



Indian Institutes of Technology

IIT Alumni Newsletter December 2016

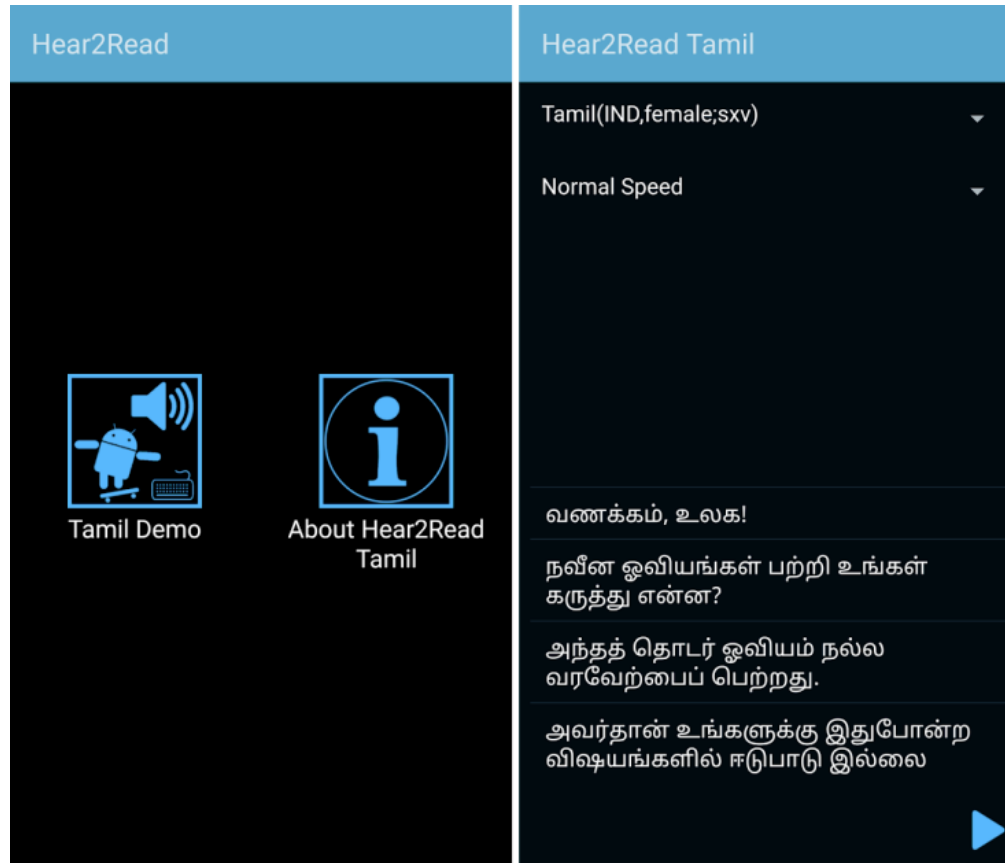
PAN IIT Alumni News

App lets visually impaired in India hear books in their native language

For the millions upon millions of visually impaired people in India, it can be difficult getting hold of the audiobook they want in the language they need it in. A project from Carnegie Mellon University and partners aims to fix that with a free, easily extensible Android app that can be quickly trained to read texts aloud in local languages.

[The app, Hear2Read, had its first release today](#), supporting Tamil, with Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, and other languages and dialects coming over the course of the year. A few hours of talking from a native speaker is the raw data, which is then fed into a machine learning system.

“Each language is different and historically TTS systems have been done one at a time. We looked at commonalities of Indian languages and developed tools to apply the same technology to multiple languages,” said Suresh Bazaj, an IIT Alumni and founder of the project, [in a CMU blog post](#).



The resulting language database is small enough that it can be stored on the phone, meaning no internet connection is needed to translate texts. It'll run on low-end phones, as well, an important factor in a country where budget devices and spotty connectivity are the rule. (You'll need Android 4.1 or higher, though.)

The Hear2Read software also integrates with Android's built-in accessibility functions, letting browsers, email apps, and others integrate text to speech.

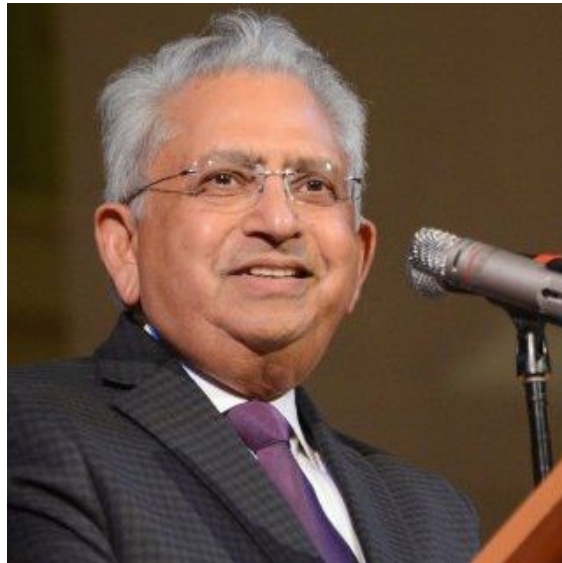
More info on Hear2Read, the app, and the partners that helped make it possible can be found at the company's [website](#).

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Indian American Engineer Pradeep Gupta Sworn in as South San Francisco Mayor

Pradeep Gupta, who had been serving as the vice mayor of South San Francisco, Calif., Dec. 6 was sworn in as the mayor of the city. During the South San Francisco City Council reorganization event, as Gupta exited his vice mayor role, Liza Normandy took over the spot.

“It is my honor to step up and continue the work that former Mayor Mark Addiego has started,” said Gupta in a statement. “We have a great group of people on our council, many who have served the city for years. I’m eager to lead this council and our city during such exciting times.”



Gupta was originally appointed to the city council for a one-year term on Dec. 31, 2012 and was elected to a full four-year term in November 2013. Prior to his time with the city council, Gupta was on the city's Planning Commission for three years, including serving as its chair in 2011.

The Indian American earned a bachelor's in electrical engineering from IIT Madras before earning a master's and doctorate in electrical engineering from Purdue University. He has served for electric utility companies both domestic and abroad throughout his more

than 30-year career. Among his career stops include Systems Control Inc., Southern California Edison, Electric Power Research Institute, Decision Systems Inc., Synergic Resources International and Hagler Bailey, according to his LinkedIn profile.

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Adapted from - India-West Staff Reporter Dec 12, 2016

Alumni Launches Book

Anvita Bajpai, alumna of IIT Madras, and IIM Bangalore, has launched her second book titled "TURNING POINTS of uncommon people" at IIT Kanpur, during Antaragni 2016 — in a literary event, in presence of other authors, people from literary field, students, and faculty. The concept of the book was appreciated by the audience.

TURNING POINTS of uncommon people


Anvita Bajpai – Human-centric Product Visionary, Speaker and Author – is an alumna of IIT Madras and IIM Bangalore. She has over 13 years of R&D experience with MNCs like Oracle, Satyam and Wipro, and with startups like Decidyn (as AVP), Vimagino and her own ventures. Anvita has published research papers, filed patents, and written business and technology articles, and has been invited as a speaker at leading conferences such as UXINDIA (2013, 2014), WIAD 2015, Developer Summit 2015 and RSD 2016. She has also given guest lectures at IIM Bangalore.




Anvita came to her turning point — the publication of her first book, *Life, Odds & Ends* — after conducting a social study for one of her technology products. In the form of fictional short stories, Anvita expressed her contextual observations. Subsequently, she gave related talks at literary forums and institutions (including UIUC, IL, USA), and her events and interviews were published by leading newspapers like *The Hindu*, *Times of India* and *Deccan Chronicle*.

Responding to her book and related events, many people have spoken or written to her to share their life experiences. A few such true incidents of listening to the inner calling or taking a plunge inspired Anvita to work on this book, in an effort to bring out the uncommon stories of common people. These 14 true stories feature individuals belonging to different age groups, backgrounds and geographical locations, and highlight their explorations related to finding the right equation for their individual needs in the realms of career, passion, family and well-being. Anvita, based on her study of human lives, brings a larger philosophical perspective to the narratives in this book.

Anvita lives in Bangalore with her daughter and husband, enjoying the integration of her family life and writing with her technology ventures.

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About the book —

"TURNING POINTS of uncommon people" by "Anvita Bajpai" contains 14 TRUE stories (including 7 stories of IIT alumni) of people who have taken a plunge, and made a difference to their own life, and to that of around them. The stories in the book, feature individuals belonging to different age groups, backgrounds and geographical locations, and highlight their explorations related to finding the right equation for their individual needs in the realms of Career, Passion, Family and Well-being. Anvita, based on her study of human lives, brings a larger philosophical perspective to the narratives in this book.

The e-book is available @ <https://www.amazon.in/dp/B01LZB3VBM> || Paperback book is to be launched by end Nov, 2016, followed by the audiobook (due in early 2017)

A video of the book @ https://youtu.be/ysFXEz_S2-s

Details of stories are also @ http://anvitabajpailoe.blogspot.in/2016_09_01_archive.html

PAN IIT Chapter News

IIT Alumni of Greater Houston ([IITAGH](#)) organized a workshop on Art and Applied Art on Sunday July 17th from 10a-12p at the India House. In 2016, IITAGH has typically organized events around Technology. This was the first event targeted as a family fun activity while continuing to learning something new. "IITAGH works on the pillars of Connecting and Developing it's members and Giving back to the local community. This Art workshop was successful from all the three pillars, as we brought together families, connected members and speakers and gave back to local community in terms of continuing education and fun. IITAGH thanks all the participants who took time from their Sunday morning to attend this workshop and make it a success", said [Shamanth Shankar](#), IITAGH President.

[Nimmy](#) started the workshop by guiding the participants from scribbling to drawing shapes, sketching still life images and eventually sketching a self portrait. As Bharath Rao, photography volunteer at the event put it, Nimmy's instruction on how to sketch a portrait was very methodical and made it easy for an engineer to follow. Bharath attended the event with his family and parents. [Melvin](#) then choose one of portraits (self portrait created by Farrukh Hamza) and created an avatar



of it using Adobe Illustrator. As they say time flies when you are having fun, participants had so much fun during sketching that the organizers had to rush through the Adobe Illustrator coaching, to stick to time and wrap up the workshop on time. Melvin and Nimmy saved the best for the end, they invited all the children and adults to explore finger painting on the canvas which was followed by a draw and the lucky winner (Vanilla Bharath) got to take the creation, home.

[Nimmy and Melvin](#) enjoyed the workshop and were grateful to IITAGH for providing this platform. In their words, “It was an excellent experience to do an Art Workshop in a great ambience like India House with a lot of multitalented people. We enjoyed the creative spontaneity of the participants. It was a day to

remember, and we received a great deal of immediate, positive feedback from all participants. This Art Workshop is definitely going to inspire us in our creative journey.”

To the post event survey, participants responded saying that they loved this event and would attend subsequent art and design workshops. Parents commented that their children enjoyed a lot. Vasudha Govindhan said, “ Nimmy & Melvin, thank you very much for patiently and passionately sharing your art with us. I was impressed with the way you could relate to everyone from the very young children to the adults.”



The workshop started about 10:00am and concluded at about 1:00pm. The event was attended by Witty Bindra & family (PAN IIT US President) and IITAGH Board Members and family (Shiladitya Basu and Huzefa Shakir). IITAGH thanks Pradeep Anand for his support in Marketing this event. The event wouldn't have run smoothly without the help of IITAGH volunteers Riken Pandya, Bharath Rao and Badrish Krishnan. Thanks to Col Vipin Kumar and his staff for support they provided from India House.

IITAGH has successfully hosted 5 packed events so far this year and 3 codefests. IITAGH trustee Anand Kumar Chauhan organizes and leads the widely successful codefest initiative.

2016 Past Events

- [c@deFe\\$t//2.3](#) June 17-19 2016
- [Lunch with Mr. V.P Agrawal, ex-Chairman of AAI](#) June 15 2016
- [c@deFe\\$t// 2.2](#) April 2016
- [Internet of Things: Shaping Enterprises and Consumers](#) March 2016

- [c@deFe\\$t// 2.1](#) Feb 2016
- [Career Insights in Business and Technology Consulting](#) Feb 2016
- [Big Data: Solving tomorrow's business challenges](#) Jan 2016

IITAGH and Rice Indo American Business Club (RIABC) will be hosting a [panel discussion on Oil and Gas Market : Where do we go from here](#), on September 14th at Rice University from 6:00pm - 8:30pm. On the panel will be [Patrick Connelly](#), [Hossam Elbadawy](#) and [Pramod Singh](#). Sundry Srinivasan will be moderating the panel discussion. "We invite the IITAGH members and local community members to use this opportunity to listen to Global leaders and also to network with other professionals ", said Shamanth Shankar, IITAGH President.

IIT NEWS

In a first, IIT to hold exam abroad

IIT Joint Admission Board (JAB) released the name of six foreign countries including three SAARC nations where the IIT-JEE (advanced) is to be held in 2017. In the additional information brochure to the foreign candidates, JAB said the exam centres will be set up in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Colombo (Sri Lanka), Dhaka (Bangladesh), Dubai (UAE), Kathmandu (Nepal) and Singapore.

Based on their performance in the exam the students can select IITs for undergrad courses. Earlier, it was expected that the entrance exam to the premier institutions would be conducted for the first time in all SAARC nations except Pakistan. According to sources, the new list was sent by the Ministry of Human Resources Development.

The choice of Ethiopia in the list has raised curiosity. "Ethiopia was chosen by Ministry of External Affairs as the first country in Africa to host the IIT-JEE (advanced). In Dubai we are already conducting JEE for the students who are studying in the CBSE schools," said Bhaskar Ramamurthi, director, IIT Madras.

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Adapted from Deccan Chronicle Nov 22, 2016

Mind-controlled drone, electronic scooter and robots are key attractions at IIT-B's TechFest

Ever watched an X-Men movie and wondered what it would be like to be able to move objects just by using your mind like Charles Xavier, more commonly known as Professor X? Here's your chance to observe telekinesis happen in real life.

Come Friday, Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay will display Puzzlebox Orbit, a drone controlled by human neuro senses, as part of an exhibition at its annual technology extravaganza — TechFest. At the three-day festival, spectators can watch the drone lift objects and move around without pressing any button or movement of a joystick. Just think and it will happen.

The exhibition remains the biggest attraction of TechFest. This year, in addition to the mind-controlled drone, IIT-B will also put on display a whole range of new, seemingly quirky, technological innovations from across the world. This includes another drone that mimics living objects, an electronic scooter that weighs only 4kg and a wide variety of robots.

However, according to organisers, there's more to these exhibits than mere visual spectacle. For example, the mind-controlled drones can be used by paralysed patients in order to communicate with others and ease their work. Morphofunctional drones from Switzerland (Drones that mimic the actions of bio creatures).

These robots mimic biological creatures and hence can be used to study them closely. "Our aim is to introduce the latest technology to the people and give them a first experience of it. The drones are examples of what can be done with technology in daily lives," said Ashwin Gohte, who heads the exhibition at TechFest.

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Adapted from Hindustan Times Dec 12, 2016

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