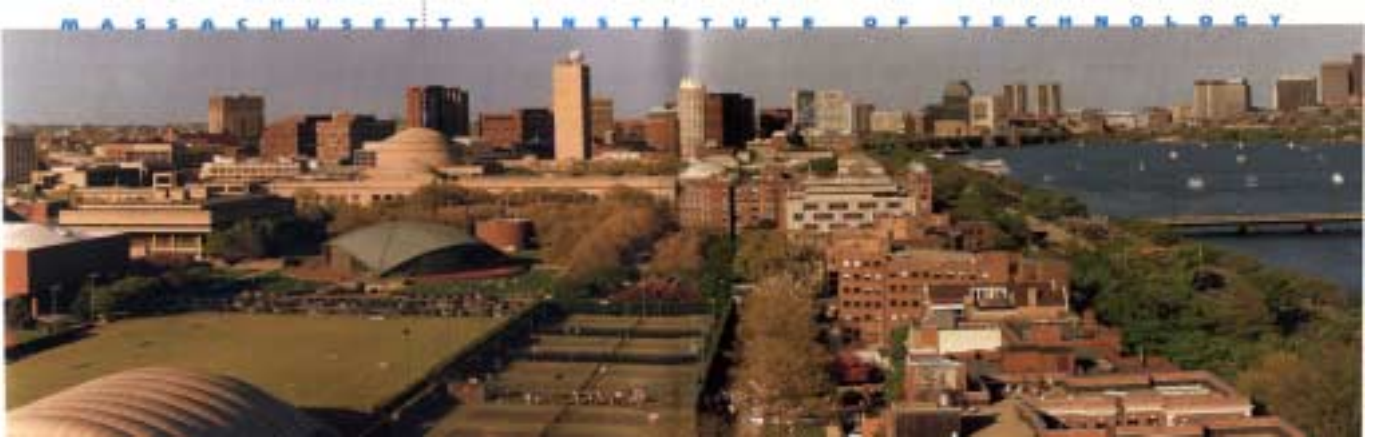


Massachusetts Institute of Technology

(by Rena Tong)



On Friday the 10th December 1999 a guided tour of MIT was scheduled. A general tour of the campus was organised where an African girl from Togo was our informative tour guide. Massachusetts Institute of Technology is more commonly known to the world as MIT. William Barton Rogers, a distinguished natural scientist and MIT's first president, imagined – and in 1861 founded – an institution fitted to the needs of an increasingly industrialized nation. However, the opening was delayed until 1865 due to the Civil War.

The school motto is “Mens et Manus”, which means Mind and Hand. MIT was initially established with programs coupling teaching and research, with much emphasis on solving real-world problems. Today, its strong programs in engineering and science remain at the core of what has become one of the world's outstanding universities. MIT's faculty also teaches and conducts pioneering research in fields such as economics, linguistics, cognitive science, management, architecture, and history and philosophy of science. The humanities – anthropology, archaeology, foreign languages, history, literature, music and theater arts, and philosophy – also play important roles at MIT.

MIT is one of the leading research universities in the country and in the world. In the past, achievements range from the creation of modern food preservation processes and the first chemical synthesis of penicillin and Vitamin A to the development of inertial guidance systems and modern technologies for artificial limbs. Others include high-speed photography, and the magnetic core memory that made possible the development of digital computers.

Some of the more recent advances include the location of the gene defect responsible for myotonic dystrophy, the most frequent form of muscular dystrophy, and identified the nature of the mutation. Technology developments such as the fabrication of a single-electron transistor and development of a new optical technique to measure galaxy distances with unprecedented accuracy and reliability are just some of the latest exciting discoveries.

MIT was moved to Cambridge in 1916. The campus has 150 acres and extends for more than a mile along the Charles River in Cambridge, Massachusetts and over looks downtown Boston, the state capital. The central group of interconnecting buildings, dedicated in 1916, was designed by architect W. Welles Bosworth. This is to permit easy communication among departments and schools. Many other buildings by some of the century's leading architects among them, Alvar Aalto, Eduardo Catalano, I. M. Pei, '40, and Eero Saarinen have been added since. Sculptures, murals and paintings, including works of Alexander Calder, Henry Moore, Louise Nevelson and Frank Stella, are found throughout the campus. Around the halls are exhibits explaining the accomplishments of many of the pioneering people who have studied and taught here. Most of the undergraduate dorms have great river views. An apple tree in MIT's alumni garden is a direct descendant of the one Sir Isaac Newton was reportedly sitting under when he conceived (or was hit with) the theory of gravity.

MIT offers degrees in five schools: Engineering, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, Architecture and Planning and Management. The MIT library system includes libraries for each of the Institute's five Schools and the Whitaker College. The library system provides comprehensive resources in all of MIT's major fields. Barker Engineering Library and its branch, the Aeronautics and Astronautics Library, provide information to serve the teaching and research needs of the School of Engineering. The main reading room of the Barker Engineering Library is located on the fifth floor, under the Great Dome of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



Great Dome of Massachusetts Institute of Technology

The word hack at MIT usually refers to a clever, benign, and "ethical" prank or practical joke, which is both challenging for the perpetrators and amusing to the MIT community. The Great Dome has become one of the buildings where hackers show off their talents. Hackers placed a convincing replica of a campus police cruiser on top of the Great Dome in 1994. The fake police cruiser, complete with a dummy

dressed as an uniformed officer, flashing lights, a toy gun and a box of donuts, appeared on May 9, 1994. The car turned out to be the metal outer shell of a Chevrolet Cavalier attached to a multi-piece wooden frame, all carefully assembled on the roof over the course of one night.



CP Car on the Great Dome

As a prequel to "The Prequel", MIT Students turned their Great Dome into an image of the infamous droid R2-D2.



Great Dome becomes R2-D2

Hackers changed the inscription on the inside of MIT's main entrance in 1994. The inscription around Lobby 7 reads "Established for Advancement and Development of Science its Application to Industry the Arts Agriculture and Commerce. Charter MDCCCLXI." Hackers changed the words "Agriculture and Commerce" to "Entertainment and Hacking" by covering the original with styrofoam panels, which were painted to look like the stone and engraved with the modified text. The styrofoam was held in place by six spring-loaded devices placed between the blocks above the text.



Changed Inscription in Lobby 7

Welcoming incoming president Charles Vest, hackers made his office "disappear" by hiding the entrance behind a bulletin board for his first day on the job in 1990. When Vice President Constantine Simonides arrived to open up the office, however, he thought he was on the wrong floor. Where the door should have been, there was only a poster-covered bulletin board.



Before



After

Disappearing President's Office. The hackers had struck again.

In MIT, there are 4372 undergraduates, 41% women, 18% underrepresented minorities (African-American, Chicano/Mexican-American, Native American, Puerto Rican), 8% international students, 5513 graduate students.

Approximately 95% of undergraduates live on campus in one of the 10 Institute houses, 39 fraternities, sororities and independent living groups. After our tour guide used the words 'fraternities' and 'sororities' countless number of times, Tyson asked what they meant. We, the group from down-under are embarrassed for not fully mastering the American terms after 17 days in the US. In case any one is wondering, fraternity refers to a body of persons associated as by ties of brotherhood while sorority refers to a society or club of women or girls.

Mental gymnastics are not the only exercise at MIT. There are nearly 250 student organisations, including athletic groups, media organisations, ethnic, language, or international student associations, musical, theatre and dance groups, religious organisations, service groups, political groups, special interest clubs, academic honoraries, and student government groups. If athletics is your interest, then there are 41 varsity teams to choose from, intramural programs in sports and club sports teams.

MIT remains to be the pioneer in almost all the fields concerned with technology, information systems and research in the world. They have the most equipped research laboratory in the world, which will in many years to come, still be unsurpassed.