Why Managed WiFi is essential for higher education

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Your WiFi network is an invisible, but vital cornerstone of operations and the student experience. As students and faculty spend more time on multiple devices for both independent learning and instruction, there is a clear, increased demand for quality WiFi.

To meet these growing bandwidth demands, colleges and universities are turning to a fully managed WiFi solution that ensures high quality connectivity while reducing the maintenance and support burden on IT staff. This allows them to spend more time on high-value activities that provide next generation learning experiences and enhance student success.

Changing WiFi demands

Most of your campus population remains online throughout the day — whether it is students using personal devices for online learning or staff that communicate via personal devices to do their job. Slow WiFi can limit the ability for students and faculty to connect to online resources and internal systems, making it harder to get work done. And buildings with thick concrete walls and multiple floors can pose a particular challenge for IT and operations staff that need to remain connected as they move across campus.

Beyond learning and teaching activities, colleges and universities are implementing smart campuses. They are using WiFi to collect more data from connected devices, implementing beacon technology and Internet of Things (IoT) features like sensors around campus for security and connected thermostats and light switches to conserve energy. As a result, you may have hundreds of wireless sensors and personal devices accessing your network concurrently. The more devices, the more strain on the network — slowing down network speeds or creating outages.

Colleges and universities with a WiFi solution that can segregate, tier traffic and increase bandwidth easily are best positioned to adapt to these technology advances, provide consistent coverage and a seamless user experience. A managed WiFi solution — which includes network design — can also ensure the best placement for your WiFi access points and routers for optimal performance.

Top reasons for adopting a fully managed solution

- Refocus IT staff on more strategic work.

- Gain access to IT skills and expertise.

- Reduce operational cost.

- Receive 24/7/365 support for your round-the-clock operations.

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Managed WiFi creates operational efficiency, cost savings

Top technology priorities for higher education often include enhancing experiences to entice and satisfy top tier students and faculty, and reducing the cost of managing technology. A fully-managed WiFi solution can help meet these priorities.
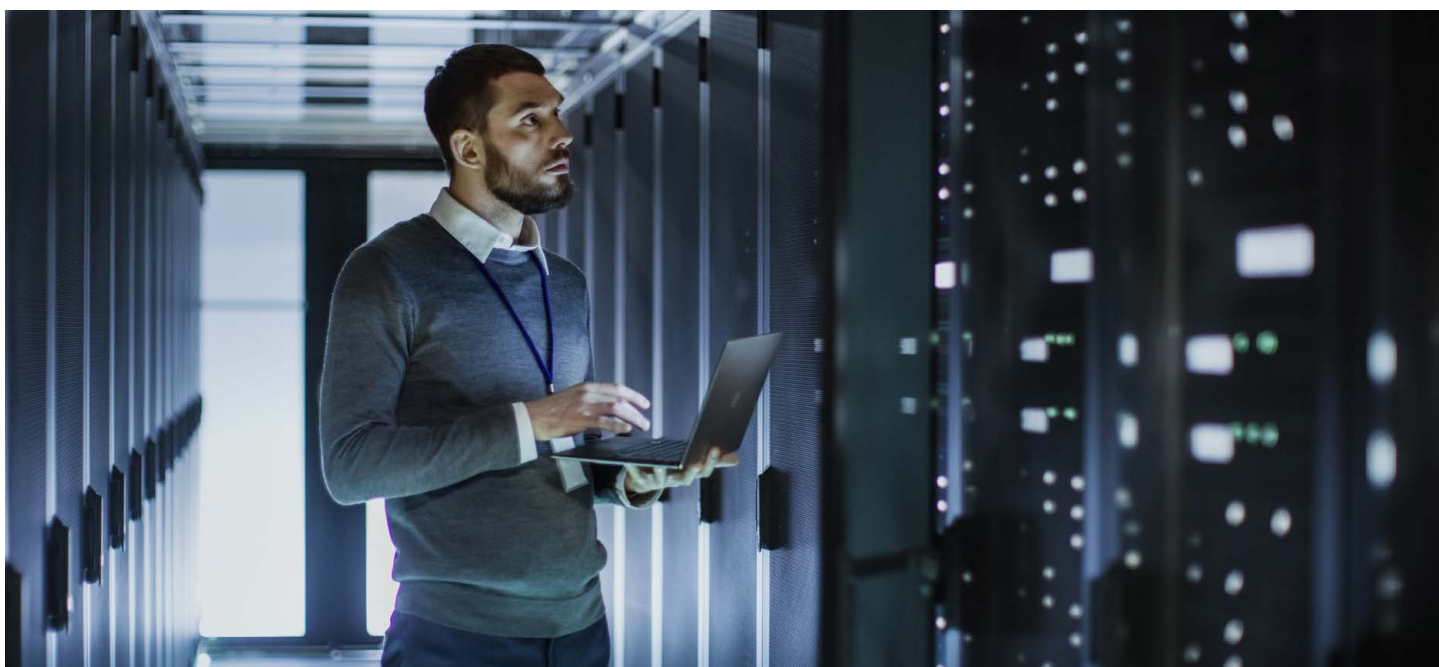
Enterprise-grade WiFi equipment is expensive, requiring annual licensing fees and costly support. And the increasing proliferation of devices requires continuous updates to your wireless network infrastructure along with funding for maintenance, technology upgrades and staff trainings. When you manage your own network, your IT staff is responsible for system design, installation, maintenance and repairs. This might require constant tweaking of coverage areas, access points and bandwidth, as well as firmware updates to keep the WiFi working well.

By choosing a fully managed WiFi solution, you'll have access to the latest equipment, software and updates. You also get access to IT professionals that serve as an extension of your team. With a managed WiFi provider you no longer spend time and resources struggling over issues surrounding network architecture and support. Instead you can focus on what matters most — student success.

Choose the right solution and the right partner

Colleges and universities face unique capacity and density challenges when it comes to operating a WiFi network. Without proper planning, you may be more likely to lose signal coverage, or your equipment might not provide the number of concurrent connections that you need. With different areas, such as the dining hall, student center, dorms, athletic center and open spaces experiencing changing volumes throughout the day and on different days, a WiFi network needs to be designed for maximum capacity. It needs to give safety devices priority over a student video streaming on a personal device.

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A managed WiFi solution ensures your students, faculty and employees don't experience dead zones and have enough bandwidth to match demand throughout the day and night. It can be customized for your unique requirements and allow IT management to monitor network traffic and analyze usage in order to make evidence-based decisions for future IT investments.

The right solution can also offer personal area networks, which allows each student to create a network that can be automatically and securely accessed by all their own devices. Also look for customized log-in landing pages, where, for example, the college or university name and an image of the mascot can be added, to instill campus pride and build confidence that the network is secure.

Spectrum Enterprise offers a turnkey, fully-managed WiFi solution ready to meet your current and future needs. Drawing upon in-depth industry knowledge and vast experience in higher education, Spectrum Enterprise builds reliable networks that allow you to:

- Deliver a highly reliable, fast connectivity experience.

- Scale up bandwidth to meet growing demands.

- Gain peace of mind with a partner that continuously monitors and supports your network 24/7/365.

- Move from a capital expenditure model to an operating expenditure model, paying a small monthly fee as opposed to paying expensive upfront equipment costs.

- Reinforce your college or university branding with customized WiFi log-in pages.

Investing in a flexible, fully managed WiFi solution ensures consistent connectivity for overall operations and every person on campus. Learn more on our website about how Spectrum Enterprise can help you meet WiFi demands by providing your campus with fast, resilient connectivity.

Learn more

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