

Vantage Gives Temple University Students XFINITY's Wi-Fi, IPTV Combo

Temple University students who reside at Vantage, an off-campus housing property, have access to two new amenities: XFINITY's IPTV and buildingwide Wi-Fi. Our thanks to Mark Caltabiano, VP of asset management for The Goldenberg Group, and Adrian Adriano, VP of strategic initiatives for XFINITY Communities, for helping compile this profile.

By Sean Buckley / *Broadband Communities*

Founded to give working-class Philadelphians the opportunity to earn college degrees, Temple University is known not only for its academic programs but also for its alumni. Rock-and-roll duo Daryl Hall and John Oates, who both attended the university, met after seeking refuge in a service elevator when a fight broke out between high school fraternities and gangs at Philadelphia's Adelphi Ballroom.

Temple University students can now take advantage of Vantage, an off-campus housing property. Designed and built by The Goldenberg Group, Vantage offers 984 residents several amenities, including a community and game room, golf simulator, fitness center and study lounge.

Vantage's residents have access to XFINITY Communities' propertywide Wi-Fi and streaming video on any device. In addition to

offering bandwidth for XFINITY entertainment, students and faculty can use high-speed internet service to access large files, complete coursework and remain in contact with friends and family.

Mark Caltabiano, VP of asset management for The Goldenberg Group, says the company had several choices before settling on XFINITY.

"We worked with InfiniSys Multifamily Technology as our telecommunications consultant during the development of this project," he says. "We solicited bids from several providers. XFINITY was one, as well as others that are a little more prevalent in the student housing space, such as Pavlov Media, Single Digits and Hotwire."

Video was also a big factor. On-campus Temple University students can access the XFINITY On Campus streaming entertainment solution. Vantage residents can watch more than 100 channels of live TV on





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demand and recorded content on their IP-enabled devices, including laptops, tablets and smartphones.

If residents are connected to the Wi-Fi network, they can watch every XFINITY IPTV channel on an Android device, a laptop or a Roku TV. When residents move in, they receive a link inviting them to sign up for accounts, which is what they use to access their own custom programming on any device.

“It’s a great all-in-one solution, and it’s nice to have a single provider for everything,” Caltabiano says.

SIMPLIFIED WI-FI

XFINITY Communities Select WiFi places access points throughout the

property, eliminating the need for residents to have routers in their units. Each apartment is equipped with an Arris/Ruckus access point.

Residents are given access to the network upon move-in and get the connectivity they need to collaborate on projects with study groups, share the latest video via social media and, with IPTV, watch live, DVR and on-demand video from any device.

Caltabiano says the Vantage Wi-Fi network comes with a private option. “There’s also a private Wi-Fi network, which only residents can access,” he says. “It’s the same access point, but it’s like your own home network, which is a nice feature in the smart-home world, where there are all kinds of connected devices.”

Adrian Adriano, VP of strategic initiatives for XFINITY Communities, says the company is seeing more off-campus housing developments and assisted living or other types of residences asking for propertywide managed Wi-Fi.

“In addition to the amenities students demand now – including everything from study rooms to game rooms – they require high-speed connectivity to conduct their student work,” he says.

In addition to offering internet access, the Wi-Fi network can serve as a backbone for automated services.

“We can add more services on top of the Wi-Fi network,” Adriano says. “This will allow us to connect to cameras,



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connect to locks, and get all the smart devices that residents are asking for.”

INSTANT IPTV ACCESS

In tandem with buildingwide Wi-Fi, access to a wide range of IPTV content was a key consideration. Unlike traditional legacy methods that require a set-top box, residents only need to download the XFINITY Stream app to access content.

Another way this has been done in the past is to use the coax signal with a QAM tuner connecting TVs on the other end. Although this method works, it is not the best looking solution and is not as functional. Goldenberg also looked at offering YouTube TV.

“Eliminating the need for cable boxes or any box in each apartment is an important factor,” Caltabiano says. “It’s operationally very painful on a year-to-year basis to deal with. When you are putting some of the responsibility on the resident, it becomes a hassle.”

Adriano says because the IPTV and Wi-Fi services do not require equipment, they simplify service management and activation.

“Because we don’t require any kind of boxes, the moving process is easy for

the students, for the property managers and for us,” he says. “We have the access points, and it’s easy for them to sign on and get connected.”

On March 16, as stay-at-home orders began to take effect due to COVID-19, Temple University’s Division of Student Affairs encouraged off-campus students to go home. Vantage instructed students to return to their family homes, but some students chose to stay in the building.

VITAL STATISTICS

Property Description: Located just steps from Temple University, Vantage is a sleek, contemporary community packed with thoughtful amenities to help students achieve their academic goals while maintaining a healthy life balance.

Each apartment comes fully furnished and includes a smart TV. Common living areas are tastefully decorated with premium contemporary furniture. The gourmet kitchens have practically everything necessary for cooking a full meal or a quick snack (just add groceries). When it comes to personal space, Vantage residents enjoy spacious bedrooms with high ceilings and windows that open to allow fresh breezes.

Demographics: College students

Greenfield or retrofit? Greenfield

Number of units: 368

Style: High-rise

Date services started being delivered: August 2019

PROPERTY OF THE MONTH HIGHLIGHTS

~ Vantage ~

- Secure propertywide Wi-Fi
- Streaming video on any device
- IPTV services
- Dedicated tech support

Did the property have any special requirements? We needed to provide a streaming entertainment solution that parallels what on-campus students receive through XFINITY On Campus, as well as high-performance Wi-Fi across the property without the hassle of dealing with routers or gateways in residential units. XFINITY Communities Select WiFi places access points throughout the property, eliminating the need for equipment such as individual routers in units. Residents get access to the network upon move-in and get the connectivity they need to collaborate on projects with study groups, share the latest video via social media and, with IPTV, watch live, DVR and on-demand video from any device.

SERVICES

Services offered or planned on the network: XFINITY Communities provides high-speed internet access via Select WiFi and its IPTV service. Students can access up to 1 Gbps speeds inside their units, and there's a common-area wireless option.

Do additional service providers operate separate broadband networks on the same property? No, just XFINITY Communities because it is a bulk managed Wi-Fi solution.

Can residents choose among multiple service providers? No, just XFINITY. It is a managed Wi-Fi solution to the entire property.

Is the point of contact for resident technical support the property manager, the service provider or a third party? Service provider

BUSINESS

Which parts of the network are owned by the service provider, and which parts are owned by the property owner? The network is mostly owned by the property owner.

Is there a marketing agreement with the property owner? No

Is there a bulk-service agreement? Can residents upgrade from the bulk services? Yes, there's a bulk-



Residents just download the XFINITY Stream app to access content.

service agreement for internet and IPTV services. Residents cannot upgrade managed Wi-Fi service now. Residents can upgrade IPTV to add additional subscription services by calling in to a call center.

TECHNOLOGY

Broadband architecture: To support the internet service, there's a fiber-based 10 GigE connection to each building. From there, fiber is connected to each floor. An Ethernet connection on the floor then goes to each apartment. The network infrastructure also has future expansion capabilities if Vantage opts to install fiber directly to each unit later.

Technology/medium used to deliver signals to each unit: XFINITY installed Ethernet on Cat 5 and Cat 6 cabling. Each unit can access Wi-Fi through network access points XFINITY installed throughout the building.

Methods for running cables between buildings, vertically within buildings, horizontally within buildings: Vantage is one large high-rise, so cables are not run between any buildings. The owner was responsible for cabling the building.

Vendors/products:

- Ruckus (Wi-Fi access points)
- InfiniSys (network design)

LESSONS LEARNED

What was the biggest challenge? Getting the service contracts finished. This was our first foray

into moving the XFINITY On Campus product to an off-campus student housing project, which presented a lot of issues that had to be worked through.

What was the biggest success?

The low-voltage installation crews followed InfiniSys' design to a T. That eased installation by Comcast and Epproach because they could go by the firm's design and know that the cabling for units was where it was supposed to be, and they did not have to spend time figuring things out because of field changes. By acquiring Epproach Communications, a provider of multifamily technology including managed Wi-Fi and internet, XFINITY Communities strengthened its managed Select WiFi offering in 2019. Select WiFi places access points throughout a property, providing quality of experience while eliminating the need for residents to have equipment in their units.

What should other owners consider before they get started on a similar deployment? Students have a unique profile. Peak usage times tend to be when the building is full, from 8 p.m. to 3 a.m. Students want flexibility in addition to on-demand content, which they can get with the IPTV solution. ❖

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