

IPRO 335 in Haiti - Day 3: spiders and solar panels

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TECHNEWS WRITER

We woke up comfortably the third morning. With our goal seemingly completed the day before and no clear agenda for the next day, we all took a much-needed rest after the long car rides. We gathered down in the outdoor cafe area. With no time restraint, the gradual build-up of the meal seemed like a reward to yesterday's hard work. Eventually we were greeted by the Haitian OLPC team and they surrounded us at the table. We discussed what we had seen at the schools and the conclusions we had come to, that there was one school that stood far above the rest.

But, of course, it wasn't going to be so easy to convince ourselves. Missing from this conversation were the three heads of the project: Dr. Hosman, who is leading the IPRO, Guy Serge Pompilus who works at Haiti's OLPC organization, and Bruce Baikie who helped initiate the project. After much discussion between the IIT and Haiti teams, the others joined us. Dr. Hosman related to us that Guy Serge, who had a much closer relationship with the schools, had advised us to look deeper. He had expected us to make the choice we had made, but from his own experience he knew that structural capacity isn't the only factor in installing new technology in an under-developed country. Hand it to a group from

an architecture and engineering university to only look at the physics of the situation and be completely blind to the social and interpersonal aspects - and we might have a problem. In fact, Guy Serge informed us that his perception of the most supportive schools, the ones who would be most willing to work with us, was the exact opposite of how we had graded the schools structurally. The other team members from Haiti weighed in and agreed that there was more information to be gathered from the school officials that was imperative to a successful implementation. Clearly, our work wasn't done in Haiti.

Our plan, then, was to spend the day in Port-au-Prince to see where we could purchase

solar panels, then head back to Mirebalais to spend the night. From there, we would drive to Lascahobas the next morning to talk more with the school officials to see how willing they were to work with us in achieving our goal. We could then take both the physical constraints and the social hindrances into account in our decision for a trial installation.

We split up and headed across the city so that we could see the stock at four different stores. To our surprise, several did actually have solar panels, though the prices tended to be situated on the expensive end. Other stores, however, turned out to be less fruitful; despite our contact's insistence (and they reaffirmed this after we returned empty-handed). One store turned out to be more of a furniture and appliance store, with couches and love seats from wall to wall—one was even placed on the unreachable outcrop above the door. There were certainly options in Haiti, though, and it was surprising to see what the Haitian people actually have at their disposal for powering their homes.

With our work done in Port-au-Prince, we headed back over the mountains to our next hotel, which was the same place we had eaten at the day before. With palm trees, peacocks, and a resort-like feel, we were truly looking forward to a relaxing night in Mirebalais. With no dinner, we headed back to one of our rooms to further discuss the project. But unbeknownst to us, Haiti loves to surprise its visitors with guests of their own. As we all sat there talking, one of us jumped and pointed towards the door. A large, long-legged spider had crawled in, and another was waiting just outside for that lucky individual who would try and escape. With no one brave enough to try and crush it, we simply grabbed a coffee cup and covered it for the night, leaving a picture on a post-it note for the clean-up personnel in the morning. Needless to say, when we left for our own rooms we checked every corner; luckily, we only found cockroaches and small lizards... *luckily*. Unsurprisingly, we slept lightly that night.

For more information on IPRO 335, please check out <http://iitempoweringhaiti.org/> and the IIT Empowering Haiti facebook page for updates, events, and pictures of our work.



Just your friendly neighbourhood Haitian spider (Image courtesy Simon Brauer)

Upcoming SGA Events



Tuition General Assembly w/ the President & Provost Thursday, March 10 (12:30pm - 1:30pm) in the Hub Expo. The President and Provost are ready to answer your questions about the state of tuition at IIT. They will highlight the state of the IIT reputation, and how their plan to improve the university's financial state contributes to the value of every degree at the university.

Value of Degree General Assembly An opportunity to interact with alumni and Institutional Advancement to express what you feel your IIT degree is worth. Details coming soon.

Universal Calendar Unveiling General Assembly Join us in welcoming and understanding IIT's new Universal Calendar in all it's awesome glory! Details coming soon.

GreenIIT

Did you know...

... 90% of the energy used in a typical washing machine cycle is to heat water? Hot water to wash laundry is only necessary for bed linen and grease-stained fabrics. Reduce your energy usage by using warm or cold water for your laundry.

The Office of Campus Energy and Sustainability (OCES) is coordinating an effort to define the specific actions, programs and policy changes IIT will make in order to reach the targeted commitments that will define IIT as the most sustainable urban university campus in the United States.

IIT First-Year Students and Graduating Students (Seniors)



Want to win
an iPod Touch?

- ☐ DISAGREE
- ☐ AGREE
- ☒ STRONGLY AGREE

TAKE THE SURVEY!

IIT is participating in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). You will receive your survey by email from NSSE soon.

Respond by **April 1** for a chance to win one of two iPod Touches.

We want to hear your feedback about IIT!

Your opinions count and will help IIT to improve academic and social programming at the university.

HAVE QUESTIONS?
Contact the Office of the Registrar at registrar@iit.edu.

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