



**pb** @prstb Thu Jul 21 10:11:49 +0000 2022

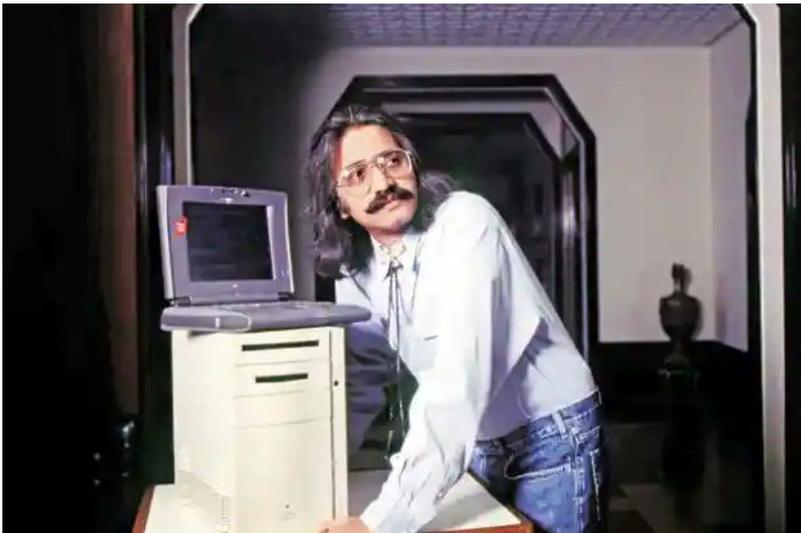
#TIL that Shammi Kapoor was one of the first users of the Internet in India

He was the founder & chairman of the Internet Users Club of India. I can't wrap my head around how someone like Shammi Kapoor was in the thick of the internet movement in India?

I did some digging ■

I found this dead website <http://mafatlal.co.in> on the Internet Archive. It was one of the first domains with a ".co.in" TLD.

It was owned by this guy: Miheer Mafatlal and it hosted the IUCI webpage. As tech people stereotypes go, he sure does look the part. <https://t.co/hhWkORsaAE>



This is how one of India's first independent and private websites looked like.

It couldn't have a more 90s internet aesthetic if it tried. Love it! <https://t.co/a06zM9CAfR>



The Constitution of CyberSpace  
or The Digital Bill of Rights 4554

First here:-

from India:



Shamsher

(Shammi Kapoor);

outside India:

John  
Harvey.



Jaideep Mehrotra's *ArtistTree*

*Vijay Mukhi's   Site.*

The *e-Community* *lives on at* 

Table Of Contents of (some of) the other stuff on this server.

Internet Users Club of India



Your Internet eMail address:

Click here to: Register to receive eMail when this page is updated.

Shammi Kapoor and his internet club were also the self-proclaimed gatekeepers of the Indian internet culture.

For instance, check this email sent by Shammi Kapoor, asking Indians in way too many words to basically be less horny on "CityTalk" - an IRC server from that time. <https://t.co/UnetySugSx>

Subject: THE GOOD & THE BAD---NEWS  
Sent: 1996-08-07 23:43  
Received: 1996-08-06 23:31  
From: Shammi Kapoor, shamsher@giasbm01.vsnl.net.in  
To: Multiple recipients of, IUCI-L@mail.mafatlal.co.in

Message from Shamsher to IUCI members===

I have good news and bad news.

The good news is that, at IUCI's request, VSNL has made TalkCity the default IRC chat server for Shell account holders.

The reason this is good news is that TalkCity is a clean, friendly place that welcomes everybody -- it does not raise any barriers of caste, creed or colour, and there are always people who are ready to help new Internet users with answers to their questions.

Now, this is *\*not\** typical of IRC channels. In fact, there are many that seem to be full of unpleasant stuff: they're a bit like the not-so-nice bars in the not-so-nice areas of our towns -- the ones most of us prefer to stay away from ourselves, and the ones we try to protect our children from.

Now, this kind of friendliness and helpfulness doesn't happen by accident. In TalkCity, it happens because the citizens of this community are genuinely nice people who *\*want\** it this way, and they make special efforts to keep it this way.

Which brings me to my bad news.

A number of visitors to TalkCity -- many of them from India, I am ashamed to say -- behave as if the words they type on their keyboards will be read by computers. They seem to forget that there are human beings sitting in front of those machines.

To put it bluntly, they are rude, they are offensive to members of the opposite sex (and I mean this both ways) and they do things that make it difficult for others to participate in a conversation.

One result of this kind of behaviour is that a lot of TalkCity citizens, who used to look forward to meeting people from India and learning about our rich culture, are now avoiding contact with Indians.

A second result is that a number of parents and newspaper reporters have been expressing concern -- the parents are wondering how to protect their children, and the reporters are concerned that the international media will start carrying anti-Indian news reports.

So I have a couple of requests to make to you:

Please... you wouldn't behave like this in your own homes, so please don't behave like this in TalkCity. If you *\*must\** vent your frustrations at your keyboard, do it either when you're not connected to the Internet, or go to one of the chat servers that allows it.

They even set up a "Page of Shame" to name and shame Indians who were being dicks on the internet. ■  
<https://t.co/hyM3pE7A3J>

Subject: IUCI - Page of SHAME :-(  
Sent: 1996-08-16 09:18  
From: The Count of CipherSpace, CCCcount0@CipherSpace.org.in  
To: IUCI-L@mail.mafatlal.co.in

Greetings,

This is a follow-up to the message that you received recently from Mr. Shammi Kapoor, Chairman, Internet Users Club of India.

I want to add something to what Shammiji said: some of these people persist in being abusive and offensive even after they are made aware of the guidelines for TalkCity.

They may not be aware of it, but this carries a risk: if you're going to behave badly in a worldwide forum like the Internet, you should expect to be publicly disgraced -- worldwide -- in the same forum.

So starting immediately, the IUCI has agreed to create a new section on the IUCI web site: The IUCI Page of Shame.

On this page, we will spell out not just the nicks offenders use online; but, their real-world names and their specific offenses. And, where we can manage to track the information down, their email and street addresses as well.

We realise that some of the offenders could be children "having a go" at their home computers, without their parents knowing what they're up to, and that this international exposure on a "page of shame" will give their parents a bad name.

Our viewpoint is: if that's what it takes to persuade the parents to take a more active interest in their children's activities, they deserve it. And if a few grown-up kids get spanked, it's probably many years overdue. :-)

We also realise that some of the offenders could be company employees mis-using the company Internet account. If having the company's name (or the employer's name) appear on a world wide web hall of shame leads to lost jobs, don't come to us looking for new ones. You'll be automatically blacklisted. :-)

So now you've got a choice: be nice on the 'Net because you're genuinely a nice person, or be nice because you're forced to.

But be nice.

So I opened this Page of Shame but to my disappointment, the list was empty. ■■

Maybe the updates to the page aren't archived or they probably decided to drop the idea altogether.

<https://t.co/xiC0a9c211>

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**Internet Users Club of India**

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## Page of Shame

- An [explanation](#) - sort of :-)
- [Email](#) about what people think.

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Who'll be the first ???

Your Internet eMail address:

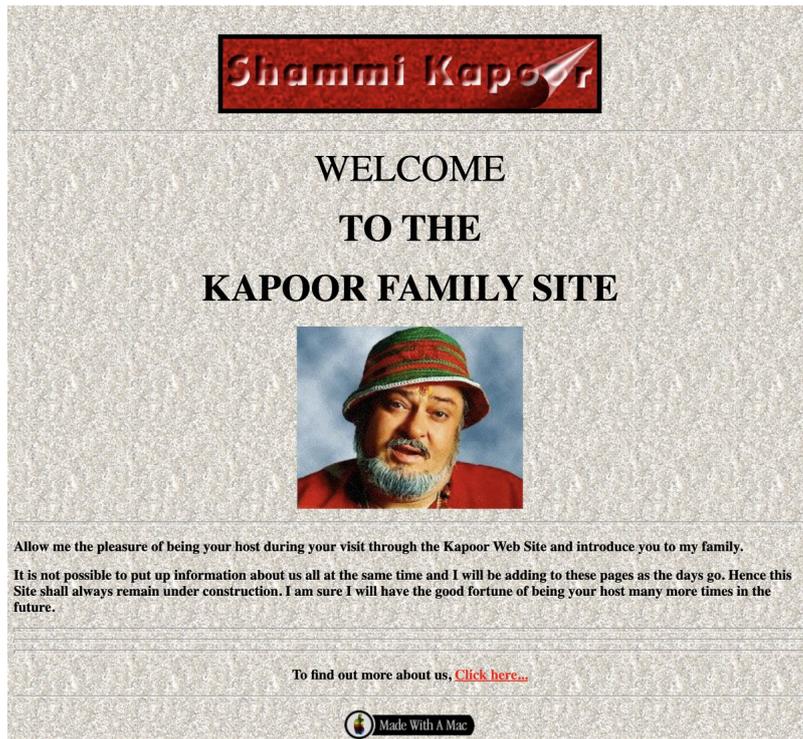
Click here to: [Register to receive eMail when this page is updated.](#)



page counter

I'm still fascinated by how Shammi Kapoor, of all people, was at the helm of all of this. He had a cute personal website too. According to him, he learnt all the coding and designing himself.

Tbh, this has more character and creativity than some of the personal websites of today <https://t.co/PchEbsBQte>



He was into writing online as well and this was even before "blog" was even a term. Read this wild excerpt from a very random post about Librans being very accident-prone (??) <https://t.co/OIBE0FMlyA>

**Before starting "Dil Deke Dekho," I did a reading stint. Ayn Rand, the author of "Fountainhead" had written a new book called "Atlas Shrugged." It was a massive novel comprising some 2000 pages and I was bent upon doing a start to finish job. It took me 36 hours of non-stop reading but left me with a kidney ailment. I do not know how the two are connected but the pain was excruciating. After all the medicines failed to give me relief, it took a homeopath, Dr.Sinha to help me out. He gave me some pills and a pethidine injection to abate the suffering. I passed out and due to pain, woke up in the middle of the night. So that I may gain some respite from my predicament I lit a cigarette and in the middle of a soothing puff, passed out again. When I woke up the next morning my kidney trouble had vanished; instead there was sharp, shooting pain in my right arm. The cigarette had burnt a hole in the dunlop pillow and my arm had sizzled like a steak while I slept under the dope effect. I have a huge beauty scar in that memory.**

Fin. The boys from the "Bombay Computer Club". The pioneers of our internet. When are we getting an OTT series on them? <https://t.co/DYub2re4qt>



You can read a more detailed and complete version of this here:

<https://peabee.substack.com/p/15-mafatlal-and-the-early-indian>

Wow, this thread has become popular! I have nothing to promote, except check this silly little website I made (as a joke) to find half loaves of bread near you. Because I can never finish a full loaf of bread!

<https://halfloafnear.me/>

And a list of other silly little projects here: <https://peabee.xyz/projects/>