

Product: Ruckus Network

Company: Ruckus Network (formerly College Entertainment Network, CEN)

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Note: Information presented in this report is based in good faith on information provided by the company offering the technologies described. No independent due diligence has been carried out to verify the original source information.

1. The Legitimate Service Overview

RUCKUS states that their system provides a library of movies and music for on-demand playback on campus networks. They claim to have licensed content from major and independent music labels as well as a movie distributor. Their stated goal is to augment the nationally available content with content from local artists including students and student groups.

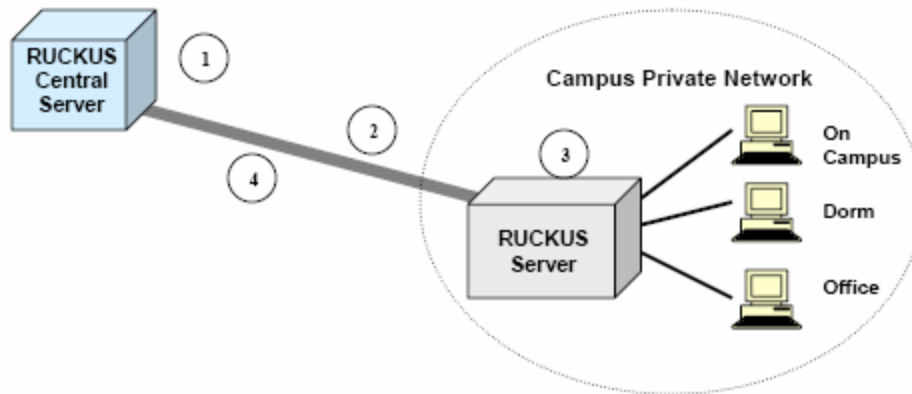
RUCKUS claims that students will have “unlimited” access to the above content. They additionally claim to be able to acquire discounted licensing terms for the academic community.

2. Detailed Technology Description

RUCKUS informs us that students can “stream, download, watch and listen to their favorite music and movies on their computers.” Use of the service requires installation of servers on the institution’s intranet. At the time of their submission, the company claimed access to over 500,000 music tracks and hundreds of movies.

3.1 Network architecture

RUCKUS claims to have integrated a number of technologies into their server-based system. The RUCKUS central server provides content to another RUCKUS server on the local intranet. The following diagram was provided in their response to show the flow of content through the system:



1. Redundant central servers hold several terabytes of music, movies, and other content
2. Most frequently requested media is periodically downloaded into each RUCKUS server located within a college intranet
3. Students access the media via the RUCKUS client application. If the requested media does not reside on the local server, an immediate request is made to the RUCKUS Central server
4. Local content, user preferences and other important data is uploaded to the RUCKUS Central server to constantly improve the quality of service

RUCKUS claims support for a number of authentication schemes including Kerberos (also from MIT), Novell Directory Services, MS Active Directory and LDAP.

3.2 Scalability

The RUCKUS server installed at the college or university is designed to provide an adequate response time for local users. By avoiding any reliance on the public Internet, the company says they can maintain a higher quality of service for students.

They claim that the system is designed to be responsive for hundreds of thousands of subscribers. They claim that their architecture incorporates strategies for redundant components with the goal of maintaining constant availability of content.

3.3 Testing and installed base

Details of beta testing accomplished thus far were not provided. A launch date was not provided.

3.4 Competitive approaches

RUCKUS claims that an advantage of their system is that it incorporates content of local interest, especially to college students. Their goal is to incorporate access

to content from campus musical groups, student films, student news broadcasts and campus event listings.

The system provides a means for content discovery, the company claims. To provide this they say that a rich search, categorization and cross referencing capability is provided.

The company lists the aggregation of content, the community based features and the attention to student-oriented needs as key advantages of their system.

3.5 Technology/Service Characteristics

a) Downloading of files and burning to other digital media

We are told that students may opt for premium services such as the ability to purchase permissions to burn music tracks to CD-R or copy the tracks to a portable device. The company also mentioned ring tones and games as additional planned premium features.

b) Distribution to other computers or portable devices

RUCKUS informs us that the ability to download content to a portable device is included as a premium offering in their system. They state that the Windows Media rights management system allows control of the subscription rules. A detailed listing of the typical usage rules was not provided.

The company states that super distribution is provided by the Windows Media DRM. This, they say, permits students to transfer files to each other provided that both are valid RUCKUS subscribers.

c) Compatibility with Windows, Macintosh, and/or other systems.

The company currently claims compatibility with Windows operating systems only. They inform us that they are planning compatibility with the Mac OS, Unix and Linux at a later date. The company did not state which codecs or DRM products would provide the equivalent services for Mac and Unix users.

d) Type of content and the number of titles available on the vendor's system for selection by authorized users of the university or college network;

The company claims to have licensed over 500,000 tracks and hundreds of movies for on-demand playback.

- e) Identification of companies from whom the vendor has obtained licensing agreements

RUCKUS did not list content producers who have licensed content for their system.

4. Corporate Characteristics and Resources

The company was founded by two graduate students from MIT Sloan School of Management. Originally known as College Entertainment Network (CEN), the company now calls itself RUCKUS Network. This is also the name of the service.

The states that their management team and board of advisors include executives from the entertainment and education sectors such as Scott Dinsdale, former CTO of BMG and SVP of digital strategy at the MPAA; Jim Bruce, former VP of information technology at MIT; and Stuart Lynn, former CEO of ICANN and CIO of the UC system.

RUCKUS reports that they are backed by Battery Ventures (www.battery.com), a leading venture capital firm focused on technology companies at all stages of growth. From its offices in Wellesley, Mass., and San Mateo, Calif.,

5. Pilot Testing

RUCKUS has announced that they are seeking colleges and universities interested in deploying the beta service for the 2004-2005 school year. Terms were not provided.

6. Commercial Terms

The company suggests that colleges and universities can provide RUCKUS for their student populations by purchasing a site license. Licenses are offered through a wholesale subscription based on the number of students per month that will use the system.

7. Other Information

The company claims to have interviewed more than 1,000 students as a way to acquire knowledge of student's needs and entertainment preferences.