

16 cool gadget

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WEBVENTURE

www.ideacts.com

A good idea

It might seem ironic that even though cyber cafes are so extensively used in India, the communication space they offer is largely unorganised. Three college-going youngsters noticed potential in this sector some 10 years ago and decided to develop the industry through a combination of technology, media and digital retail management. And that's when they hit upon the idea of an active desktop application.

Rudrajeet Desai, Maninder Gill and Saurabh Khullar, all twenty-something at the time, started Ideacts Innovations in 2001 right after graduating from college.

Secure web access

They'd all spent quite a substantial amount of their college lives working on computers in cybercafés and wanted to make browsing easier and more productive. The idea they had was to create a user-friendly active desktop application that provided links leading to content on the Web. They decided to bundle this with another application that would make cybercafé systems more secure and help owners track user activity.

Their business model was such that access to content had been made easier for users while the safety levels of surfing the Net had been increased. The trio approached cybercafé owners — their prospective customers — after the first iteration of the product had been built. But to their dis-

may, no one seemed too upbeat to use it. "They saw the three founders doing all the field work and must have assumed ours was a one-man company. Everyone turned us down," says Desai (30), CEO of Ideacts Innovations.

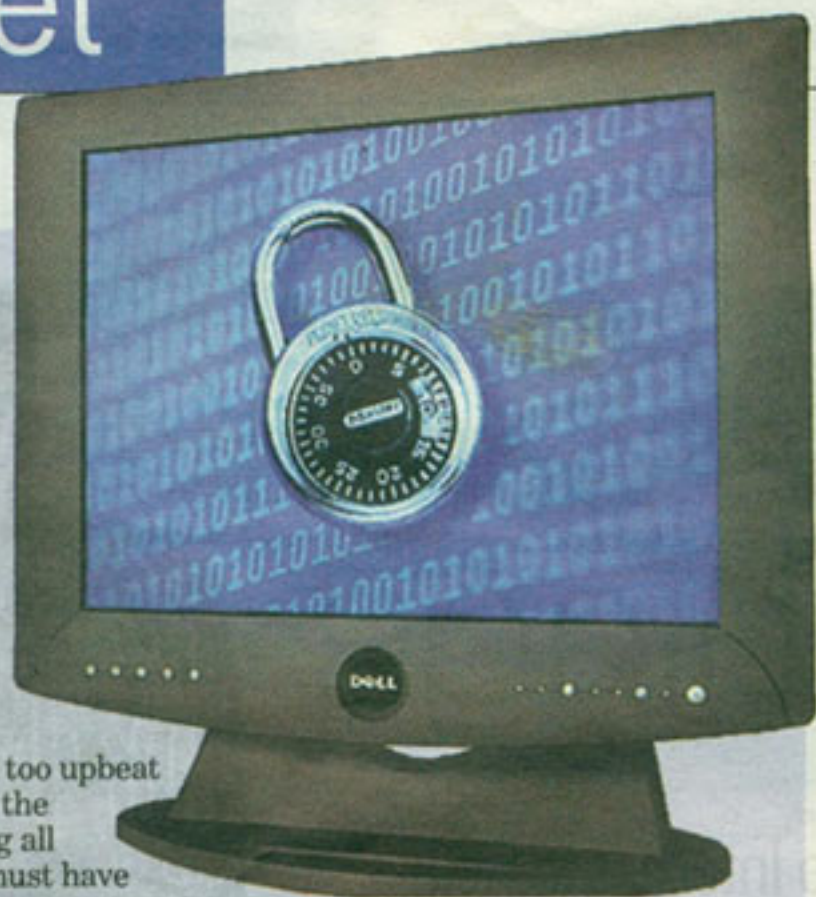
However, even back then, the company did manage to find brands willing to place advertisements on the space that the application provided. Which is why, although they temporarily shut shop within 6-8 months, they were back in business in 2006. This time, Desai and Ranjeet Sawhney, Head of Operations, started approaching

cybercafés again while Gill began redeveloping the software application. And this time the response was positive.

CLINCK does it
"When we'd begun, fewer people used the Web. But in the

six years that we remained shut, a lot had changed. Social networking sites had begun to pick up and people were turning to the Internet for information," says Desai. The main desktop application offered by Ideacts is called CLINCK. It creates a replica of the desktop on your computer screen and lets you manage your browsing through it. The only difference is that 80 per cent of the free space on its main screen is dedicated to content on topics such as food, music, and gaming. Currently, CLINCK is used

CLINCK creates an active desktop that you can browse from, and is being used in cybercafes in 214 cities



by cybercafés across 214 cities including Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. Although their cybercafé management and security application comes bundled with the desktop application, the latter can be individually downloaded off their site for free. "We make access to content easier by placing links on the desktop. That's what our advertisers pay us for, and that's how we can offer the application without cost," adds Desai.

Making access easier

Every time the cybercafé application is updated, an automated notifying system sends owners an email about it. The content, however, is updated daily. "On an average, 0.5 per cent of the people that access the Web click on links that they think are useful. But the percentage of CLINCK users that click the links put up on the desktop is 2.5. We ensure that the content is updated," says Desai. However, the company hasn't yet thought about making other applications specifically for home and office users.

Ideacts also has a tie-up with Facebook, which allows their users to add a tab on their desktop that notifies them of Facebook status updates and any activity on their profile. Google India, too, is a premium alliance partner of theirs, which means the company gets paid for offering the Google search bar on their application.