"Research & Innovation Ashram(s)"
A Concept-Paper & Proposal
from: The Academy of Electronic Arts
[working-draft, version July 04, 2007]
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Observation 'A': in speaking very broadly, it can safely be said that Indian students and professionals working in countries more advanced than India are generally observed to manifest more—and more exciting—experimentation, innovation, inventiveness and enterprise in their work, than is observable amongst their own counterparts and contemporaries working within India itself

Observation 'B': it can also quite safely be said that a lot of this has to do with a relative deficiency of facilities, resources, support, supply-chains and basic opportunities for students and professionals to engage in such pursuits within India in the normal course,.. as also a historically deficient DIY culture in itself, in comparison to many other communities of the world, which in turn stretches across a millennial *separation of head from hand* by rigorous caste system(s)

Observation 'C': with an immense and burgeoning student-body to be catered to into the new millennium, established institutions are presently being bloated right across the board. And the frenzied rise of a private sector in education is entirely unorganized, entirely commercial,.. and in many parts unfortunate. As such, qualitative advancement in such matters will take some time to be manifested in any meaningful manner and measure within either of these existing sectors in the normal course, even though this shortfall may be clouded from many behind an independent qualitative advancement of the student-body in itself

PROPOSITION: a parallel-track approach to more quickly, evenly and also increasingly, introduce more opportunities for quality experimentation, innovation, inventiveness and enterprise amongst students and professionals within India, would be to evolve an entirely separate and continuously growing grid of small "Research & Innovation Ashrams", to serve different sectors and specializations across the country. These would obviously begin by serving just "the best", but as more and more such "Ashrams" come into existence across a national grid, they will become more and more easily accessible to more and more students and professionals,.. and eventually even to local communities on entirely unilateral local affairs and projects, as desirable and as necessary

Proposer: The Academy of Electronic Arts and its antecedents have to do with networking cutting-edge e-Creative Practitioners and associated individuals and organizations involved with cutting-edge technologies all around the world, for many years. As such, we are continually in rich, long-standing, and also ever-new relationships with outstanding institutions and professionals across all sorts of streams of technology-based creative experimentation, study and practice, globally.
In the case of this proposition, The AeA is most particularly suited to drive an experimental primary initiative because:

   [a] we manifest a collective global imagination and ability to do so, along with our associates, with whom
   [b] we are already virtually networked globally, and
   [c] the primary tools that we all use, define and drive towards the future (computers) touch upon almost all future experimentation, innovation, inventiveness and enterprise, across almost every stream of human endeavour.

For more info:

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ACTION POINT: The AeA seeks to legitimately gain a minimum of 2 acres of Good Institutional Land in a Good Place in India, at Good Institutional Rates, or as an Outright Grant in support of its activities and agenda. Ideal location would be within about 100km of a major metropolis, or within about 50km of a smaller centre. It would be advantageous for the local weather to be mild enough so as to also optimize the summer months ~ a time when there is more flexibility in everyone's schedule, almost globally.

PURPOSE: Usage of this site is intended in service of general public benefit, by manifesting and evolving a first "Research & Innovation Ashram" over time, as broadly described in the Proposition above, and in further detail below, to focus upon and empower e-Creativity, by:

1. establishment of a modest physical campus, intended to evolve into one of the most exciting eCreative Mini-Labs and Networking Centres in the world; in part by evolving and manifesting a format that would be easily replicable, and also worth replicating, in small numbers anywhere and everywhere around the world, to address different communities and streams of creative human endeavour; with dedicated infrastructure for:

    1-a. simple administrative offices
    1-b. digital & electronic media workshop
    1-c. solid media workshop (wood, metal, plastic, electrical, etc.)
    1-d. space for presentations, exhibitions, group-activity & assembly
    1-e. media library/archive and research work-spaces/cubicles
    1-f. some residences and basic amenities, for Resident-Fellows, occasional Professional Visitors and also a few Fulltime Staff

2. to specifically provide for intensive short-term pursuit of independent small-scale R&D initiatives onsite, by outstanding students, researchers and professionals working upon New Paradigms, New Practices and/or New Products for advancing and refining e- Creative empowerment globally, and/or general technology-based empowerment locally.

A possible primary focus, at least to begin with, will be the graduation-project opportunity of outstanding students from any potentially-creative stream of undergraduate or post-graduate study or research, such as engineering, design, architecture, film-making, new-media, fine arts, music and so on.

Part of the rationale being to provide a few special people every year with an'autonomous and empowered opportunity' to meaningfully exercise the creative freedoms and privileges of an independent developer/researcher, perhaps for the first and last time in many cases, before moving on to, or even on sabbatical from, a regular career.

An extra credit of up to a maximum of 25% to be given in the selection process to project-proposals with local developmental value/relevance.

Provision to all such Fellows of:

    2-a. empowered workspace & residence for fixed duration of 4-6 months, for a fixed ceiling of not more than 5-7 Fellows at any given time. Duration(s) extendible on a case-by-case basis, in increments of not more than 4-6 months at a time. In the case of special projects, a maximum of 2-3 practicing professionals may be hosted at any given time in the same manner

2-b. global & national networking and tie-ins with specialist guide(s), other researchers and students. Some specialist and general support internally, and possibly also from supporting/associated organizations

2-c. modest monthly honorarium, on a case-by-case basis

2-d. modest project-budget, on a case-by-case basis

2-e. assistance in sourcing project materials

2-f. Fellowship certification upon project-completion, as appropriate

3. individual corporations, institutions and governments to be invited to establish and/or support:

3-a. initial site identification and acquisition

3-b. individual infrastructure and/or technology items and heads

3-c. individual projects and/or project-streams

3-d. mainstream operational budget

3-e. occasional public presentations, events and the like

3-f. networking of individual Fellows with professionals and teams within their own organizations, as necessary and as appropriate

4. possible supplementary incomes in support of primary activities and project-streams to be generated by:

4-a. providing specialized fee-based services to businesses, institutions and governments

4-b. selectively hiring out possible spare time and capacity on individual infrastructure and/or technology items, on a case-by-case basis

4-c. fee-based hosting of tenant-Fellows & Researchers affiliated elsewhere, on a case-by-case basis

5. knowledge products of supported projects to be placed in the public domain in the normal course, for general free-usage governed by appropriate liscencing with regard to possible commercialization

6. some products, soft or hard, may be productionized internally, or by association with others, on a case-by-case basis, with partnerships and potential profit-share allocated as appropriate to all concerned

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[end draft-in-progress]

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Note: The AeA recommends use of the term "e-Creative" with regard to its broadly inclusive and continually evolving focii, because it is our view that the Creative Empowerment of Individuals being wrought by the development and spread of technology is burgeoning across all streams of human endeavour, and at the same time introducing ever-new interstices between different streams that were never before possible, on the basis of the increasing usage of common toolsets. For example, the development and application of gestural controllers and wearable sensor-systems ranges through music, dance, micro-surgery, therapeutic devices, robotics, interactive arts, industrial controls, motion-capture for animation, ergonomics, sportsmedicine, and so on.

As such, the "e" in e-Creative stands for "Empowered" or "Empowering".

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