gift.
The site also tries to help its

his intent to keep the site Michigan-specific.
He is, however, cultivating relationships with other Web site developers in order to link up with other India-themed sites throughout the country.
"That would be very helpful to people who are relocating or traveling from state-to-state," Kumar said.
The site is currently supported by more than 30 advertisers, but Kumar said he is convinced that number will grow quickly.
"There are about 40,000 Asin Indians living in Michigan, and more than 80 percent of them

AARON WARD

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New Web site offers information for natives of India

SY CAROL MARSHALL
STATA WHITE
comarballocalomecommunet
Although he's lived in the
United States for 16 years,
Annah Kumar remembers well
what it was like when he left
India and settled in his new,
strange home in the Midwest.
He needed a place to live, a car
and places to shop and eat—
and he needed to find them fast.
Those needs sparked Kumar's
Michigan Indian Web site,
www.miindia.com, launched two
years ago.

"The area was growing quite
fast and there was a need among
people from India who were getting off the plane and alrendy
had good jobs, but did not know
how to find a place to live, how
to got a car, where to buy Indian
clothes and food, "Kumar said.
Kumar, who already had a
busy schedule as AAA of Michigan finance director, began
working on the site in his sparetime with businesse partner;
Senthil

Kumaran.
The site opened in 1998, and it's
been growing over since.

"We now have five people
develop milndia as a Web portal
for Michigan Indians."
Comprehensive source

Comprehensive source

Comprehensive source
Kumar said most Indian
groups and associations are
based on its members' region of
origin, but until minida, there
was no one source that brought
all the groups together.
Today, the site includes information on issues every newcomor to the United States needs to
know, including how to dress,
where to shop, how to get a drivcer's license and Social Security
card, and information about
mmigration.
The site also gets personal,
Site for everyone

and includes a message board, filled with messages from people seeking baby sitters, roommate, used cars, and information about issues and events.

"There's a certain comfort levie when people visit our Web site," Kumar said. They feel like they're visiting a room full of people who have been through exactly the same things at one point or another. We have all been through those things after the contract of the produce of the produce of the produce in the produce of the produce of

■ 'People understand so much more about other cultures and other people than they used to, and that has a lot to do with the Internet.

> Anand Kumar Web site developer

fitting in. We want to be a part of our communities," Kumar said, "But at the same time, our culture is several thousand years old and we want to held onto that while we go about our jobs and everyday lives,"

The site began to evolve from there, said Kumar.

"My friends and neighbors were curious about me and my

"My friends and neighbors were curious about me and my culture – especially Indian food – so I try to include information for them to learn about us." Kumar said. He added he hopes to develop more information about Indian culture specifically for non-Indians.

MEET THE RED WINGS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH

"This site is definitely not intended to be only for Indians," Kumar said. "This is great for people who work with, or live with, or are friends with Indians, who want to know more about us. Our intent is help everyone understand about each other."

Kumar explained said just this week, he came across a message on the message beards from a young man whose former room mate is Indian, and is getting married. The writer asked for suggestions about what to buy him for a traditional wedding of the said of the s

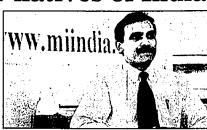
have computers," he said. "Businesse, especially large businesses, are recognizing that ethnic marketing is the way to go to reach these people."

Further, he said, Indian consumers are a very attractive audience because so many have well-paying tech jobs.

Kumar said he's very pleased with the site's growth, and looks forward to watching it grow in the future.

"The changes I've seen during the last 16 years are phenomenal," he said. "People undersand so much more about other cultures and other people than they used to, and that has a lot to do with the Internet." The site also tries to help its visitors in their careers. Much of the material on mindia is technology-inténsive, explained Kumar, because so many immigrants come from India to take technology jobs. Recognizing that, he includes as much useful information and tutorials as possible for them. Kumar said he has no intention of expanding the site outside Michigan, and he estimates about 80 percent of the site's visitors are from Michigan.

If you're going to do some hing like this, and do it well, you have to live there, 'he said of his intent to keep the site Michigan-specific.



MINDIA.COM: Anand Kumar describes the offering of his Web site, www.miindia.com, designed for Michiganders of Indian descent.

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