

**Date: September 23, 2003**

## DEAR FRIEND OF BITS



BITSConnect has been an extraordinary demonstration of loyalty and confidence in BITS. A big thank you to all the volunteers and supporters of BITSConnect for your time, energy and monetary contributions. It is largely due to your tireless support and financial help that BITSConnect has transformed from thought to deployment in under a year!

Many have asked us about the status of the project as well as the status of fundraising - how much was spent, which batch or chapter gave most money, etc. Here is a project summary as well as the answers to some of your questions while keeping in mind our donor's requests for privacy -

**ON TRACK AND BELOW BUDGET** We are happy to report that we have made excellent progress on Phase I of BITSConnect project implementation. Over \$250K of equipment has been deployed in Phase I. The BITSConnect campus backbone has been fully laid out and the new core of the network is now live.

Phase II equipment totaling \$470K after vendor discounts has been ordered and is being dispatched by our suppliers. The cost of deploying these phases is roughly \$300K. At the end of Phase II, BITS will have a fully functional network with all access points live and active.

The project team is 100% confident that the remaining work too will be completed on time, below budget, and BITSConnect infrastructure will be fully deployed by year-end.

**WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN?** Over 15 kilometers of cable has been laid in Pilani and the core of the network is live. All hostel rooms now have voice-capable data network access points over a gigabit backbone. Staff quarters have been connected via Long Range Ethernet. The academic blocks are already on the new network. Wireless access points are being set up in the new library, the Senate Room and Sky. Configurations and 'bring-up' operations are progressing in full swing and the institute; hostel rooms and the staff quarters will all be on the network before the end of the semester.

**WHERE DID THE MONEY COME FROM?** Until BITSConnect came along, BITSAA International collected under \$10K in its under 2 years of existence as a not-for-profit organization. The estimated cost of BITSConnect was \$1.5 million. After substantial vendor discounts, the cost to BITS was \$1.2 million. Of this total, BITS laid out \$450K with BITSAA offering to raise the remaining amount of \$750K. This was a huge challenge - this amount was 75 times the amount BITSAA had raised in a single year! What's more, the \$750K had to be raised in under 12 months! BITSians had to quickly build fundraising capacity and launch a mammoth marketing campaign to lift the profile of BITSAA in the US. BITSians rose to the challenge and the proof is in the pudding. In all, BITSAA has raised about \$650K so far and here is an update on who gave how much and how can you help us in the last leg

**THE US NUMBERS!** Over 150 BITSians contributed roughly \$550K to BITSConnect in the US. This includes about \$58K from friends of alumni and other non-BITSian supporters! With the Silicon Valley Chapter in the driver's seat of the project, the two California chapters showed us the way - 90 Californians gave \$300K to BITSConnect! Boston based New England chapter surprised everyone with the highest per capita contribution!

Just 11 Massachusetts BITSians gave a combined total of \$63K – an average of about \$6K per person! Individual contributions ranged from \$20 to \$50,000.

**MEERA BHARAT MAHAAN!** Chapters in India got into action only two months ago but posted an impressive total on the scoreboard! They contributed Rs. 45 lakhs or \$100K to the project. Bangalore came on top with over Rs. 30 lakhs. The Bangalore effort was helped greatly by BITSConnexion – a BITS style music night that has been the talk of India ever since. BITSians in Europe and Asia (outside India) contributed about \$2K.

**BATCH WISE – STRENGTH IN NUMBERS!** With memories of BITS fresh on their mind, the 90's batches showed strength in numbers. More than 50 BITSians from the 90's batches contributed roughly \$20K to BITSConnect.

**A ROUND OF APPLAUSE** A handful of BITSian grad students gave about \$200. For their unconditional love of their alma mater, they deserve the biggest applause!

**DIGGING DEEP...** It was the 60's and 70's batches that dug really deep into their pockets! Eight BITSians from the 60's gave over \$110K and roughly 40 BITSians from the 70's gave about \$160K to BITSConnect! One 60's batch BITSian based in DC wrote a check for \$50K! Only slightly behind their seniors, 35 BITSians from the 80's batches contributed roughly \$100K to the project.

**THE LAST MILE** The BITSConnect team takes this opportunity to thank all the contributors for your support. Thanks to your support, we are nearly at the finish line.

**BUT WE ARE RUNNING THE PROVERBIAL LAST MILE – WHICH HAS PROVED TO BE THE MOST DIFFICULT MILE.** We are still \$100K short of the \$750K we committed. If you haven't already contributed and would like to do so, or you would like to contribute more to this effort, it is not too late to join in. When BITSConnect is completed later this year, we would have funded and implemented a massive 4000+ node network costing \$1.2 million in a little over 12 months! Thanks to your support, BITSConnect will provide a massive boost to preserve BITS' position as India's leading private sector university. Thanks once again for your help.

Your BITSConnect Core Team

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We are still \$100K short of the \$750K we committed. If you haven't already contributed and would like to do so, or you would like to contribute more to this effort, it is not too late to join. Visit [www.bitsaa.org](http://www.bitsaa.org) to get more information or email [bitsconnect@bitsaa.org](mailto:bitsconnect@bitsaa.org)