



Social media revolutionizes college life



Photo illustration by Vivian Fan and Jennifer Aldoretta / Student Publications

By Kamna Bohra
Focus Editor

Hundreds of websites. Thousands of homework assignments left unfinished. Millions of people communicating via chat and video conversations. Billions of minutes logged globally. And to what does the world owe these events? Facebook. Twitter. MySpace. Tumblr. Social media.

Beginning in the late 1990s with the now unrecognizable Geocities and Tripod, social networking originally served to create communities where users with similar interests could come from across the world into a single chat room. Because these websites had user-friendly options, people began creating personal web pages and asking anonymous users for their age, sex and location.

After scrolling through the phases of America Online Instant Messaging and Friendster, social networkers progressed to the more personal, and sometimes privacy-invading, MySpace and Facebook, the latter of which is now the largest social networking website in the world.

Blogging websites, such as LiveJournal, Tumblr and BlogSpot, originally began as forums for political and ideological discussion, but they have since changed to more personal, diary-like entries, detailing people's lives moment by moment.

From an entertainment perspective, websites such as YouTube allow its users to post videos of television shows and movies, along with video blogs, which are more commonly referred to as "vlogs." People can communicate via video as well, using interfaces

such as Skype and Oovoo.

On a professional scale, these same social networking websites are used for advertising, especially by offering coupons and deals to users who invite more people to their websites. Some advertisers attract users by creating games whose surface-level purpose is social networking and fun, but their underlying purpose is spreading knowledge about their businesses.

After years of sudden events to which journalists could not travel, major news sources, such as CNN and FOX, created the iReport and the uReport, respectively, to allow non-journalists to report breaking news with quick video, photo and text updates.

Social networking has also expanded to include online dating, family tree creation and advertising,

along with online bullying, identity theft and pornography.

Despite the multitude of uses for social networking websites, Tech students use social networking sites largely for their original purpose: communication.

"I have deactivated [Facebook] a couple of times, but I come back because it's pretty much my primary way of reaching some people for group projects," said Sravya Kotte, a second-year CS major.

Tech students also network with former classmates and friends to maintain relationships.

"The websites are really great to stay up to speed with events going on and pictures, but [it] can be a source of gossip as well," said Andy Barrenechea, a second-year BME major,

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Citizens discuss science policy

By Andrew Nelson
Staff Writer

Tech students and faculty brought the state's major movers and changers together at the fifth annual Legislative Roundtable this Tuesday, Nov. 16, to make headway in science and technology's incorporation into state and local public policy.

The Office of Policy Analysis and Research (OPAR) of the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) coordinated the event with the Technology Association of Georgia (TAG), drawing together 150 industry representatives, state policy makers, students and faculty to tackle contemporary issues in technology and public policy.

Each roundtable focuses on developing a state strategic plan that incorporates science and technology in legislation.

"Collaboration between higher institutions, schools, legislators and researchers is important to strengthen this connection," said Yujia He, a Ph.D. student in International Affairs, Science and Technology. "Tech and GTRI can play a very important role in creating new technologies to meet Georgia's local demand, evaluating the use of technologies and stimulating interest of students and researchers to participate in policy-related projects, debates and careers."

While OPAR identified state legislators active in the science and technology community, TAG attracted local industrial leaders. They then formed these leaders into four panels to discuss the four main points of emerging policy topics: transportation and logistics, health information technology, energy and education.

"You have information from both sides: the government and industry," said Lindsey Hankins, policy analyst intern at OPAR and a fifth-year BME major. "With industry representatives, you get to hear about needs in the field and about the latest trends—for example, new technologies used. With government representatives, you get to hear about how policy is addressing the needs of industry and how policy

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Buzzar teaches Middle Eastern culture



Photo by Basheer Tome / Student Publications

Students of both Middle East countries and other nations participated in the Buzzar.

By Chris Russell
Online Editor

Hosted by the Iranian Student Association (ISA), the Lebanese Club, GT Hillel and the Turkish Student Organization, the Middle East Buzzar aimed to teach the student body about the cultures of the Middle East.

"Essentially, the Buzzar is a chance for Middle Eastern organizations and people from Middle Eastern countries to get to know each other. It's also a chance for Tech students to get to know our cultures and for us to break stereotypes," said Melissa Parham, ISA President and a third-year BCHM major.

According to Parham, given the current political climate, people are often surprised by what they learn about Middle Eastern culture.

"Recently, Middle Eastern coun-

tries haven't had the best image in the media, so it's nice for people to see what Middle Eastern people actually are. It seems like a lot of the time it's exactly the opposite of what people think [we are]," Parham said.

Aytac Yaraneri, culture chair for the Turkish Student Organization and a third-year ECE major, agreed.

"We don't ride to school on camels, we don't live in tents, we actually live a life that's quite similar to [other cultures]," Yaraneri said.

However, Yaraneri said that the event is just as much about reaching out to other Middle Eastern students.

"Another reason [for the Buzzar] is that we've heard stories from other colleges about how a lot of the people involved in the Buzzar—Israelis, Palestinians, Iranians, and Lebanese—

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Photos by Sho Kitamura / Student Publications

Policymakers, faculty and students collaborate to talk about technology policy.

Owens owes success to difficult decisions, risks



Photo by Olivia Pan / Student Publications

IMPACT Speaker and IronPlanet Chairman and CEO Gregory Owens discussed strategic decision-making in career selection.

By Yameen Huq
Contributing Writer

For those looking for career advice, this past Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2010, the College of Management's IMPACT series hosted Gregory Owens, Chairman and CEO of IronPlanet. A Tech alum who is also on the Board for the College of Management, Owens provided students with an array of advice on how to survive and prosper in the working world. Owens began his presentation with three basic questions. These questions involved dealing with the recession, choosing a large or small company and choosing between product-based companies or consulting.

His biggest advice to people just entering the labor force was to work hard and put in the extra effort. Owens emphasized the presentation aspect of both finding the job and being successful with customers. "I think it was refreshing, just to really hear where he was coming from and how he achieved his goals, [especially] the real world advice and just how people can go about being successful after they graduate," said Richard Mokuolu, a fourth-year ME major. He conveyed this advice using examples from his own working experience. After his own graduation, Owens answered the three questions by immediately working for a small consulting firm

that was not his top choice. However, due to the recession, he chose to play it safe and to build experience overtime, something that he recommended to the audience. "I liked how much I could relate to the speaker, [especially] the feasibility of his career choices, where he came from and where he got to be who he is," said Charley Crosson, a third-year MGT major. Eventually, he felt that he had become too successful to remain in a small company. This was his reasoning for transferring to the supply chain team at Accenture. Throughout the lecture, Owens emphasized following pas-

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don't get along, but we wanted to show that as Tech students, we do get along and can actually work together," Yaraneri said. According to Parham, the week was originally just supposed to last from Wednesday to Friday, but it instead expanded to fill the entire week in conjunction with International Education week, which is being hosted by the Office of International Education (OIE). The Buzzar's events started out with traditional Turkish coffee at OIE's International Coffee Hour on Monday, Nov. 12. Belly-dancing lessons were given on Tuesday, Nov. 13, and drew a sizable crowd. Parham estimated 30 to 35 people attended, the majority of whom were not of Middle Eastern descent. The next two days played host to cultural exhibits on Skiles Walkway and in the Student Center, as well as one more event

apiece. One night was Buzzgammon, an annual backgammon tournament—a game that has strong ties to Middle Eastern countries. Thursday was the Buzzar's Hookah Night. The week wraps up with the annual Plaka Party, held at Taverna Plaka on Friday, Nov. 19 at 9 p.m. A big part of the week has been bringing together existing traditions that the organizations involved had already established individually. Buzzgammon, Hookah Night and the Plaka Party are all events that have a history on campus, so a big part of the Buzzar was just bringing them together into one collective event. According to Yaraneri, many of the events were focused on students who otherwise had very little exposure to Middle Eastern cultures. Using food, dance and social events, Buzzar's attendees included a wide variety of students.



Photo by Basheer Tome / Student Publications

Although it was organized by students of Middle Eastern descent, the Buzzar focused on teaching students of other nationalities about the culture through food, dance and other cultural exhibits.

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Dance competition awards A-Town Crown

By Mary Ann Hanke
Contributing Writer

Crowds gather around TV sets to watch "America's Best Dance Crew," "Dancing with the Stars" and "So You Think You Can Dance." Needless to say, dance competitions are inspiring, compelling and exciting to watch. Now is another annual dance competition, this time brought by the United Indian Student Alliance (UISA), that is the first of its kind: ATL Tamasha.

The United Indian Student Alliance is a collaboration of Indian students from campuses around the southeastern region, including Tech, Georgia State University, Emory, UGA, Kennesaw State University, Georgia Perimeter College and Southern Polytechnic State University.

UISA serves as an over-arching

student organization for the different Indian student groups on college campuses. It unifies and supports the efforts of the individual groups and strives to increase the awareness of Indian culture in the area.

Each year, UISA hosts a dance show in honor of Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights. However, UISA took a different route this year.

"Normally, [UISA] holds the annual Diwali Show, and this year, we decided to kick it up a notch and turn it into a competition known as ATL Tamasha 2010," said Kishan Bhula, the VP of Finance for UISA and a third-year PTFE major.

The first ATL Tamasha show is unique in several ways. The competition was bigger than previous

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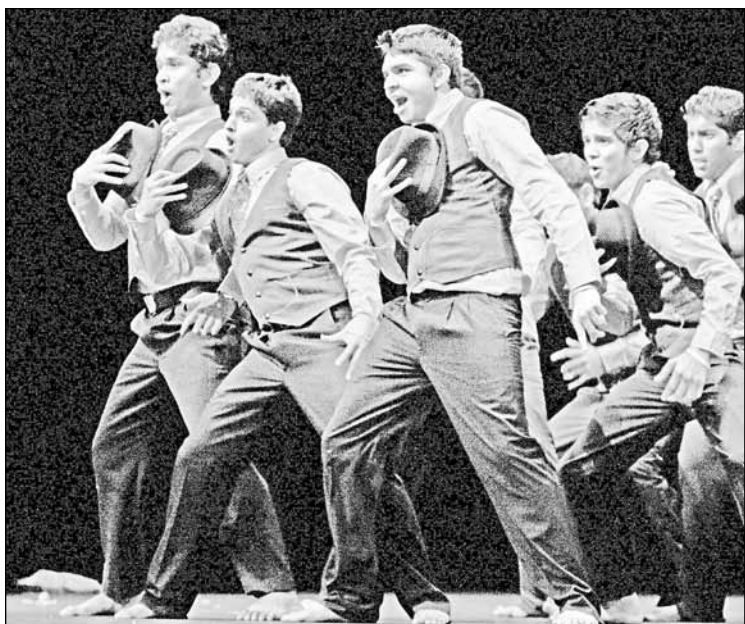


Photo by Victor Lee / Student Publications

Indian dance teams from as close as Georgia State University and as far away as UNC-Chapel Hill competed in the new ATL Tamasha.

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is being used to progress trends."

Moderators from Tech faculty and the state of Georgia help direct the panels, each including legislators—such as Georgia Senator Cecil Stanton—and industry representatives—such as Glenn Pearson, the executive vice president of the Georgia Hospital Association.

"One of the important points was that for both education and energy, Georgia has the resources to make a difference, but the question is how to use them, how expensive it will be for the state and the general public and also what incentives can be implemented to engage the community to take part in making these changes a reality," said Hillary Alberta, policy analyst intern at OPAR and a PUBP grad student.

The roundtable included major student involvement on the coordination side, with student ambassadors like Hankins writing detailed reports for panelists.

"One of our most important functions was to prepare policy memos which contained information about national and Georgia-specific legislative progress relevant to the main topics of the roundtable," Hankins said. "The purpose of the policy memos was to deliver the present and future in legislation while at the same time pinpoint where the legislation is lacking. The policy memos were written in hopes of presenting facts that opened discussion between the panelists."

The students also helped with organization, escorting participants and panelists, providing refreshments and collecting evaluation forms. The student ambassadors all remarked on how the conversations seemed to heat up by the end of each panel's discussion and wish they could be longer next time.

"I left with a sense of optimism



Photo by Sho Kitamura / Student Publications

The Legislative Roundtable hosted panels on a variety of topics including transportation, energy, health care and technology.

and excitement. The panelists in each discussion all showed true passion for their fields, and both panelists and the audience have ideas on how to overcome the various challenges the state of Georgia currently faces," Alberta said.

The roundtable lasted four hours and culminated in a summary session where all participants gathered in the auditorium for final commentary.

"Major results from this year's event include stronger understanding of the role of science and technology in economic development, increased visibility for Tech and GTRI with state legislators and ongoing discussion around the need of a statewide science and technology roadmap," said Marlit Hayslett, director of OPAR.

Altogether, there were nine industry panelists and 10 legislator panelists.

"The roundtable is a great place to see government and industry working together to benefit society. Open discussions like the ones this roundtable enabled are essential to real progress," Hankins said. "Policy cannot be made with a blind eye to industry, but it's hard to hear what industry has to say without outlets like this roundtable."

OPAR and TAG also collaborated with the School of Public Policy, Georgia's Center of Innovation for Logistics, the MIT Enterprise Forum of Atlanta and the Business and Technology Alliance to make the 2010 Legislative Roundtable possible.

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competitions, with a larger number of teams competing and bigger prize values.

UISA broke its participants into four categories: Fusion, Female Fusion, Bhangra and Raas/Garba; the latter two are regional Indian dance styles.

This means that each team is not competing against all the teams, but only the teams within its respective category of dance.

Participating teams included Azaadi, GSU/UGA Bhangra, Emory Karma, Ramblin' Raas, Southern Raaspathality, TarHeel Raas, Asura, Qurbani, Tufaan, Champa and Chameli, Nazaaqat and Paheli.

"The show itself was a blast to put on and raked in hundreds of spectators to the GT Ferst Center that evening," Bhula said, who is also a member of Qurbani and Ramblin' Raas.

"It was a marvelous experience to watch people of different teams from different schools perform in different categories," said Pushkara Chaganti, a member of the

Nazaaqat and Ramblin' Raas, and a second-year CS major.

"I thoroughly enjoyed being a part of Nazaaqat and ATL Tamasha, and I'm eagerly looking forward to the next one," Changanti said.

Each category winner was also the recipient of a \$1000 cash prize, and ultimately every team was competing for the overall prize, the "A-Town Crown."

The winners of each category are as follows: Fusion—Qurbani, Female Fusion—Paheli, Bhangra—Karma, Raas/Garba—Tar Heel Raas. UISA awarded the "A-Town Crown" to Karma.

"The six-hour practices and endless frustration of the efficiencies of an amateur team pay off big when you hear the crowd roar at a piece you helped create or at how you interpret music through your body," said Ryan Yan, a member of Qurbani and a second-year MGT major. "The rush is incredible and can never be duplicated in any way."

There are big plans for UISA's first dance competition, which include expanding its reach to out-

side the Southeast.

"This was much more organized than any other Georgia Indian dance competition I have been to," said Janushi Pandya, a member of Tufaan and a second-year BME major.

"We hope to see ATL Tamasha turn into not just a competition for the Southeast but a competition for teams from around the nation to come and compete," Bhula said.

All this falls within the UISA's goal of working together and networking.

Students can get involved in the organization to meet similar people in various schools and with different backgrounds. It serves as a base point for Indian students to reach out to one another and get to know the community.

"I joined and decided to take on a more active role as VP of Finance to retain my own sense of culture as I continued my college career through Tech," Bhula said. "It's something that's pretty important to me and it's also a great way to network with different individuals from around the state."



Photos by Victor Lee / Student Publications

While some dance teams mixed modern hip-hop with Bollywood styles, others performed purely classical and folk dance pieces.

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sions over rules, noting that the financial aspect of one's career will eventually take care of itself.

Accreditations, such as degrees, while important, are only necessary if one needs them for a specific career.

"You don't have to get an MBA. But it's a great game-changer," Owens said.

Owens then discussed the importance of Tech and how it influenced the successes of his career.

"Surround yourself with smart people. Smart people make you smarter," Owens said.

Owens' career took many sharp turns. Even though he started out in a small firm, he eventually found greater success at Accenture.

While he was there, Accenture went from one billion dollars in sales to 10 billion dollars in nine years.

After this he eventually started and sold a packaged software company and also worked in private equity for a year and a half.

"My long-term goal was to run a company. I got an opportunity to run a software company at 39. I resigned from Accenture, and they thought I was crazy because the [software] company might not make it," Owens said.

He eventually moved on to running IronPlanet, an online company that auctions heavy equipment and vehicles.

Recently, they have also become involved in selling motors, motorcycles and boats. He attri-

butes the success of this business to his flexibility and adaptability.

"Look at the business model and see if it's changing. Ask yourself, are you changing too?" Owens said.

This style of changing the business model to meet the environment is what Owens says helped his company overcome the recession.

Owens noted near the end of his lecture that the most important part of his decision-making was being able to make choices that did not seem easy.

As an example, Owens once took a 75 percent pay cut to start a new company.

According to Owens, hard work and tough decisions were the keys to his success.

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who noted that he visits Facebook once daily and LinkedIn, a professional networking website, once monthly.

However, some students describe a level of difficulty with balancing the use of social networking websites and school work.

"[It is] bad for productivity, but not to a great degree. I just log off when I should be studying. It is more of a benefit to my social life than it is a detriment to my productivity. It helps me keep in contact with people [whom] I left [at home]," said Sebastian Monroy, a second-year ECE major.

"It honestly improves my productivity. It keeps me alert. It may detract from my focus a bit, but it keeps me awake. My social life

definitely improves. It allows me to keep in contact with people that I don't see on a daily basis. It provides a form of instantaneous communication with those online," said Joey Slater, a second-year CM major.

On the flip side to their promotion of unproductivity, social networking initiatives offer a wide variety of job opportunities by employing a wide range of skills and majors from MGT to ECE.

On the whole, students find social networking websites to be useful for social and academic lives in terms of gathering information they need, but strongly believe they have restraint when it comes to stereotypically spending all 24 hours of the day on a social networking site.

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