

TECHNO BITS

DOES IPHONE WANT TO BE THE KEY TO YOUR LIFE?



The latest patent filed by Apple might take technology to a different level altogether. According to it, in addition to providing you digital music, movies and 'print' media, it would allow Apple to be the gateway to

your home and bank account as well. The new Apple patent called iKey plans to turn iPhone into an all-in-one key to your life. From what we understand, the patent talks about providing you access to a 'your door, car, house or other physical area' via the iPhone.

A SECURITY SLIP THAT 'MISDIRECTED' CHATS

A recent security slip reportedly put Facebook, the social security website, in a spot. According to a blog post, Facebook "misdirected" hundreds of private messages, including an "explicit chat" to a newspaper reporter. Zach Seward claimed that he got misdirected messages from about 100 people. Seward says on the blog that he also got "one couple's entire explicit chat session" in the mix. So, how did this huge security slip happen? Well, according to Facebook, it was just a code update "that caused some misrouting to a small number of users for a short period of time".

YOUR BUTLER IN FABLE III

Remember Monty Python's John Cleese? Well, looks like you will be seeing a lot more of him as your butler in the role-playing game Fable III. The top two men behind Fable III, Lionhead Studios' Peter Molyneux and Josh Atkins disclosed this



nugget at Game Developers Conference. The addition of Cleese is just one big change. His character wasn't shown at the conference, but Cleese will play the role of a butler that you encounter when you press the start button in the game. In Fable II, you'd take that action and get a 2D menu. In Fable III, your character will appear in a room full of his clothes and a table representing the world map.

Crimebusters: Faster, higher-tech, smarter

Criminals had better watch out as investigative agencies use social networking to track them down

Saira Kurup | TNN

Mafia dons must be looking for a tech-upgrade after one of their brethren in Italy was foolish enough to get arrested this week, thanks to his love of social networking. Pasquale Manfredi, a feared mafia boss, used an internet key to log on to Facebook, helping police zero in on his location.

This is becoming a familiar story. In October, US federal agents managed to catch up with Maxi Sopo, a fugitive wanted for bank fraud, who had been sunning himself on Mexico's beaches. Sopo made a crucial error: He posted details of all the fun he was having on Facebook, little realizing the agents were watching. They tracked him down, thanks to information on Sopo's Facebook "friends" list and some legwork by the Mexican authorities.

These are just two of a growing number of instances of law enforcement agencies entering popular social networking sites such as MySpace, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Investigators are even going undercover to communicate online with suspects. Whether it is keeping watch on the movements of pedophiles and drug lords, or the tax authorities estimating an artiste's hidden income from his tweets about performances, social networking is helping to fight crime.

Indian police have noticed. Police cracked the case of IIT-Delhi student Pragati Tibberwal's murder in a Shimla hotel room last month using information from the Facebook account of IIT-Roorkee suspect Gaurav Verma. The account linked Verma to the murdered girl. Shimla SP R M Sharma says, "We got the girl's laptop,

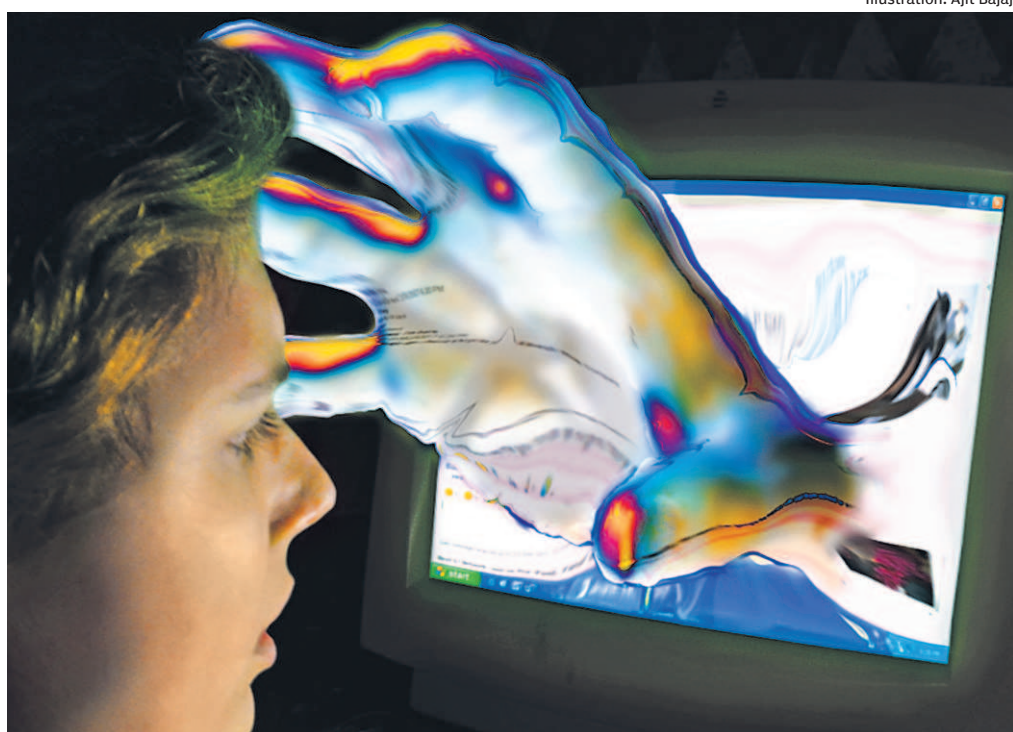


Illustration: Ajit Bajaj

How to catch a criminal

- In the US, people have been posting surveillance videos of burglaries on YouTube, leading to some arrests
- In Mexico, where gun battles can erupt on the streets without warning, people are turning to Twitter to find out safe areas
- British policeman Ed Rogerson regularly tweets with weather warnings and missing cats
- Facebook and Twitter are being used in the UK to trace missing persons by involving their online friends in the search

which had many photos. We asked the IIT-Roorkee registrar (an answersheet from that institute was found in the hotel room) to send a photo and samples of Verma's handwriting via email to cross-check with his signature in the hotel's reception book." Meanwhile, police looked through Facebook to identify the right Gaurav Verma, and then found the girl name on his friend's list.

This has become fairly standard procedure in the West. Investigative agencies increasingly log on surreptitiously to exchange messages with suspects, identify the target's friends or browse postings and videos. They follow tweets and photos that indicate

suspicious behaviour, such as people posing with guns.

Cyber forensic expert Santosh Raut recounts a case in Punjab that had a boy creating a fake Orkut profile of a female friend and posting her photograph and contact number online. After the girl started receiving calls, she filed a police complaint. The police set up a fake Orkut profile, made contact with the boy and got his location. He's now in jail.

Cyber lawyer Karnika Seth says, "Clues can be drawn from blogs and chatrooms. Incidents mentioned there can be tracked so that a chain of events can be analyzed and linked to suspects. If it's a cognizable offence, the ev-

idence can be presented in court."

So is India in tune with the immense potential of cyber investigation? The technology is available but law enforcement agencies have less expertise than they should. Raut says, "There are no specially appointed cyber experts in the police. They have only existing experts in, say ballistics and physics, who receive some training in cyber security."

He says that Indian lawyers and judges are not sufficiently aware of the potential of cyber crime-fighting. Seth, who trained Delhi Police officers on cyber security, agrees. "Not many police officials understand basic concepts like email." She believes that some interdisciplinary skills are required, such as a forensic science background, for a policeman to be an expert.

But Sharma says, "We have regular training and workshops (on cyber investigation). It's part of the curriculum at the police training college. We are already tracking and recovering stolen mobiles online." In other words, no one should be surprised to see the local constable busy tweeting in the thana.

WILBUR SARGUNARAJ, SINGER FROM MADURAI



Meet India's first YouTube star

Javed Anwer | TNN

Last month when music video "Love Marriage" hit the internet, little did its maker realize it would become an interwebs sensation. He was catapulted into the big league of YouTube's famous stars. Wilbur Sargunaraj, a 32-year-old singer and performer from Madurai, has become India's first real YouTube star to make it big. He has joined YouTube's 'fame club' of stars such as Lim Jeong-hyun (also known as funtwo) and Adam Nyerere Bahner (Tay Zonday).

Sargunaraj aims to "make the common extraordinary". He seems to have succeeded. Celebrated movie critic Roger Ebert has "dared" his followers on Twitter "not to like this Indian music video with its smiling bride", while the Digg web community has featured him in its top stories.

YouTube viewers have been savouring Sargunaraj's autotune song and its exaggerated Tamil-accented English. Does Sargunaraj know why? "I started writing this song after seeing many friends and family going through arranged marriages in Tamil Nadu," he replies. "Many in India have to approach this matter seriously, but I wanted a light-hearted way of doing this. A good example is 'Love Marriage'." The women in this video are my friends. They are all very poor but have a zest for life. They have no idea that the video is being watched across the world. This is how the common can be made extraordinary."

Sargunaraj's music and videos may lack the finesse of professionally recorded and edited clips, but he is thought to have the uncanny ability to find humor in the mundane, be it introducing cricket to an audience that thinks a bat can only have wings.

"Blog Song", uploaded on YouTube in July 2007, was Sargunaraj's first music video. It was composed while he was on a field trip in Tokyo in 2005. "At that time, blogs were very popular and the standard statement on the internet was, 'Please check my blog!' So I decided to write a song on it," he says.

He has come a long way since then. Many more videos have been released, to the enthusiastic appreciation of YouTube fans. He has performed in many countries and his songs are available on iTunes. "My love affair with music started at a young age. I would sing and dance for at family gatherings. One of my inspirations was Michael Jackson - all my beats follow his style. When I realized I couldn't become a doctor, software engineer or lawyer, I decided to follow my passion for music. However, I did it very late in life, at 23," says Sargunaraj.

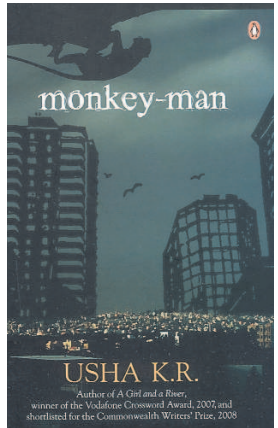
His rustic southern Indian persona and thick moustache have caused many netizens to question if he is for real. Some bloggers speculate that Wilbur Sargunaraj is a web avatar created by Canadian singer and recording artist Paul Benjamin. But Sargunaraj insists his "name is for real. It is in my passport."

OFF THE SHELF

Monkey-man as metaphor

Meenakshi Sinha | TNN

In the year 2000, at the dawn of a new millennium, a strange incident grabbed the country's attention - the Monkey-man. A beastly creature described as half-man, half monkey was spotted in several cities, including Delhi and Bengaluru. It became a topic of discussion across India with everyone discussing how he scratched, pawed, jumped in



Monkey-Man Usha K R
Penguin (India), 259 pages
Price: Rs 299

the dark or turned into a ball of fire in the high skies. A decade later, Usha K R takes a fresh look at the Monkey-man's impact on the collective psyche. She includes a popular radio show discussion with eyewitnesses recounting their experience of the Monkey-man, including college teacher Shrinivas Moorthy and call centre executive Pushpa Rani. Was the sighting a bat, a malevolent avatar, a sign that the city was crumbling as it grew too fast? Or was it just a lost monkey?

Usha lays bare the real Bengaluru, which is a city of chaotic desire rather than just a pensioner's delight or an IT hub. The destinies of the various characters are unequivocally linked to a city that has moved on with time. The book looks at Bengaluru with profound understanding.

WRITE PRESCRIPTION

Indian doctors put down their scalpels and stethoscopes...briefly

Shobha John | TNN

"Medicine is my lawful wife, and literature is my mistress. When I get fed up with one, I spend the night with the other."

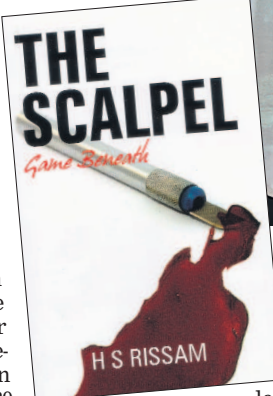
- Anton Chekhov

Dr Chekhov's writer's views might increasingly find resonance in India. Here too, doctors are taking up the pen with the same ease as wielding the scalpel. It's more than heavy medical tomes. It's fiction.

Dr H S Rissam is the newest entrant to the club of doctors-as-writers. Director of cardiac sciences at Delhi's Max Hospital, Rissam has just written a thriller called "The Scalpel". It took seven years and he says he conceptualized it at Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris. "This work is the outcome of 35 years in the medical profession and deals with issues such as organ trade, transplants, etc," he says.

Rissam was once vice-president of the Academy of Fine Arts and Literature in Delhi, but says he did not combine literature with medicine because he felt neither would take him seriously. "I was in hibernation for 20 years, till one day I decided to take the plunge," he says.

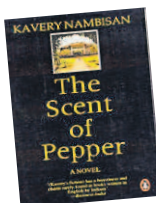
There have been others who took the "plunge". In 2007, Ambarish Satwik, a surgeon at Sir



Ganga Ram Hospital, Delhi, wrote "Perineum: Nether parts of the Empire", a slightly dense volume, which he describes as "a collection of 13 stories about the sexual history of the British Raj and dwells on Robert Clive, King George V, etc." It took him 18 months of research in the National Archives.

Then there is "Bombay Rains Bombay Girls" by Kolkata-based kidney specialist Anirban Bose. It is about a small-town boy who arrives in Kolkata to study medicine. He is ragged, struggles to fit into his new world and makes difficult choices as a doctor.

Medical humour need not always be grim. Ajit Saxena, urologist with Apollo Hospital, Delhi, has written a book of jokes, which



is routinely circulated at urological meets.

"These medical jokes are in a pocket-sized book, which doctors can read during their heavy schedules," he says.

The well-known surgical duo, Kalpana Swaminathan and Ishrat Syed, write under the pen name Kalpish Ratna. "The Quarantine Papers" is the duo's detective story and was well received. Set in Grant Medical College and Sir JJ Hospital, it ranges across medical discoveries of the 19th century.

So is medical writing a new genre for India? Ravi Singh, editor-in-chief, Penguin India, says, "Doctors as fiction writers is an old phenomenon. 'The Scent of Pepper' by surgeon Kavary Nambisan came out in the mid-90s, while Kalpana Swaminathan has been writing for a decade. But with the market for books growing and more doctors taking up writing, this genre is more visible now and doing well commercially."

Its publishers claim that "The Scent of Pepper" sold 5,000 copies years ago, Swaminathan's "Bougainvillea House" sold 7,000 copies in 2005 and "Bombay Rain, Bombay Girls" sold about 30,000 copies.

Are doctors particularly good writers then? VK Karthika, publisher and chief editor of HarperCollins says, "They use language differently. Medical words are used as verbs and you may need to look up a dictionary."

Singh says doctors write with greater precision.

SMART P-I-C-K-S

WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE READ THIS WEEK ABOUT GODMEN - BUT PROBABLY DIDN'T

Godman: Finding a Spiritual Master - by Kirpal Singh
Kirpal Singh, a spiritual teacher born in Pakistan, provides a helpful how-to list to evaluate gurus. How does one



make out if a spiritual master is a real "godman", ie a man of god or the more debased kind. One surefire test: a true Master never asks for anything from his followers.

Swami Sivananda: Saint, Sage & Godman - by Swami Chidananda
For more than 50 years, Swami Chidananda, spiritual successor of the Divine Life Society founder Swami Sivanananda, traveled extensively urging his listeners to seek more than the known world. Here, he offers a guide to the journey towards the Beyond.

The Godmen of India - by Janaki Ram
A revealing book by the police officer who investigated the affairs of some godmen and their ashrams. He debunks their claims and exposes them.

Autobiography of a Spiritually Incorrect Mystic - by Osho
A collection of tape-recorded reminiscences by Osho. His thought process is rooted in the Buddhist tradition, but his discourses refer to diverse sources, including Prophet Muhammad. It's possible to be amused by the humour and taken aback by his boastfulness. One cannot but be struck by his insight.

Lalu Prasad doing yoga under the guidance of a godman

Not Dog-eared



A boy examines his belly button in the film, 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid'

UNLIKELY PROTAGONIST | A pre-teen literary storm is underway in North America and at its centre is Jeff Kinney, author of the bestselling "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" series. The first book in the series has just been made into a film. It chronicles the embarrassing trials of preteen hero Greg Heffley for whom school is a place full of humiliation and failure. Kinney says, "I wanted to create a character who's more relatable. He's not a bad kid, but he's not a fully formed human being. All the humor comes from his flaws."

INDIA'S AMAZING WOMEN | Dominique Hoeltgen was always fascinated by Indian women and now she has given more permanent form to her fascination than journalistic pieces for French publication L'Expansion. Her book, "Inde, la révolution par les femmes", (Indian women, the power of change) was released recently in India. "I met so many amazing women while living in Mumbai for four years that I had to put my stories into a book," she says. "India has so many powerful women and yet, their position is difficult."



JAIPUR FESTIVAL INSPIRES KARACHI | A two-day Karachi literary festival under the joint aegis of the British Council and Oxford University Press (OUP) began on Saturday, March 20. It features writers and authors from Pakistan and abroad. OUP managing director Ameena Saiyid says the inspiration was literary festivals in Jaipur and Sri Lanka. She said Pakistan had tremendous literary talent but this was still to be projected worldwide. Pakistani lawyer Asma Jahangir at the Jaipur Literature Festival in January

FROM PILLS TO PENS

When MD stands for doctor of literature

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE | The physician created the world's most famous detective, Sherlock Holmes. He was also a prolific writer of science fiction, historical novels, plays, romances and poetry.

W SOMERSET MAUGHAM | He attended St Thomas's teaching hospital in London in the 1890s.

Philip, the protagonist of his best book, "Of Human Bondage", is an aspiring artist who ends up as a doctor

ANTON CHEKHOV | His first collection of stories, "The Fairy Tales of Melpomene", appeared in 1884, the year he graduated from Moscow University Medical School. His originality was the early use of the stream-of-consciousness technique

ROBIN COOK | He's called the master of

the medical thriller. He writes on medical issues such as bioterrorism and organ donation. Many of his bestsellers have been made into feature films.

MICHAEL CRICHTON | A medical doctor, he wrote thrillers under various pseudonyms. "A Case of Need" won the Edgar Award. His "Andromeda Strain" was sold to Hollywood.