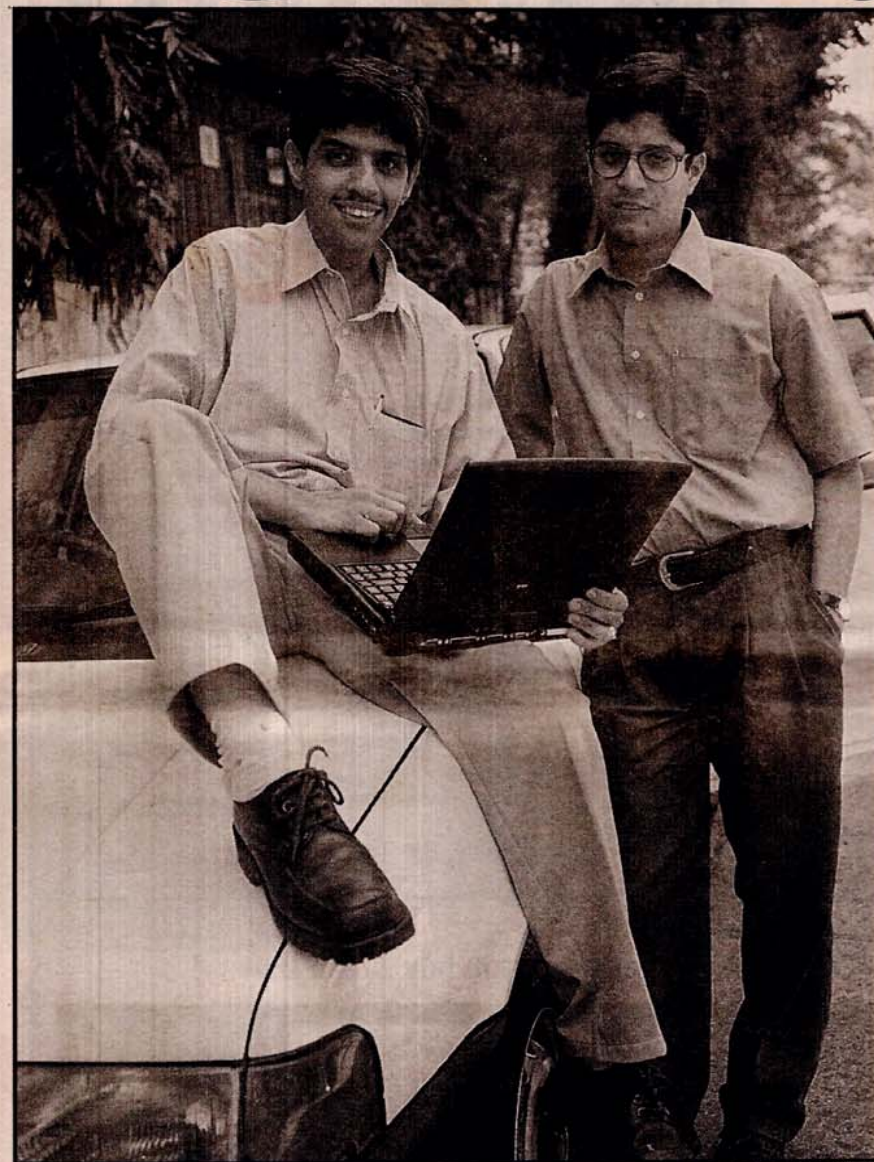


bigmoney.net



Darayus Mehta (31) (right), of radiofindia.com, with his marketing head Bansi Wadia (29) SURESH KK

S RAMACHANDRAN

HELLO, I am starting a dotekome. Will you join my company? I will give you Rs 55,000, car, mobile, laptop and stoke options," a man with a peculiar accent called up this writer. Believe it or not Mr Ripley, but this dotekome aka dotcom is what's changing the lifestyles of many young marketing, IT professionals and yes even journalists in a big, big way. The lure of the lucre, dreams of a lavish lifestyle and the prospects of doing a la Rajesh Jain are there in the minds of many who join the bandwagon.

Content is the most important factor behind this trend, explains Milind Kotak, president Tulips Placement Services. "There are no good content providers besides journalists and the dotcoms know that. That's why they are now ready to pay any amount to get journalists in for the content."

So has the change in lifestyle been as dramatic as the salary graph? G P Vinaybabu (27), executive editor, Digital Age, www.strategicnewspapers.com, emphasises "I consciously chose to enter into the dotcom world as the Internet fascinated me no end. The choice was more based on understanding the new medium and working at breaking the aura surrounding it. It so happened that it simply sucked me into it in the process. But the lifestyle change evolved naturally, not externally but internally. It has not changed the way I live *per se*. It has only given me a sense of well being and the happiness you get out being a part of the evergrowing and all pervasive media, not to mention the money that automatically follows."

Former choreographer and editor of *Star and Style*, Mushtaq Sheikh (28), is unabashedly thrilled. "Well to tell you honestly, everyone, whether given a chance or not, always foresees a huge change from every given situation he or she is in. Be it your job, love life or marriage. So here I was being an editor of a film magazine, paid

Last month he was earning Rs 18,000. Now he's catapulted into the one lakh bracket. Burgeoning websites are changing the lifestyles of many professionals

The demand for huge money has come about because hopefuls want more money than we ourselves earn

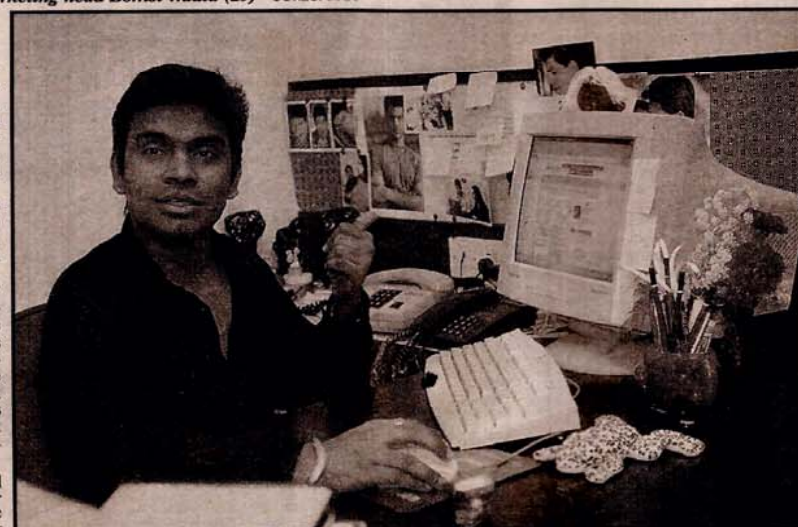


— SURESH THIRUGNANAM, INTERIM CEO, JOBSTREET.COM

peanuts for all the efforts I was putting in, naturally anything more than that would have been a boon. Actually my trait of demanding more from life had already goaded me into writing for movies. Screenplays and scripts for television and films had become my mainstay when *indiainfo.com* happened. This one twist in the screenplay, I must admit, I had never imagined or engineered."

Santosh Vallury (30), who after a short stint as a scribe, went into advertising has been sucked into Santoshi Nadkarni-led *footforward.com* as vice-president, content.

"Well, I choose not to talk about the monetary aspects. Lifestyle for me is a lot to do with the mindset. And yes, that surely has changed the way I look at media now. This medium is different from TV and one needs to understand it to realise its true potential."



Mushtaq Sheikh (28), of indiainfo.com SURESH KK



G P Vinaybabu (27), of strategicnewspapers.com

For Darayus Mehta, (31) Director Internet branding and commerce, www.radiofindia.com and www.tvofindia.com, mobile phones and laptops were a definite no-no earlier. "Now, I am using them, but more out of necessity than as a lifestyle statement. If I am not contactable, I lose a client. I lose money. So it is important to be in touch with people. Otherwise there has been no perceptible change in lifestyle," he avers.

Stories about the huge jumps in salaries grow by the day. One of the most dramatic ones is about a scribe from a leading newspaper, who skyrocketed into the Rs 1 lakh bracket from his earlier salary of Rs 18,000.

And if this isn't enough, there is this knowledgeable head of dotcom who was paid Rs 5 crore just to get into the board of directors of a fast moving website.

But it is also clear that with these moolah stories there is the knowledge that it is also about sweat, blood and tears.

"Actually, to be honest, life ceases at Internet start-up companies. So where's the question of living with style at all," Vallury guffaws. "It's all hard work, common sense and no glamour. Truly a knowledge medium," he adds.

Mushtaq Sheikh agrees. "Your remuneration is equivalent to the hard work put in. In this business you can't have a lackadaisical attitude; you have to be on your toes all the time. Every second counts. It's not about closing your files and going home. It's about having a 24-hour job! The pay cheques could be far from the huge figures thrown by media for acquisitions and mergers, but believe me, the pay everyone gets in the dotcom line of work is a happy one."

The question on many lips is whether all this is just illusionary? Will the bubble burst like the television and multichannel boom? Or has this talk just been sparked off by envy?

"There hasn't been any perceptible change in the way people look at me since most of my friends and close acquaintances are in some way related to this new media revolution. But yes, those who are outside the IT spectrum are wonder-struck by the fabulous growth this has offered," says Vinaybabu.

He elaborates, "The net is slowly turning into an omnipresent media. It is not restricted to IT field alone. The web offers myriad opportunities. This will last as long as one wishes to create and innovate. I don't foresee the net boom getting over in the near future. I'll be comfortable working under a lower salary structure, but I'll certainly stick to the Internet media in future too, boom or no boom," enthuses Vinaybabu.

Vallury again is not bothered by these speculations. "This is one question that bothers me in

come crashing down!"

And that is what even Suresh Thirugnanam, interim CEO, jobstreet.com, India agrees with. "Smaller companies who do not have the backing are bound to close shop soon. The demand for huge money has come about because hopefuls are demanding more money than we ourselves earn," says he.

Kotak agrees. "Indeed. The scene has now changed from the eyeball to the sticky eyeball content. It is more important, to get the people glued on. If you can't, you close down."

Sheikh is indignant with the prophets of doom. "This is a ludicrous question. I mean the Internet is not a fly-by-night operation...it is to be the flight that the world is going to take to get closer to each other. The future and doomsday both have Internet written in their karma. We now have to check our MB Ram and Bandwidth. Anybody, who chokes and splutters in the race, will miss the gates of heaven!"

Mehta is unperturbed. "I am of a different breed. For me, money apart, all these luxuries



Santosh Vallury (30), of footforward.com

are just business tools. Boom or no boom, life will continue," he says.

The last word should come from Gourav Jaswal, editor *Chip*, who in his latest edit piece cautions, "Instead of jumping in

with the next fevered teenager with venture capital induced flagrantcy, spend time to cement your key skills. They may be your only guarantee against irrelevance. Welcome to the new economy. Useful advice, one must admit!

HERE ARE THE LUCKY WINNERS OF THE CONTEST FOR THE TRULY UNLUCKY.



WINNERS FOR D'Signer Watches 21 JACKPOTS CONTEST

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Anahita J Irani, Bandra(W) | 9. Bianca Gomez, Malad (W) | 18. Dharmishtha D Thakker, Sonawala Bldg |
| 2. Meera Sharma, Mr Pleasant Road | 10. Rama Chopra, Dombivli(CE) | 16. Sushma J Purjari, Mahim(W) |
| 3. Sami Hida, Colaba | 11. Deshpik Nalik, Kanjurmarg | 17. Jai Adajania, Chirabazaar |
| 4. S K Marathe, Dombivli | 12. Chaurasia D'Souza, Vile Parle(W) | 19. Andrea Bailey, Borivli |
| 5. Wilma Rodrigues, Vikhroli | 13. Sonal Khilari, Chembur | 20. Ratna Srin, Bandra |
| 6. Smt Gargaly, Dahisar(CE) | 14. N Chaudhari, Yerwade, Pune | 21. Nutan Gajaria, Naporizwa Road |
| 7. Ramesh R Jatakia, Andheri(CE) | 15. Sundesh R Kulkarni, Agripada | 22. Mehta Darshanikumar Ishwarlal, Dadar(W) |



HERE'S WHAT THEY HAVE WON!

Elegant gold plated watch sets worth Rs. 10,000 each from D'Signer.



Winners to collect prizes from Mid-Day Publications Ltd., Sitaram Mills Compound, N.M. Joshi Marg, Lower Parel, 9:30am - 5:30 pm, Monday to Friday before March 27.