

# ITS reminds students of file sharing laws

BY CHELSIE YOKUM  
Staff Reporter

Truman State works to cut back on Peer-to-Peer file sharing in accordance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act, Donna Liss, Chief Information Officer of Information Technology Services, said.

P2P is a software client that searches for other connected computers, allowing users to download files such as movies, music and games.

Liss sent an email to all students Tuesday, Oct. 2 explaining Peer-to-Peer file sharing and the consequences of sharing copyrighted material.

Truman, along with most campuses, includes copyright education as part of its plan, Liss said. She said the act, which requires Truman to have a plan to deal with P2P file sharing on campus, is a federal regulation Truman must comply with to receive certain federal funds.

Although Liss said there haven't been any recent infringement issues from students, the school periodically receives complaints from agencies claiming copyright infringements at Truman.

"There are actually agencies out there that will go and search for copyright infringements on behalf of artists," Liss said. "So the movie



Ashley Jost/Index

Left to right, seniors Josh Zilch and Adam Wieberg help sophomore Valerie Free connect her iTouch to the Truman State server Monday morning at the Information Technology Services Center in Pickler Memorial Library. Technology assistance is one of the services the center offers, as well as providing help with file sharing programs students might not know their computer's have.

industry has agencies that they use to go look for copyright infringement. The recording industry has the same kind of thing."

There are about six agencies that contact Truman if they suspect

copyright infringement, Liss said.

If Truman is contacted by one of these agencies, the first step taken is notifying the student that illegal material seems to have been shared from their computer. A student

might have paid for a song, but having P2P on their computer might make it appear as if they are sharing that file with other users.

"I think every college campus has this happen," Liss said. "But you

don't know whether or not it's intentional or whether it's accidental."

Liss said most students are unaware of the violation and opt to shut down the software.

Students have the options of shutting the software down themselves or contacting the ITS help desk in Pickler Memorial Library if they do not feel comfortable dealing with the software themselves, said Information Technology Director Jim McNabb.

Most of the incidents that occur appear to be accidental. For example, a student might not know that their machine is open to file sharing and they fix it once they know it's a problem, Liss said. But if a student has more than one violation, the case is sent to Student Affairs and the Conduct Board.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act, a federal law, prevents the University from being liable for copyright infringements as long as the University adheres to the provisions of the policy, which state that Truman must have established procedures to handle any properly received claims of infringement, Liss said.

P2P technology itself is not illegal, but copyrighted content being stored on the system and shared with others it illegal, Liss said.

## School transitions parent's club to PTA organization

BY BROOKE DALY  
For the Index

Kirkville Primary School's Parent-Teacher Club formally transitioned to a Parent-Teacher Association during their Oct. 8 meeting.

Melinda Orskog, president of the Kirkville Primary's PTA, said the PTA is a volunteer, non-profit association, comprised of teachers, parents, faculty members, administrators and businesses with the mission of being a powerful voice for all children. She said it offers resources about how to run leadership roles, recruit more participants and foster relations between the school and the community.

She said the committee sought a change to create more structure and to make it easier for parents to participate in their children's school community.

The group decided to switch to a PTA because of the resources and structure it provides.

"As a parent group, we value [our volunteers'] time because that's more difficult than giving a small donation," Orskog said. "A lot of

the function isn't even financial."

She said the volunteers consisted of parents and about 170 Truman State students.

Kirkville Primary is the district's first public school to have a PTA, though there currently is discussion about Ray Miller Elementary transitioning from a PTC to a PTA as well, Orskog said.

Kim Weber, Missouri PTA President-elect, has been involved with the PTA for 16 years, and attended the local school's PTA meeting during the transition.

Weber said the PTA is available to public, private and charter schools. It has been around for more than 100 years and currently has 5 million members nationwide, Weber said.

The PTA is planning to do the same type of advocacy for the students and community as it has done throughout the past, said Carrie Nastav, treasurer of Kirkville Primary's PTA.

"We're hoping it will help additional parents get involved," Nastav said. "And of course the more parents involved . . . that's always helpful for the students."

### Comparison between parent programs at Kirkville Primary School

#### Parent Teacher Association

- ▶ Dues: \$5 State and National dues for resources
- ▶ Groups: National organization with local chapters

#### Parent Teacher Club

- ▶ Dues: \$3 dues to fund field trips, classroom activities and special projects
- ▶ Groups: Single-school groups

according to: [www.mopta.org](http://www.mopta.org) and [www.kirkville.k12.mo.us/k2/PTC/PTC.html](http://www.kirkville.k12.mo.us/k2/PTC/PTC.html)

At a typical PTA meeting, there are parents and about three to four teachers, though not always the same ones, Nastav said.

Nastav said the PTA hopes the structure provided by the PTA will help more parents feel comfortable taking leadership within the organization

"Sometimes it's difficult to get people to volunteer to take on positions," Nastav said. "They feel like they've never done anything like that before, or they might not have the organizational skills that it requires, or they just don't know how to do something that we do."

Nastav has been treasurer for two years, and said she hopes to remain as active as possible in her children's school.

She said leadership role transitions from year to year will be easier with the structure and additional support available.

To get access to information about leadership roles and mentor programs, the PTA requires national and Missouri dues from each member of about \$5. The local dues are determined by the chapter.

The PTA has an annual national conference during June and an annual Missouri PTA convention during October. The next conference will be in Cincinnati. This year's convention will be in Kansas City. The PTA also has leadership conferences to offer skills and training to officers.

"Fifty years ago, the whole community was involved with the local school," said Kim Weber, Missouri PTA President-elect. "Be involved. That doesn't necessarily mean you have to be at the building every day, volunteering although I'm sure the staff would greatly appreciate that. It's just being involved and knowing what's going on."



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