



Overview

Industry

- Education / University

Challenges

- Needed to curb illegal downloading of copyrighted material without adding to administrative costs and extra headcount
- Wanted to track network usage over time with automatic reports
- Wanted system that would help leverage the “teachable moment”

Solution

- Detect illegal downloads with CopySense® Appliance

Benefits

- Curbs illegal downloads while still allowing legitimate P2P use
- Helps teach students about copyright infringement – creating better digital citizens
- Provides comprehensive, easy to read reports
- Basically runs itself; no additional headcount required

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Northern Michigan University

Located on Michigan's Upper Peninsula on the scenic shores of Lake Superior, Northern Michigan University is home to 9400 students. This four-year, public university has the distinction of having been named one of the “most unwired” (wireless) college campuses by Intel Corp. In fact its lucky students each receive a notebook computer upon his or her matriculation. The university's wireless campus has dramatically changed the way students learn and teachers teach. It has also carved a new landscape for how information, music and video are downloaded and shared.

David Maki, CTO for the university, oversees the administration and use of Northern Michigan's networks – both wired and wireless. According to Maki, a few years ago along with the distinction of providing easy network access to its students, came the not-so-distinctive record of being listed on the RIAA's top 25 list of universities receiving the highest numbers of RIAA complaints for college campuses.

“When we made number 16 of the top 25 universities for downloaders of illegal music, we knew things needed to change. We turned to Audible Magic for help.”

--David Maki, CTO

“It was imperative that we eliminate illegal downloads on our P2P networks,” says Maki. “It was also important that we not block usage for legitimate purposes. We needed a solution that was affordable and wouldn't require additional staffing to operate. We have found Audible Magic's CopySense Appliance software and hardware to be the ideal solution.

“The technology coupled with Audible Magic's extensive database of audio and video files are highly effective. Prior to our using the CopySense Appliance, the university received a large number of RIAA notices. This year, the number of notices has been reduced by 98% and the best thing about the system – it basically runs itself.”

Maki has implemented a multi-tiered system that works in conjunction with the CopySense Appliance. The system takes advantage of the opportunity to educate students on appropriate network usage, while tracking potentially illegal downloads.

All students must register all electronic device that can connect to the Internet, including computers, iPods, and cell phones. Once registered, students receive information on proper use of the Internet. A “must-view” video features the Dean of Students and focuses on copyright infringement. Still infractions do happen.

These are handled via a multi-step process using the CopySense Appliance Graduated Response System:

- First infraction: Receive automatic email letter from the Dean of Students and student is blocked from non-campus Internet use for 48 hours.
- Second infraction: Receive email notice to visit the Help Desk for P2P software review; and again blocked from non-campus Internet access for 48 hours and until the Help Desk review is complete
- Third infraction: Receive an email notice to contact the Dean of Students; blocked from non-campus Internet access for a minimum of 60 days; a required Help Desk P2P software review; and the student must sign a strict compliance contract
- Fourth infraction: Loss of non-campus Internet use; Student Code violation that is reviewed by the Dean of Students.

“We do see a fair number of students that get to that second infraction point. But a far more limited number ever make it to number three,” says Maki. “Our students appreciate the ability to access the Internet from everywhere on our campus and many hotspots within the city as well. Losing that privilege makes a real impact on their ability to communicate with others and to facilitate legal downloads.

“We have been very happy with the CopySense Appliance,” adds Maki. “The reports the system generates give us a clear picture of the progress we have made in reducing incidents of copyright infringement. The proof is in the numbers – the system really works.”