedures to being in the vanguard of new, smart and technologically sound ones. From staid and battered identity cards to long queues for academic registration that greet the first dawn of any new semester, the system appears to be functioning in a manner that utterly ill behoves the dignity and sanctity of this institute. Watch Out! News Agency attempts to find out why while uncovering the current state of labs and technical framework in IITR.

An IITian's dream

If, for once, you were to live by the musings of an average IITian on a utopian campus, you would find that suddenly you don't have to struggle in the strenuously stretched lines of academic registration. Your practical classes, complete with state of art facilities, have turned into a veritable adjunct to theoretical concepts. Your attendance in the mess, hostel, library and other student places gets recorded by swiping your sleek smart identity card which, apparently, is more than a piece of paper with your most embarrassing photo. You receive a message on your cell and probably an email regarding the change in class timetable by a centralised messaging facility while you sip the deliciously hot Starbucks cappuccino in the avant-garde Institute cafeteria and read Homer's *The Odyssey*. Although the aforementioned ameliorations (replacing Starbucks with CCD and Homer with Chetan Bhagat) are not entirely impossible, yet, if the past 12 years of the institute's existence as an IIT are anything to go by, their realization in the near future may seem very little more than chimerical.

The Six Card anomaly

The start of every semester is marked



by the students of premier technology institute being brought down to Earth through 6, computer generated but submitted by hand, forms, appearing one semester after another with the same lack of any recognizable purpose and any difference in the data. This time, to the delight of students, there were 4 more cards. True, their bright colors rendered them aesthetically highly appealing, but their existence in tandem with an online registration system defied any logic that students could comprehend.

So how does the CampusLynx work apart from acting as a pdf generator? Expressing the impractical necessity of the cards, the deputy registrar Mr. Ajay Sharma remarks, "I doubt if we can contemplate a reason why those cards are needed by the institute. They are just dumped into non-being. However the cards you filled after arriving here were taken into account by the Bhawan authorities". Although Mr. Sharma is not involved in the nitty-gritty of registration, he was adamant on reducing the cumbersome nature of this process. There have been many hackneyed explanations and theories on behalf of the institute authorities and students that highlight the definition of change. In this debate, a very interesting thought comes from the mind of a man who has been associated with the digitization of student records since 1990 and still works in the registration process on advisory basis. "I believe that the whole registration process should be done manually," says Prof. Pramod Agrawal, EE department, "There has to be a way that ensures that the students reach the institute well on or before the reporting day. Otherwise the institute won't function properly. The deposition of the academic course list and cards manually in the department ensures this and reduces the cases of false attendance in the beginning of semester".

On being questioned on whether a centralized database can tackle all of the administration's woes during form collection and grades allotment, Prof. Agrawal responds, "Definitely it is the best thing that can happen. But the question is who will take the responsibility? The current

company that manages CampusLynx is a disappointment. And we cannot expect IMG to do it as they do not pay heed to administration's needs"

One I-Card, to rule them all

By the end of the student's first semester at R-land, this red painted piece of paper with handwritten, irrelevant and temporary information, in case not lost, reduces to a metastable state where its existence becomes paradoxical. Like Schrodinger's cat it surfaces to a state when it is both there and not there.

Heard and echoed all over the blogosphere and the social media pertaining to IITR for a long time now, is the immediate need of 'Smart' cards for students. The smart card system can solve many problems at once as Vivek Bhagotia (B.Arch., IV year) says, "They will be a very efficient solution to many of the problems that we are facing. With proper devices placed at hostel entries, mess entry, main gates of campus, at departments, library and the computer centre, the entry can be restricted to authorized people". Besides the reduction of security concerns in hostels, this change will help in bringing more independence to students in terms of the fact that they will be free to choose the mess of their own will. The recent issues of mismanagement in hostel mess can be resolved by this method. "In IIT Madras, the mess fee is compulsory, but students not wanting to opt for mess can redeem food coupons that can be used at the central food court. If they are able to make sure that non-enlistees don't eat in the mess, then so can we, surely", remarks Rushil Nagda (Int. M.Sc. Mathematics, III year).

The Software Syndrome

The answer to whether our labs hold enough facilities to provide for anything more than a parody of practical application of studied concepts varies largely from lab to lab. While the Computer Centre boasts of proper functioning computers with both the software and hardware in an efficient condition, most logs show students using the facilities for social networking and

worthless web surfing, instead of something productive, like the institute, parents and the nation expects us to do. The CAD (Computer Aided Design) lab of Civil and Mechanical Departments face a challenge of non-uniform installation of software as different versions of the same software exist in some machines. Though the lab assistants claim that the software is updated uniformly everywhere in the lab, the same cannot be heard from students. The overall response from the authorities seemed surprisingly positive. Prof. Dheesh Saxena, the newly instated lab-in-charge of Mechanical department, showed very immediate interest in the matter and assured us of a swift action in this regard. We can hope that the condition might soon take a different turn but if history has anything to say in this matter, it doesn't seem likely.

A ray of Hope

The path between Mahatma Gandhi Central Library (MGCL) and the Main Building acts as a fine dividing line between the past and the future. MGCL acts as a working example of all the technical dexterity our institute is capable of providing. The series of developments in the Library: the RFID system, the surveillance cameras, the e-index and digitized technical record of a student's book issuance, is worth appreciating.

The Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) system is one of the major technical innovations that have been introduced by the administration. RFID system tracks the identity of a library book on its issuance or transfer by monitoring a chip that is installed in the book itself. Over thousands of books, this process was introduced 10 years back and now serves as a fully functional service. It also has 1984 inspired state of the art surveillance system, although, we doubt if the students actually appreciate that.

Meanwhile as the Library moves ahead with the administration's new plans to reduce mechanical labour in bookkeeping and greener, eco-friendlier decoration

on the library roof, we continue trying to fathom the reason for the installation of Windows OS on Macintosh PCs present in the common area.



“Students are more comfortable with Windows than the pre-installed software that comes with Macs”, explains the Asst. Librarian, “The computers are updated as soon as a new update is launched. Our library is the best in terms of technical advancements among all IITs”.

That's then, now what?

The subtle nature of the issue in question, very much resonates through the minds of the students of IIT Roorkee. The advent of digitisation of data on campus and the introduction of advanced technical facilities in the beginning of this century acted as a ray of hope for the junta. However, in the past decade the nature of technical growth in the outside world has been exponential. Taking into account the intellect level of students that this institute is harboring, it seems improbable that a better digital and technical system cannot be developed in house. In fact, the sheer number of students on the search for technical projects can be

better channelized into creating something employable inside the campus. IITs, after all, are supposed to be the hotbed of latest in technology.

It may be a vicious circle of questions, answers and excuses but we cannot ignore the fact that something is out of place here. On doing a quick research we found that the real reason why most students don't raise their voices against the dormant nature of these facilities is that there are individuals and groups which tend to give up very early. They lose focus and brainstorm on finding loopholes in the system. In the labs where the condition is lamentable, these students get cheered up after the sight of an erroneous system or machine. The chaos that ensues after this initiation of events kills the very spirit of engineering. There have been many instances when the students sail off with more than average marks in practical examinations even after displaying mediocrity at the basic level of understanding.

The absence of a sound technical framework for student database management and an arduous, gruelling registration process are not the only things that make life tough on campus. After all we do have exams for that.

Professorship: A career option?

#verbatim

For most of the students a job in a multinational or further studies in a foreign university is the main aim in life. We hope, for the sake of India and IITs, that a few would prefer to come back and contribute to their alma mater. While we realise that the hope sounds more childish than realistic but it's got to start at some point of time for IITs to even dare to match the standard setters like MIT, Harvard, Stanford etc.

Pretty much like the students, the professors are also hired through a very selective process. Keeping the selection process competitive and efficient is of primary significance to maintain the overall quality of the academic and research activities in the campus. The most common notion of a professor's life is that of a happy and effortless one, albeit earning a penny or two less than the people in industries. But, news heralding a change in times reach our ears every now and then, making the decision between an academic and an industrial career a perplexing task. Here's an interview with **Dr. Vinod Kumar, Dean of Faculty Affairs** clearing our doubts and detailing the selection process for us.



What is the process for the selection of faculty in IITR?

There are two processes by which a faculty member is generally appointed- Fast track and regular. Faculty those who are excellent in their fields are taken in as soon as possible through the fast track process before the other institutes.

Departments recommend the meritorious people in the respective fields and based on their willingness to work in our institute, they are hired. The Second is the regular process, in which applications are received as a response to our advertisements and processed by the departments. The selection committee then selects the professors based on a round of interviews.

Who are the members of the Selection Committee?

The selection committee consists of the Director, a visitor's nominee who is nominated by the President of India, two to four experts nominated by the senate and the board, with expertise in the subject area of the faculty and the Head Of the Department. The Selection committee has the final say on all decisions regarding the selection and promotion of the professors.

What are the prerequisites for a person to apply for a faculty position?

As per Ministry of Human Resources, the qualifications for the position of an assistant professor are a PhD and a good academic record in the previous degree. They are inducted at Grade 3 and after a minimum service of 3 years they are promoted to grade 4. If the competition is tough, we look into their achievements and expertise in research and academics. Normally, there are at least 6 to 7 applicants for a position.

How are the current faculty evaluated?

Performance evaluation of the professors is done taking into account the student's response, the research activities, consultancy projects, sponsored research etc., Based on these factors a professor is rated on a five point scale. The selection committee may use these data to award the promotions.

What are some common grievances of the professors?

The professors feel that the funding given by the MHRD for their attending of international conferences is not enough. We are continuously trying to make the process less cumbersome than it was before. Some of the professors also complain about the teaching load, which is heavier when compared to the other institutes.

Can you tell us something about professorship as a career option?

Comparing myself with my classmates, who are in the industry, I would say there is not much of a difference between the two paths. Though an industrial career might have a slight financial edge, I am satisfied with the fact that whatever I did, I did it for myself and not for the company that employs me. It is the freedom of work that I enjoy the most in this job. The financial difference is also slowly disappearing with the revision of the pay scale and endless consulting opportunities available to the professors.

Trials, Faith and Trust. What Changed?

We love to quote the fact that IITs are supposed to be the centers of excellence and cutting edge technology. But at the same time we are all aware of the limitations of the class room education that IIT and colleges in India provide in general. So naturally, the presence of student groups whose sole activity is to make a robot for a national competition or create software apps for the institute appeals to the technically inclined residents of R. In fact, you could go on to say that the quality of work in these sections is the difference between an IITian and others.

Hobbies Club has always been one of the most underrated parts of our campus. It doesn't have the glamor that's associated with the Cultural Sections, nor does it demonstrate physical excellence like the Sports Council. Nonetheless, Hobbies Club has enough dedicated members across various sections that when suddenly the administration changes their policies, more than a few are irked. 5 out of the 8 staff advisors changed this year and this reflected in terms of changed policies. Watch Out spoke to Sethu Nachiappan, General Secretary of Hobbies Club, to find out more about the issue.

"The Hobbies Club administration comprises of Staff Advisors of each section and a Chief Advisor. The other maintenance works are overseen by the technicians who are mostly part time staff. Up till the previous semester we saw a mostly liberal attitude of the staff advisors towards the rules of the system which allowed students to work without having to deal with administrative hassles. The key of sections was issued in the name of the staff advisor and was taken as a responsibility by the Secretary of the section. The Secretary in turn held total responsibility for affairs of the section premises and was considered liable for any damages. This year saw a significant change in the attitude of the advisory panel of the professors. There was a sudden shift from this student friendly nature to a harder version where the section is opened strictly for events and under the vigilance of the staff advisor," says Sethu Nachiappan,

General Secretary of Hobbies Club.

"They must realize that there are certain procedures and practices in their rulebook that they follow, which make perfect sense on paper but in reality they just create an unnecessary hindrance. The administration here must also believe the fact that the students working for the section work for the joy of working, for their passion and interest unlike in many cases, the departmental studies. I strongly believe that the professors fail to show proper trust which is required by the students to have a say in significant matters. To put it bluntly I would say, they simply don't trust us. I can give an example. On encountering such a situation for the first time, we decided to ask for a security guard. There is no security during day time, so we suggested that we could get a night security guard, if their only concern was security during night time. The reply we received from the concerned faculty members was that they were sceptical about the whole idea of student key issuance. This confirms our above mentioned hypotheses."

The Robotics section participates in Robocon each year. The amount of time needed to finish the bot for the competition lies in the range of a few months. But in the current state of affairs, they simply cannot work only 5 days a week for a fixed number of hours. "Photography section currently doesn't face much issue due to time restrictions but I'm getting a studio set up. After that is done, we will also need more number of hours to work there," says Divya Agrawal, Secretary of Photography section. Software Development Section claim to be severely hindered due to the change in policies. "A lot of times when there is power fluctuation, the servers may go down. This leads to interruption in services that we provide to IITR. DC++ is one of the biggest sufferers in this regard and we can't do anything about it over the weekend since the section is closed," says Abhishek Das, Joint Secretary of SDSLabs.

Sethu continues, "The new panel is somewhat reluctant in having student involvement in serious affairs. They

tend to limit the work of secretary to just coordinating and maintaining an organizational hierarchy and taking care of the daily affairs of the section. I believe this behavior of theirs can be attributed to their usual way of dealing with students who attend the classes and later fall-out for some reason. They fail to sense our passion and motivation of working in the section. If the professors become more open minded towards the idea of student representatives holding substantial powers in the working of the section, I believe things can take a rather different turn. Also professors should be more open about taking risks and trusting students in a normal manner.”

According to Divya Agrawal, the administration does have a reason. “There have already been many instances when important things went missing from sections. So in case, apart from the caretaker, the secretaries are also provided with the keys and a similar situation arises, it would be highly confusing. Hence, there should be only one person as a caretaker of the club premises. As far as responsibilities are concerned, there are professors/advisors ready to take them up, but not all

eight. And this is the reason for it not having been done yet.”

Prof AJ Mishra, Staff Advisor of Photography Section, agreed that sections like Robotics, Electronics and SDSLabs require the relaxation of restriction in order to really produce anything meaningful. “I believe that this is a really important issue and needs to be taken up more seriously. Hopefully we can find a middle ground soon.” Watch Out also tried to reach out to Dr Akhil Upadhyay, Chief Advisor of Hobbies Club, but he wasn’t available for a comment.

Clearly, some of the brightest and most active students of R are losing out on the true IIT experience. It is difficult to figure out where exactly the blame lies. The administration seems to be on the defensive due to instances of losses in the sections and the secretaries seem unable to make them come around. If things don’t change soon, these rules will continue to stultify the growth of sections like SDSLabs, Robotics, Electronics etc and see all the progress they have made over the last few years, razed to nothing.

Thought for Food- Mess Reforms

R junta have never had a lot of options when it comes to food. Why Roorkee doesn't have McDonalds or any alternative to Dominos is an unsolved mystery. Couple it with the not so enticing mess menu and that takes IITR out of the competition for the best campus for foodies award. While the confidence of students on the mess food is at an all-time low, thanks to the unfortunate RJB incident, the authorities in charge want us to believe that changes are taking place. WONA spoke to Dr. Inderdeep Singh, Associate Dean, to find out what exactly are the changes. (The answers have been paraphrased)

What steps have been taken by the institute to prevent recurrence of the RJB incident?

The system had been in place for a long time without any issue. But since the RJB case, we have setup a committee for spot checking and a Vigilance Committee which has SAC members also, so that necessary checks are in place to ensure quality and hygiene in the Bhawan Mess. Apart from this, a big initiative taken up by us is to procure branded supplies of items like cooking oil etc. We are already in talks with some major FMCGs to setup a process for supplies procurement. Also, the supply of items like potato and onions is being procured centrally since last few times and this is has led to savings. Previously supplies were purchased on a mess to mess basis and there were issues with pricing.

There are a lot of complaints against hygiene standard in the kitchens of Bhawan Mess. How is this being addressed?

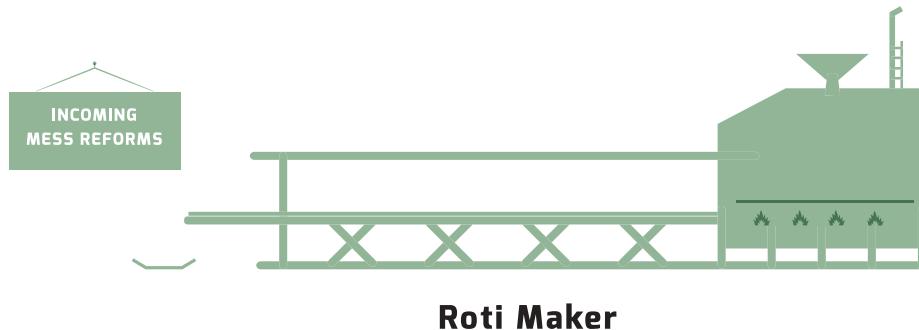
We have given directives to each mess for this. For eg, previously food items were being stored in bags after being cleaned for cooking. Now we have asked them to strictly use containers once the items are out of the initial packing. The institute has also advertised for tenders for dish washing machines to address the issue of hygiene. We are also in the process of providing roti-making machines to each and every mess. We hope that these steps would ensure basic hygiene in each mess.

In IITM, eating in mess is optional. Students are allowed to obtain coupons instead which can be redeemed at a central cafeteria. Can this be implemented in IITR?

We have observed that especially during lunch times, students have to go back to hostels which are not exactly close to the academic area. In order to make it easier for the students, we are considering a setup where students can/may obtain coupons which can be redeemed in a central mess. Discussions are already going on in this regard. We are also considering opening a food court in the Multi Activity Center once it is ready.

A large section of students requested for non-veg to be served on campus. When will this be provided, if at all?

This discussion has been going on for some time now. We have received strong objections from certain people against providing non-veg in the mess. While we haven't crossed out the possibility of introducing non-veg diet in mess menu, we are also looking at alternatives. One possibility is that we may allow a few existing vendors to serve non-veg items. Non-veg can also be provided in the food court that we are planning for the Multi Activity Center. As I said, the discussions are going on and hopefully we'll be able to introduce it soon.



What Makes Us A Pirate?

--Mayank Jain

And my story from a pirate to founding a digital music store

In the last 6 months, two important things have happened:

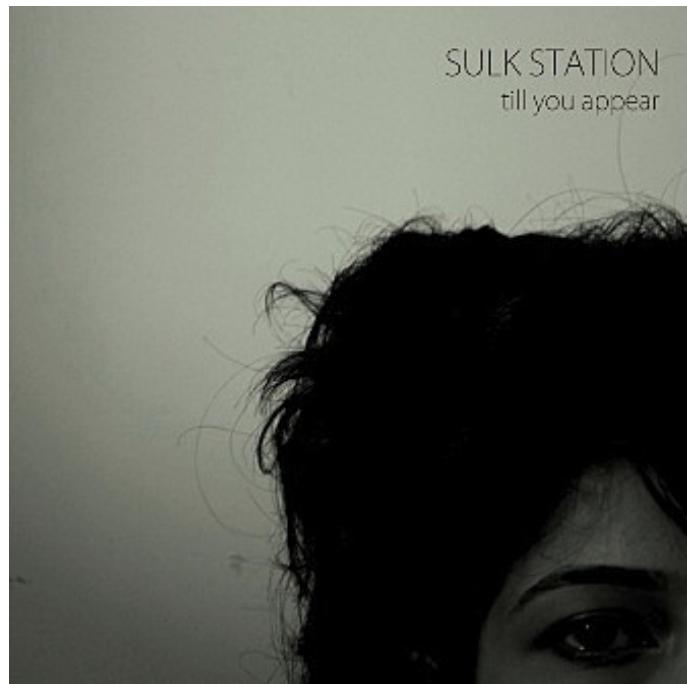
1. I am more broke than ever before in my life
2. I have purchased more music than I did in my 23 years before that

This might seem odd. After all, who pays for music these days, anyways - just the rich kids and audiophiles, right? Certainly not a broke entrepreneur. It was my belief that people who pirate and later turn to buying music do so because they are financially more well off. Because of the simple reason that many considered 'buying' music a luxury but not a necessity. I did too. And boy, was I wrong.

Back in college, I did what any music loving, self respecting, on-a-small-pocket-money-budget college kid would do. I grabbed a senior's hard drive and copied his complete music collection into my machine. I was so high on the shining new music collection of 50 Gbs.

Watch Out! was the monthly student magazine of our college. It was what the cool kids read. For one of the columns called Almost Famous, they interviewed one famous student of the campus. All the young kids wanted to be on that column one day - it was the peak of popularity you could attain. I remember reading one particularly well where the interviewer asked this highly popular chap: "What do you consider your most prized possession in 4 years of college?" His answer: "My 34 GBs of hard drive full of amazing English music by bands from all over". I was so amazed and blown away. I wanted to be that guy. Imagine having 34GBs of new music to listen to and show off. I craved for his music collection and more. It didn't matter to me that it was pirated or not, which of course it was.

The important thing to note is that this answer came from a senior student of one of the best engineering colleges in India. He was actually proud of his feat. Whether he was unaware of the implications of his



actions or was just playing the fool is anybody's guess. The magazine editors who pride themselves on their slogan We have Issues didn't seem to have any issue about him pirating music. That to me is the crux of the piracy problem - ignorance.

When we were young, a lot of us were ignorant about what piracy actually means for the artists. Unfortunately, some of us are even today. A lot of us don't know that it is illegal and harmful to the artists to do so. I met the ex-head of a major record label once who told me that his teenage kid doesn't buy music because he thinks it is stupid. And I found this a common trend with most people I spoke to. Very few seemed to have the idea that it was hurting the artists.

Earlier I used to think it's about the money - that as soon as I start earning, I would start paying for music. I did, by going out and paying for gigs, but not so much for digital downloads or CDs. Then, Musicfellas happened.

My first music purchase was a CD by the band Sulk Station. I emailed them requesting their CD and they were kind enough to send me one with a hand written note on the envelope. It felt good. But it wasn't until I started working on Musicfellas that I started purchasing music. I was completely unaware of how badly it is



Bringing you awesome music.

affecting the artists.

As I got to know the artists personally and hear their stories, it made me realize how hard they work to give us the music we love. Stories of having to worry about the next month's rent - every single month were not uncommon. I met artists who sacrificed sleep, comfort and even food to do what they loved. And it changed me. Thus, it is my opinion that, like me, there are others out there who need to be educated. Most people are not stingy, but simply ignorant. I have seen a lot of my friends convert into paying users on and off Musicfellas and it warms my heart. We need to tackle piracy at the

root level by educating the next generation and not merely by putting bans on torrents or releasing DRM-restricted music. People will always find ways to break the rules until they know in their heart what right thing to do is.

About that 50GBs of music, I am slowly deleting more and more of it and replacing it with legally bought music - Thanks to iTunes' entry into India

Mayank Jain is an IITR alumnus and the founder of Musicfellas. This was originally posted on medium.com/@mayankj. Musicfellas is the end product of a combination of entrepreneurial spirit and love for music. Musicfellas is an indie music discovery platform which boasts of a broad collection of music and perfect use of technology to augment it.

