

## Student gets around program to prevent music piracy

by Elise Ackerman  
Knight Ridder Newspapers

A Princeton University student has found he can defeat a highly touted computer program to prevent music piracy with the stroke of a single key: "Shift."

In a paper posted on his Web site on Monday, graduate student John Halderman, 22, said he got around restrictions built into the CD "Comin' From Where I'm From," by Anthony Hamilton, a soulful R&B artist. The CD, released by BMG's Arista Records last month, was heavily promoted as the first to use copy management technology. Software included on the CD limited consumers to burning only three regular copies or to sending promotional copies that timed out after 10 days.

But Halderman managed to stop the software from installing itself on his PC.

"In practice, many users who try to copy the disc will succeed without even noticing that it's protected, and all others can bypass the protections with as little as a single key stroke," he wrote.

Nathaniel Brown, a BMG spokesman, admitted the restrictions could be bypassed by a determined consumer. But he likened the software, made by SunnComm Technologies, to a "speed bump" that would deter ordinary consumers from casually making multiple illegal copies.

"It's not going to stop a hacker or someone who wants to mass copy," he said.

Brown said the company chose to use the technology anyway because it "offers a new level of playability" - which means consumers can now

play the CD in their cars.

BMG, a Bertelsmann subsidiary, and other music companies have sought to discourage mass copying by taking 261 people to court last month for sharing songs without permission and have threatened other lawsuits.

SunnComm protested that Halderman made circumventing their software sound too easy, and that they knew about the loophole already. Halderman's paper could be considered a violation of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, a controversial law that prohibits making devices that circumvent copy-prevention measures, said Peter Jacobs, president of the Phoenix, Ariz., company.

"I don't see how telling people to press the shift key can be a circumventive device," said

Halderman in an interview.

"This technology is going to end up in the hall of fame beside the previous Sony technology that was famously defeated by drawing on the CD with a felt-tipped pen," wrote Edward Felton, Halderman's adviser, who publishes a Web log, "Freedom to Tinker." A Princeton professor, Felton was threatened by the Recording Industry Association of America in 2001 when he sought to publish research on vulnerabilities in digital watermarking technology.

Jacobs said he had no intention of suing Halderman under the act, and that the student should spend his time researching something more worthwhile. He said, "This just isn't one of the weighty issues of the world."

## Many college freshmen must play catch-up

by Amy Hetzner  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Even as the number of students taking upper-level math courses soars at high schools, a stubborn demographic continues to plague higher education: remedial enrollments.

In 1999-2000, 35.5 percent of all first- and second-year undergraduate students reported taking some sort of remedial college course, according to a study by the National Center for Education Statistics, an arm of the U.S. Department of Education. And, for nearly three-fourths of those students, one of those classes was math, the study found.

In addition, only four in 10 high school seniors in the 2002-'03 class who took the ACT received a score that indicated they were ready for college-level algebra, the college admissions test company reported this year.

Critics use such figures as an indictment of high school instruction, that the schools do such a poor job of preparing their graduates that the colleges are forced to take care of the problem. But college officials are not sure that's the case.

The dichotomy between increasing achievement levels in high school and the need for remediation in college shows a disconnect between the two systems, said Michael Kirst, a Stanford University education professor who co-authored a study on the issue earlier this year.

The problem is that colleges have different expectations for incoming freshmen than states have for their high school graduates, and most high school students don't know that, he said. The results aren't seen in students who take Advanced Placement courses, which are specifically geared to match college curricula. But they become apparent in the 80 percent of students who aren't in AP or honors-level classes and still might go to college, he said.

"You have two disconnected systems that proceed in their own way, and the kids are the losers," Kirst said. "What's in Algebra 2 in high

school isn't what colleges want in Algebra 2."

Jana Plotkin, a freshman at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, recently found herself caught in that divide.

Plotkin took four years of math at Glendale, Wis., Nicolet High

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*- Michael Kirst, a Stanford University education professor who co-authored a study on the dichotomy between increasing achievement levels in high school and the need for remediation in college.*

School, including trigonometry and statistics, and received fairly good grades.

But when she took her math placement test at the university in May, she scored below what she needed to get into a for-credit math class. Instead, this fall, she enrolled in the university's Math 095 course, which combines lectures and online course work to help fill in the gaps in students' math skills.

Some of the difficulties that students like Plotkin have with college placement tests for math, however, may be just a need for review, college instructors say.

Many high schools require only three years of math, so it may be more than a year between a student's last math class and the placement test.

"After even about six weeks out of math class, you forget so much of what you did if you don't use it," said Sue Sharkey, a math instructor at Waukesha County Technical College. "So much of what the problem

is, is it hasn't been done recently. So they need a review on everything before they're ready to jump into an actual math class."

Not everyone views remedial classes as a bad thing. In fact, Wisconsin's Madison Area Technical College has deliberately expanded the number of students enrolled in such classes.

"One of the reasons our college exists is to provide access to higher education for anyone who wants it," said Terrance Webb, executive dean for learning programs at Madison Area Technical College. "And one of the things it means is we are bound to enroll students who are not prepared to do college-level work in certain areas."

Webb doesn't like the name "remedial," though. He opts for calling such courses "developmental."

Today, 40 percent to 50 percent of the college's students are placed in developmental math courses, according to Webb.

There are many causes for that figure, he said. Some students don't test well, some haven't taken a math course in years and are returning to education after several years in the work world, and some took the state's minimum two-year math requirement in high school.

"There's a lot of reasons for this," Webb said. "A lot of people like to blame it on the high school. 'Oh, they're not teaching the students the right thing.' But I'm not sure that's true."

In the meantime, the Madison technical college also is looking to bridge that divide, which Kirst complained is keeping some students from achieving their college dream. Over the summer, the school co-hosted a daylong school-to-careers conference for high school teachers to explain the technical college's math expectations.

Judy Jones, a math instructor at the college who helped coordinate the conference, said she doesn't believe incoming college students are less prepared than they were in the past.

"I do feel we are getting a broader range of students today," she said.

"We are getting more down at the low level than just at the middle level. And the problem with students who aren't on the college track - they don't tend to like math, and they take as much as they have to and they don't take any more."



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