Social Networking Site for Social Responsibility

[1]M.Vinod Kumar & [2]M.Ratnakar Babu
[1]S V College Of Enggineering Hyderabad

[2]Associate Professor S V College Of Enggineering Hyderabad

Abstract:

As the social enterprise builds momentum, the big question is: How will companies effectively tap the employee crowd to become more socially productive? Enterprise social networks arm companies with social media functionality, allowing them to collaborate with their employees around up-to-the minute information. The ability to manage and profit from employee knowledge through social networks, idea funnels, and prediction markets will be the defining competitive advantage for this decade. Employees will have a voice and enterprises will truly leverage their most valuable assets. Today, social media has become a weapon for the corporate as well as individuals to serve the society. While the corporate are using it to carry out their corporate social responsibility, individuals are using it to build up a social movement-raising funds for causes to catalyzing mass upheavals. The present paper aims to throw light at the various possibilities & potential of social media, its functioning styles, current trends & attitudes of corporate and individual with the help of relevant statistics and case studies.

Keywords: Blog; Wiki (Online Encyclopedia); CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility); Facebook; Tweet; YouTube

Introduction:

Social media are media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques. Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Heinlein also define 1 social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content." Businesses also refer to social media as consumer-generated media (CGM). A common thread running through all definitions of social media is a blending of technology and social interaction for the co-creation of value. People gain information, education, news, etc., by electronic media and print media. Social media are distinct from industrial or traditional media, such as newspapers, television, and film. They are relatively inexpensive and accessible to enable anyone (even private individuals) to publish or access information, compared to industrial media, which generally require significant resources to publish information. One characteristic shared by both social media and industrial media is the capability to reach small or large audiences; for example, either a blog post or a television show may reach zero people or millions of people. Some of the properties that help describe the differences between social media and industrial media are: Reach - both industrial and social media technologies provide scale and are capable of reaching a global audience. Industrial media, however, typically use a centralized framework for organization, production, and dissemination, whereas social media are by their very nature more decentralized, less hierarchical, and distinguished by multiple points of production and utility.

1. Accessibility - the means of production for industrial media are typically government and/or privately owned; social media tools are generally

available to the public at little or no cost.

2. Usability - industrial media production typically requires specialized skills and training conversely, most social media production does not require specialized skills and training, or requires only modest reinterpretation of existing skills; in theory, anyone with access can operate the means of social media production.

3. Immediacy - the time lag between communications produced by industrial media can be long (days, weeks, or even months) compared to social media (which can be capable of virtually instantaneous responses; only the participants determine any delay in response). However, as industrial media begin adopting aspects of production normally associated with social media tools, this feature may not prove distinctive over time.

4. Permanence - industrial media, once created, cannot be altered (once a magazine article is printed and distributed changes cannot be made to that same article) whereas social media can be altered almost instantaneously by comments or editing.

Community media constitute an interesting hybrid of industrial and social media. Though community-owned, some community radios, TV and newspapers are run by professionals and some by amateurs. They use both social and industrial media frameworks. In his book, The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom, published in 2006, Yochai Benkler analyzed many of these distinctions and their implications in terms of both economics and political liberty. However, Benkler, like many academics, uses the neologism network economy or "network information economy" to describe the underlying economic, social, and technological characteristics of what has come to be known as "social media". Andrew Keen criticizes social media in his book The Cult of the Amateur, wrote, "Out of this anarchy, it suddenly became clear that what was governing the infinite monkeys now inputting away on the Internet was the law of digital Darwinism, the survival of the loudest and most opinionated. Under these rules, the only way to

intellectually prevail is by infinite filibustering." Tim Berners-Lee contends that the danger of social networking sites is that most are silos and do not allow users to port data from one site to another. He also cautions against social networks that grow too big and become a monopoly as this tends to limit innovation. There are various statistics that account for social media usage and effectiveness for individuals worldwide. Some of the most recent statistics are as follows:

• Social networking now accounts for 22% of all time spent online in the US.

• A total of 234 million people age 13 and older in the U.S. used mobile devices in December 2009.

• Twitter processed more than one billion tweets in December 2009 and averages almost 40 million tweets per day.

• Over 25% of U.S. internet page views occurred at one of the top social networking sites in December 2009, up from 13.8% a year.

Each social networking website and application provides its own privacy policy, and while users are typically required to submit some PII during the registration process, the Department will not solicit or collect this PII. In advance of utilizing a social networking website or application, the Department will examine the social networking website or application privacy policy to evaluate the risks to determine whether the website is appropriate for the Department's use. Additionally, to the extent feasible, the Department will post a Privacy Notice on the social networking website or application website itself.4 If an agency posts a link that leads to a social networking or application website, the agency will provide an alert to the visitor, such as a statement adjacent to the link or a "pop-up," explaining that visitors are being directed to a nongovernment website that may have different privacy policies from those of the agency's

official website. If PII is posted on a social networking or applications site or sent to the Department in connection with the transaction of public business, it may become a federal record and if so the Department is required to maintain a copy per the appropriate records retention policies. The Department will only collect the information necessary for the proper performance of official Departmental functions.

Characterization of the Information

The following questions are intended to define the scope of the information requested and/or collected, as well as reasons for its collection. 2.1 Identify the information the project collects, uses, disseminates, or maintains. Under this PIA, the Department may utilize social networking websites and applications for external relations (communications/outreach/public dialogue), to provide information about or from the Department, and to provide customer service. The Department uses these non-government websites to make information and services widely available, while promoting transparency and accountability. DHS may use these websites to inform the public on a range of topics from information on airport security to preparedness measures in the event of a hurricane. A public user's information will only be viewed by the Department when the user posts on DHS social networking websites or applications. Those DHS programs using the social networking websites and applications listed in Appendix A are not permitted to actively seek PII, and may only use the minimum amount of PII, which it receives, to accomplish a purpose required by statute, regulation, or executive order (all other PII received will be managed in accordance with the requirements and analytical understanding

outlined in this PIA). Many social networking websites and applications request PII at the time of registration. This collection will vary. Frequently users can provide optional information in addition to the required registration information. For example, users can include optional information on: interests, birthday, religious and political views, family members and relationship status, education and work, photos, alias, contact information (phone, email, address), and hometown to name a few. The Department does not automatically have access to, and will not seek, the public's registration information unless the information used during registration pre-populates a public profile when interacting with a user, if the users' privacy settings allow this display. If PII is posted on a social networking website or application or sent to the Department in connection with the transaction of public business, it may become a federal record and if so the Department is required to maintain a copy per its records retention policies. Through use of social networking websites and applications, DHS users and public users may have an account and, by nature of the program, PII may transit and be displayed by the system during the sign-up/long-on transaction and subsequent interactions.

Sources of the information:

Social networking website and application users may be required to submit PII to the social networking website or application service at the time of registration. As noted above, users may voluntarily submit additional optional information to further identify or categorize themselves if they so choose. This may also happen during social networking sessions with the Department. If the Department accepts a friend request from a public

user, additional information is viewable by the Department that users have designated for their network to see. This information is collected and maintained by the social networking website or application service provider, but may be viewed by the Department. The Department may view user comments in instances of bi-directional communication between a DHS user and another public user. If PII is posted on a social networking website or application or sent to the Department in connection with the transaction of public business, it may become a federal record and if so the Department is required to maintain a copy per its records retention policies. The use of a social networking website or application to conduct communications and transactions on behalf of the Department does not preclude the Department's responsibility for potentially managing it as a federal record.

A History of Social Network Sites:

The Early Years According to the definition above, the first recognizable social network site launched in 1997. SixDegrees.com allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and, beginning in 1998, surf the Friends lists. Each of these features existed in some form before SixDegrees, of course. Profiles existed on most major dating sites and many community sites. AIM and ICQ buddy lists supported lists of Friends, although those Friends were not visible to others. Classmates.com allowed people to affiliate with their high school or college and surf the network for others who were also affiliated, but users could not create profiles or list Friends until years later. SixDegrees was the first to combine these features. SixDegrees promoted itself as a tool to help people connect with and send messages to others. While SixDegrees attracted millions of users, it failed to become a sustainable business

and, in 2000, the service closed. Looking back, its founder believes that SixDegrees was simply ahead of its time (A. Weinreich, personal communication, July 11, 2007). While people were already flocking to the Internet, most did not have extended networks of friends who were online. Early adopters complained that there was little to do after accepting Friend requests, and most users were not interested in meeting strangers. From 1997 to 2001, a number of community tools began supporting various combinations of profiles and publicly articulated Friends. AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, and MiGente allowed users to create personal, professional, and dating profiles—users could identify Friends on their personal profiles without seeking approval for those connections (O. Wasow, personal communication, August 16, 2007). Likewise, shortly after its launch in 1999, LiveJournal listed one-directional connections on user pages. LiveJournal's creator suspects that he fashioned these Friends after instant messaging buddy lists (B. Fitzpatrick, personal communication, June 15, 2007)—on LiveJournal, people mark others as Friends to follow their journals and manage privacy settings. The Korean virtual worlds site Cyworld was started in 1999 and added SNS features in 2001, independent of these other sites (see Kim & Yun, this issue). Likewise, when the Swedish web community LunarStorm refashioned itself as an SNS in 2000, it contained Friends lists, guestbooks, and diary pages (D. Skog, personal communication, September 24, 2007). The next wave of SNSs began when Ryze.com was launched in 2001 to help people leverage their business networks. Ryze'sfounder reports that he first introduced the site to his friends—primarily members of the San Francisco business and technology community, including the entrepreneurs and investors behind many future

SNSs (A. Scott, personal communication, June 14, 2007). In particular, the people behind Ryze, Tribe.net, LinkedIn, and Friendster were tightly entwined personally and professionally. They believed that they could support each other without competing (Festa, 2003). In the end, Ryze never acquired mass popularity, Tribe.net grew to attract a passionate niche user base, LinkedIn became a powerful business service, and Friendster became the most significant, if only as "one of the biggest disappointments in Internet history" (Chafkin, 2007, p. 1)

The Rise (and Fall) of Friendster Friendster launched in 2002 as a social complement to Ryze. It was designed to compete with Match.com, a profitable online dating site (Cohen, 2003). While most dating sites focused on introducing people to strangers with similar interests, Friendster was designed to help friends-of-friends meet, based on the assumption that friends-of-friends would make better romantic partners than would strangers (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 27, 2003). Friendster gained traction among three groups of early adopters who shaped the site—bloggers, attendees of the Burning Man arts festival, and gay men (boyd, 2004)—and grew to 300,000 users through word of mouth before traditional press coverage began in May 2003 (O'Shea, 2003). As Friendster's popularity surged, the site encountered technical and social difficulties (boyd, 2006b). Friendster's servers and databases were ill-equipped to handle its rapid growth, and the site faltered regularly, frustrating users who replaced email with Friendster. Because organic growth had been critical to creating a coherent community, the onslaught of new users who learned about the site from media coverage upset the cultural balance. Furthermore, exponential growth meant a collapse in social contexts: Users had to face their bosses and former classmates alongside their close friends. To complicate matters, Friendster began restricting the activities of its most passionate users. The initial design of Friendster restricted users from viewing profiles of people who were more than four degrees away (friends-of-friends-of-friends-of-friends). In order to view additional profiles, users began adding acquaintances and interesting-looking strangers to expand their reach. Some began massively collecting Friends, an activity that was implicitly encouraged through a "most popular" feature. The ultimate collectors were fake profiles representing iconic fictional characters: celebrities, concepts, and other such entities. These "Fakesters" outraged the company, who banished fake profiles and eliminated the "most popular" feature (boyd, in press-b). While few people actually created Fakesters, many more enjoyed surfing Fakesters for entertainment or using functional Fakesters (e.g., "Brown University") to find people they knew. The active deletion of Fakesters (and genuine users who chose non-realistic photos) signaled to some that the company did not share users' interests. Many early adopters left because of the combination of technical difficulties, social collisions, and a rupture of trust between users and the site (boyd, 2006b). However, at the same time that it was fading in the U.S., its popularity skyrocketed in the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Goldberg, 2007). SNSs Hit the Mainstream From 2003 onward, many new SNSs were launched, prompting social software analyst Clay Shirky (2003) to coin the term YASNS: "Yet Another Social Networking Service." Most took the form of profile-centric sites, trying to replicate the early success of Friendster or target specific demographics. While socially-organized SNSs solicit broad audiences, professional sites such as LinkedIn, Visible Path, and Xing (formerly

openBC) focus on business people. "Passion-centric" SNSs like Dogster (T. Rheingold, personal communication, August 2, 2007) help strangers connect based on shared interests. Care2 helps activists meet, Couchsurfing connects travelers to people with couches, and MyChurch joins Christian churches and their members. Furthermore, as the social media and user-generated content phenomena grew, websites focused on media sharing began implementing SNS features and becoming SNSs themselves. Examples include Flickr (photo sharing), Last.FM (music listening habits), and YouTube (video sharing). With the plethora of venture-backed startups launching in Silicon Valley, few people paid attention to SNSs that gained popularity elsewhere, even those built by major corporations. For example, Google's Orkut failed to build a sustainable U.S. user base, but a "Brazilian invasion" (Fragoso, 2006) made Orkut the national SNS of Brazil. Microsoft's Windows Live Spaces (a.k.a. MSN Spaces) also launched to lukewarm U.S. reception but became extremely popular elsewhere. Few analysts or journalists noticed when MySpace launched in Santa Monica, California, hundreds of miles from Silicon Valley. MySpace was begun in 2003 to compete with sites like Friendster, Xanga, and AsianAvenue, according to co-founder Tom Anderson (personal communication, August 2, 2007); the founders wanted to attract estranged Friendster users (T. Anderson, personal communication, February 2, 2006). After rumors emerged that Friendster would adopt a fee-based system, users posted Friendster messages encouraging people to join alternate SNSs, including Tribe.net and MySpace (T. Anderson, personal communication, August 2, 2007). Because of this, MySpace was able to grow rapidly by capitalizing on Friendster's alienation of its early adopters. One particularly notable group that encouraged others to switch were indie-rock bands who were expelled from Friendster for failing to comply with profile regulations. While MySpace was not launched with bands in mind, they were welcomed. Indie-rock bands from the Los Angeles region began creating profiles, and local promoters used MySpace to advertise VIP passes for popular clubs. Intrigued, MySpace contacted local musicians to see how they could support them (T. Anderson, personal communication, September 28, 2006). Bands were not the sole source of MySpace growth, but the symbiotic relationship between bands and fans helped MySpace expand beyond former Friendster users. The bands-and-fans dynamic was mutually beneficial: Bands wanted to be able to contact fans, while fans desired attention from their favorite bands and used Friend connections to signal identity and affiliation. Futhermore, MySpace differentiated itself by regularly adding features based on user demand (boyd, 2006b) and by allowing users to personalize their pages. This "feature" emerged because MySpace did not restrict users from adding HTML into the forms that framed their profiles; a copy/paste code culture emerged on the web to support users in generating unique MySpace backgrounds and layouts (Perkel, in press). Teenagers began joining MySpace en masse in 2004. Unlike older users, most teens were never on Friendster—some joined because they wanted to connect with their favorite bands; others were introduced to the site through older family members. As teens began signing up, they encouraged their friends to join. Rather than rejecting underage users, MySpace changed its user policy to allow minors. As the site grew, three distinct populations began to form: musicians/artists, teenagers, and the post-college

urban social crowd. By and large, the latter two groups did not interact with one another except through bands. Because of the lack of mainstream press coverage during 2004, few others noticed the site's growing popularity. Then, in July 2005, News Corporation purchased MySpace for $580 million (BBC, 2005), attracting massive media attention. Afterwards, safety issues plagued MySpace. The site was implicated in a series of sexual interactions between adults and minors, prompting legal action (Consumer Affairs, 2006). A moral panic concerning sexual predators quickly spread (Bahney, 2006), although research suggests that the concerns were exaggerated.2 A Global Phenomenon While MySpace attracted the majority of media attention in the U.S. and abroad, SNSs were proliferating and growing in popularity worldwide. Friendster gained traction in the Pacific Islands, Orkut became the premier SNS in Brazil before growing rapidly in India (Madhavan, 2007), Mixi attained widespread adoption in Japan, LunarStorm took off in Sweden, Dutch users embraced Hyves, Grono captured Poland, Hi5 was adopted in smaller countries in Latin America, South America, and Europe, and Bebo became very popular in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia. Additionally, previously popular communication and community services began implementing SNS features. The Chinese QQ instant messaging service instantly became the largest SNS worldwide when it added profiles and made friends visible (McLeod, 2006), while the forum tool Cyworld cornered the Korean market by introducing homepages and buddies (Ewers, 2006). Blogging services with complete SNS features also became popular. In the U.S., blogging tools with SNS features, such as Xanga, LiveJournal, and Vox, attracted broad audiences. Skyrock reigns in France, and Windows Live

Spaces dominates numerous markets worldwide, including in Mexico, Italy, and Spain. Although SNSs like QQ, Orkut, and Live Spaces are just as large as, if not larger than, MySpace, they receive little coverage in U.S. and English-speaking media, making it difficult to track their trajectories. Expanding Niche Communities Alongside these open services, other SNSs launched to support niche demographics before expanding to a broader audience. Unlike previous SNSs, Facebook was designed to support distinct college networks only. Facebook began in early 2004 as a Harvard-only SNS (Cassidy, 2006). To join, a user had to have a harvard.edu email address. As Facebook began supporting other schools, those users were also required to have university email addresses associated with those institutions, a requirement that kept the site relatively closed and contributed to users' perceptions of the site as an intimate, private community. Beginning in September 2005, Facebook expanded to include high school students, professionals inside corporate networks, and, eventually, everyone. The change to open signup did not mean that new users could easily access users in closed networks—gaining access to corporate networks still required the appropriate .com address, while gaining access to high school networks required administrator approval. (As of this writing, only membership in regional networks requires no permission.) Unlike other SNSs, Facebook users are unable to make their full profiles public to all users. Another feature that differentiates Facebook is the ability for outside developers to build "Applications" which allow users to personalize their profiles and perform other tasks, such as compare movie preferences and chart travel histories. While most SNSs focus on growing broadly and exponentially, others explicitly seek narrower

audiences. Some, like aSmallWorld and BeautifulPeople, intentionally restrict access to appear selective and elite. Others—activity-centered sites like Couchsurfing, identity-driven sites like BlackPlanet, and affiliation-focused sites like MyChurch—are limited by their target demographic and thus tend to be smaller. Finally, anyone who wishes to create a niche social network site can do so on Ning, a platform and hosting service that encourages users to create their own SNSs. Currently, there are no reliable data regarding how many people use SNSs, although marketing research indicates that SNSs are growing in popularity worldwide (comScore, 2007). This growth has prompted many corporations to invest time and money in creating, purchasing, promoting, and advertising SNSs. At the same time, other companies are blocking their employees from accessing the sites. Additionally, the U.S. military banned soldiers from accessing MySpace (Frosch, 2007) and the Canadian government prohibited employees from Facebook (Benzie, 2007), while the U.S. Congress has proposed legislation to ban youth from accessing SNSs in schools and libraries (H.R. 5319, 2006; S. 49, 2007). The rise of SNSs indicates a shift in the organization of online communities. While websites dedicated to communities of interest still exist and prosper, SNSs are primarily organized around people, not interests. Early public online communities such as Usenet and public discussion forums were structured by topics or according to topical hierarchies, but social network sites are structured as personal (or "egocentric") networks, with the individual at the center of their own community. This more accurately mirrors unmediated social structures, where "the world is composed of networks, not groups" (Wellman, 1988, p. 37). The introduction of SNS features has introduced a new organizational framework for online communities, and with it, a vibrant new research context. Previous Scholarship Scholarship concerning SNSs is emerging from diverse disciplinary and methodological traditions, addresses a range of topics, and builds on a large body of CMC research. The goal of this section is to survey research that is directly concerned with social network sites, and in so doing, to set the stage for the articles in this special issue. To date, the bulk of SNS research has focused on impression management and friendship performance, networks and network structure, online/offline connections, and privacy issues. Impression Management and Friendship Performance Like other online contexts in which individuals are consciously able to construct an online representation of self—such as online dating profiles and MUDS—SNSs constitute an important research context for scholars investigating processes of impression management, self-presentation, and friendship performance. In one of the earliest academic articles on SNSs, boyd (2004) examined Friendster as a locus of publicly articulated social networks that allowed users to negotiate presentations of self and connect with others. Donath and boyd (2004) extended this to suggest that "public displays of connection" serve as important identity signals that help people navigate the networked social world, in that an extended network may serve to validate identity information presented in profiles. While most sites encourage users to construct accurate representations of themselves, participants do this to varying degrees. Marwick (2005) found that users on three different SNSs had complex strategies for negotiating the rigidity of a prescribed "authentic" profile, while boyd (in press-b) examined the phenomenon of "Fakesters" and the ways in which profiles could never be

"real." The extent to which portraits are authentic or playful varies across sites; both social and technological forces shape user practices. Skog (2005) found that the status feature on LunarStorm strongly influenced how people behaved and what they choose to reveal—profiles there indicate one's status as measured by activity (e.g., sending messages) and indicators of authenticity (e.g., using a "real" photo instead of a drawing). Another aspect of self-presentation is the articulation of friendship links, which serve as identity markers for the profile owner. Impression management is one of the reasons given by Friendster users for choosing particular friends (Donath&boyd, 2004). Recognizing this, Zinman and Donath (2007) noted that MySpace spammers leverage people's willingness to connect to interesting people to find targets for their spam. In their examination of LiveJournal "friendship," Fono and Raynes-Goldie (2006) described users' understandings regarding public displays of connections and how the Friending function can operate as a catalyst for social drama. In listing user motivations for Friending, boyd (2006a) points out that "Friends" on SNSs are not the same as "friends" in the everyday sense; instead, Friends provide context by offering users an imagined audience to guide behavioral norms. Other work in this area has examined the use of Friendster Testimonials as self-presentational devices (boyd&Heer, 2006) and the extent to which the attractiveness of one's Friends (as indicated by Facebook's "Wall" feature) impacts impression formation (Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, &Westerman, in press). Networks and Network Structure Social network sites also provide rich sources of naturalistic behavioral data. Profile and linkage data from SNSs can be gathered either through the use of automated collection techniques or through datasets provided directly from the company, enabling network analysis researchers to explore large-scale patterns of friending, usage, and other visible indicators (Hogan, in press), and continuing an analysis trend that started with examinations of blogs and other websites. For instance, Golder, Wilkinson, and Huberman (2007) examined an anonymized dataset consisting of 362 million messages exchanged by over four million Facebook users for insight into Friending and messaging activities. Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2007) explored the relationship between profile elements and number of Facebook friends, finding that profile fields that reduce transaction costs and are harder to falsify are most likely to be associated with larger number of friendship links. These kinds of data also lend themselves well to analysis through network visualization (Adamic, Buyukkokten, & Adar, 2003; Heer&boyd, 2005; Paolillo&Wright, 2005). SNS researchers have also studied the network structure of Friendship. Analyzing the roles people played in the growth of Flickr and Yahoo! 360's networks, Kumar, Novak, and Tomkins (2006) argued that there are passive members, inviters, and linkers "who fully participate in the social evolution of the network" (p. 1). Scholarship concerning LiveJournal's network has included a Friendship classification scheme (Hsu, Lancaster, Paradesi, &Weniger, 2007), an analysis of the role of language in the topology of Friendship (Herring et al., 2007), research into the importance of geography in Friending (Liben-Nowell, Novak, Kumar, Raghavan, and Tomkins, 2005), and studies on what motivates people to join particular communities (Backstrom, Huttenlocher, Kleinberg, &Lan, 2006). Based on Orkut data, Spertus, Sahami, and Buyukkokten (2005) identified a topology of users through their membership in certain communities; they suggest

that sites can use this to recommend additional communities of interest to users. Finally, Liu, Maes, and Davenport (2006) argued that Friend connections are not the only network structure worth investigating. They examined the ways in which the performance of tastes (favorite music, books, film, etc.) constitutes an alternate network structure, which they call a "taste fabric."

CONCLUSION

During this project we have accomplished all the objectives and this project meets the needs of the organization. The developed will be used in searching, retrieving and generating information for the concerned requests.

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M.VINOD KUMAR
S V COLLEGE OF ENGGINEERING
HYDERABAD

M.RATNAKAR BABU

Associate Professor
S V COLLEGE OF ENGGINEERING
HYDERABAD