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NETWORKING – HOW KINGMAKERS CAN BE MORE POWERFUL THAN KINGS THEMSELVES

With a growing emphasis on relationship building and networking as one of the keys to success in the business world, many of us have discovered the power of the BITS Pilani alumni network through online communities such as Yahoo! Groups, Linked In and our very own BITSAA classnotes.

SINCE BITSAA came into being, many many BITSians have expressed a wish to reconnect with their long lost wingies and batchmates. Some resorted to setting up private networks as extensions to the cliques they formed on campus. Others simply waited for word of their pals in an anticipated serendipity of cosmic connections.

While there are lots of interactions as evidenced by the chatter within private BITSian networks, we wonder if members in these networks would like to share their batch achievements with the rest of us folks. It's certainly clear there is a lot of obvious pride within us to take the time to celebrate such BITSian achievements. We recently analyzed the activities within our own BITSAA ClassNotes network and noticed some interesting patterns.

The sharp “digital divide” between the pre-'80 and the post-80 batches has some obvious reasons. When I

joined BITS somewhere in the early '80s, HP-1000 and punch-cards were still the norm in the electronic world (or was it only at BITS?). Internet and email were not yet common words in our vocabularies. Cellphones and iPods did not exist even in science fiction (well maybe cellphones in some form did exist).

Meera Bhawan “inmates” respected the 9 PM curfew regulation and Malviya was still the much feared super-senior domain for male BITSians. We worshipped lone-ranger superstars (personified by Clint Eastwood and Amitabh Bachchan) as heroes. Much has changed since then. Those lone rangers and angry young men have now been replaced by Gen Xers, Gen Yers, Internet pioneers and VCs.

Open source communities, Yahoo groups and Ryze networks are really the worlds we have begun to reside and test our reality in.

It seems that the power behind Six Degrees of Separation and

Metcalfe’s Law of Networks* have come to be recognized universally by our collective selves. Networked communities have become the bridge to our future existence.

The ClassNotes as it exists today is part of our constantly evolving effort to make it easier to connect BITSians worldwide. The Sandpaper community congratulates these leaders and seeding agents who worked behind the scenes to pull their batch-mates together and expand our own BITSAA community. They have truly foreseen the tremendous potential of professional networking among BITSians globally. The BITSAA ClassNotes crown this year goes to the members and batch reps of the '97, '98, '94, '88 and '84 batches.

To the lone rangers in other batches, we invite you to see how BITSAA has grown and how you too to can do your bit and be a part of this formidable and evolving organization.

