Editorial

We are very happy to publish the Volume II of *Bhatter College Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* both on the web and in print. It is indeed a very amazing feeling that we are carrying forward a legacy of human culture that had originated out of the need for communication in the unknown prehistoric times. The history of civilization—to a great extent—can be called a history of the evolution of technology. Marks and signs are everywhere—from the caves paintings, rock inscriptions, papyrus manuscripts, palm leaves, animal skin, printed paper, telegraph, radio, cinema to the digital media, and all these point to the evolving and creative nature of *élan vital,* which tries to assert itself in complex and varied forms. In the previous century we witnessed the culmination of such spirit on two media—paper, a product of Industrial Revolution of Europe, and cinema/television which led ultimately to an explosion of knowledge. But in this second decade of the 21st century we can sense that we have entered into post-Gutenberg digital era and got past the print culture. While in the previous century we witnessed explosion of knowledge, in the new century with the physical barriers of time and place greatly minimised, we are experiencing a revolution of communication and access and an explosion of information. With the new technology, teaching-learning systems all over the globe are going through challenging times; for, it also demands that the infrastructure exist in functional form and trained teachers incorporate the techniques as naturally as they do the blackboard.

The role of the UGC in proving much-needed support for implementing ICT in higher education has been very praiseworthy, but it is not sufficient enough because implementation depends on the positive role of the organizations at the last level. Another hurdle in this regard is the commercial aspect of technology: it is very difficult for people and institutions to maintain use of up-to-date hardware and software especially when certain updates and changes are commercially motivated. Investment for ICT in a higher education institution is huge and the redundancy factor makes the situation very difficult. A five year old computer in good condition has to be discarded simply because of hardware and software compatibility problems, and that very machine would still run well enough in open source software. One way out of the commercial stratagem and saving billions of dollars could be through building up an alternative culture of Open Source software managed and maintained centrally with policies country-specific by some government organization. This can also help in developing organically a country-wise system fit for addressing region/culture specific needs. This could also contribute to solving, to a great extent, the problem of digital divide in the developing nations, where softwares for basic computing cost almost double the price of hardware. However, experience with one such attempt—which promised tablets for school children, has been so far dismal. Another important issue awaiting attention is developing accessibility features in ICT for physically challenged persons, who need the help of technology much more than others.

Implementing ICT in higher education should not be the exclusive job of technology experts; it involves more experience and knowledge than the technical persons come up with. For, ultimately all depends on teachers in the classroom and we have to keep in mind that introducing new technology does not mean removal of the human factor and nothing can replace the human presence in direct classroom teaching. In the new context, the human factor will be increasing more important for leading students through the jungle of information and dangerous attractions.

The situation demands holistically multidisciplinary perspectives. We sought papers from scholars from a number of disciplines. Thanks to their valued scholarship, research and experience we have succeeded in compiling a good volume, which, I am sure, will help in understanding ICT from a rich collective perspective and spreading awareness about the new technology without the introduction of which higher institutions will surely lag behind in a superfast networked world of information and interactivity. Finally I would like to thank all the contributors, editorial board members and the college authority for their contribution, support and inspiration.

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