Vis-à-vis:
Likes me, likes me not, likes a little, likes a lot

By Vlada Gaisina
OPINION EDITOR

When I first heard about www.LikeALittle.com, which was featured in the Chicago Sun-Times and other publications, the concept of gushing about a cute stranger via a website seemed creepy. However, after a friend linked to it on Facebook with a disclaimer about how funny it was, I became intrigued.

As it turned out, LikeALittle is something like mass Twitter – there is a "wall" for each of many colleges across the country where anyone can post an anonymous "flirt." The format goes like this: "I am looking at a Girl/Guy (pick one) with (pick the color) hair at (pick location or enter a new one)," followed by a text box. On the IIT page, the posts range from endearing to funny to plain odd. Some of them were clearly written as a joke, but others appear genuine. Here are some of my favorites:

"T-shirt tucked into shorts. In December. This is making my finals week worth it. Delicious."

"You rode away on your little cycle with my heart you tan, tan man."

At Center Court: "love your panini."

"You were my philosophy professor last semester, and I've never been so stimulated... intellectually. Hot Mexican."

"Hey cute boy in the blue, I like the way you work. Workin' that wood so slow and steady. You seem like you don't care if it's dirty - but I suggest you use a 400 bit sandpaper to clean off all the bumps on your project."

Though occasional trolling can be spotted, posts on LikeALittle across campuses tend to be creative, heartfelt, and cute. It's a different approach to flirting, but much needed for college campuses. In an era when people no longer carve names of their beloved on park benches, but can discover the world from the palm of their hand, digital flirting offers the possibility of connecting with your crush without risking embarrassment. It is especially appropriate for IIT, where the student population is ripe with awkwardness.

Flirting doesn't come naturally to everyone, much less the tech nerds that comprise a large part of IIT's student body. Here is an example of a typical approach to social situations:

[23:25] IITguy: you basically said: we can date... but if you're looking for a relationship, you're out of luck

[23:25] IITguy: you have vaguely defined dating and lack almost any hard description of relationship

Sadly, this is not a quote from The Big Bang Theory, but something pulled from my own experience. I won't claim that women are innocent, though. Someone I know was recounting how a girl he asked out originally said "maybe" and then never talked to him again. In her mind, she was probably trying to avoid being rude, and then later avoid the situation altogether, which is precisely the wrong thing to do.

Without stomping on SexTech's turf, the point is that handling romantic situations is a learned skill. LikeALittle, with its ease of access and anonymity, can help the faint-of-heart romantics and the rest of us who often recognize a connection with an attractive stranger a little too late. People can comment on posts and send private messages to the author, thus allowing the object of the post to follow up with its writer. This will not always turn into a success story, though LAL has a number of positive testimonials. But the more people use it, the better the chances.

At the moment, IIT's LikeALittle probably serves little purpose beyond entertainment, since so few people know of it and use it. Meanwhile, the University of Illinois's page gets the same number of posts a day as IIT does in a week. Even taking into account the difference in population size, we could be doing better. So go ahead, take your best shot at a clever nerdy flirt, and you might even be featured on LAL's daily feed. Because "Baby, if you were words on a page, you'd be what they call fine print."

What's your angle?
An ethical discussion on current topics

By Annie Hutches
TECHNEWS WRITER

This week:
Who should survive?

"I'm so frustrated!"

"What's got you down?"

"We recently had our 25% review for Studio, and the reviewers brought up a valid, but difficult point. We are designing a survival retreat for the end of the world as we know it, and they want us to think about why the people are chosen to survive."

"Why can't everyone survive?"

"See, that's the challenge. We are supposed to design a retreat for 24 people – not everyone can fit. So far, many of us are hiding our retreat from "outsiders" in order to keep the people who bought the retreat safe."

"So everyone else is just going to die?"

"Well, I hope not, but the more people you add to the program, the more problems it creates. You need more space, more food, more everything, including security, and on top of it, the more people you have the more difficult it is to keep everyone safe, and that's the whole point of the project; to keep people safe."

"How will you decide who gets to stay in your fancy safe house?"

"It will be the people who are funding the project, the people who are taking care of the project before the end of the world as we know it, and their families and friends. So basically, people who are smart enough to plan ahead and have lots of extra cash to spend on a project that may or may not become needed during their lifetime."

"So only ridiculously rich people are going to survive the end of the world? Did the reviewers have any suggestions on how to solve their 'ethical dilemma'? It kind of seems ridiculous for them to bring it up, if it's not part of your project... I mean, you are designing this for a certain small group of people, right?"

"Well, they mentioned making the building into a prototype, so that it can be easily replicated and spread all over the place, but even with that suggestion, there are people who won't be able to afford a survival retreat no matter how cheap it is, there are people who don't have houses or enough food to eat. Not everyone is going to survive. I can't stop the end of the world as we know it from happening. I just don't know what to do about it."

What's your angle? Send your thoughts to peds.iit@gmail.com

The 2011 mayoral race

By Kushan Trivedi
TECHNEWS WRITER

Come February 22, 2011, Chicago will be voting for its new Mayor, and if none of the candidates have a clear majority, then April 5, 2011 has been set as a runoff date. Incumbent Mayor Richard Daley, who has been holding that post since 1989, isn't seeking a new term. Six names would be appearing on the voting ballots for the post of Chicago's Mayor:

Rahm Emanuel: Former White House Chief of Staff and US Representative for Illinois 5th District

Gery Chico: Former Chief of Staff to Mayor Richard M. Daley and the former chairman of the City Colleges of Chicago

Miguel del Valle: City Clerk of Chicago and former Illinois State Senator

Patricia Van Pelt Watkins: Non-profit administrator and activist

Carol Moseley Braun: Former US Senator from Illinois and former US Ambassador to New Zealand

William "Dock" Walls III: Community activist and former aide to Mayor Harold Washington

Rahm Emanuel is currently emerging as the favorite, and with 49% of the votes in the WGN/Tribune poll, seems to be within striking distance of the victory figures of 51%. On February 15, Rahm set out to visit 50 wards in Chicago in 50 hours and speak to the voters. After one of the worst winter storms in Chicago's history, Rahm was seen helping clear the snow. This act even gained praise from the President himself, who commented that his one-time White House aide is "doing just fine" on his own.

With Chicago ranked 3rd in the list of most corrupt cities in the United States by Forbes magazine, the city is in search of a strong and ethical leadership. And based on what the experts say, Rahm Emanuel would be the right choice. The list of issues with which Rahm has been dealing during his campaigning includes job creation, education, combating crime rate, city finances, energy efficiency, city transportation, LGBT equality, good government, energy efficiency, Tax Increment Financing(TIF) reforms and food access.

However, coming into the mayoral campaign, Rahm has had to face a rollercoaster ride. His application for the mayor of Chicago was overturned by Illinois Appellate Court, with two of the three judges voting against him. For the past year, Rahm's opponents have been trying to toss his name off the ballot. However, with the Illinois Supreme Court passing a judgment in his favor, Rahm Emanuel's name would appear again on the mayoral ballots.

The mayoral election in Chicago would define whether race or ethnicity still plays an important role in politics, or whether we are making progress into a post-racial era. Average voters in Chicago might not be blindly supporting a candidate based on their race or ethnicity. They definitely care about a lot of issues, ranging from corruption and economy to crime rate and education.

Going by the figures from the exit polls, Rahm Emanuel appears to be a likely successor to Richard M. Daley, and the issues he has taken up paint the picture of "Rahmbo" to the rescue. However, if the issue of race plays a major role at the polling places, then the outcome will be far from certain.