

From India... a trio of canny Web tool

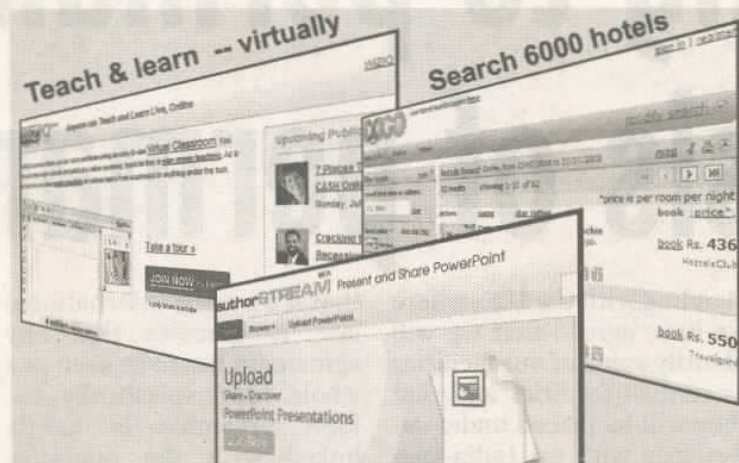
Anand Parthasarathy

BANGALORE: Indian innovation is increasingly centred around what is known as Web 2.0, the Internet's Second Coming, where the user is in more effective control of content, and the way it is deployed.

The week gone by, saw at least three innovative new extensions to the Web experience, which *The Hindu* has put to the test before sharing details with readers of this page.

Based in Gurgaon, iXiGO is a travel search engine created just one year ago by a small group of IIT and management graduates. On Friday, they unveiled what they claim, is India's biggest hotel search service, encompassing over 6,000 establishments, across 400 Indian towns; trawling 40 of the best hotel and hostel price comparison sites. Among the bigger Web resources covered are the Travelguru hotel network; Inasra, a Chennai-based aggregator and HostelWorld, a specialist who concentrates on budget accommodation favoured by international 'backpackers' and students.

We tried out iXiGO's hotel search facility. It usefully turns up some facilities not covered by most hotel search engines in India — like home stay addresses and service



HARNESSING THE WEB: *New Indian online resources reach out to a global Net community.* — PHOTO:

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apartments. For reservation, it links to Travelguru. Another useful feature is the ability to check if any customers have given feedback at review sites like HolidayIQ and OK-TataByeBye. What we missed is a filter in the opening search menu that would allow us to specify the type of accommodation we are looking for and a price band. (www.ixigo.com)

Those who prepare PowerPoint-type presentations, either as lecture material or to support a job application, know the hassles of sending them by e-mail: such files can be very bulky ... and most email clients rarely permit attachments larger than 10 MB.

A Chandigarh-based com-

puter science and mass communications graduate, Umesh Sharma, has helped create a web resource called AuthorStream (www.authorstream.com) which is essentially a platform for sharing presentations on the Internet. Once registered, a user can use the free resource to upload as many presentations (currently in PowerPoint format), as often as one likes — and this is the nice part — each of them can be up to one GB in size!

The site will also help you format it as a slide show, YouTube video or an iPod file using the iTunes format. Once uploaded, the owner gets to decide with whom to share it — everyone or selectively among friends who can be au-

thorised. It is also a to post one's resumé, a video effect tell a prospective employer: "I'm Web Are You?"

The final Web week is possibly elaborate — a full-fledged virtual classroom where teachers and students benefit from a range of paint brushes to work; an 'electronic board', audio and video; PowerPoint presentations...

All sessions are for future reuse; live lows teachers and students interact. The basic is entirely free — but nominal annual cost premium service teachers have full access. It is called WiziQ (www.wiziq.com) and works on standard PC systems, Mac and Linux. It is created by Harman S, a truly innovative entrepreneur, like Auth is Chandigarh-based seen investment Educomp group. Web services are India — but it is obvious from a superficial look this borderless, virtual users are everywhere these are indeed to world, only inci 'made in India'.