M E M O R A N D U M

TO:      Steve Fleagle, Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer

FROM:  Jane Drews, University Information Technology Security Officer

DATE:  July 15, 2010

RE:      Copyright Violation Deterrents


On June 10, I and others from the University IT Security Office met with representatives from the Office of the Dean of Students and University Housing to review and evaluate the frequency and type of copyright violations by student users of the University of Iowa's computer network during the 2009-10 academic year.  Earlier, I discussed with you and other ITS staff members the frequency and type of copyright violations by employee users of the University of Iowa's computer network during the 2009-10 academic year.

As you know, our department has employed a number of different means for combating the unauthorized distribution of copyrighted material by users of the UI network.  Currently, the University utilizes the following technology-based deterrents:

- Network activity limits for each ResNet computer port/jack

- Daily e-mail warnings to room occupants when port/jack approaches network activity limits

- Web registration system that presents ResNet acceptable use policy and requires acknowledgement by student prior to network activation each semester

- Network quarantine system to restrict Internet access for ResNet computers that exceed activity limits, are compromised with malware, and/or that violate policy

In addition, University of Iowa rules prohibit staff and students from using the University of Iowa's computer network to violate copyright laws or for any other illegal purposes.  Besides imposing disciplinary sanctions on violators and utilizing technology-based deterrents, a number of pamphlets and e-mail messages were distributed to students and staff explaining our policies and warning of the consequences if caught.  Many of the educational programs, pamphlets, and flyers targeted Residence Hall students.  The University of Iowa policy on Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources was distributed to all UI students via mass e-mail in the fall of 2009.

Prior to our June 10 meeting, I prepared a graph which displays the trends in copyright violations during the 2009-10 academic year (see attachment).  Compared to previous years, fewer non-wireless violations were reported but the number of wireless violations has remained steady.  Only a small fraction of violators were accused of violating the copyright policy on a subsequent occasion.  Given that the percentage of students who accessed a web browser via UI wireless service increased considerably over the last two years, it is apparent that the proportion of laptop wireless users accused of a copyright violation has actually decreased.  When we discussed possible alternative means for educating and informing the community about appropriate versus inappropriate uses of copyrighted material, persons in

attendance pointed out that we are already utilizing every major form of media to communicate our policies to students and employees.

As a result of our June 10 discussion, it was determined to continue a multi-dimensional media program for educating and informing the community about appropriate versus inappropriate uses of copyrighted material.  It was agreed that the current technology-based deterrents being utilized are sufficient to discourage illegal sharing of copyrighted materials through the UI network.  Utilizing additional technology-based deterrents would not significantly decrease the number of illegally copyrighted complaints.  It was further recommended that our investigation procedures, technology-based deterrents, and education campaign strategy be reviewed in the summer of 2011 if not earlier.

With regard to our disciplinary procedures, it was determined during our June 10 discussion to continue our practice of notifying UI students and staff in response to reports that copyrighted material was allegedly shared illegally through the UI network.  For the 2010-11 academic year, we intend to notify every offending residence hall student anytime we learn that copyrighted material was allegedly shared illegally through a wired ResNet room port.  For wireless users, we intend to notify every offending student and staff member anytime we learn that copyrighted material was allegedly shared illegally through wireless internet access through the UI network.  All wireless violators will be referred to the ITS Help Desk for an inspection of the hard drive and mandatory removal of any peer-to-peer file sharing applications found in the hard drive which were used to share copyrighted material without authorization from the copyright holder.  Multiple violators will be referred to a Residence Hall Area Coordinator or to the Office of the Dean of Students for disciplinary sanctions.

I will proceed to implement these plans unless I hear from you otherwise.


Cc:     Tom Baker, Director, Student Conduct Office
        David Grady, Associate Vice President for Student Services & Dean of Students
        Rob Porter, Office of the General Counsel
        Greg Thompson, University Housing