

My Days at MyDLIS: Two Reflections

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Classes that Foretold the Future of Information

My admission to MLISc is accidental, just like many of my classmates. But in the beginning, the interdisciplinary nature of the subjects aroused some interest in me. The Foundation to Information Science classes (in the first semester) handled by Prof. Shalini Urs was very stimulating as she was bringing her rich experience to juxtapose literature, information science, library science and other subjects to make us understand the nature of information from an interdisciplinary perspective.

We were introduced to Derek deSolla Price's "Little Science, Big Science", J C R Licklider's "Libraries of the Future" and Englebart's idea of world encyclopaedia kind of classic works to understand the changing nature of the availability of information (analog to digital) and also the changing nature of the container of information.

We were also told about SPARC (The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition), BioOne (a non-profit publisher that aims to make scientific research more accessible) and ArXiv, one of the early open archive initiatives, which later revolutionized the scholarly communication models. We were lucky to be introduced to new concepts, latest developments and cutting edge technologies in our field early in the formative stage of their evolution

The Information Retrieval (third semester) and Information Society (fourth semester) both papers handled by Ms. Indira was also stimulating because she also introduced us to read non-fiction



works such as Third Wave, The Future Shock written by Alvin Toffler, Peter Drucker's works on Knowledge industry, Vannevar Bush's classic article "As We May Think" which shaped the world of today's information retrieval techniques. Apart from this, there was encouragement for questions, comments and discussions.

Unicode (encoding system for representing different language in computers) was introduced for us way back in 2002. It took us sometime to understand the concept. Now we realized the importance of Unicode for interoperable purpose and representing vernacular language in

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all kinds of gadgets. Dr. N S Harinarayana used to demonstrate to us how Kannada script can be represented in computers.

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The Accident that I cannot forget

It was in our last semester that our class decided to take a two-day trip in Coastal Karnataka to make our student days memorable. All of us except one or two classmates decided to take the trip in Feb 2004. It was well planned with Pradeep Kumar U.M. taking all the responsibilities for travel arrangements.

We set off on the night of 14th February 2004. All was fine until the early hours of the morning at 5.00 AM on that fateful day. We met with a terrible accident near Sulya. Passers-by thought that there were some serious casualties. It took sometime for us to understand what had happened. We were thrown out of our seats, the front glass and windowpanes of the vehicle were broken into pieces. We slowly tried to come to terms with the accident. Some of us got injured but fortunately none was very serious. We still wonder how on earth we were able to escape such a horrific incident with only minor injuries. With pain and some kind of dejection we walked towards the Sulya Bus stand. Murgesh was looking for the vehicle driver and his assistant. They had escaped from the spot immediately and were nowhere to be seen.

The girls were in agony and busy contacting their families. Some wanted to return to Mysore soon.

We got treated in one of the private hospitals in Sulya. There was complete gloom while we looked at each other wondering what to do next. Local people in Sulya who had seen the damaged vehicle started to flock at the bus stand to see us.

Finally we decided to hire another vehicle and continued the trip although some of us were reluctant. The fear was there in all our faces. We had wild thoughts - "what if we meet a similar fate"? Fortunately the driver seemed to be

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experienced and assured us a safe journey. On the evening of 15th Feb we were in Kapu Beach in Udupi. The time was right. It was twilight and a very soothing environment. All of us got back the energy we had lost in the morning and went swimming in the sea.

We all had a very joyful evening and totally forgot the incident. We stayed in Udupi and visited Sringeri and Belur the next day and safely reached Mysore on the 16th evening.

Till date except my classmates (2002-2004) and few junior students (2003-2004) no faculty in the Department knew of this incident and in fact they did not even know that we had gone for a trip without the permission of the Chairman of the Department!