

# Fear Factor and American Idol: Leveraging Pop Culture for Student Support

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Brookes/Rubino



Simmons College, 2006



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# Outline

- Overview of Simmons
- The “Traditional” Support We Provide to Students & What’s Missing
- Technology Fear Factor
- Simmons Idol
- Conclusions

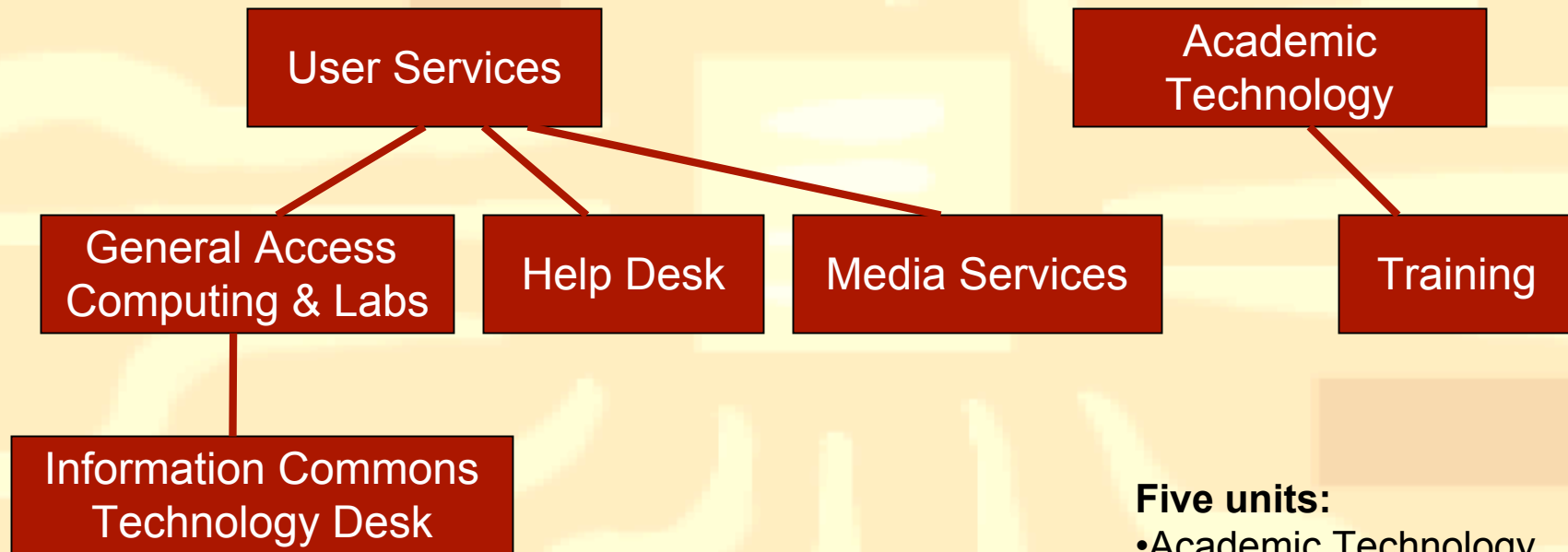


# Simmons College

- Small university, urban location
- Undergraduate women's college (1,938)
- Graduate schools (2,840)
  - College of Arts and Sciences
  - School for Health Studies
  - Graduate School of Library and Information Science
  - School of Social Work
  - School of Management (all women)
- 98% of students own computers; 76% of those own laptops



# Technology at Simmons College



**Five units:**

- Academic Technology
- Administrative Systems
- Networks & Servers
- User Services
- Web Design

# Support for Students

## Phone/email

- Help Desk



## In-person

- Information Commons Technology Desk
- Media Services (for a/v equipment)
- Self-Help Clinics (session yesterday)



## Formal training sessions

- Academic Technology



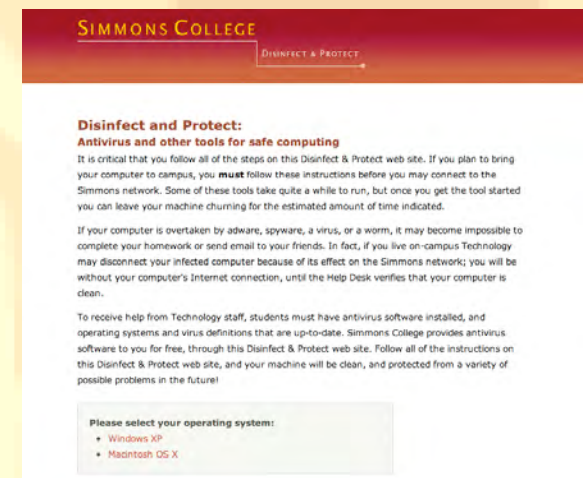
# Support for Students (continued)

## Flyer/Handouts

- Top 10 for new students
- Safe Computing

## Online

- Web site: tips and policies
- Disinfect and Protect site: virtual self-help clinic
- Email announcements



# Student Support: Challenges

## Common to us all

- Students do not know how to properly care for their own computers
- Supporting student-owned technology is resource intensive
- Without support, academic work suffers



## Simmons-specific

- No dedicated group assigned to only supporting students and their equipment; no laptop program.





# Analysis of our Standard Solutions

Students must take the initiative:

- Install and run Disinfect & Protect tools
- Enroll in a workshop
- Read a flyer or web page
- Attend a self-help clinic

Timing of messages out of step with opportunities

- June orientations: what to buy
- September orientations: overwhelmed
- Training: need to know this instant
- Self-help clinics: just fix it

Passive

- Listen
- Read
- Follow instructions

# Pop Culture: Flyers

## At Simmons, there are some things money can buy...

Simmons T-shirt from the bookstore.....	\$15.99
Large Café Mocha from Java City.....	\$2.99
Lunch at the Fens.....	\$4.95
Accessing your documents on the Simmons file server from home.....	priceless

Not all things at Simmons cost money! Take advantage of the free 100MB of storage space students have on the **Simmons file server**.

It's easy: just open your Internet browser and go to

<http://remote.simmons.edu>

The small print: For instructions on using remote access, go to <http://my.simmons.edu/technology/helpdesk/remote.shtml>. Give remote.simmons.edu a try from the Library Information Commons so you can get help from staff at the Technology Desk on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. If you are not sure what a file server is, see <http://my.simmons.edu/technology/helpdesk/fileserver.shtml> or stop by the Technology Desk for a conversation about it.

# A Captive Audience

## First Year Experience (FYE)

- All incoming first year students
- Course is mandatory
- Overall goal: student retention

TECHNOLOGY  
FEAR FACTOR

# Technology Fear Factor: Curriculum

1. Identity theft
2. Securing Your Computer
3. Copyright
4. Using Simmons Computers



# Fear Factor: Logistics

- Teams, or “shark tanks”
- Facilitators
- Rules
  1. Complete a challenge at the challenge table
  2. Go to the team laptop and answer all of the questions for this topic
  3. When team finishes all of the questions, return to challenge table



# Fear Factor in Action: Identity Theft

In order to receive your first series of online questions, you must go “**phishing.**”

Use your sense of touch to find the bug and get your first series of online questions.





# Securing Your Computer

Beware of **worms**, viruses and other threats. Worms do not belong on your computers!

Eat your way through worms to receive your next series of online questions.



# Copyright

Downloading music illegally is **nose-sense!**

Identify the smell correctly to receive your next series of online questions.



# Using Simmons Computers

Warning: Living life in the fast lane and not choosing secure usernames and passwords can have **dire consequences!**

Break through the password road block and save the blocks for the last question.





# Last Year: Monster Sessions



# Changes Made this Year



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# Technology Fear Factor: Successes

- Students: no initiative required
- Learning
  - From peers
  - Hands-on
  - Fun
- Collaboration with Student Life
- Facilitators benefit too
- Good publicity for Technology



# Ongoing Challenges

- A lot depends on the participants
  - Students
  - First Year Experience instructors
  - Student TAs
- Many details to coordinate
- Very time consuming/resource intensive
- All during our busiest season

# Simmons Idol

Coming to a Quadside near you...



Technology at Simmons College  
and the Class of 2009  
present  
Simmons Idol



- ★ Test your knowledge on how to download music legally and safely.
- ★ Come and enter for a chance to participate in the Simmons Idol karaoke contest.
- ★ And find out why Kerline sings the blues.



Thursday, October 27  
6:30-8:30pm  
Quadside Café



# Simmons Idol: Logistics

- Workshop held in dorm cafeteria
- Props and equipment from Student Life
- Simmons celebrity judges
- iTunes gift cards for prizes
- Copyright brochure



# The Program

Kerline sings the blues

Questions and answers

- Why does filesharing mean and what are some filesharing programs?
- Why is it often illegal to share files?
- What harmful effects can happen to you or your computer if you share files?

Guest performers

# Kerline Sings the Blues



“My world was shattered, I was torn apart. Like someone took a knife and drove it in my heart.

You shut off my port and I thought that I didn’t care. But I lost everything and all my songs I downloaded.”

-Kerline St. Fleur, Class of 2007

# Simmons Idol Rocks!

- Approximately 80 participants
- Co-ownership of the problem
- Promoted understanding of issues of filesharing and copyright
- Students knew more than expected, likely because of Fear Factor
- Cost effective





# Fear Factor and American Idol: Leveraging Popular Culture for Student Support



# Multi-faceted student support

- Phone/email
- In-person service points
- Formal training
- Flyers/handouts
- Online
- Another layer, that binds them all
  - Interactive educational programs

# Questions?



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