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How the Violinist Beat Sprint

A gifted musician talks about his battle with the big wireless service provider.

By Roman Loyola

Friday's episode of "The Screen Savers" features a guest you normally wouldn't associate with technology. No, it's not Martin Sargent (though he is on the show Friday). It's Mark O'Connor, world-renowned violinist and composer.

Why should you care about O'Connor? After all, your MP3 playlist is filled with tunes from [Pennywise](#) (if you're Patrick), [Baha Men](#) (if you're Leo), [Pat Boone](#) (if you're Jessica), or [Wu-Tang Clan](#) (if you're Martin). Even though O'Connor is a brilliant musical genius you may not have heard of, he has made an impression on technology.

Sprint: You've been served

Here's why you should care about O'Connor: He challenged a big, Fortune 500 company with its mighty lawyers and seemingly endless supply of cash. And he won. Fair and square. He's living proof that you don't have to be pushed around by a big-business Goliath.

O'Connor's Goliath was cellphone provider Sprint. It wanted to erect a cellphone tower in his neighborhood. O'Connor discovered that the tower emitted noise that exceeded the county limit of 45 decibels. Fearing that the excessive noise would devalue the character of his neighborhood, he rallied his community and filed suit against Sprint. Five months later he and his neighbors won.

"Many people are trying to figure out the balance between the need for technology while keeping neighborhoods free from the clutter of the towers," O'Connor says. "It is my hope this case is a step toward establishing some appropriate balance for our neighborhoods. We were successful because we determined that there were alternative placements available for the tower that

were less evasive to the surroundings."

He's no Luddite

Just because a guy sues a tech company like Sprint doesn't mean he avoids tech like the plague. On the contrary, O'Connor embraces technology and uses it in his everyday life.

- 1 O'Connor uses three Macs: a G3 desktop machine, an iMac, and a PowerBook. He'll spend up to 10 hours a day in front of his computer.
- 1 He uses his cellphone to check his email.
- 1 He's very busy with his [website](#), which informs fans of his tours, music, fiddle camps, and more. The site also lets him interact with fans.

Free music

Speaking of his website, O'Connor [offers sheet music of his work online](#). For a small fee (\$1.50 to \$6) you can download PDF versions of O'Connor's sheet music. You need the [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) (free) to view the music.

For TSS viewers O'Connor is offering the sheet music for "Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier" for free. Click on the link below to download the PDF file.

More free stuff

On Friday's show O'Connor demonstrates how he uses Finale for music notation. You can download a free demo of Finale by clicking on the link below.

[Download Finale Demo](#)

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