

Intention right, but the execution was flawed

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The shortcomings of the first Common Admission Test 2009 (CAT2009) are threatening to eclipse the benefits of going online. Experts and students agree that the decision of the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) to go online was right, but the execution was flawed.

"Enough time was given to Prometric to plan and organise the CAT, but they were not ready. Everyone (IIMs and Prometric) assumed that they would be successful in conducting the CAT online, and didn't have a contingency plan. That's why they simply didn't have a clue of what to do when problems started to crop up," said Satwinder Singh Saimbi, co-founder, MBAUniverse.com, a management portal.

Now, the fate of other tests slated to go online in the future like the state's Common Entrance Test (CET) and the national All India Engineering Entrance Exam (AIEEE) also seem to be hanging in limbo. Minister of human resource development, Kapil Sibal, had recently chaired a meeting with the directors of the National Institutes of Technology (NITs), wherein the idea of AIEEE going online was mooted.

"They (IIMs and Prometric) were not ready to conduct the online test. The preparations were clearly inadequate. But in the future, testing has to go online," said Aman Mittal, assistant director, Lovely Professional University.

However, candidates are apprehensive

Online exams are the future of education



According to Dr GK Prabhu, registrar, Manipal University, online is the way forward for educational institutions. "Online is the future, especially for examinations and entrance tests. There are bound to be technical glitches when introducing any new system, but these can be sorted out. A Few setbacks might make students want to revert to the paper-pencil format. However, online testing gives students more choices, be it dates, venues or timings," he said.

about facing more online tests because of the recent goof-ups associated with CAT2009. "I've taken the paper-pencil Management Aptitude Test, instead of the online one. I've had a stressful experience trying to attempt CAT2009. When doing a review shortly after sitting for the test, I accidentally clicked on the icon marked 'End', and the test got submitted. Unfortunately, the invigilators could not help me in this regard," said Akshaya I, a candidate.

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