



GEN Z'S STEADY STREAMING HABIT:

What Colleges Need to
Know to Stay Competitive

SWANK
RESIDENCE LIFE CINEMA

No one can deny technology has vastly changed the way today's college students live and learn.



In order to stay relevant, colleges must fully embrace technology to improve all facets of the student experience, including communications and entertainment. It's one of the reasons why Ohio State issued iPads to 11,000 incoming students and is building an app that includes class schedules, bus routes, and even information on student organizations according to a [recent article](#) in the New York Times.⁷

Technology's latest and greatest enhancements must be present on campus so schools can continue to evolve and grow along with students' needs. This includes the belief that many resources, including entertainment, should be available anywhere and on any devices while on campus.

Today, many colleges are recognizing that keeping up with the latest technology can result in a better student experience. For example, Nicole Kraft, a journalism professor at Ohio State told the [New York Times](#)⁷ that she takes attendance on Twitter, posts her assignments on popular workflow app Slack and holds late night office hours on the video conference site Zoom. Presently, more than 64 percent of colleges and university offer comprehensive wireless coverage across 80 percent or more of the entire campus, according to an ACUHO-I online survey targeted at higher education, IT, business and housing officers published in [ACUHO-I's State of ResNet 2018 Report](#).¹ This number is a seven percent increase over last year, a rise partly due to the number of schools adding better wireless access in student areas and outdoor campus spaces.¹

Streaming is a huge reason for the increasing need for a campus-wide wireless connection. According to a [blog post](#) by streaming service provider Roku, college students want to watch what they want wherever they want.⁸ They also want to control the experience and have the ability to watch a variety of content, from movies to shows to educational documentaries, on a wide variety of mobile devices. Privacy is another key streaming feature because college students want to avoid disturbing others, especially when they're bingeing their favorite show or movie franchise.⁸

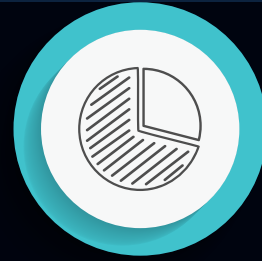
And while wireless coverage is significantly expanding, and student's expectations changing, schools across the country are struggling to find the best way to adapt to the rise of streaming.

Streaming on Mobile Devices

The ACUHO-I online survey lists smartphones as the **biggest bandwidth consumer, now surpassing desktop computers, laptops and tablets (listed as number two).**¹ Even though most connected devices use little bandwidth individually, the massive amount of devices connected at the same time means more bandwidth usage overall. More students are using their phones to upload and download digital coursework, check social media and, of course, stream online content.

In fact, streaming TV shows and movies weighs in as the biggest bandwidth threat because it takes up such a huge chunk- nearly 88 percent according to schools surveyed by ACUHO-I.¹ And the college demographics' streaming usage is only going up. Awesomeness, a multi-platform media company, [analyzed](#) Generation Z's habits (those born between 1996 -2011, making up 25 percent of the world's population) and found **"71 percent of their typical entertainment consumption is streaming, and one-third is viewed from a mobile device."**²

Because Gen Z is the world's first generation of truly digital natives, growing up with smartphones, social media and 24/7 news at their fingertips, it's not surprising this is how they choose to devour content. Also worth mentioning: **smart TVs have jumped to number three on this year's list of highest bandwidth consuming devices with an 11 percent increase thanks to on-demand TV, video consumption and web-based rich content using lots of bandwidth.**¹



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Capturing Students' Time

Not only is the number of devices on campus a concern in relation to bandwidth usage, but the number of hours a day they are used can also increase consumption exponentially. [Recent reports by Forbes.com](#) state that half of Gen Z is connected online for about 10 hours a day, every day.⁶ "Creating mobile-optimized content that's platform-specific, direct, and entertaining is essential for brands to reach Gen Z," says Harley Block, Senior Vice President of Brand Partnerships at Awesomeness. **"They watch 68 videos in a day — meaning this audience has the ability to sort through content faster than ever before."**²

Another [recent study conducted by Defy Media](#) found **consumers aged 13-24 stream 12 hours of video per week on YouTube, social media and other free online sources, plus another eight hours weekly on Netflix and other subscription video services.**⁴ That's more than twice the eight hours weekly they spend watching pay-tv services like traditional cable.

Similarly, a [recent survey by GlobalWebIndex](#) noted traditional TV habits are becoming a thing of the past with **71 percent of 16 to 24-year-olds streaming TV online in the past month and 40 percent of millennials and Generation Z binge watching online weekly.**⁴

With so much content available when you want it, on whatever device you want it on, it's no wonder why cord-cutting is quickly gaining steam. Millions of Americans have already cancelled traditional pay-TV services and the number is expected to continue to rise. According to a [recent article](#) on entertainment resource Variety.com, the number of U.S. cord-cutters will climb nearly 33 percent to 33 million in 2018 thanks to data from research firm eMarketer.⁹ There were just under 25 million cord-cutters in 2017, which was up 43 percent from the previous year.⁹




Looking to Cable Alternatives

The cord-cutting trend hasn't shied away from crossing campus lines either. In fact, 16 percent of schools have transitioned from traditional cable television to internet protocol television, internet protocol video or another related service.¹ This number might not seem exceptionally large, but another **76.4 percent of schools are currently considering switching according to the AHUHO-I.**¹

One major reason across the board is consistently the same – cost. The average pay-TV bill in 2017 totaled \$100.98 per month, a 5.5 percent compound annual growth rate between 2000 and 2017 according to S&P Global Market Intelligence.⁹ Plus, roughly 70 percent of pay-TV subscribers feel they're getting too little value for their money according to Deloitte's 2018 Digital Media Trends Survey mentioned in the Variety.com article.⁹

Between outrageous bandwidth use and the always-rising costs of cable, many college campuses are looking at options that provide premium content without hefty bandwidth fees. Services that don't demand high utilization of your campus network but still offer the educational and entertainment content that students want to see are becoming an increasingly popular choice. Other amenities of these services, like the ability to add custom content, university branding and campus-specific messaging make them a great choice over traditional campus entertainment options and even popular streaming services.

Technology is changing the landscape of today's college experience, just as streaming is changing the entertainment landscape. Now, 73 percent of schools allow an unlimited number of devices to connect to the residential network, draining current bandwidth, slowing connectivity speeds and adding to the frustration of students who are used to instantly accessing content.¹ This perplexing situation is happening right at a time when pay-TV services are continuing to soar in price.



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Final Thoughts

So how should colleges respond in order to stay competitive with residential amenities, particularly surrounding entertainment?



Research streaming services that offer premium content on a mobile-friendly, customizable interface to keep your residents engaged.



Pay close attention to services that do not require high network utilization but still provide college students with instant access to must-have content.



Turn to services built with the college audience in mind. Find a tool which can be used not just for entertainment, but also to communicate important information and updates on campus.



About Swank Motion Pictures

Swank Motion Pictures is a non-theatrical film and television distributor focused on creating memorable movie experiences beyond the theater. Now serving clients all over the world for more than 80 years, Swank Motion Pictures has licensed and distributed content to thousands of viewers at U.S. colleges and universities, K-12 public schools, libraries, hospitals, worldwide cruise lines and many more. With a fully customized approach to customer service, groundbreaking technology and close partnerships with the majority of Hollywood studios, Swank continues to serve an evolving population and share the magic of movies with its customers.

For more information about our company,
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