



## Making elephants dance to the digital tune

**ATUL PHADNIS, CEO and chief evangelist, MediaE2E**

For 34-year-old Atul Phadnis, stereotypes are boring. So naturally, his firm, **Aarohan Media Software Pvt. Ltd.**, better known as MediaE2E, doesn't fit into any conventional media or marketing mould. Media E2E provides a multi-platform consumer search and guide for audio and video content, which essentially means streaming digital listings of programmes on various television and radio channels, via digital media such as the Internet, mobile phones and set-top boxes. He also provides business solutions—to analyse and manage performance, and improve planning effectiveness—to CEOs and senior business managers in the broadcasting industry.

That Phadnis prefers freshness in everything he does is also evident from his designation at MediaE2E. He calls himself the chief evangelist. "I am an evangelist for change, for new trends and hence the designation," he says.

Phadnis started his career 14 years ago, as a media planner with **Rediffusion|DYR**, where he worked on big-ticket accounts such as Colgate, ICICI and Fiat. But it was creating new divisions, and working on new projects in places such as **Starcom MediaVest Group** and **Television Audience Measurement (TAM) Media Research**, that gave him a rush.

During his stint at TAM, Phadnis discovered the opportunity in multi-platform consumer search. While working closely with television networks, he realized that the advent of the conditional access system (CAS) and emerging distribution media such as direct-to-home (DTH), the Internet and Internet protocol TV would require new tracking devices. That was the genesis of MediaE2E.

He planned to develop tools for broadcasters and DTH companies as the overall analogue market was

going digital, and the content had to go digital, too. "My friends used to tease me, (saying) that I would get withdrawal symptoms if they took my laptop or mobile away even a few metres," says Phadnis.

Almost a year later, in October 2005, his digital drive bore results. Phadnis managed to create a first-of-its-kind tool in India to aid the digital transition, particularly for large media organizations. "I have seen lots of elephants that can't dance—large companies that are not able to move very quickly when the market changes," says Phadnis.

These large companies have now bought into Phadnis' idea. MediaE2E partners companies such as **Wipro Technologies**, **Vistaar Technologies Inc.** and **Persistent Systems Pvt. Ltd** in the IT space and **Star India Pvt. Ltd.**, **Sony Entertainment Television (SET)**, part of the **Sony Entertainment Network**, and **Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd** in the media space.

Phadnis is already working on the next level. He is in the process of creating something that "will revolutionize the way the media industry works". He refuses to divulge details, but says, "I wouldn't touch it if it was 'been there, done that' already".

In the meantime, he has authored a book, 'India Planning and Advance Broadcast Marketing'. Clearly, media marketing tops his priority list.