

Software hunts illegal sharing

BY AMY THOMSON
STAFF WRITER

The popular practice of file-sharing on college campuses coupled with the recording industry's increasing pursuit of copyright violators has pushed some campuses to take the file-sharing issue into their own hands.

The University of Florida has employed the most aggressive tactic so far in the war against file-sharing with its tracking program known as ICARUS.

ICARUS, an acronym for Integrated Control Application for Restricting User Services, is designed to scan the university network looking for certain types of computer activity.

If a student is sharing illegal files for more than 20 minutes, ICARUS will pull him off the network. On the first offense, the student is cut off for a half-hour. The punishments escalate until the student loses all his network privileges.

The implementation of programs such as this allows administrators to view all user activity on the network. "Basically anything you do when you're using a UFL account is available for the university to look at," said Kyle Jones, UFL student body president.

But the software isn't stopping students from sharing files. According to an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, students at the university discovered ways to modify file-sharing programs such as Kazaa that prevented downloads from being detected.

When the university's programmers updated the ICARUS program to detect the modified file-swapping software, students began sharing files through AOL Instant Messenger.

While many students have raised an outcry against the software, which they call invasive, administrators claim the program will protect students from lawsuits by the recording industry and will keep the network from becoming clogged with downloaders.

According to UFL Provost David Colburn, the peer-to-peer sharing took up enormous amounts of bandwidth and prevented students from using the network for legitimate purposes.

"(ICARUS was implemented) so the university can do its business and the students can do their business," Colburn said.

But most universities aren't using such strong methods and prefer to educate network users on potential copyright violations.

N.C. State University only acts against illegal file-sharing when administrators get complaints. "There are potential legitimate uses for using the technology appropriately," said Jeff Webster, IT Security Administration Manager for N.C. State.

The school has gotten only one subpoena so far and mainly deals with cease and desist notices sent by representatives of various music and entertainment agencies.

UNC-Chapel Hill has a similar policy, which doesn't track students' network activities.

"Every campus does something to try to keep their networks healthy and viable," said Jeanne Smythe, director for computing policy at UNC-CH. "ICARUS is another depth beyond that."

The UNC-CH ResNet center is hosting a "music day" Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Great Hall. Students will be invited to try out legal music downloading software and portable music playing devices.

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

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P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515
Elise Ashburn, Editor, 962-4086
Advertising & Business, 962-1163
News, Features, Sports, 962-0245

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Charity seeks UNC houses

Intends to create low-income housing

BY ERIN GIBSON
STAFF WRITER

Pine Knolls Community Center hopes to obtain three houses from University land to help house low-income families in Chapel Hill who are losing their homes because of increasing rent and an expensive standard of living.

The University purchased a plot of land at the corner of Cameron Avenue and Merritt Mill Road with plans to convert it into a parking lot. As a result, the three houses on the land must be removed.

Bruce Runberg, associate vice chancellor for planning and construction, said the University must first formally advertise the plan with a request for proposals.

"We are asking for proposals that will relocate the houses," he said. "Demolishing them is a second option."

Theodore Parish, Pine Knolls Community Center board member, said the board already has tentative plans for the houses.

If Pine Knolls' proposal is chosen, the homes would be relocated to the 2 1/2 acres of land the center owns near the First Baptist and Manley Estates at the corner of Park Road and Merritt Mill.

"We are in the business of providing low-income housing," Parish said. "The University would be doing something for the community by letting us have them at no cost."

He said there is a three-story

house that would make a great group home for homeless adolescents in the area.

Parish also said the other two houses have two and three bedrooms that could work for two low-income families.

Pine Knolls has seven other houses in the same area. The houses were acquired from Durham Public Schools in 1994 to make way for the future Eastway Elementary School site.

The group obtained five of the houses for free and two for \$1 each. After fixing them up, the board chose families to move into the homes.

The families in the existing houses work in the community as firefighters, house cleaners, roofers and child-care providers. "These residents are real assets to our community," Parish said.

Volunteers do most of the work renovating the houses and professionals are brought in to do electrical and plumbing work. A subsidized mortgage, paid by the occupants, covers most extraneous costs.

"We work on a very low budget," Pine Knolls treasurer Anthony Garchie said. "Sometimes the money comes from our own pockets."

Garchie said he hopes to get the houses for free because Pine Knolls is a nonprofit organization with tight finances.

There are at least six groups, both profit and nonprofit, that are



DTH/KATHY SHUPING

Pine Knolls Community Center hopes to obtain and relocate three houses currently on University land to help house low-income families.

interested in removing the Chapel Hill houses.

Runberg did not comment on which groups have expressed interest in the houses.

Runberg said that within a month state officials in charge of

surplus land and University officials will review the proposals and pick the one that is most advantageous for the University.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

Princeton to tackle grade inflation

BY DORA P. GONZALEZ
STAFF WRITER

Princeton University faculty will discuss this month the possibility of establishing a common grading standard across the university that would cap the number of A's a professor can give in a class.

Grade inflation is not a controversial issue at UNC, administrators say, but some faculty and students disagree with Princeton's proposed system.

The Princeton proposal was introduced by Nancy Malkiel, dean of the undergraduate college, in a memo to faculty.

The April 26 meeting will focus on the establishment of a standardized grading system and the definition of the meaning of letter grades. Malkiel stated in the proposal that it is designed to bring grade inflation under reasonable control.

UNC Provost Robert Shelton said that grade inflation is not a hot topic at UNC but that it is discussed in academic departments year in and year out.

He said each department should be responsible for how professors grade their students — whether it be on a scale or on a curve.

"Faculty have control over their class. ... The watching has to occur among the department members," Shelton said.

Attached to Malkiel's memo are details on how the new system would work. "With strong encouragement of the department chairs, we chose 35 percent A grades in undergraduate courses and 55 percent A grades in independent work," Malkiel stated in her proposal.

But for the plan to work, Malkiel added, it is essential that the remaining grades not all be bumped in the B range.

Shelton said the grading system at UNC still depends on a student's performance and each department's policies. Faculty in science departments have no grade inflation; humanities department professors tend to grade on a curve.

Shelton added that some facul-

ty members agreed that students have been entering the University better prepared than students 10 years ago.

But UNC students say that having a system in which students have to adjust to a specific grading system is unfair.

Shelley Basinger, a sophomore journalism major, said a students should be given an A if he has worked for it. "If getting too many A's is a problem, then professors need to revise their (grading systems) or how hard their exams are."

Other students added that a system like Malkiel's would only increase competition among classmates rather than motivate students to really gain knowledge on a subject.

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

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