



Naresh Agarwal

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

B.A.SC.(Honors), Nanyang Technological University

Ph.D., National University of Singapore

Teaching/Research Areas

Information behavior (seeking, source choice, context); theories, models, frameworks; evaluation; information systems (knowledge management, health informatics); happiness

SIMMONS

Graduate School of Library
and Information Science

Naresh Agarwal: Commonalities and Communities

In 2008, while Naresh Agarwal was working on his doctoral dissertation and a job search, he took on something he'd never done before: he worked with a famous artist to create a marble sculpture for the School of Computing at the National University of Singapore (NUS), as part of a university-wide endeavor. "My professor was worried that our faculty might be the only one without a sculpture," he says. "So, I promised him I'd get one done."

The work, called *In Harmony*, speaks to Agarwal's artistic side — his favorite hobby after traveling, acting, and modeling is painting — and also to his love of community. "It is my endeavor to find commonalities among differences and to respect differences among commonalities," he says. "In understanding other people, we understand ourselves — for differences are only outward."

After earning his bachelor's degree, Agarwal worked for six years in the industry as a computer engineer. But he wanted to move from "working with machines" to the "softer side of things," he says. So he joined the Department of Information Systems at NUS, where, in his "person-centric" research, he looked at why and how people search for information the way they do and how context influences their choice of information sources. Agarwal, who grew up in Sikkim, India, in the foothills of the Himalayas, spent the last fourteen years in Singapore. He says he was drawn to Simmons largely because of the people: "When I walked in, I found a very collegial environment; I can see myself getting old at Simmons."