As journal prices soar, file sharing rises

Rising costs of academic journals lead to alternative methods of accessing research

BY DANA BRUXVOORT
Staff Reporter

Illicit file sharing is moving from the music community into academia, as Web sites have started illegally pirating academic journals.

In a six-month period of monitoring an unnamed free swapping Web site, about 5,500 academic articles were exchanged, which costs journals approximately $700,000, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Richard Coughlin, dean of libraries and museums at Truman, said these alternative and often illegal methods of accessing academic journals might be a reaction to the rising costs of journal subscriptions.

He said libraries have been fighting the cost increases for at least 40 years. The subscription costs of periodicals are increasing at a rate that far exceeds the consumer price index. From 1986 to 2002 the average journal cost rose 227 percent while the CPI rose only 64 percent, according to the Association of Research Libraries.

"We pay, for some journals, two, three, four, or five thousand dollars," Coughlin said. "The highest we ever had was $11,000, and we canceled it. As they get more and more expensive ... we have to cancel."

He said science and technical journals are the most expensive, costing several thousand dollars. Social scientific journals that typically include only text information are less costly. In 2005, the average cost of a yearly subscription to a social science periodical was $237.19, and the average cost for a science periodical was $1,514.39, according to the American Library Association.

Of the library's $1.25 million budget, $660,000 is spent on periodical subscriptions and $236,000 on electronic sources, which include databases such as JSTOR, EBSCOhost and LexisNexis. Coughlin said that as libraries face higher subscriptions rates, they inevitably will have to reduce the number of journals they have available.

"What it results in, ultimately, is you own less because you pay more," he said.

Daisy Rearick, reference librarian and head of periodicals and microforms, said the library tracks usage of databases and journal titles to determine which subscriptions should be renewed.

"We try to keep up with usage statistics, and if people aren't using what we have available for them, then we're cutting them," Rearick said. "And so yes, it will affect students eventually."

The library tries to provide students with all of the resources they need, Rearick said, so in most cases it shouldn't be necessary for students to retrieve journal information elsewhere.

"That is our desire, to be able to furnish [students] with the journals that they need," Rearick said. "I think if they find out what we have available, they won't need to do this because it's available, full-text, at their PCs. They don't even have to come to the library."

Junior Katherine Murphy said she uses scholarly journal articles for research assignments and typically accesses the journals from her own computer.

"I usually use EBSCOhost or LexisNexis because those are usually the easiest and the most accessible," Murphy said. "They have such a wide range of topics that you can find anything you're looking for."

Although some Web sites are sharing articles illicitly, other sources are attempting to provide convenient access to scholarly information in a legal, inexpensive way.

DeepDyve is a company that has opened the largest online rental service for scientific and research journals. They have access to more than 30 million articles. Through the company's Web site, individuals can "rent" an article for 24 hours at the cost of 99 cents, according to a press release. Monthly subscriptions are also available.

"DeepDyve intends to close the loop and not only help our users search for research, but rent and read what they discover, easily and affordably," DeepDyve CEO William Park said in an Oct. 27 press release. "We believe our new offering will open a large, untapped market for our publisher partners who had primarily served the large corporate and academic institutions."

Coughlin said the larger problem academia and libraries face is simply how to make scholarly information accessible to everyone.

"Part of it is just, 'How do I get the article I want, the periodical I want?'" he

Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
The average journal price rose 227 percent from 1986 to 2002.

said. "But part of it is, 'How do we communicate scholarly information in a way that doesn't break the bank and makes this stuff available to people?'

"And that's the context — the bigger system of communicating scholarly information. And we're seeing a lot more different ways of doing that."

ITS provides some services to students

BY SHIHARA MADUWAGE
Staff Reporter

When a computer crashes or students can't connect to the Internet, ITS is the first place to call, but some services might be out of their range of their realm of abilities

ITS offers a variety of services for students and faculty, ranging from handling problems with cable television and land line phones to fixing hardware and software problems with personal computers. They also repair network issues and clean viruses. Students also can borrow video equipment such as video cameras and data projectors for a 24-hour period. All these services are free of charge.

"A lot of the issues [they] get have to do with malware and virus problems," help desk manager Tim Mills said. "We do have issues with classroom technology and a lot of issues with wireless."

ITS also tackles problems such as changing passwords, accessing e-mail and other minor difficulties. Mills said they also help students purchase computers, software and other computer products at a discounted price.

"During orientation we would talk to hundreds of students and parents, and we would also send out brochures to every student every year, talking about the services we have, our phone numbers and location," Mills said. "We try to get the word out as much as we can. ... Hopefully, everyone knows we are here."

Donna Liss, chief information officer, said ITS recently appointed a Student Technology Improvement Committee to improve the quality of its services, which has been very helpful in providing valuable feedback and assistance.

"It has been instrumental in a lot of the things that we changed over the past year because we were sort of able to bring a voice to it," Liss said.

She said ITS was using these methods to figure out what it needs to provide and what areas need improvement.

"It is really helpful to hear some of the students because that is the only way we can make changes," Liss said. "The numbers speak."

Freshman Katie Loock visited the Help Desk because she could not connect to the wireless network. She said she heard about ITS from her student adviser during her first week at Truman. She had received help with minor problems over the telephone before, but this was the first time she visited the Help Desk.

"The first time I went there the guy could not help me because he was not used to the Mac, but he gave me a time slot when someone else would be available," Loock said.

She said ITS was quick, professional and answered the additional questions she had.

"It would be nice to have

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>
> **Tim Mills**
> ITS Help Desk Manager

scheduled people so that there is one Mac person and one PC person," Loock said.

Freshman Julianne Meyer went to the Help Desk with a more serious problem. Her laptop was not operating, and the Internet was not working because of hardware problems. Meyer said she heard about ITS during Truman Days, and this was the only place on campus that she knew could help with computer problems.

"At first I thought they were going to be helpful," Meyer said. "But then it took them a little over a week to tell me that they could not fix my computer."

She also said ITS made her computer's problems worse by taking off some software and putting it on safe mode.
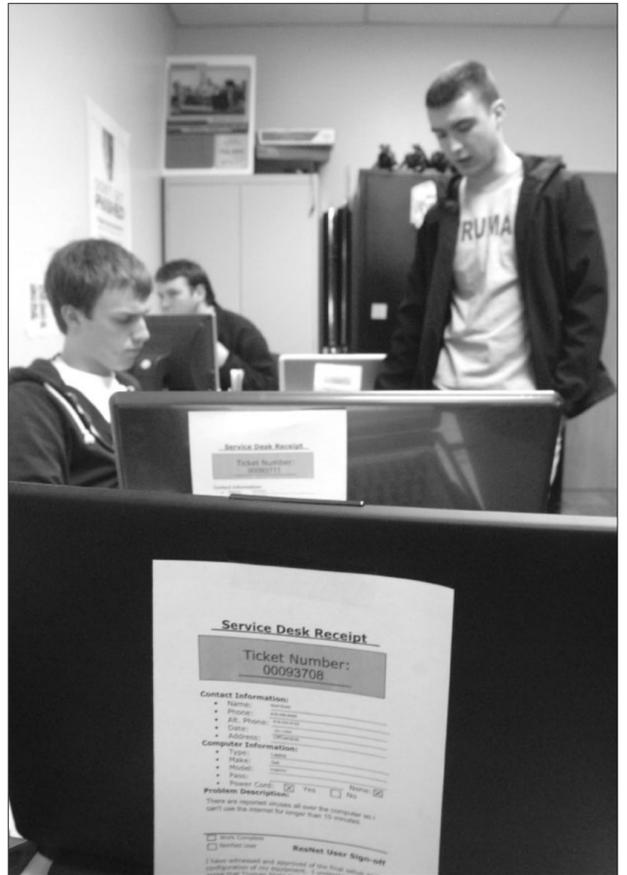
"They did not tell me that it was on safe mode," Meyer said. "They pretty much told me that they did not know what was wrong with my computer and gave it back."

Meyer said she went to ITS every day for a week to get the workers' attention, but ITS still was not able to fix it.

"They just told me to send it back to Dell," she said. "They did not even contact me ... so they would have kept my computer for longer if I had not gone there."

Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Information Technology services, located at McClain Hall 111, provides support for students' computer problems.