



GLOBAL Wi-Fi NETWORKING

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REDIFINING WI-FI SERVICE GLOBALLY

AUTHORIZED MERAKI CHANNEL SALES PARTNER

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Residential and MDU: University Hills Apartments

“In the time it takes to install a Glade Plug-In, you can install a Meraki Wall Plug. It enabled us to complement the existing Meraki network by boosting areas with weak signal fast.”

– Steven Scheck, Inspire WiFi



University Hills Apartments is a 154 unit residential complex just off campus from the University of Toledo. The property is managed by Campus Apartments, one of the largest owners/managers of student housing in the country, with more than 18,000 beds in 16 states and serving over 50 colleges and universities.

University Hills competes with other nearby housing options when it comes to attracting University of Toledo college students. Management knew offering WiFi to tenants could help lower vacancy rates and improve resident satisfaction. But they were hesitant: Past experience with WiFi installations was less than rosy. A network had been installed at another property, but residents complained of spotty coverage, which was worse than no coverage at all. For University Hills, Campus Apartments called on InspireWiFi, a Meraki Authorized Reseller. Inspire WiFi is a nation-wide specialist in deploying and managing WiFi solutions for residential properties, shopping centers, and restaurants.

Challenge

Property manager wanted to differentiate 154 unit residential housing complex vs. other properties vying for college students

Believed providing WiFi would lower vacancy rates and raise customer satisfaction, but was skeptical based on previous deployments

Needed a solution that just worked, and could be deployed quickly

Meraki Solution

Initial Deployment:
26 Meraki Outdoors
10 Meraki Wall Plugs

Cost: Extremely Affordable

Results

Dependable WiFi across entire property deployed in less than a week and serving 500 tenants

200 users per day have downloaded over 24 terabytes on information in first few months of deployment

Areas with weak signal boosted quickly with new Meraki Wall Plug devices

“When it comes to college students, Internet is a need-to-have, not a nice-to-have,” said Steven Scheck of InspireWiFi. In addition to installing wireless coverage that just worked, Steven knew high bandwidth usage would be a special challenge. College students gobble up more of it than average Internet users, thanks to music downloads and iPhones.

Steven installed three T1's and three DSL lines across University Hills' six buildings, and then designed a network with 26 Meraki Outdoors throughout the property. The whole complex was now covered with WiFi. But Meraki's software-as-a-service Dashboard management tool showed that some nodes were serving 15-20 users each and slowing down performance. That's where Meraki's new Wall Plug device came in handy. Like the Indoor and Outdoor, the Wall Plug is a 3-in-1 gateway, access point and repeater. But Wall Plug was specifically designed for rapid deployment in existing Meraki networks to shore up coverage. It plugs right into a standard power outlet—no cords or cables required. Installation literally takes 1-2 minutes.

Steven sent 10 Meraki Wall Plugs to the property manager. In the first week the network was live, any time a resident complained of a weak signal, Steven directed the manager to hand out a Meraki Wall Plug and have the tenant plug it in. “If someone complained, we knew they were a candidate for a Wall Plug,” said Scheck. In a few days, the Wall Plugs were deployed to spread and strengthen the WiFi signal in areas with weaker coverage.

The biggest challenge came from a tenant who didn't believe it was that fast. He kept calling in, asking if there was something else he needed to do. As Steven puts it: “In the time it takes to install a Glade Plug-In, you can install a Meraki Wall Plug. It enabled us to complement the existing network by boosting areas with weak signal fast.”

Inspire WiFi manages the University Hills network for a monthly fee, so the property manager can focus on managing the property, not the wireless network. Scheck and team also built a unique landing page for residents. Every time a user signs onto the network, they start with the University Hills homepage. Tenants and management use it to post scheduled events and arrange group activities. “It's created a livelier community at the complex,” says Scheck. “Everyone is happier.”