Silicon
...*beyond teaching*

Image from Kala Kumbh at Silicon

Inaugural Issue SLATE 2022

SLATE

Silicon Language for Arts Technology & Education

Our Vision: "To become a center of excellence in the fields of technical education & research and create responsible citizens"

From the Editor's Desk...

'The Times They Are a-Changin' is a very famous song by iconic singer and songwriter Bob Dylan, a Nobel Laureate in Literature and regarded as one of the greatest songwriters of all time. We feel that the song is appropriate for these times. Keeping that tune in mind, we are revamping our beloved *SLATE* quarterly with a new look and feel. Some of the feature articles remain, but we have reduced some portions of the content, particularly news, which were duplicated in many parallel forums and have become redundant here. We are introducing a collage of photos of recent happenings at Silicon, on the inside front and inside back covers, to tell the tale in pictures. Some 'stories' pertaining to Silicon will also appear in future editions.

Having endured two years of COVID-related upheavals, finally there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel. Activities are being held in-person, and not via a video screen; all processes are beginning to assume some degree of normalcy. This bodes well for us in terms of student, faculty and alumni interactions, which will be the backbone of every issue.

We will continue to be a student-driven, faculty mentored publication, and present to you quality articles that we feel are reflective of the current times. Let us know what you think, and we will certainly be receptive to your suggestions.

Wish you happy reading and enjoy the new *SLATE*!

Prof. Jaideep Talukdar
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EDUCATING US
'The Thatcher Effect'

The human brain is very susceptible to tempo and melody. It discerns what it is made to. In short, it's acquiescent.

The world has numerous complexities residing in its vicinity which makes for the comprehensive uniqueness of the very incongruity of the mortal beings, termed as HUMANS. Speaking of complexities, one of the most composite entities to ever exist is a human brain, and THATCHER EFFECT is no doubt a testimony to the above-mentioned fact.

Thatcher effect was first demonstrated by Peter Thompson in 1980 at York University. It's named as such because the photograph that was used was of the then British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher.

The phenomenon basically involves the act of looking at an upside-down picture which looks completely customary until it's reverted back to its original configuration and it's then perceived that the eyes and the mouth were upended as well, which was not witnessed by the human brain when the entire picture was inverted.

One dominant reason for this occurrence materializing is accounted to the fact that a large part of the brain is assigned the task of conceding faces the first thing that the encephalon intercepts is a face, in places where they don't even exist! Whenever a human witnesses any object, they first expect the particular object to be arranged and placed in accordance with what their visual field presumes i.e., eyes first and then the chin, but when the image is turned upside down, the human brain fails to detect any evident inaccuracies. Coming to next, whenever we see a smiling face, we immediately acknowledge the fact that the other person is contented, but when the image is inverted the brain flounders to recognise the reason and the ulterior motive behind the expression adopted and as a consequence becomes incapable to recognise any drastic changes in the arrangements of various aspects of the human face in the picture.

Coming to a plausible explanation of the phenomenon, there's this one explanation which elucidates that when an earthling usually comprehends and visualizes an image, it usually tries to compare it with the ideal model of the same presiding in the viewer's brain and then it slowly tries to focus on each individual aspect, but the human brain doesn't have any model image of an upside-down face, so it fails to visualize the image properly and fails to see any issue.

This effect is also being investigated in people suffering from prosopagnosia, a cognitive disorder, where the ability to recognise familiar faces, including the one's of their own, is impaired, interestingly, people suffering from this disorder are able to detect the discrepancy in the Thatcherized face easily than others.

So, after culminating all the antecedent facts and figures we can reach the conjecture that the way a human brain functions is pretty mysterious and bizarre in a whole lot of ways. It's all about the perspective of the individual that matters by the end of the day.

Avinash Prasad
ECE, 6th Sem.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
Do languages shape the way we think?

"To have a second language is to have a second soul" - Charlemagne, Holy Roman Emperor

We, humans, are social animals and language forms the basis of our society. Language helps us transmit really complicated thoughts to one another. It is because of language we are able to transmit our ideas across vast reaches of space and time.

We know there isn't just one language in the world. There are thousands of them, about 7000, spoken around the world. And all of them differ from one another in more than one way. Some languages have different sounds, they have different vocabularies and they also, very importantly, have different structures. This brings us to the question, does the language we speak shape the way we think?

Before diving into the question, let me give you a couple of examples. An Aboriginal community in Australia is the Kuuk Thaayorre people from Pormpuraaw at the very west edge of Cape York. What sets the Kuuk Thaayorre apart from others is that they don't use words like left and right. Instead, they use cardinal directions, north, south, east and west, to describe everything.

In fact, they greet each other by asking which way they are headed. Now imagine you have to say the direction you are headed to every other person you meet, wouldn't that make you more oriented.

Lots of languages have grammatical gender, every noun is assigned a gender, often masculine and feminine, and these genders differ across languages. So, for example, the sun is feminine in German, but masculine in Spanish and it is the reverse for the moon. Could this actually have any effect on how people think? Do German speakers think of the sun as somehow more female, and the moon as somehow more male? It turns out that's actually the case.

Quite clearly, the structure of the language we speak and the culture it comes from has a drastic impact on the way our thought process is shaped. Now, the tragic thing is that we're losing so much of this linguistic diversity; we're losing about one language a week. Studies suggest that half of the world's languages will be gone in the next hundred years.

The even worse news is that right now, almost everything we know about the human mind and the human brain is based on studies of usually English-speaking undergraduates. This means we have excluded almost all other humans. So what we know about the human mind is not only a tiny fraction but also biased. While we take huge leaps in technology our science has a long way to go if we are to understand the working of our greatest gift, our mind.

Anshuman Mahapatra
ECE, 8th Sem.

HEALTH WATCH
COVID 19: The Age of Fear

With beaded perspiration, breathlessness, racing blood pressure, flashing visions, nausea and chills, many of us have woken up at the dead of the night these days. Social media clamouring with the horrific ground reality of the COVID-19 situation, we see strangers begging for critical medicine, running around for a single hospital bed and gasping for a breath of oxygen. Amid the surging active cases in the country, with increasing numbers of death and unavailability of vaccines, people are forced into the caged dome of fear, anxiety, over thinking and panic attacks.

For those who have lived this situation up close, all hope seems lost, and life appears as an eternal miserable reminder of all the horrible events.

They say that your mind is as powerful as your thought, and it all comes true when we hear cases of self-isolation on the pretext of conferring COVID while all their symptoms are mind-stipulated.

The fear of this invisible enemy leads them to a state of paranoia, anxiety, and constant fear of the future and its uncertainties. These people tend to hoard medical supplies and reserve hospital beds when infected with mild symptoms, depriving the needy of the required amenities. They even make it a habit to watch the news now and then and fall into an intoxicating habit of keeping tabs on their near and dear ones. Some might even agree that the reason behind all these fusses might be the extended isolation and its side effects.

This said, the mental health of the country after this second wave of COVID has been severely deteriorated, and the toll it has taken is vividly visible. But for every problem, there exists a solution, and so does for this.

Therapists have been insisting on keeping the mind healthy and positive throughout the pandemic. Healthy food, physical exercise (at least for 5 mins), breathing exercises, spending time in the garden along with nature, keeping yourself busy yet taking recursive breaks are some of the constantly stressed upon advice. Penning down thoughts might help as a coping mechanism for many. In case of the loss of any loved one, make sure to take time and grieve. Developing a hobby is another way to keep us busy, occupied and distracted from all the negativity. Accepting the fear of COVID, we should realise that though the threat is substantial, we are already doing all that we can do. Staying in touch with friends and family is a must in these harsh times, as they act as a much-needed support group.

The times are tough, and the world has turned into a war zone. The only thing that can protect us and keep us going is us. Maintaining a positive attitude and hoping for a better future are the only things we can do. Utilising these times productively, we can turn the disadvantage into an advantage. Let us try our best to keep ourselves healthy, occupied and away from all the negativity; because "This too shall pass".

Isha Bharadwaj
CSE, 8th Sem.

MENTAL HEALTH:
LET'S TALK
Being Virtual: The new adaptation to learn and live

The Only Constant in life is Change – Heraclitus

Humankind has faced the outbreak of this global pandemic COVID-19 in such an uncertain way that the perception of life has altered. The style and the pace of life are not the same as it was before the COVID-19 pandemic; rather it has changed significantly. The most difficult part is to maintain physical distance, as one of the safety measures, the fundamental trait of human beings to socialize with each other is denied.

Here, technology came as a savior, and the education system has adapted the virtual learning across the globe quite early compared to other sectors. Initially, it seemed convenient but gradually one realized that there are challenges in planning and execution of online classes by students, teachers, and parents. In more than 18 months the uneasiness is felt, and both physical and mental health gets affected.

Students generally report the difficulties they face during the virtual classroom sessions.

Educational institutes are the center of students' life and students used to learn and express many things by face-to-face interaction. But this pandemic forced physical isolation and virtual interaction upon students, creating anxiety among students. In virtual classes, the scenario is quite different as students exercise their autonomy in attending classes. Due to online classes the students many a time feel confined and this feeling creates stress and anxiety of missing out on important information.

During this pandemic one term has been coined, "ZOOM FATIGUE" which onsets by facing the screen for a prolonged period for video conferencing and online classes. It causes mental exhaustion and tiredness in both teachers and students.

Students report an inadequate set up for online classes, lots of distractions at home. Increased laziness and procrastination have become the way of life for a majority of students. As they are not answerable to anyone the habit of delaying tasks is formed and this creates a lazy and lethargic atmosphere.

Though the above difficulties look unsolvable, it is our mental block that does not allow us to look at the bigger picture. It is time to get out of one's mental comfort zone as online classes or the blended teaching-learning process is here to stay. Amid this pandemic, we have to be more solution-oriented in coping with these changes. Some of the suggestions are given below,

- Have a designated study space at home
- Connect with teachers, classmates and friends regularly
- Identify your productive time of the day and maintain a regular schedule
- Make time to learn new skills
- Make time for physical exercise
- Pay attention to self-care and relaxation
- Help in household chores
- Spend quality time with family
- If possible get involved in community work

Our brain needs to be aware and alert to cope with such challenging times without being trapped by "learned helplessness". In any dilemmatic situation never hesitate to seek the help of mental health professionals, and be kind, sensible, and supportive to yourself as well as to others.

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IN CONVERSATION WITH ...

Dr. Prayag Prasad Mishra

Professor, Dept. of Basic Sciences and Humanities, efficiently took charge of the Covid situation at the Institute during the 2nd wave. This interview deals with his experiences, challenges and decisions during the tough and volatile times.

Editor: Sir, Welcome to the interview. You were quite active in managing the Covid situation at the college during the 2nd wave of Covid. Would you like to share your overall experience of the same?

PPM: Thank you. Yes, I would love to do so. When our offline classes were in full swing, BMC advised us to stop these activities and to start everything under online mode keeping the second wave in mind. During this transit period, all our resident students were given an option of going home and attending classes from there. Some students decided to stay back in the hostel. We had around 30 students in the campus having 2/3 Covid positive cases. Slowly the number of positive cases increased among students and staff members. At the same time we had to run the canteen, create isolation rooms, quarantine halls, procure medicines, sanitizers, masks along with oxygen cylinders and to keep our Ambulance ready for emergencies.

Editor: What challenges did you face during the time and how did you tackle them?

PPM: Times were tough but I must thank our Director and the trustees for making everything simple for us. They were in regular touch with us and were always ready to extend their support at the time of need.

The guest house was converted to Quarantine centre for staff and students. In addition to that we kept 20 number of rooms from each residences as Isolation rooms. Affected staff/ students along with their family members were offered the guest house. Thanks to the effort made by one of our staff members, Mr Jitendra

Nayak and his team. They worked hard at the ground level with the help of our Administrative officer and HOD, Admin. We provided medicines with the consultation of our doctor to all affected students and staff members who were residing in our quarantine centres.

Editor: How prepared are you for the third wave of Covid in case it affects us?

PPM: First of all, I pray to God not to make us witness the third wave. However, almost all our staff members are already vaccinated. We will also ensure that our students above 18 years will check-in to the campus with vaccination. We have kept dormitories ready in addition to the existing Isolation rooms on campus. Awareness among students in the form of notifications, posters is to be developed. An undertaking is being prepared and will be in action shortly. Hopefully we will overcome this phase too.

Editor: Any message to our readers?

PPM: We are currently living in uncertain times with the outbreak of Covid-19. While we are at home with our family or at work with our colleagues we should co-operate and should lend a patient ear to others because we do not know what the other is struggling with. People are grief-stricken at the loss of their loved ones and others are facing the disease themselves. In these trying times it is challenging to be entirely optimistic, but we must believe that this too shall pass. Regardless of vaccination we should take necessary precautions. We should keep sending messages of hope and give strength to the people who is battling this disease. Don't forget to pray and always be kind, try to stay positive. This is an opportunity to reflect. We must remind ourselves that together we can overcome the difficulty.

Take care and stay protected.

IN CONVERSATION WITH ...
The Social Media Cell

In the previous issue we featured interviews of four members of the Social Media Cell at Silicon. The cell became active in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic to conduct programmes of various kind in the on-line mode. In this issue we publish to the conversations with six more members of the team.

PRASHANT KUMAR

Being one of the founding members I have actively participated in almost all the programs organized by the Social Media Cell. I started with Noesis where I used to click photos of the events and put stories of the live events, select and upload them in the official handle of the institute. I personally look into the video editing part and team management part, along with that I was also involved in anchoring the programmes. We believe in team work and distribute work among ourselves. This makes the job easy.

RAJEEV RANJAN

I was responsible for managing resources and our team as well. I had to deal with completion of tasks assigned and keeping up with schedules. Our team worked tirelessly to bridge the digital divide. We collected pictures, recorded and edited songs and performed to provide the best possible experience from our end. I was staying inside the college hostel during the lock down, so it was my responsibility to handle content and resources from this side and the urgency of tasks were quite troubling at times but eventually we took everything that came to us with excitement and enthusiasm.

SALVIKA SHUBHANGI

In the farewell we were responsible for planning out the whole event. The flow, the coordination, the resources for the event were managed by us. I also hosted the farewell and was responsible to look after the freshers for the ECE branch. Major challenge that we faced for this "new normal" was connectivity, there were many instances when we faced this issue. I believe as the team is very supportive and understanding, we easily tackled challenges.

SHREYA SARKAR

My major responsibilities were anchoring and content-writing. In the initial days my tasks mainly comprised of providing voice-overs for the videos and writing the captions for our Social Media posts. Arranging licensed versions so as to accommodate larger number of people, managing the audience on the online platform while maintaining the flow of the events simultaneously, dealing with network issues, promoting the events amongst the college audience, were the major challenges. Also, while the event was going on, last-minute changes always tended to make things more difficult. It has been a constant teaching-learning process in the team we all shared with each other what we knew, and learned the rest from each other. We always made sure that we gave our maximum effort to help each other too.

SOUMIT DAS

I have been a part of all the programs, conducted by Silicon Social Media Cell right from April'20. Time management was always a challenge. We had to plan, collect and execute the program in the best possible way, in the short notice period. But we are proud of our TEAM SPIRIT. Each member of the Silicon Social Media Cell is proficient in their own field, and everyone delivers up to that very standard of output. Each member is allocated a different task, and a time frame is given to them. We the members of the Cell work independently, and all our work is reviewed internally. So, timely feedback and a good output is always present.

DEBADUTTA PATTANAYAK

I joined the team right during its initial days as a part of the photography section. Then I upgraded my skills and helped the team with videography and editing, poster designing and management of the records during the events. The biggest challenge was to successfully build the Media front of the college on video conferencing applications, social networking sites and more. We took to the internet to research and implement new ways of connecting to people, and constantly learned from each other. Growth is always more of a personal trait, and being a part of this cell only pushed me further up on this ladder.

STUDENTS' CORNER

BITCOIN

Bitcoin is a decentralized digital currency that you can buy, sell, exchange directly, without an intermediary like a bank. Bitcoin's creator, Santoshi Nakamoto, originally described the need for "an electronic payment system based on cryptographic proof instead of trust."

Each and every Bitcoin transaction that's ever been made exists on a public ledger accessible to everyone, making transactions hard to reverse and difficult to fake.

Since its public launch in 2009, Bitcoin has risen dramatically in value, although it was once sold for under $150 per coin as of March 1, 2021; One Bitcoin now sells for almost $50000.Because its supply is limited to 21 million coins, many expect its price to only keep rising with time, especially as more large, institutional investors begin treating it as a sort of digital gold to hedge against market volatility and inflation.

How does a Bitcoin work?

Bitcoin is built on a distributed digital record called a blockchain. As the name implies, blockchain is a linked body of data, made up of units called blocks that contain information about each and every transaction, including date and time, total value, buyer and seller, and a unique identifying code for each exchange.

"Once a block is added to the blockchain, it becomes accessible to anyone who wishes to view it, acting as a public ledger of crypto-currency transactions," says Stacey Harris, consultant for Pelicoin, a network of crypto-currency ATMs.

Blockchain is decentralized, which means it's not controlled by any one organization. "It's like a Google Doc that anyone can work on," says Buchi-Okoro, co-founder of African crypto-currency exchange Quidax.

"Nobody owns it, but anyone who has a link can contribute to it, and as different people update it; your copy also gets updated."

How to Use Bitcoin?

In the U.S. people generally use Bitcoin as an alternative investment, helping diversify a portfolio apart from stocks and bonds. You can also use Bitcoin to make purchases, but the number of vendors that accept the crypto-currency is still limited.

• Big companies that accept Bitcoin include Overstock, AT&T and Twitch.

• You may also find that some small local retailers or certain websites take Bitcoin, but you'll have to do some digging. Example- PayPal .

• "They have 346 million users and they're connected to 26 million merchants," says Spencer Montgomery, founder of Uinta Crypto Consulting.

How to Buy Bitcoin?

Most people buy Bitcoin via exchanges, such as Coin base. Exchanges allow you to buy sell and hold crypto-currency, and setting up an account is similar to opening a brokerage account you'll need to verify your identity and provide some kind of funding source, such as a bank account or debit card.

How to Invest in Bitcoin?

Like a stock, you can buy and hold Bitcoin as an investment. You can even now do so in special retirement accounts called Bitcoin IRAs.

Prayas Raj Mahapatro
CST, 4th Sem.

PABLO NERUDA

"Only a burning patience will lead to the attainment of a splendid happiness." Pablo Neruda

Over time, many poets came to pen poems on nature but not many had the eye for details like Pablo Neruda. Originally written in Spanish, his poems often used straightforward language, everyday experience and objects to create lasting impact. Often hailed as a romantic and revolutionary, Neruda adopted many styles on his way to greatness over a career spanning half a century.

The influential poet of the 20th century was born in 1904 in Paral, Chile. His father worked for a railroad and wanted his son to follow in his footsteps. But Ricardo wasn't interested in trains and wanted to be a poet. Neruda was 14-year-old when he first published his poems in a magazine. When his father came to know if his son's poems, he burned the writings.

From then on, Ricardo wrote under the pen name Pablo Neruda. Neruda published his first collection *Crepusculario* (Book of Twilights) when he was still in his teens. A year later, he published what would become his most popular collection, 20 Love Poems and a Song of Despair. It was a collection of poems where he used the natural world as a metaphor for a doomed love affair.

Back in the day, even successful poets usually weren't very well paid. So to make a living, Neruda took a job as an honorary diplomat representing Chile in countries around the world. During his time in Spain, he became politically active when the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936. From this point on, Neruda's poetry and his life both became more political as his friend and fellow poet Federico Garcia Lorca was executed.

During this time, he wrote his next major work, *Residence on Earth*, a collection of surrealist poems. Many of these poems were experimental, merging epic landscapes, supernatural themes and feelings of longing with discussion of political strife as he described the horrors of the Spanish Civil War with great detail.

After returning to Chile, Neruda became a senator for the Communist Party. As an anti-communist government took control of Chile, Neruda and his wife were forced to flee to avoid arrest. While in exile, he published his influential *Canto General*, a collection of more than 200 poems.The book, which many consider as his masterpiece, was Neruda's attempt to retell the entire history of Latin America through poetry, touching on everything from its flora and fauna to its politics and wars.

Two years later, with a new government in power, Chile welcomed Neruda home as a hero. As he was cherished as a hero in his country, Neruda was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1971. Neruda died just two years later. While the timing of death sparked rumors of a political conspiracy, he remains a source of inspiration for revolutionaries around the globe. Even today, Neruda's lines are recited at protests and marches worldwide.

Swayanshu Mallick
ECE, 8th Sem.

Darkseid

In the silence of the perilous dark expanse,
There was an old teal wooden window.
Somewhere a mystery was obscured.
A voice was calling out.
Curiosity longed to find a partner there.

Revealing, the window creaks sideways,
And who ought to wait there?
None but a tree
A green, lustrous, fruit-bearing gay tree.
It was spring then, perhaps.

In a flash, Autumn arrives.
The tree lies bold and barren, sparse, coarse and rough.
The leaves have been piled up,
And set on fire.
I notice a few beautiful flowers amongst them.
I run, desperate to save them.
For they were indeed pretty, and quite lively,
Ought to be rescued, preserved and well-taken-care-of.

Suddenly, the fire sky-rocket.
The pile of leaves gain life,
There are screams heard.
I run at the speed of light.
But my efforts vanish into thin air.
For I realize, I now sit in a gallery.
I am all but a mere spectator.

On the centre stage, there's a throne.
Death sits on it.
I am now wide-eyed.
I see the set. I see the cast.

I see men in white coats.
They are sweating to the best of their efforts.
Clinging to utilize the last of the resources.
But
Evil runs deep, equipped with a Midas touch.

There prevails a silence in the dialogues,
Despair and helplessness in the air.
A prayer on every lip.
Yet a backdrop of pearly cruel laughter.

The curtains fall,
And the question appears,
"Can this fight be ever won?"

Isha Bharadwaj
CSE, 8th Sem

Death of A Poet

Stamped beneath the bag of sweet dreams,
As the stars knelt down the black beauty;
The moths commenced their diurnal duty,
He woke up and dressed his silent scream,

His palace, the one window and two paper cups,
Sword and Staff treasured on the desk;
The cot on Earth and the chandelier hung up,
Emotions at night? he left them untamed.

"I miss you", he would babble composing,
The ink drew his words, a catastrophic ending;
"I don't really want you back", the stars were listening,
Not anew, but the last verse of his writing.

Purple shades of warmth would wrap him,
Darkness would drape the truth and trust;
Silver guards the ember slithering,
White would power the already dead lust.

"Let the rain wash away, the pains of yesterday."

Neither lust of the bygone, nor the memories,
But of the shield of hope he carries;
Yearning for an eternal verse, he tries
To live,
Brooding apart from sour truth and empty lies.

"I wish to live, until they say, He was a poet, He wrote,
He died."

Anwesha Mishra
CSE, 4th Sem

The Lost Arcane

Did you ever try?
Or stood there feigning a cry.
Did you just smile?
Or you went looking for a mile.
Did you ever help?
Or all you did was yelp.
Did you ever scream?
Or was it in a dream.
Did you ever ask?
Or just put on a mask.
Did you light the fire?
Or just arranged the pyre.
Did you just push?
Or hid behind the bush.
Because all I heard was a "shush".
Did you get the bone?
At the break of dawn.
Or was it just the throne?
In your mind all alone.
Did you again frown?
When I took time to drown.
Did you sign the pact?
Or did I spoil the act.
Did you sell my life?
Or just run the rife.
Because I saw you holding the knife.
Did you ever see the pain?
Or busy removing the stain.
Now that it's my reign,
Did all that go in vain?
Because I saw you put the gown,
When I wore the crown.

Alekshya Mishra
CSE, 4th Sem.

Trespass

The last time I cried over your absence,
is the day I miserably failed to sketch my patience.
On days when nothing but holding back seems easier,
will you be the sunshine granting me hopes to respire?

Even though you're a feel away,
isn't it weird, how I still get lost midway?
There's not a day when I feel this void any lesser,
but how else do I cherish an ounce of this love any better?

I have become a prisoner behind the bars of time
yet, writing you letters is still my favorite crime,
because hope is no more a benchmark I look forward to,
when all roads have ceased leading to you.

Often, I trespass through the corridors of your heart,
if someday I misplace these letters thereby,
would you care or just tear'me apart,
to avoid the silence those full stops impart?

Saswati Rath
E&IE, 8th Sem.

RUDAALI - A Lost Chronicle

Ever wondered who will cry if you die?

Were you noble enough that people will mourn your death?

Somewhere deep in the Thar, the women were still inside the house due to traditional norms, while the men of the village gathered to pay their respects to the deceased and then there came women dressed in black. They wailed, beating their chest and the ground in front of them. Everyone looked as they grieved and mourned the death.

These women are known as Rudaalis or professional mourners. Yes, they make a living out of mourning. Coming from a lower caste, these women are into a very uncommon profession of crying at funerals. Wearing black sarees, as considered to be the favourite colour of Lord Yama (the god of death), these women are summoned to express grief.

Unlike other professions, this profession isn't born out of passion. The lower caste women are ill-treated, and poverty forces them into this. The job demands one to cry and mourn, and these women are ready to sell their tears to make a living out of it. To keep up with the performance, the Rudaalis often think about their own painful lives to induce crying.

Till about 30 years ago, they would charge for wailing and rolling on the ground, beating one's chest and accompanying the corpse to the cremation ground. They received rice and old clothes. The food they got was raw onions and leftover Rotis.

Over the years, with rising literacy rates and migrations, families now prefer sophisticated, quieter funerals, forcing the Rudaalis to increasingly lose their relevance and get pushed to the realms of obscurity. The Rudallis now have no option except to switch to other jobs. With increased literacy rate and escalated awareness regarding social stigma, such a fascinating line of work in rural areas is being pushed to extinction.

Prabhudatta Mishra, CSE, 6th Sem.

MY CYBERSPACE

Ransomware is a type of malicious software (malware) that encrypts a victim's files and blocks access to data or a computer system, until the victim pays a ransom fee(normally in Bitcoin) to the attacker within a stipulated time. The origin of Ransomware dates back to 1989 when the "AIDS virus" was used to demand ransom from the victims.

The attackers use several ways to launch a ransomware attack, but the two most prevalent types are: Encryptors & Screen Lockers. Encryptors hide/encrypt the data on a system rendering them useless and Screen Lockers block access to an entire computer system with a screen lock. Victims are asked to pay the ransom amount. After payment they may receive a decryption key to reestablish access to data and systems. The vectors used for such attacks are usually 'Phishing' or 'Social Engineering'.

Normally the attackers target organizations with security loopholes or they select tempting targets that are most likely to pay the ransom quickly, for example Government organizations, Medical facilities & Law firms etc. But some of the ransomwares are designed to spread indiscriminately.

Some of the major ransomware attacks were: WannaCry (Attack designed to exploit Microsoft OS, infected over 250,000 systems worldwide), Crypto Locker (First ransomware that required cryptocurrency for payment (Bitcoin), NotPetya(Considered one of the most damaging ransomware attacks, infected and encrypted the master boot record of a Microsoft Windows-based system), Bad Rabbit(Targeted media companies in Russia and Ukraine), Thanos (Sold as ransomware as a service)

Experts have devised/suggested various ways to prevent Ransomware. Some of which are mentioned below:

•   Defend your email, mobile devices, web browsers, servers and networks against   Ransomware.

•   Keep your OS patched.

•   Be careful while giving administrative privileges for software installations

•   Use whitelisting software, which prevents execution of unauthorized applications.

•   And the most basic- Take regular back-ups.

Dr. Sushree Samita Rout, Associate Professor, CSE Dept.

Alumnus Speaks...

My Experience from Student Life to Corporate World

Like any other student, my initial goal was to complete my Engineering degree and get placed in a reputed firm.

This is what we engineering students dream of!! Don't we?

Student Life is the best life, but we don't realise it until we graduate. My engineering days were the best, I made good memories of the four years I spent in college. The initial two years went by swiftly, then came the year of deciding our career ahead, yes the Campus Interview time!! , we had early campus interviews, like in the 3rd year of engineering. The tension in the environment reflected everything. So proud to be a Siliconite as we were guided with proper training and preparations to crack the placement.

In the first campus interview, I cracked TCS !

Yeah!! But trust me this isn't the final journey.

But more importantly, finishing 3rd & 4th year was much more important .

Somehow, after being placed, I chose to work in another company in another country.

I was a fresher, with no experience and faced a lot of questions, "Are you aware of skill sets? You don't have any experience" etc. I was determined, anyhow I need to crack it. "if everyone, says this then how will I start my work and gain experience", this was my reply to my interviewer.

By God's grace, I was selected. My first job was as an ERP Consultant, not in any IT firm, rather in a non-IT company. I got very good exposure in learning and gaining experience.

It's always easy to learn more in a small company rather than in a big company.

Then I evolved, I learnt Oracle Apps myself. Worked on a few assignments being a part-time Corporate Trainer. I loved teaching. And my experience helped me to build my career ahead with Oracle Apps technology.

After 3 years of working, I decided to return to India, to prepare for my MBA, but the same year may be within 3-4 months again I got placed in TCS as an experienced employee. I felt TCS was my destiny!! I joined back as Oracle Apps Consultant. Must admit it wasn't easy for me to switch from a non-IT company to an IT company. In the initial years I struggled, then I got the grip of it. I chose to be Oracle HRMS Functional Consultant

Corporate life is very different from your student life. You need to learn technologies within a week to start to work like a pro. Sometimes the deadlines and pressure would be high too. After a few years in TCS, I went as faculty to mentor the freshers at ILP centre, Ahmedabad. This was again an amazing experience. While you are working in an IT firm, you always need to upgrade your technical skills, you need to do many certifications both internal and external. You will face the appraisal, promotion cycles. You need to work on many other skills like your communication, managerial etc. These days cloud is in demand, my project demanded cloud DB as well. My journey has ups and downs from a team member to a team lead. But each day is an opportunity to learn something new. Each experience counts.

Cetana Das
ETL lead TCS

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