



Everything... As It Is: Infinite

The intriguingly titled Doors of Perception conference seeks to press the right design keys.

WHAT'S COMMON TO A Bangalore-based design hot-shop, an exhibition of unique media devices used in India, and the desire of every company, Indian and global, tech and non-tech, to use technology in such a way to create products and services that can be used by people who aren't conversant with technology (think handheld computers targeted at rural areas, village ATMs and the like)? The answer is Doors or Doors of Perception (the name, and the headline of this piece, together make up almost half of William Blake's famous quote, borrowed first by Aldous Huxley for a book he wrote while on LSD, and later by Jim Morrison of The Doors) 8, a conference that will be held in Delhi in the third week of March (the exhibition is an add-on).

Big deal? Actually, Doors is. A participant at an earlier conference described the event as "the nearest thing the design world has to a World Economic Forum" and *Wired* magazine called it a place where "top conceptual thinkers ruminate on sticky new media subjects ... key steps in the transition from products to services".



CKS' Sood: It's actually serious business

The Bangalore-based design firm is Center for Knowledge Studies (CKS), a technology design firm that obsesses more about usability and interface than the actual technology itself. CEO Aditya Dev Sood (see *In Your Face, In Your Space*, BT, June 20, 2004, where Sood talks about the use of ethnographic research in designing technology products) first encountered Doors... four years ago when he attended a conference in Amsterdam—the seven previous editions of the conference happened there and explored themes drawn from technology that had implications for almost everything;

the theme of Doors 7, for instance, was Flow, which dealt with the design challenges of pervasive computing—and has since been trying to organise a Doors conference in India (he has organised two abbreviated versions Doors East, in Ahmedabad and Bangalore in 2001 and 2002).

Sood was driven by the same motive that drives several transnational technology firms. Today, a large number of products are being created for emerging markets. Designers and companies need to understand how consumers in these markets use and react to these products. And the learnings may not merely necessitate a new design; they could entail a whole new way of doing business, a new business model. Sood himself is thrilled by the fact that some 150 design students from schools across India will attend Doors 8 (its theme is Infra, for infrastructure). "Hopefully, they'll learn something they can take into their professions," he says. Some research on how people use information they glean at such conferences may not be out of place.

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