Report on the workshop
Diminishing the Digital Divide for mothers of
engineers: how to use the PC ?
organized by
IEEE Women in Engineering Affinity Group,
Calcutta Section

November 12, 2010

This report presents a summary of the workshop, ” Diminishing the Digital Divide for mothers of engineers: how to use the PC ?” organized by IEEE Women in Engineering Affinity Group, Calcutta Section on August 23, 2010, at Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata. The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc. (IEEE) is the world's largest professional non-profit association dedicated to advancing technological innovation and excellence for the benefit of humanity. The mission of IEEE Women in Engineering (WIE) Affinity group is to inspire, engage, encourage and empower women engineers and scientists worldwide whose percentage is not even 20% .

The motivation of the program was to sow the seed of the process of bridging the digital divide between the mother of engineering/science student and her child as the mother/mother-figure has an immense influence on the overall development of any student of science and engineering ; yet, not all of the mothers have had the opportunity to experience the advantages of information technology like her child. So the target participant was the mother/mother-figure of a PC-savvy engineering/science student, who did not use a PC/Internet, so that after that day-long initiation she can continue exploring the digital world with help from her child if required. The workshop was attended by 25 mothers from various parts of Kolkata. Ten student volunteers from ISI and other engineering colleges assisted the participants in the labs. Also, 11 representatives of IEEE WIEA, Calcutta section were present.

After reporting and registration of the workhshop, Prof Nabanita Das, Chair, WIEA, IEEE Calcutta Section, gave an introductory lecture on the motivation of the workshop in the presence of other IEEE WIE members at 9-45 am. Next, the participants were given a platform where they were taught how to use PC. This session was practical where from the beginning of how to start the computer to the creation of emai addresses were taught. The practical session also enabled the participants to browse internet for different daily life purposes like- telephone directory search, bank account balance checking, cooking gas booking, checking results of competitive exams, elections; maps, directions, people search, restaurant guide, movie tickets, music, online story books; train & flight ticketing, internet security with credit/debit card usage etc.. Most of the participants enjoyed this session with great enthusiasm. Some of them said that the time was too short to learn so many things.

In the valedictory session WIE vice-Chair, Takako Hashimoto from Chiba University of Conmmerce, Japan, delivered an awesome speech on her *career development as a female researcher in Japanese industry*. Finally, Prof. Susmita Surkolay,

Vice-Chair, WIEA, IEEE Calcutta Section, thanked all for making the program successful, and concluded the program.