



University of Missouri

# MIZZOU

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## Mizzou: wired and wireless

### **Mizzou helps students connect and communicate in myriad ways.**

Story By Marcus Wilkins | Photos by Nicholas Benner

The kids these days, with their iPods-pads-phones, books of faces, Twitter spaces, Android apps and Google Maps.

But email? Already an outdated mode of communication for Generation Y. Dial-up Internet? That annoying sound their grandparents' computer makes.

Things change so quickly that even the once ultramodern term "information super-highway" elicits chuckles from today's youth.



The MU Student Center is equipped to loan up to 100 laptops. The concept replaced the traditional computer lab in the high-tech facility. The campus has experienced an 886 percent increase in wireless traffic since 2006.

At Mizzou, the goal is not to merely keep up with the modern wired student, but to stay ahead. New technological modes of classroom lessons are arriving faster than you can say semester,

while tiny cellphones and recording devices have prompted administrators to rethink longstanding policies about practices as innocuous as note taking. For some, the high tech MU Student Center has supplemented the library as the central study stop, and avenues for virtual self-expression have hit an all-time high.

“A lot of undergraduate science students and journalism students have blogs,” says Jon Stemmler, associate director of the Health Communication Research Center in the School of Journalism. “Many times it will start because they have a blog for their class, and then they just like the experience, so they continue. They see that if they want to get a job in the professional world, they need to have social media skills, and it becomes almost like a clip for them.”

The MU graduating class of 2012 will be the most tech-savvy in school history. As those grads make way for younger students to enroll at record-breaking numbers, Mizzou’s digital amenities are an undeniable draw for high school graduates. Mizzou knows because they “like” us on Facebook.

## **Below are some of the ways innovative technologies have transformed campus life at MU.**

- It was a rite of passage every semester: students lugged used textbooks to campus and hauled home the ones the bookstore wouldn’t buy back. Now there’s a smartphone app that scans a book’s ISBN from the comfort of a dorm room, tells how much it’s going for and lets students decide whether it’s worth the trip.
- Internet shopaholics know that vendor competition is one of online shopping’s biggest boons. When students look up courses on the University Bookstore website, it provides prices for the required books from multiple online retailers, including Barnes & Noble and Amazon. Sometimes, MU’s price is the lowest, but even if it’s not, students buy at the convenient campus location about 80 percent of the time.
- The Espresso Book Machine automatically prints, binds and trims paperback books on demand. Anyone, including professors, can upload PDF pages and stand back as the automated press creates perfect-bound books for about 8 cents per page. Beginning in fall 2010, the economics department used the machine to produce its Econ 1014 text, and 2,049 students have saved more than \$180,000.
- The MU Student Center has averaged 17,000 to 19,000 visitors daily since opening in 2010. The Trafosys infrared person-counting system measures body heat to tally the guests in the 240,000-square-foot facility when, say, Chancellor Brady J. Deaton announced Mizzou’s SEC move to an audience of 2,300 on Nov. 6, 2011.
- Instead of dedicating space to traditional computer labs, the student center’s information desk stocks up to 100 laptops for check out. During fall 2011, the program loaned those

computers 35,000 times. Students who don't own a laptop, or who just prefer not to carry one around, can use the machines for two-hour blocks. The desk also offers a cellphone-charging service.

- The student center accommodates students' devices at every turn. It has 304 electrical outlets, and many of the coffee tables include electrical ports on every side.
- Social media have changed how administrators advertise to Mizzou students. University Bookstore held an "11-11-11" sales event at which employees dropped 11,111 ping pong balls at 11:11:11 a.m. on Nov. 11, 2011, from the roof of the Student Center. It was promoted only on Facebook and Twitter, and nearly 3,000 people showed up to exchange the balls for prizes.
- Flat-screen TVs in the Student Center and Memorial Union have replaced some of the signs and fliers that formerly plastered the walls of the old Brady Commons. Interested parties can visit the Missouri Student Unions website and post a message to be displayed throughout several buildings.
- The "ride board" at the old Brady Commons was a car-pool map where students could leave a number and offer (or catch) a ride to nationwide destinations. Now it's available at [universityrideboard.com](http://universityrideboard.com), where a university email address is required to log on.
- Even when students aren't actively using their electronic devices, smartphones in pockets, purses and backpacks are taxing the campus Wi-Fi grid. MU's Internet traffic went from 171 megabits per second in 2006 to 1,686 in 2011 — an 886 percent increase. "Campus Internet traffic used to drop off on Sundays," says Jacquie Cummins, marketing specialist in the Division of Information Technology. "Now it's as busy as a school day." The student center plans to upgrade its Wi-Fi capacity in 2012.
- Tegrity is the latest in lecture-capture technology, and it is sweeping the MU campus. The software system allows instructors to record audio, video and computer screen activity (e.g., PowerPoint presentations) and make it available on the Internet. It is an easy way for students to keep up if they miss a class. (See "Teaching with Tegrity" on Page 9.)
- MU's classroom digital recording policies have changed in part because of leaked video of two University of Missouri–Kansas City and UM–St. Louis professors in spring 2011. The



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instructors appeared on the website [biggovernment.com](http://biggovernment.com) in footage edited to give the appearance that each was endorsing violence. Students remain permitted to record lectures, but redistribution of the content is now prohibited without the professor's consent.

- MizzouRec's renovation in 2005 meant resplendent architectural updates, but it also brought cardio equipment with integrated USB and iPod ports, Internet-capable treadmills for uploading workouts, and a swimming pool with underwater speakers so athletes can rock out while they swim.
- Many large lecture classes employ the i>clicker, a hand-held remote device registered to students for use in multiple classes. The gizmo makes it easy to take attendance electronically, and professors can get student responses to impromptu polls and quizzes to assess how many understand and are paying attention.

**Share your comments with Mizzou magazine at [Mizzou@missouri.edu](mailto:Mizzou@missouri.edu).**

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