



## The University of Denver empowers its IT Team and students with uninterrupted connectivity

**50 %**

Time saved deploying Nile vs. traditional network

**3X**

Increase in network speed after Nile deployment

**\$1M**

Capital outlay avoided thanks to Nile's subscription pricing model

### The Challenge

The University of Denver's (DU) dorms were due for a Wi-Fi upgrade and the IT team had a list of non-negotiable requirements when it comes to coverage, capacity, and availability of the wireless network.

They needed a network solution that would address the unique security and deployment challenges universities face and offer a cost model that makes sense in the higher education environment. In addition, the solution had to lighten the load for the IT department, allowing them to focus on a key priority: enabling student success.

- Equip dorms with guaranteed performance when it comes to wireless connectivity and coverage while adhering to a tight deadline
- Ensure that the myriad student's devices don't increase cybersecurity risks
- Create a pricing structure that aligned with DU's budget requirements
- Offload and automate operational tasks from a resource-constrained IT team

## The Solution

Nile Access Service was deployed across two residence halls with a combined capacity of 1,100 students, serving 2,500+ connections. From site survey to final installation, Nile's team led the deployment for the entire wired and wireless network, in partnership with the university and its channel partner.

The unique architecture and capabilities of the solution allowed for a complete refresh while the halls were fully occupied, an impressive feat. Currently, 10 additional dorm buildings are being transitioned to the Nile network.

- Nile Access Service supports 1,110 students, serving 2,500+ connections
- Secure wired and wireless connectivity fully operational in under two weeks
- The project was completed with minimal disruption to occupants

## The Results

Dorm residents now enjoy secure wired and wireless connectivity that is 3x faster than before and one that comes with guaranteed performance for coverage, capacity, and availability.

Instead of focusing on troubleshooting and upkeep, DU's IT staff have more time for innovative projects that bolster student success. A flexible subscription-based pricing model made this deployment not only feasible but also very desirable.

- University dorm Wi-Fi refresh that supports 9,000+ devices
- Built-in zero trust isolation protects against lateral cyber attack movement
- No upfront capital outlay is required with square footage-based subscription pricing
- Fully automated lifecycle management has saved time for critical IT initiatives

**Nile is exactly what I've been looking for. It has given me and my team time back to spend supporting our students and evaluating new technologies."**

Russ Kaurlo  
CIO, University of Denver

## Taking on the challenge of residential life

Access to dorm rooms when students are living in them during the school year is a logistical nightmare. But even during the summer months, the dorms are often occupied with youth from summer camps and programs. And, of course, you have to support every possible device a student might have – phones, laptops, smart watches, tablets, and gaming systems. Older buildings, often constructed with materials that hinder signal transmission and pose hazards like asbestos, also add to the complexities.

All of those factors made Nile a very attractive option to lead the Wi-Fi refresh of the Centennial Hall and Centennial Towers at the University of Denver. Typical installs call for an access point (AP) to be deployed in each dorm room. Confident that Nile APs could penetrate the walls to deliver a strong wireless signal, the decision was made to locate them in the hallways instead. Nile deployed the new network and the connectivity is flawless.

“Nile was able to deliver a completely new network including access points, access and distribution switches in half the time a traditional network would take to roll out,” says Padma Rajendran, Director of IT Network Operations at the University of Denver. “That was one of the biggest wins working with Nile, getting the job done in the shortest period of time possible.”



### **A budget tailored to the project**

Because the Nile Access Service is delivered as a subscription, it was well-suited to the needs of higher education institutions where the budgets are always tight.

University of Denver avoided a capital outlay of more than \$1 million. Monthly payments are manageable and predictable and there won't be any surprise costs when it comes to lifecycle refreshes. Nile also protects the existing network access investment by integrating with Aruba ClearPass, the campus-wide RADIUS solution.

“I really appreciated how Nile worked with our existing ClearPass deployment,” recalls Rajendran. “Other vendors only support their own products, but Nile went the extra mile, helping with the configurations to make sure the integration worked flawlessly.”

### **Built-in security to protect students and faculty**

Data shows that the education sector has rapidly become one of the biggest targets for cyberattacks, with educational institutions experiencing the highest number of attacks yet in the first quarter of 2023, an increase of 15 percent over the previous year. In the residence hall environment alone there are thousands of unique, student-owned devices on the network. The chances of those devices being exposed to malware and helping proliferate it throughout the university are high. That's where Nile's ability to extend zero trust principles to the campus network turned out to be essential.

“I'm a firm believer that security needs to be engineered within the solution on day one, you should never have to go find it after the fact, and Nile delivers that,” says Russ Kaurlo, DU's CIO. “If it's not built in,

you end up with shadow systems you bolt on, this means it's less secure and it adds more complexity and more management."

Nile was able to deliver a brand new network in half the time a traditional network would take to roll out."

Padma Rajendran

Director of IT Network Operations, University of Denver

## **Outcome based, student focused**

Everyone at DU, including IT, is responsible for, and takes pride in, their contribution to student outcomes.

"Nile is exactly what I've been looking for," says Kaurlo. "It has given me and my team time back to spend supporting our students and evaluating new technologies. We're outcome based and student focused."

By taking on the everyday networking tasks, fully automating lifecycle management and providing white-glove support, Nile significantly lessens the burden on the university's IT team.

"Nile support is awesome," says Rajendran. "When we reach out to the Nile help desk, we get an immediate response. Usually they know about the issues before we do. With other vendors, you're waiting up to three days for a response after you submit a ticket."