

Scott College of Business – Technology Suggestions – 2011

ISU is a Laptop University – Required for all Undergraduate Students

Indiana State University adopted a mandatory laptop computer policy for all undergraduate students *beginning with the fall 2007 class*. Laptop computers are now required for *all* undergraduate students in the Scott College of Business – incoming freshmen and transfer students. With the completion of the wireless computing network, mobile computing is easy just about everywhere on campus. You will be computing from a variety of locations (on and off campus) not just in your residence. You will bring your laptop to classes, in the library, in a friend's room, and take it home.

What Computer Should I Buy?

Most of the campus uses Windows computers, although a few departments use Macintosh.
*The Scott College of Business uses **Windows** personal computers.*

If you bring a Macintosh, you will need to get Windows for it so you can use the standard Windows software applications in your business classes.

We recommend a mid-level or better **laptop computer** with Windows 7 (or Windows XP Professional) as the operating system and at least a 2 GHz processor. See the ISU laptop web site for details. www.indstate.edu/laptop. We suggest at least 2 GB RAM in the computer. Pick at least a 200 GB hard drive; larger is optional and often no more expensive. A 14" LCD screen is typical – larger may look nice but is heavier to carry around campus. Be sure your computer comes with a **DVD-RW** drive for installing software and burning DVDs and CDs. Your laptop computer should have a **wireless adapter** – preferably 802.11g or 802.11n – for connecting to Wi-Fi on campus and elsewhere. Most laptops will also have a slow modem port but few people use modems any more. Having more than two USB ports is advantageous – there you connect a flash drive, printer, digital camera, iPod, and so forth.

Preferred laptop computers come with special *low-power circuitry* that gives **longer battery life**. Low end laptops without this circuitry have much less battery life. Another consideration for the laptop computer is weight – heavier machines typically have longer battery lives and cost a little less. The less expensive laptop computers weigh 7-8 pounds without the battery charger. Better machines (more money) will **weigh about 5-6 pounds** – even this much can make a difference when you carry it around campus.

This year ISU adopted the **Dell Latitude E5420 laptop computer** as the campus standard after a competitive proposal process. If you did not receive the laptop award, you can purchase this model for \$795 directly from Dell using the ISU pricing at www.dell.com/isustudents. * This computer comes with an Intel i3-2310 processor, 4 GB RAM, 250 GB hard drive, 6-cell Lithium battery, 14" 1366x768 LED backlit screen, and webcam. It weighs only 4.5 pounds. There are attractive prices on that site – hundreds of dollars less than buying this computer without the ISU discount. Remember that the Dell prices at this site include *three years of full warranty coverage and accidental damage*. Dell was ISU's laptop vendor for last year as well. These computers will come preloaded with ISU software if obtained through the university (scholarship or purchased from the Dell ISU site).

Although there are other manufacturers for desktops and laptop computers, *the Dell Latitude E5420 laptop is highly recommended as it is fully supported for both hardware and software by on campus technicians at no additional cost to ISU students*. Support for all other brands of computers is a chargeable item through the ISU Computer Support Center. The technical support for all non-Dell laptops may be limited to software.

Dell often runs its own sales online (www.dell.com) and I recommend that you check frequently for other products if you don't use the ISU link to Dell. Sales often appear on weekends for a couple of days, and then disappear; better prices appear at the end of the month and particularly at the end of a quarter – March, June, September, and December. Be sure to factor in the three years of warranty, and that you are purchasing a computer with specifications that are equivalent to those the university endorses.

Peripherals and Accessories for your Laptop Computer

The ISU Computer Store is currently located in the Student Computing Complex building next to Dede Fountain. There you can purchase accessories, peripherals, software, iPods, printers, papers, ink cartridges and the like at very competitive prices. All the products in this section are carried in The Computer Store.

Students will have to experiment with the best **carrying case** for their laptop computer. Some will prefer a padded book bag/backpack. Others may like a conventional laptop computer case, while others may get a rolling case with wheels. Cases are also available online and at local office supply stores like Staples and Office Max near Honey Creek Mall. See what other students are using before you make a decision about a case. ☺

Many students will bring an **inexpensive ink jet printer** for their room or apartment. HP, Epson, Canon, and Lexmark offer models starting around \$75-100. Paper is relatively inexpensive but a set of ink jet print cartridges (black and color) is often around \$50, so we encourage students to use their printing allotment, provided by the technology fee, for laser printers in the computer labs when printing larger volumes. Don't forget a USB cable for the printer – typically around \$10-20. Avoid buying the gold-plated USB cables – they offer little improvement and are more expensive.

A very popular technology tool is the **USB flash drive**, also known as a portable drive or thumb drive. About the size of your thumb, they plug (temporarily) into a USB port and are recognized by the computer as a removable drive. You can drag and drop files onto this drive, then use them in another computer. Many students buy these in 1 to 4 GB sizes. These run \$10-\$30 and every student needs at least one of these! *Hint: these may get lost, so be sure to regularly back up your thumb drive to your laptop computer's hard drive.*

Some students will use a separate **LCD monitor**, keyboard and mouse with their laptop computer. While not necessary, this configuration is more like a desktop computer and offers much more flexibility for input and output. Together, these optional peripherals add about \$200 to the cost of your computer. You can always purchase a mouse for your laptop – it plugs into a USB port. It is easier to click, drag, and drop in Windows with a mouse!

Laptop computers carry some additional challenges – theft is more prevalent with laptops. It's a good idea to have a **security cable** for your laptop computer – that secures it to the furniture and protects your investment. Check with your home insurance company about coverage of your laptop and other possessions at campus. Renter's insurance is inexpensive and gives excellent coverage.

Advice for Students Living in the Residence Halls

OIT (Office of Information Technology) plans to have a move-in procedure with important software that students must apply **when first connecting to the network**. See notices in the hall, the web, and in the mail. The goal is to have students bring their computers up to date with current patches *before* they connect to the campus network. The OIT web site is found at www.indstate.edu/oit/. The Help Desk with assistance for students and some free downloads is at ithelp.indstate.edu/. Read the *OIT Technology Guide* (found at the OIT web page) *before* school starts. In ISU residence halls, there is **no charge** to connect your computer to the wireless campus network.

- Talk to your roommate to see if he or she is **planning to bring a printer**. Remember that sharing a printer also means sharing the cost of the disposables like paper and ink cartridges. These can be expensive if you print lots of pages, especially in color.
- A **laptop computer** presents a theft risk – plan to secure it to your desk or bed with a cable (**Kensington or Belkin locking cable**, around \$30). Important: know who is visiting your room – be sure to have a talk with your roommate about locking doors and other procedures when you're not there!

For Commuting Students

We recommend that commuting students consider high speed (broadband) Internet connections – either **DSL** or **cable modem**. This connection is very convenient – and it is always on. For several students sharing an apartment, this is a good way to **connect more than one computer** – with a wireless router – to the Internet at the same time. Most apartment complexes offer high speed Internet to residents.

If your residence doesn't already have high speed Internet, this service starts at about \$29 per month – look for deals. Frontier offers telephone-based DSL; Road-Runner cable Internet is around \$35-40 per month and requires you have a TV cable service. Both companies offer start up special packages – be sure to ask for any special pricing.

If you live out of DSL or cable modem service areas, you **may not have high speed access to the Internet** – this should be a consideration when making a housing decision. In rural areas, contact your local cell phone company about mobile broadband coverage. All of the other ISU technology benefits included in your fees apply to students living off campus, including free wireless access while on campus.

Cisco Clean Access and Important Software Upgrades

ISU has a mandatory software tool for student computers that forces them to be up to date with Microsoft critical updates and anti-virus data definitions. In other words, when you log in on campus (by wired or wireless connection) you are asked to download a program (CCA - Cisco Clean Access) and authenticate with your Sycamore login. *CCA will check your Windows operating system and anti-virus program to be sure they are current.* If OK, you are permitted to log in to the network; if not OK, you will need to the opportunity to download and install the latest updates. When all campus computers have current system software, there are fewer chances for your computer to be infected and attack others on the network.

Software Download Site and Other Technology Benefits at ISU

You are entitled to download a *single copy* of software that we use on this campus to install on your own laptop. The address of this site is <http://downloads.indstate.edu> – this will revert to a different site after you connect. You will have to give your Sycamore login information to gain access to the download, so be sure you only attempt to download the software one time. There you will find Microsoft applications like Office 2007/2010, anti-virus software, and Windows 7. All of this is included at no charge to full-time registered students. *Hint: if possible, save the download file on your hard drive (and burn a CD or DVD copy) so it's available if you need to install it on your computer again.*

You are also entitled to *complimentary* black and white laser printing – about 650 pages each semester (\$.03 per page). You can go to a campus computer lab and print a document from a desktop computer or print wirelessly from your laptop. You will have to install the campus printer software on your laptop to be able to print wirelessly.

More Technology Advice

Cell phones are everywhere on campus! Many long distance calls are made when the free minutes begin on your plan. *But cell phones in the classroom are always a no-no: no rings, no texting, no vibrations, just silent voice mail, please!* Faculty may be short-tempered when cell phones ring, and even more vexed when someone answers a call during class or texts someone else. If you must respond to an expected emergency call, notify your professor before class and answer the call in the hall. **Important: don't expect to be able to refer to your cell phone, even for the time, while taking a test in college.** If this is your only calculator, you need a new calculator. For business majors, we recommend a financial calculator – inexpensive models are available from HP (10BII and 20b) and Texas Instruments (BA II Plus).

Parents will find it is also helpful to communicate with your student via email or instant messaging. A low-end computer at home will do email and IM very well, but you will need some way to connect to the Internet via an Internet Service Provider. Remember that grandparents enjoy working on the Internet!

When technology changes occur, you will find an updated version of this technology advice document on the College of Business web site. Check out www.indstate.edu/business/programs/students for a link to the most current computer advice.

For specific questions, contact Dr. Bruce McLaren, b-mclaren@indstate.edu or 812-237-3606.

* The Dell ISU site www.dell.com/isustudents has the recommended Latitude E5420 computer. Click on Recommended Business Systems to see this system. As of June 3 the Dell ISU special price was \$795.