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Lay off Napster, tech services asks

□ Napster may be the culprit for our slow computers.

JENNY COSTA
News Editor

All over campus, slow computers have been the bane of many students existence since the start of school. Now, Technology Services has found the culprit.

The use of Napster by resident students seems to be causing the Internet communications lines to operate at 100 percent.

An email went out from Technology Services last week about the use of Napster by resident students.

Technology Services hoped that the notice contained useful information about Napster and the problems it has been causing for our campus network.

There are two issues that campus officials are having to discuss involving the use of Napster.

The first is a legal issue. Colleges and universities are considering banning Napster because they fear that they may be held liable for the actions of students who choose to use this software illegally.

The second issue, which is more relevant to Meredith, is technical. The technical issues center around security and bandwidth, according to the email that was sent out.

The security problem is somewhat complicated. Meredith has invested in a valuable, efficient firewall system that protects the system from outside users but allows Meredith students to access campus information from any location.

The Napster software is specifically designed to circumvent traditional network security and to make information on its users' systems accessible to anyone anywhere on the Internet.

Computer experts predict that it is only a matter of time

before some malicious computer hacker finds a way to exploit Napster to illegally acquire, alter or deface computer files, the email reported.

Bandwidth is the real problem for the Meredith system at this time. There is only a certain amount of space on the virtual spectrum that Meredith pays to use, and recently, it has been reaching full capacity.

Some signs that it is nearing capacity are messages that say "Server not responding," "Host not available" or "Time-out error." Many Meredith students have received these responses when trying to access the Internet.

"We have a serious problem which we must address immediately," said Network Systems Supervisor Doug Alm.

This year there are student owned computers using more than ten times the combined bandwidth of the email, web and Blackboard servers.

There are several proposed solutions for the problem. One

is for the school to buy more bandwidth. However, this idea is both limited and very costly. Another idea is to simply ban Napster, a very unpopular choice for students. And a third idea is to forcibly block access to Napster, which would be difficult and costly.

The Senior Management Team has been briefed on the technical and legal implications of the software and will decide what course of action they will take, according to Alm's email.

In lieu of making these costly changes, Technology Services asks all resident students to refrain from using Napster for the remainder of this week, through Sept. 22, so they can measure its impact on the system.

They also ask that students educate themselves about Napster. There are several websites that have more in depth information about the legal and technical implications of the software.

Brodie speaks on women, military

STEPHANIE JORDAN
Copy Editor

With the proximity of the Citadel and Virginia Military Institute to North Carolina, Meredith students have seen the controversy over admitting women to both military schools.

Laura Fairchild Brodie, author of *Breaking Out*, a new book that addresses issues relating to admitting women to the Virginia Military Institute, spoke at Meredith on Wednesday, Sept. 13.

Brodie's visit was sponsored by the History and Politics Club but was open to anyone in the Meredith community.

Brodie earned her B.A. from Harvard and a Ph.D. in English literature from the University of Virginia.

She began her research of women at VMI in 1997, just after the Supreme Court ruled that VMI must either admit

women or renounce public funding.

Brodie's husband had been VMI's band director for ten years, so she "got to know the VMI culture very personally." She also taught freshman English at VMI.

When you take on a research project like this, it has to be something close to your heart" Brodie said.

Originally she only intended to write a few articles, but she soon "realized that a lot of people had interesting views on this subject."

Brodie was surprised at some of the things that people are willing to tell her she said.

Brodie spoke with a wide variety of people for her book because she wanted to capture "a view of an entire college culture."

"Different generations that you speak to give you very different views," Brodie said. "I spoke to students, staff and

alumnae, and they would each have their own take on the same event."

VMI had been an all male institution from 1839-1997, so the decision to admit women introduced several areas of concern.

The campus was set up so that students had almost no privacy. This was to create an open brotherhood among students, but admitting women introduced the issue of privacy.

VMI decided to allow shades to be pulled over door windows when women were changing clothes. They also installed private shower stalls, a very controversial move.

Another concern arose over the Rat Line, a tradition of hard physical and mental work forced on freshmen by upper class cadets.

"To outsiders it looks something like Marine Corps boot camp," explained Brodie. "VMI worried that women

wouldn't be able to handle it, but they definitely did not want to take it out."

So far VMI has not altered this tradition. Women are subjected to identical physical tests as the men.

Brodie did not intend for her book to take a stand on whether or not women should have been admitted to VMI. Instead she wanted to show all sides of the debate and "the progress being made toward the assimilation of women."

A reception was held in Joyner Lounge following Brodie's presentation. Students and faculty used this time to talk personally with Brodie.

In addition, Brodie gave a book reading and signing at Quail Ridge Books in Ridge-wood Shopping Center later in the evening.

Brodie's connection to Meredith is that her mother once taught on campus.