

Guruji.com eyes Rs 20cr revenues by `09

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Guruji.com, the country's first Internet search engine launched in October 2006, hopes to achieve break even by the end of 2009, said chief operating officer and co-founder, Gaurav Mishra. 'We have already started monetising traffic on our search engine and by adopting the pay-per-click revenue model, we expect to be profitable with revenues of \$5 million (approximately Rs 20 crore) by the end of 2009 or early 2010,' he told Business Standard.

Founded by two IIT-Delhi graduates - Gaurav Mishra and Anurag Dod - Guruji.com focuses on developing search products for enhancing the Indian user experience by using Crawl technology. The technology, a complex computing system that crawls the web, identifies Indian content on the Internet in the desired language by using sophisticated algorithms. Guruji.com, which received a seed fund of \$7 million (Rs 28 crore) from Sequoia Capital and Suvir Sujan, founder-partner of Nexus India Capital, is looking at raising up to \$10 million (Rs 40 crore) in a second round of funding to finance its expansion plans.

'We are in final stages of negotiations with a few venture capital firms and expect to wrap up the deal in a couple of months,' Mishra said. Stating that the growth of Internet in the country would largely be driven by the growth of regional content, he said the desi search engine would be launching its regional language search services in Punjabi, Bengali and Marathi in the next six months. Currently, Guruji.com's search data is available in Hindi, English, Gujarati, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada. 'Besides, our game plan is to widen our umbrella to 40 cities, especially to tier II cities such as Patna, Varanasi, Madurai and Hampi, from the present 34 cities in the next eight months.

Plans are also on the cards to ramp up our human resources pool from the current 44 employees to 70 by the end of this calendar year, and take the number to 130 by the end of 2009,' Mishra said. According to a study conducted by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), the domestic search engine market is currently pegged at \$50 million (Rs 200 crore), which is expected to touch \$200 million (Rs 800 crore) in the next four years.

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For more information, Please contact:

Narendra Singh

Client Service - Mutual PR

41134406

41134407

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