The Adoption & Use of ICTs in Management and Technical Education in India

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Structure of Presentation

- ICT infrastructure and Management
- Library system
- ICTs in the classroom
- Distance education
- End-user feedback
- Personal reflections
Colonial legacy of selective/mechanistic learning, centralized administration.

Peculiar South Asian system of “affiliation”.

Supreme authority of University Grants Commission (UGC)
  ... but things may be changing.

Privileged/peculiar positions of the IIMs and IITs
  Perhaps the most competitive schools in the world
  Enjoy freedom beyond dreams of by those under UGC
  ... but now face the challenges of a flat world and social inclusion
Technology infrastructure multi-layered and multi-jurisdictional.

Combination of outsourcing and in-house management.

Management without professional qualifications

- No long term strategy
- Technologies not researched before purchase/implementation
- Opaque operations. Not feedback mechanism
- Library and computer committee consisting of faculty members (which may not be wise administratively)

Result: ICT environment inadequate by global standards.

- Biggest deficiency - no one-stop-shop portal
Among the best in India; process of “informatization” a possible lesson for IHEs in developing countries.

1. Phase I: Computerization show up on radar, tech-savvy librarian appointed with clear mandate.
   - 40 people on payroll, 0 with technical skills.
   - Non-existence of LMS, purchase of Libsys in 1996
   - No scope of learning from peer institutions

2. Phase II: Computerization to Information Management (1997-1999)
   - Routine administration computerized
   - Barcoding
   - Public access catalogue version 1.0

3. Phase III: Going online (1998- )
   - Full-text databases
**ICTs in the Classroom**

1. **Classroom ICT infrastructure**
   - 3 categories of classrooms, plus auditorium when required.
   - Masters/doctoral computer labs
   - Financial trading and research lab

2. **Software environment**
   - Requirements not sophisticated
   - No “official” learning management system (LMS)
     - Moodle maintained unofficially by individual professor
     - Participation not mandatory

3. **ICTs in learning**
   - Question of “appropriate” technology
   - Importance of faculty interest/skills
LDPs model for: (a) balancing revenue generation and social outreach, and (b) successful partnering with private sector players.

IIIMC provides intellectual resources, HughesNet and NIIT Imperia provide infrastructure and marketing.

Virtual classroom technologically not advanced, but adequate.

Idiosyncratic pedagogic requirements.

“Classroom” environment perhaps not worse, certainly different.
Voices of Students

- Caveat: Privileged students - especially if being charged large fees - can be opinionated.
- Position of students in institutional environment.
- Internet Services Group.
- Online survey of student satisfaction (administered by a student)
  - Strongly in favour of more intensive and extensive use of ICTs
  - General frustration/resentment with administration
  - Discontent with skill-levels of faculty
"Our institute website is a complete mess. Even after repeated initiatives by the Internet Solutions Group (student body), no action has been taken. The red tape involved completely jeopardizes any chances of its update."

"There is a lack of coordination between different offices and the bureaucracy and red tape used to mask the lethargy and inefficiency is very difficult to deal with. On top of that the reluctance of many faculty members and administrators to change in any little way from their set methods is nearly impossible."

"A coffee day shop (except the one at campus) have better wireless wi fi than the one at iimc. One good central for printing, copying, making papers etc is needed - only new hostel have some facilities. Wireless and/or broadband just need to work all the time, help should be easy to access."

"Throughout this questionnaire, I wished there was a "0" I could click on."
What Have I learnt?

1. “Appropriate” technologies (as in LDPs) can reap dividends.
2. Indispensable nature of professional staff and environment.
4. Ingrained public systems apathy + changing market realities = Low and worsening human capital pool.
5. Problematic procurement policies.
6. Importance of individual initiative/vision.
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