

Torrent download policy enforced across WNC schools



Nick Robinson - Staff Photographer

Freshman Shaun Barrick uses Vuze, a popular torrent download program.

UNCA, ASU, WNC students punished for Internet piracy

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Ben Kimsey was initially confused when his Internet access was cut off in his UNC Asheville dorm. He was even more startled to discover that someone had pirated music using his Internet connection.

"I didn't realize it had stopped working at first. Then my suitemate told me that he got an e-mail saying that one of us had violated copyright law," Kimsey said. "I was only 50 percent certain it was my fault because both me and my roommate downloaded music. My roommate was mad at first because he thought it was him it had happened to. Neither of us do it anymore."

While school Internet policy forbids the use of Internet access for the illegal downloading of music, many students do it anyway. Others choose to wait until they return home on breaks to download music, movies and other content, which they then bring back to campus and enjoy.

"I went kind of Torrent-crazy over Thanksgiving break," admitted freshman Miranda Payseur.

BitTorrent is a software program that facilitates downloads of large files, such

as music, movies or other documents, without any one download location needed.

University Librarian and Copyright Infringement Officer Jim Kulhman sent out a campus-wide e-mail in September to all students with the heading, "Important Information about Downloading on campus." This e-mail reminded students of both the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and of UNCA policy No. 80, both of which explicitly forbid illegal downloading.

The e-mail said that over the past 18 months, Kulhman had only received a handful of complaints of illegal downloads on campus from the music industry. However, the e-mail stated that in the previous two weeks, they had received 30 such complaints.

Other Western North Carolina universities have similar policies in place.

"I pirated a [lot] back in college," said Matthew Barrett, a graduate of Western Carolina University. "[The universities] don't care that much unless they get a call from the Internet service provider," Barrett said.

WCU's policy is relatively hands-off, according to Barrett.

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'Gadgets Aren't Just for Geeks' kicks off TGIF series at Reuter

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Those intimidated by modern devices that most people use in their everyday lives can attend an introduction to useful gadgets taught by Mike Honeycutt, technology support specialist at the NC Center for Creative Retirement. Honeycutt will teach this week's program, Gadgets Aren't Just For Geeks, as part of NC-CCR's TGIF Lunch & Learn series this Friday at the Reuter Center.

"Gadgets are something that you don't need in your life, but if you have them, they make your lives easier," Honeycutt said.

Honeycutt, who calls himself "the computer guy," will feature devices like smart phones, robot vacuum cleaners, digital cameras, FM transmitters and mp3 players, to name a few. He will demonstrate the features of different gadgets and answer questions from the audience.

"This is definitely not a sales talk," he said. "I will tell the pros and cons as I see them, my opinions of why this is a good thing, or why this is not for everyone."

The smart phone, one of Honeycutt's favorite gadgets will be used to assist Honeycutt in interfacing with a video projector to be used in the presentation of other gadgets.

"It simply has my life in there," he said. "It has all of my nieces' and nephews' birthdays - this is dumb - it has the presidential successions. I must have 150 notes in there on just everything from my insurance information for my car to the last time I rented a condo from somebody that I really liked."

Honeycutt's smart phone, different from a regular cell phone, has Microsoft Word, voice record, digital camera and video camera included.

"It would be much more traumatic for me to lose that smart phone than it would be to lose the computer on my desk because my life lives there. I love my smart phone," he said.

Not all smart phones are iPhones by Apple, and not all mp3 players are Apple

iPods, Honeycutt said. He will show people other options available in the market that may be cheaper or more appropriate for different individuals.

"There are other options available for you that are cheaper, or perhaps have a few more features that you might be interested in," Honeycutt said.

For people and college students on a tight budget, he will share his knowledge of other brands. Honeycutt will also talk about "the joys of eBay," where he bought one of his smart phones.

Cullum Norman, 75, retired and a member of the Reuter Center, identifies himself as "primitive" when it comes to new gadgets. He plans on attending this Friday's program so that he can feel "more tech-savvy."

"I won't feel ostracized since most of the people who will attend do not know much about today's technologies," Norman said.

One of the more popular gadgets among the NCCCR members may be the robot vacuum cleaner because of the age of the people who have memberships to NCCCR, Honeycutt said. Most of the people with memberships are above the age of 66.

"I'm interested in learning about gadgets," Norman said. "It would help me become more knowledgeable about all these new technologies. I don't even have a computer or a cell phone."

The robot vacuum cleaner can vacuum a house without a person guiding the device. Robot vacuum cleaners, depending on their features and setting, can detect dust and debris, clean even if the owner may be away and navigate well on their own around the house.

Honeycutt said his mother, 83, has a robot vacuum cleaner (Roomba).

"She just loves it," Honeycutt said. "It allows her to be independent as she grows older. That (product) is probably going to be a hit."

College students may be more interested in the FM transmitter, according to Honeycutt. Students can purchase the FM

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