



## **SHARING THE CAMPUS NETWORK**

by Brian Ziff-Levine and other CAs

People have taken to calling the Internet the “information superhighway.” That is just what our on-campus network is: our own little stretch of that highway. You can imagine that the pieces of data that your computers send out to the Internet, and the other pieces of data that come back to your computer, are like cars on a highway. The campus network is like a four-lane highway for all of us to share.

You may have wondered why the campus Internet access is often slow. When all of the campus is using KaZaa or other Internet file sharing programs, all incoming lanes get congested like a highway at rush hour. If we all decide that we want to download an entire season of Buffy at once, we will cripple the online network and kill the bandwidth (that is the size of the highway) that we have. Movie files and multiple music files being downloaded at once equate to one person driving twenty cars down a highway at rush hour, and this does little to help the flow of traffic. Right now this is very common, and so the network is usually slow.

We all have to get a little better at sharing, because the bandwidth that this campus has is not a right; it is a privilege. Those people who overuse this privilege are interfering with other people’s ability to use and enjoy the campus network and bandwidth. The thing you all must realize is that when CMS blocks you from accessing the internet, it is not because we want to make your life harder. Blocking prevents downloading habits that take away from everyone else’s ability to use the network. We only have a certain amount of lanes open on our highway (to be technical, about 5 megabits per second). If ten users are downloading a movie over KaZaa, they could potentially be using more than a third of the highway. That’s a third of the bandwidth being used up by three percent of the students, leaving the other 97 percent of the students with only two thirds. This doesn’t mean that no one should download movies: only that you should be aware of the impact on the rest of the network and download them at times when the network is not being used heavily (for example, 3–6 A.M.)

So all we ask is that the next time you want to download every song The Who ever wrote, or *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*, or any file that is big enough to take a substantial amount of time to download, please think twice about it. Maybe you can download the file at some other time, or get it from another student’s computer on campus. Please think of our network as our little piece of the information highway, and if we congest this highway then none of us will be able to use it.