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## **Now, study engineering sitting at home**

Aditi Tandon/TNS

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You no longer need to be a student of a private or government technical institute to access courses and lectures delivered at the said institutes, including the premier Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).

In a major leap forward in the use of ICT (information, communication and technology) in education, the IITs have, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, have developed 135 video and 125 web-based courses (in technology, engineering and sciences) that comprehensively cover the curricula being taught at all the AICTE-approved institutions. Each such course comprises 40 hours of lectures delivered by the IIT and IISc faculty.

Close to 1,000 courses will be added to the pool by 2010. Already available for free downloads at [www.nptel.ac.in](http://www.nptel.ac.in) are the courses in the following branches - civil, computer science, electrical, electronics, mechanical, ocean, biotechnology, mining, and metallurgy. Anyone, from among students, faculty or industry, can access these contents, the largest such repository of virtual knowledge in the world. So far, certain such courses were available for downloads from You Tube and Google, but the IITs now have their own server located at the IIT, Madras, from where free downloads are possible. Copies of courses are also available in CDs, DVDs etc at a cost of Rs 200 per course (40 hours of lectures).

The effort is part of the National Programme on Technology-Enhanced Learning initiative launched across India under the National Mission on Education through ICT today. Gradually, the IITs and the IISs will work with the HRD Ministry to develop 150 virtual laboratories across India to allow students accessing courses to also have practical training and do experiments. "We are moving towards a virtual university system where we will try to ensure that every student accessing our contents gets some sort of certification after taking a certain examination," IIT Roorkee's Professor Bikas Mohanty said. The website already has 4.9 million hits.