

Central Michigan University satisfies rising student expectations for anytime, anywhere access to video programming with SpectrumU

Campus-wide streaming service brings a rich entertainment experience to student mobile devices and laptops

College students gather around the big screen to cheer on their schools when they face off against their biggest rivals. They stream shows on their laptops during breaks between classes. They snuggle into their dorm room beds, binging the latest craze on their smartphones.

Video has become a part of student life. Gen Z undergrads spend as much as 3.4 hours every day watching video, and Millennial grad students spend 2.5 hours each day.*

Administrators at Central Michigan University (CMU) are well aware of these trends. They recognize they must not only deliver a quality education, but also provide an environment that meets students' varied social and recreational needs, including their desire for video anywhere on campus.

“How we provide cable TV service to students has changed fundamentally as the screen has changed.”

— Kole Taylor, IT manager for communications and enablement, Central Michigan University

Meeting changing student expectations

For more than a decade, CMU — an innovative, nationally ranked university — has equipped its dorm rooms with free cable TV using in-wall coaxial hook-ups linked to TV service from Spectrum Enterprise. This hard-wired solution met student needs when TVs were the preferred way to watch, but today's digital generation has more expectations.

“Students are also spending time on their phones, spending time on their computers and spending time on their devices,” says Kole Taylor, IT manager for communications and enablement at Central Michigan University.

CMU administrators recognized the benefits of bringing a better TV experience to students on whatever devices they were using throughout the campus. To make it happen, they had to answer two questions:

1. Could they deliver a TV experience to any student device, anywhere on campus?
2. Could it be done without adding new equipment or consuming significant IT resources?

For the answers, they turned to a technology partner they knew well.



Whether watching sports or catching a favorite show, SpectrumU gives students at CMU, a client since 2012, new ways to relax.

Client profile



Client

Central Michigan University

Industry

Higher education

Services

SpectrumU
Enterprise TV Services



Students can enjoy TV anytime, anywhere on campus, with content streamed to phones, tablets and laptops.

Tapping into video trends with SpectrumU

In 2018, the Spectrum Enterprise team met with CMU to talk about SpectrumU — a video streaming service designed especially for today’s connected student.

SpectrumU, which can run over an existing campus network, enables students to watch live programming and on-demand content on the devices of their choice, anytime, anywhere on campus. The solution, which works with mobile phones, tablets, laptops and desktops in addition to AppleTV and Chromecast^ devices, delivers a wide variety of live entertainment, news and sports programming. It also includes up to 40,000 on-demand shows and movies.

“When we learned about SpectrumU, we thought, ‘Wow, this is how our students are out there consuming media, and we really belong in this space,’” states Taylor. “We’ve had a long-time partnership with Spectrum Enterprise, and this just seemed like a natural fit for us.”

Reliability was another plus. CMU liked that SpectrumU uses proven

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— Kole Taylor

video streaming technology that is delivered straight from the content delivery network. This means it’s not subject to interference or weather-related disruptions. And unlike other streaming video alternatives, SpectrumU has no head-end, caching or transcoding equipment to power, cool or maintain. Another advantage is that deployment is typically fast, with the service often up and running in under a week.

CMU launched SpectrumU in November 2018, and according to Taylor, the implementation process couldn’t have been easier. “Most of the job involved researching the IP ranges to whitelist, acting as a liaison with our networking group and passing information along to the

Overview

- Central Michigan University (CMU) wanted to complement its in-dorm cable TV service with new technology to satisfy rising student expectations for anytime, anywhere video consumption
- Programming had to be available campus-wide — simply and with minimal resource requirements
- The University partnered with Spectrum Enterprise to introduce SpectrumU, a streaming video service enabling students to watch live and on-demand content anywhere on campus using mobile devices and laptops

Outcomes

- Cable alternative provides easy access to live TV plus up to 40,000 on-demand shows and movies to watch anywhere on campus
- Reliable technology and no equipment to maintain means IT staff can focus on strategic, high-priority projects instead of service support and maintenance

Why it matters

- CMU is now meeting the varied video consumption preferences of its students
- The university is demonstrating its commitment to innovation while improving the on-campus student experience

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Spectrum Enterprise team, who took it from there. Getting set up with SpectrumU was really a matter of coordination and communication; it involved very little technical effort.”

Getting students started with SpectrumU

After the service was live, Taylor partnered with the University Office of Residence Life to get the word out to existing students via social media channels including Facebook and Twitter, the student newsletter and resident assistants in the dorms.

Taylor briefs incoming students and their parents on SpectrumU during campus orientation. “I tell them we have traditional cable if you want to set that up, and we have online streaming TV with the SpectrumU app that you can test out while you’re here,” he explains. “They quickly realize how cool SpectrumU is once they see it has the same features they’d get with regular cable, but they can use it with mobile phones, tablets, laptops, desktops, AppleTV and Chromecast devices.”

“The response to the service has been overwhelmingly positive. Students are especially happy with how easy it is to use. Taylor expects SpectrumU will eventually be adopted by nearly every on-campus student as word continues to spread.

“Spectrum Enterprise places a lot of value on providing a good experience—the team has always been very responsive.”

— Kole Taylor



CMU students like SpectrumU because it addresses their evolving viewing preferences.

Delivering dependable service

Taylor is impressed with the dependability of SpectrumU. “I sit at the help desk as our communications guy and the point of contact for SpectrumU, and no issues have ever come my way,” Taylor states. “The only issue I remember was from a student who didn’t have his phone’s WiFi turned on.”

If an issue or a question does arise, the University has a direct line into the Spectrum Enterprise support team. Taylor notes that his interactions with them have been very positive: “Spectrum Enterprise places a lot of value on providing a good experience. The team has always been very responsive and whenever I needed anything, if they didn’t have it right away, they would go out of their way to get it.”

Redefining entertainment for a new generation of students

Taylor is happy with how SpectrumU supports CMU’s efforts to innovate and keep pace with student lifestyles. “SpectrumU has enabled us to take a traditional service and modernize

it for what students expect today,” Taylor says. “It shows that we understand where technology is going, and how students want to interact, not just with media, but with entertainment in general.”

“How To Reach Audiences With Social Video: From Millennials to Generation Z.” Wibbitz survey, November 2018. <https://see.wibbitz.com/wibbitz-report-millennials-generation-z-social-video-trends/p/1>

*If your school requires a Web page to complete the logon process for its network, you may not be able to use Chromecast.

About Spectrum Enterprise

Spectrum Enterprise, a part of Charter Communications, Inc., is a national provider of scalable, fiber technology solutions serving America’s largest businesses and communications service providers. The broad Spectrum Enterprise portfolio includes networking and managed services solutions: Internet access, Ethernet access and networks, Voice and TV solutions. Spectrum Enterprise’s industry-leading team of experts works closely with clients to achieve greater business success by providing solutions designed to meet their evolving needs. More information about Spectrum Enterprise can be found at enterprise.spectrum.com.

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