

# ...SO SAID UG1-F



An anonymous confessions page has pretty much become a staple for all colleges, now, be it in India or abroad. It's hard to map out as to how the trend began, but the reasoning behind this "fad" is clearer.

What is a "Confessions page"? It's a social forum, completely digital, for students to anonymously share confessions of all kinds, both light-hearted and serious — stress, insecurities, relationship angst, questions about a course or grades, politics, campus gossip, and even the well-loved "Shower Thoughts". In its own way, it's a reflection of the fact that we're all humans, all of us going through something.

The pages are usually run in a manner such that a person who wishes to put up a confession, will have to fill out details and their confessions on a form, which will then be put up by the students who administrate the page.

Even though all confession pages have the same basic idea, issues are bound to come to surface especially when certain milieu add up together and many such hitches can be seen on IIIT-H's confessions page. Though it may not be the idea's origin, one of the most followed university confessions page is of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's and we'll be looking

into what sets their forum and ours apart and why one is seemingly more polarizing than the other.

One of the most perceptible differences will be the "name-calling". Going by the sheer number of students who attend each of the universities in the States or even the IITs in India, our college comes nowhere near them. IIIT hits out at about a number centering around 1500, while MIT, Harvard and the bigger IITs take those many in every year, and score above 10000 in total enrollment. The treasured close-knit community is definitely "wholesome" in its own way but one of its less endearing qualities will be the fact that individuals stick out, and many a times, these said hermits are named in many confessions.

This habit of picking out entities can be illustrated by the numerous posts which mention the charm or the appearance of certain students, usually broached in positive light, often accompanying the suffix "UG1-F", which are almost never first-year students or girls,

**OBJECTION!  
HEARSAY**

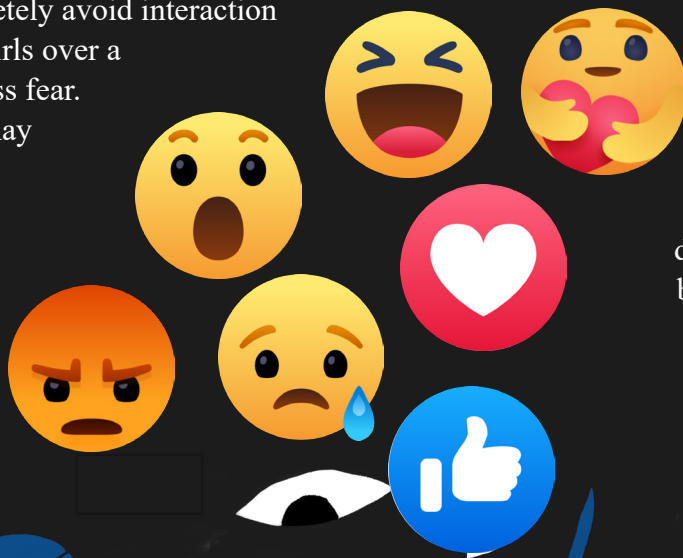
but rather a friend of the aforementioned individual's friend winding them up as a jest. Alongside this, it is not unlikely to find behaviour, which strictly speaking, can easily be termed as "creepy" towards girls.

Shades of sexism unfailingly shine through many of the confessions. It may not be evident from general behaviour of students during regular classes, but it is quite possible that students might have these underlying ideals which they manage to suppress but showcase this when handed the faculty of invisibility through the anonymity of the said confessions. It often ends up as an emulation of the "virgin" and "simp" culture which is entertained in social media platforms which utilize anonymity like Reddit.

## EXHIBIT A



So, going by definition, "simp", an internet fabrication, is a word used to mock certain kinds of boys and men. Rather than just abandoning machismo and treating women respectfully, the poster above claims to completely avoid interaction with girls over a baseless fear. This may seem



to not be of much worry but as can be seen in the following post, it can have negative ramifications.

## EXHIBIT B



Not to be harsh on the poster, but the lack of social skills enough to

ascertain appropriate and socially replicable behavior is embarrassing and not having the realization that the real world doesn't think of people in terms of "simps" and "creeps", but even if, rarely so.

Analysing individuals is not an easy task, or even too accurate for that matter. However, going over it with an eagle's eye, it can be recognized that for most students in college, this is the first time they've been away from under the thumbs of their parents and are recouping the "time of life" that they lost due to their often overbearing guardians. In a vastly diverse country like India, it is bound to be that a few hold unfavorable views, views which they cannot express when they hold a name and a face, leading them to opine under the handed cloak of invisibility.

The positive is that even if these confessions are written as "jest", there will definitely be boys (and girls) who sincerely do believe in these ideas, and there are people who correct them in the comment section. Constructive discussions which take place in the comment section will benefit as awareness grows among people. Going round the bushes regarding the issues doesn't help and these matters need to be acknowledged. Calling them out and the ensuing discussions which take place underneath the posts is a good way to at least point out a certain direction or thought process which needs to be made a staple among people. This may not be a perfect way but is the only one that we have at this point.

## EXHIBIT C



In the linked post, sexist ideals are blatantly visible as the poster not only considers the female students of IIIT as “not worthy” of being, without even considering the plethora of reasons as to why the gender quota exists, but also reducing the girls studying here to being in romantic interested to him, rather than just fellow future alumni.

Alternatively, many may argue that providing people with the platform in the first place is bound to lead to such negatives and the clever thing to do will be to not have it exist at all. Naturally, as students spend their four or more years at college, it will result in everyone maturing and just moving onto a better outlook on the world at a larger scale. However, hanging your hope onto this is not fool-proof and vetoing its presence is no different than the act of sweeping dust under the rug: you hide the issues rather than acknowledging and addressing them.

Alongside the negatives, however, there are also many posts which ought to be, and are, looked at in a positive light. The general entertainment provided by the posts on these forums, for the most part, cannot be denied, and the slew of shower thoughts, and just generally whimsical comments and ideas that one reads provides a good eye away from the monotony of a IIIT



*“On the Internet, nobody knows you’re a dog.”*



student’s life.

Adding to that, plenty also reach out for help regarding mental health, and seniors ensure that the recipients are pointed to the direction towards which they can move to get help whilst also divulging that their own “DMs” are open. Amongst other conversations that are ostracized by Indian society, alongside mental health, there are also occasional posts with folk “coming out”, bringing about conversations regarding LGBT+ or talking about abusive households that they’ve sadly been born into, with the comments in all theses posts lined with the warmth of support of students of IIIT.

## EXHIBIT D



Considering the post above, some may condemn the use of language to refer to people are intolerant; putting that aside, the major point of the post was a queer person looking out for themselves checking as to how supportive the environment is to people like her.

## EXHIBIT E F G

In the three aforementioned posts, students vent about their home life and how it's affected them and their mental health, while other students in the comment section provide their words of affirmation as a form of virtual help.

In theory, the confessions page can be a wonderful place and many do find it to be so. But practically speaking, there are still vast tracts of improvements possible. The casual sexism and the general juvenility that the forum reeks of, often becomes painfully apparent. Yet, speaking to students at our usual lengths of the day, this isn't the case, and the proneness to immaturity is much less pronounced.

It's not simple to ascertain as to why the aforementioned occurs, but potentially, the vast majority of the "blame" can be placed on how the forum, at its base, works.

An MS Forms link is provided on a pinned post on the FB Group page on which one fills in their confession, their gender and their college year. The matter is then posted onto the page, ensuring complete anonymity of those who posted it.

On the surface, having the confessions being looked at by the admins, before being posted online, may seem like a good idea, there come a whole host of issues along with them. There is no one to gauge as to what the anonymous admins deem "worthy" of being posted onto the forum, and that may result in a lot of good posts being overlooked and not being put up, while a lot of posts which may be rightfully looked at in a negative light, getting posted.

If we are going with any solution which involves curbing what the audience sees, the best solution is a simple one, get better admins. The current admins are "anonymous" and it

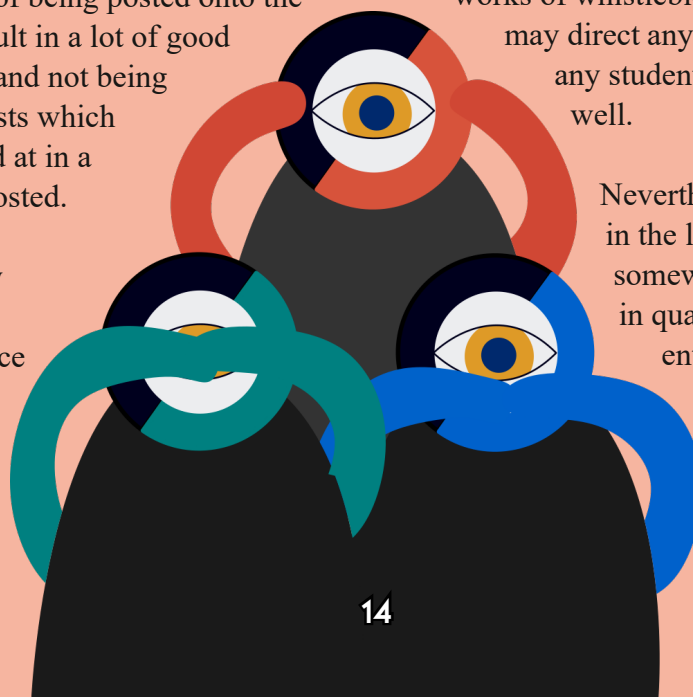
may be a better idea to proceed with admins who are known to a general populace, because this will hold them accountable in having a better, cleaner forum. That said, having signed admins may result in the admins being silently chastised for not keeping up the level of amusement the page with anonymous admins provided, which may lead to dwindling number of students, who may be effective in supervising the posts, actually wanting to archon the page.



A needless clause which can be used to improve the situation is by handing the admins a list of rules which the confession needs to pass to get posted, however, that entails the issue that it ends up with more legwork for the admin to filter through and post something, and makes the forum too proctored, taking away the fun idea of an anonymous page.

Though a fairly new development, the admins do, apparently, follow a structure to an extent, having some amount of moderation in place. Confessions of love and appreciation are by and large avoided, regardless of their level of authenticity, alongside any posts indicating works of whistleblowing. Any confessions that may direct any amount of hate or attack any student are steered away from as well.

Nevertheless, going by the content in the last few months, there has somewhat been an improvement in quality of the content. The entirety of it is far from ideal, but the posts with material that ought to be looked down upon and were called out previously in the article, have gone





down steadily, but haven't totally vanished.

As stated before, MIT confessions page is one of the best known confessions pages - the university has a brand name, the page has existed for a long time, and for the most part, it has reasonably good content. "Copying" the same will not be something I encourage, but, say, modelling the page content after theirs won't be of too much harm.

MIT confessions page rarely, if ever, have posts which call out singular individuals and have absolutely no sexist posts. You wouldn't find posts which insinuate that the only reason the girls are in college is as a romantic distraction rather than for getting their degrees. Alongside that, nearly every post in MIT confessions has a fairly uniform structure, something which isn't observed on our page, albeit confessions in hindi cannot be worked around in that regard. However, seeing that it's an informal page, it'll be fair to contest that the format is of little importance.

Adding to that, there's a definite freshness in content - which is something not only seen in MIT confessions page, but on confession pages of many other universities. The constant moaning about college not opening up, or the only topics being those about course work has a horrible implication that people have little in life to look for outside this. Even outside that, the

"shitposts" have comparably a glaring lack in quality.

IIIT isn't cluttered by a massive student crowd and it shouldn't be a hard task to encourage everyone to acquit themselves with greater maturity. Freshmen can be cut some slack, but expecting the seniors to know better, and having posts which set a bar of sagaciousness shouldn't be controversial as an opinion.

Having had spoken to the admins of the IIIT confessions page, one of the reasons they don't have rules in place is because of an opinion they share with me - they believe the college community to be mature and responsible enough to limit themselves when submitting their thoughts. They also added that, in spite of that, some level of moderation is required to keep people in line as a "free-for-all" scenario will lead to a page cluttered with rubbish, even if the majority do not act like morons. However, the juvenility of students were in plain view during the confessions submissions at the Bonfire night on New Year's Eve, so any expectations of the crowd will be in vain.

I don't want to appear as suggesting that bowing our heads down and imitating MIT's groupthink is the way to go, but rather, am trying to avoid taciturnity on the base idea that there is a lot of room for improvement regarding what we see on the page and making small efforts can go a long way in moulding a healthier forum. ■

