

COUGARCRY

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WiFi: the Good, the Bad, and the Unknown

By: Marie West

Wilkes Community College is constantly expanding to accommodate students in their learning, teachers in their training, and keep up with the technological world. One big change occurred two years ago when WCC got its WiFi, starting in Thompson Hall. WiFi stands for Wireless Fidelity, which is a fancy way of saying anything with a wireless signal. This would include your cell phone, car alarm, and in the case of WCC, wireless internet.

Students are just beginning to enter this new realm of learning. The mass majority of students have access to a computer outside of campus, and most students have their own PC. Those that don't can visit the writing lab on campus for their educational and some personal internet needs. When students go out to purchase a new computer, more and more are choosing laptops over desktops. Laptops give portability, making it easier to carry school work around with you. However, when it comes to WiFi, a recent survey taken on campus shows only 10% of WCC students are aware WCC has it. Those that do know about it are also the ones that know how to access it. Yet, that leaves a lot of students in the dark about the wireless internet resource available to them.

When it comes to instructors and administrators there are mixed feelings about laptops and WiFi in the classroom. Few are opposed to laptop use on camps, and state specific situations and uses for its purposes- during a computer class it would be unnecessary, but for a research project it would be helpful. Instructors are concerned that students will be distracted by email, social networks, and even internet chatting (and students agree). Everyone concedes that instructors should monitor computer activity in their classroom to ensure students are focusing on the lecture or given task.

Even though some teachers feel laptops and WiFi are unnecessary in their classroom, there are some that feel it is very beneficial. Martin Moore, an ACA and English teacher at WCC, takes his laptop with him to class to help him with

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Up In Smoke!

By: Andrew Bryant

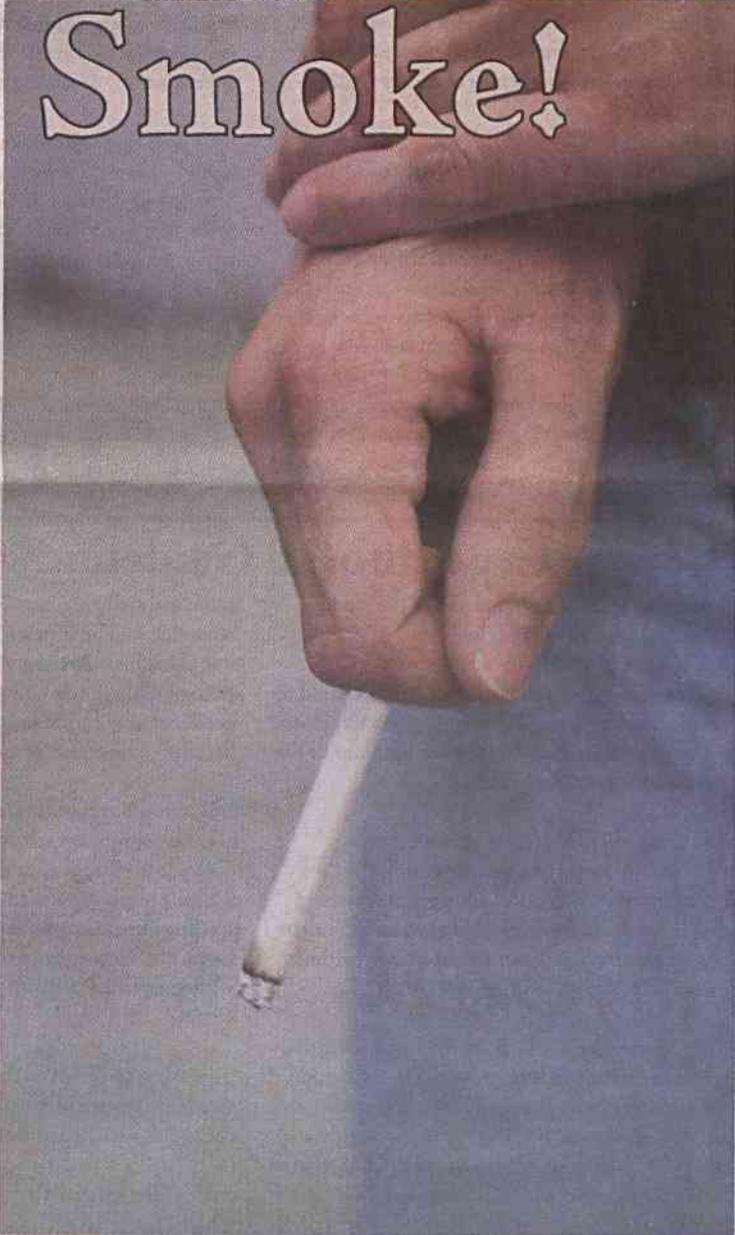
A big change for Wilkes Community College in 2007 was the new smoking sections, featured in numerous locations around the campus. For students fresh out of high school, this is a change from having 100% tobacco free campuses to specific smoking areas. For familiar faces, this is a big change for those used to carrying their cigarettes around before and after class. For Cathy Annas, the official Wilkes Community College Tobacco Use Prevention Grant Coordinator, this is a big success for promoting the health of our college students. In 2006, the college was awarded a Health Awareness Trust Fund, to promote public health issues and reduce tobacco use by college students.

For those questioning the necessity of these designated smoking sections, the answer is simple: it is believed that secondhand smoke has deadly effects on people. A comprehensive scientific report from the U.S. Surgeon General, Richard H. Carmona, states there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke and that nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work increase their risk of developing heart disease by 25 to 30 percent, and lung cancer by 20 to 30 percent.

The biggest example of secondhand smoke danger at Wilkes College was at the front entrances to Hayes Hall. Before the smoking areas came into effect there were many people standing in front of the doorway smoking. This became bothersome to most nonsmokers coming to class. Most nonsmokers are now comfortable with the smoking areas, and so are the smokers. The new changes at the college seem to be going well, and most people are reasonable about smoking their cigarettes in these sections.

However, there are some smokers who are confused about

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