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[The 802.11n Challenge: Minnesota Wants the Greatest Wireless Network](#)

They want to snatch Duke University's wireless crown

The University of Minnesota is gearing up to deploy world's largest 802.11n wireless network that will cover two of its campuses at the Big Ten University. According to the university officials, the deployment will start in May and, upon completion, the network will serve no less than 80,00 staff and students. Last month, the Duke University claimed that they finished outlining the plans for their [upcoming wireless network](#) comprised of 2,500 802.11n Cisco Aironet 1250 Series access points. The University of Minnesota will come to steal Duke University's wireless crown with their own network implementation, that will cover 1,204 acres across the university's two campuses. The networking gear will be deployed by Trapeze Networks, and will replace the university's current network, comprised of scattered Wi-Fi access points installed by multiple hardware suppliers. More than that, the new networking gear will be able to support future wireless technologies like WiMax. "The network management and planning tools allowed us to quickly import our own CAD drawings and immediately begin Wi-Fi planning for 300 buildings, including 1,300-plus floors," said Steve Cawley, the university's CIO and VP of information technology. The network will not be entirely deployed in a single step. Instead, it will be extended on a five-year period, in order to cover more than 22 million square feet indoors and additional large areas outdoors. When completed, the wireless network will be about four times larger than the one being deployed at the Duke University (it only covers 6 million square feet). Moreover, the university will offer satellite mapping tools like Google Earth that will let users check the covered areas. "Wireless access has become a part of college life. It's essential for students, faculty and staff to have a reliable Wi-Fi connection whether it's needed for doing research at the library, a school project with a study group or emailing peers," said Jim Vogt, chairman and chief executive officer, Trapeze Networks. "We commend the University of Minnesota for being the first Big Ten school to deploy 802.11n campus-wide. This is a perfect example of how leading higher education institutions can use technology to differentiate themselves and offer an improved learning environment."