

IIT students pitch at the I2P semi-finals in St. Louis

by [Smit Bavishi](#)

On March 8, a group of IIT Entrepreneurship Academy (IEA) members, along with their faculty advisor Dr. David Pistrui, flew to St. Louis to present their ideas at the Idea to Product (I2P) competition held at the John Cook School of Business at Saint Louis University.

The ideas that made it to the semifinals after intense competition included AudioDoc, a language learning device developed by Attila Kondacs, a University of Chicago researcher, and a team of EnPRO students. AudioDoc was presented at the I2P competition by Adam Berg.

Smit Bavishi's idea, STRIDE, a communications platform for small and medium-sized businesses, was presented at the I2P competition by Matt Misurac.

Of the two ideas, AudioDoc made it to the finals and secured fourth place – not an easy task given the stiff competition from Washington University, Saint Louis University and DePaul.

The trip also proved to be a fascinating learning experience as the students got to meet and talk to the judges, who were all entrepreneurs with diverse backgrounds. The judges were thrilled by both the ideas and provided great feedback to further improve them.

Also, the students got a chance to experience how it feels to be a real entrepreneur as they worked hard perfecting their pitches throughout the night, while getting at most an hour worth of sleep before the big day. In between the presentations, the students got valuable experience as real-life entrepreneurs shared their life stories from various parts of the world, including Eastern Europe and dealing with the KGB. Outside the entrepreneurship world, the students got a chance to explore St. Louis' downtown and experience some of St. Louis' culinary delights.

However, the most important lesson learned during the trip was that entrepreneurship is not just about working with cutting-edge technologies or making obscene amounts of hard-earned money; rather it's about meeting and working with amazing people like a Romanian-American business professor at IIT and a Hungarian mathematician from MIT.