



THE CHRONICLES OF A COMPUTER LAB

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You know why computer science majors have a better average sanity than most other engineering majors? It's because of their computer labs. But it's not all roses and thankful reacts. Read on to find out what transpires in the den of the computer nerds.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

The fundamental use of the computer labs is for the "lab classes". And if your batch/class doesn't have a designated lab, then this is probably the only time you get access to it.

Class assignments are usually given for the second half of the class, based on the theories taught in the first one. The following ensues after the teacher declares the assignments – a general groan followed by mass hysteria since no one paid attention to the theories followed by a fruitless try at it by searching the internet and poking at the class toppers that ends with the consolation that CGPA doesn't matter and there's always BCS.

GAMES

What happens when you put stressed out students in a room with dedicated personal computers, no supervision and a LAN? Dozens of unsuspecting students get hooked to the worst kind of drugs - games. The games can range from first person shooters like Call of Duty or Counter-Strike where nerds shifts their frustration of not being able to solve the class assignment first by virtually shooting down their fellow classmates to sports games like Need for Speed or FIFA.

Apart from the obvious recreational value, this obsession has the benefits of increased team spirit, knowing how violent that quiet girl in the corner could be or just clearing up the mind for the next class that's surely going to overload everyone's schedule with 33 new "homeworks".

On the other hand, the average CGPA drop of the whole class does nobody any good.

"PLEASE FIX MY PC, MAMA"

In computer labs, you either get a PC that runs super smoothly, has the fastest internet and the newest hardware or you get one that has a new problem every single day, there's no in between. It's usually the latter for most. And there's only one person who can fix it all – the lab technician. But of course, he's always too busy and he always reinstalls the whole operating system. Say goodbye to all your precious software and data.

VIRUS EPIDEMICS

The most frustrating thing about life in a computer lab is the virus, or more specifically, the "shortcut virus". It's always a mystery as to whose PC starts it or how it gets generated. But within the span of a week almost every PC in the lab is infected. And if you're unlucky or careless enough, you're gonna bring it home.

This is also the time when Linux users celebrate.

THE CODER CORNER

When most of the students waste their time on useless games, there are the few intellectuals who still maintain a CS student's reputation by discussing the different ways to solve Problem X from the previous night's CodeForces contest. Their collective scoffs at the normie students are audible through the gunshots

from the headphones. And their cheers when the electricity or internet goes out, stopping the games, arguably has more joy than when they solve a programming problem. Unfortunately they don't get beat up by the rest of the class because they have the dankest class notes and codes.

FRAPES

It's quite natural for frapes to happen so often in computer labs where the students are more worried about the most efficient algorithm to use for the Data Structure assignment than their browser sessions. Frapes are a good way for young CS students to prepare for the dog-eat-dog world of the tech industry. It

teaches to never be careless with your virtual data and to never trust another human being.

GROUP PROJECTS

Computer labs set the perfect environment for group projects. Whether it's a course assignment or an outside venture, computer labs have the necessary components – computers, free internet, a whiteboard, a projector – for efficiently conducting meetings and collaborations. And like any group project, the ones in labs are responsible for broken friendships and loud arguments, which often disrupt the natural state of gamers and coders alike.

CLASS SETUP

If professional surveys were done, they would show that annually half a year is

spent setting up the right environment before starting a class in a computer lab. It could be that the projector goes blurry all on a sudden, or an IDE on the teacher's computer isn't installed properly, or the whole OS simply needs 1 hour to update because the CR forgot to turn auto update off.

CONTESTS

What better place to hold programming contests than in a room with computers serially placed under one network? All the big fests in universities that contain gaming or programming competitions depend on these labs. Hosting them or volunteering in them provides the students with something more than an increased social status. No, not valuable experience. Money.

SECOND HOME

This is relevant for the ones who have a dedicated lab for a whole year/semester. At one point, the students start spending almost the whole day inside their labs. There are stories about students having to stay overnight in the lab for thesis works. Some horde food under their desk because leaving for lunch or snacks is such a waste of time, which causes intolerable dismay among their neighbours. During long holidays (relatable for public university students), there's a sort of home sickness for the intense lab life. You can often hear graduates reminisce about their golden times in their labs. And that hits you hard, the inevitability of leaving this place and how short the stay is in retrospect, motivating you to stop worrying about that bloody assignment and keep playing some more COD.

Fatiul Huq Sujoy is a tired soul (mostly because of his frail body) who's patiently waiting for Hagrid to appear and tell him, "Ye're a saiyan, lord commander." Suggest him places to travel and food-ventures to take at fb.com/SyedSujoy

