

Simmons Rockstar



OVERVIEW

All colleges have seen a steady increase in DMCA complaints over the past few years. At Simmons, Technology has taken the lead in educating students about the academic consequences and personal risks of downloading music/movies and sharing files illegally, and also publicizing where they can go to legally get music/movies.

While Technology at Simmons College's past "Simmons Idol" events were entertaining, they publicized DMCA issues relatively passively. For fall 2007, we wanted to imbue the entire program with active learning about copyright, file sharing, and potential consequences, and to attract a larger cross-section of the residence campus community.

Thus, Simmons Rockstar was born: a delicate combination of pop-culture, "trivia," and friendly but intense competition.

To increase participation and competition, we **collaborated** closely with **Residence Life**, which tied our event into their popular inter-hall competition for the **Simmons Cup**. Through internal auditions, each dorm selected one student to represent them in the **Rockstar karaoke contest**; representatives from all eleven dorms competed for the Simmons Rockstar title. **Dorms earned Cup points** for attendance, trivia contest answers and producing the Simmons Rockstar.

Since student interest was focused on the singing contest, we added commercial breaks or "a word from our sponsors," during which we conducted an interactive trivia challenge

We used an **audience response system** to register one answer from each dorm to **multiple-choice questions** such as "which of the following programs can lead you to share music files illegally?" After dorms delegates "clicked" in, we displayed the correct answer, the winner of that question, and the overall standings. Then the host asked for audience questions and facilitated a detailed, and often lively, **discussion** about each topic. Students were responsive and genuinely interested in learning more.

PHILOSOPHY We believe the best way to encourage respect for copyright laws and keep DMCA violation notices to a minimum, is educate students about the academic and legal consequences of illegal filesharing, and where to legally obtain music and movies by:

Communicating with students in a way that combines fun and learning.

It is not enough to merely deliver the message. We must **engage** students, encouraging them to think about not only the consequences but also the **ethics involved**, not only the risks posed by file sharing software to their own computers but also **alternative, safe, and legal ways to download music and movies**. We strive to do this in ways that "hit home" and are memorable.

Collaboration between Technology and Residence Life, building on their very popular Simmons Cup competition, was a major factor in the event's success. Attendance almost doubled from 2006, forcing us to turn people away. Simmons Rockstar 2008 will be in a venue quadruple the size. We intend to fill it!