

## STUDENT COMPUTER OWNERSHIP

### Georgia Institute of Technology

Since 1997, Georgia Tech has required all undergraduate students to own a computer. Beginning in 2008, all incoming students are required to own laptops that can be carried to class. This document describes several elements of the Georgia Tech policy on Student Computer Ownership (SCO) as well as computer ownership financial aid information. Information sent from the Technology Center @ The Georgia Tech Bookstore in late spring/early summer to students starting in the fall semester will contain more detailed information on purchasing a computer, should you choose to do so. Complete information can be found on the Georgia Tech SCO website at <http://www.sco.gatech.edu>.

### STANDARD SOFTWARE

A major part of the Student Computer Ownership Initiative was the establishment of a standard suite of software to meet the communication, productivity, and educational needs of the student. Standard software minimizes software incompatibilities between students and faculty, helps meet educational goals, improves the effectiveness and timeliness of software support, and helps to minimize support costs. The standard software suite is as follows:

#### Windows systems

<i>Type</i>	<i>Vendor</i>	<i>Software Title</i>
<b>Operating System</b>	Microsoft	Windows Vista Business or higher
<b>Communications</b>	Yahoo!	Zimbra
	Microsoft	Outlook
<b>Security</b>	McAfee	VirusScan & Antispyware Enterprise 8.5i
<b>Productivity</b>	Microsoft	Office 2007 Standard
	Adobe	Acrobat 8 Standard
<b>Educational</b>	Adobe	Dreamweaver CS3
	Maplesoft	Maple 11
	MathWorks	Matlab 7.5

#### Mac OS X systems

<i>Type</i>	<i>Vendor</i>	<i>Software Title</i>
<b>Operating System</b>	Apple	Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard)
<b>Communications</b>	Apple	Apple Mail
<b>Security</b>	McAfee	VirusScan 8.6
<b>Productivity</b>	Microsoft	Office 2008
<b>Educational</b>	Adobe	Dreamweaver CS3
	Maplesoft	Maple 11
	MathWorks	Matlab 7.5

Some of these applications are downloadable from the web or a GT server at no cost to students. See <http://software.oit.gatech.edu> for further details.

The Student Computer Ownership Committee has carefully chosen the components of this software suite. Functionality and price were key factors in making these decisions. Georgia Tech's Office of Information Technology (OIT) and the Department of Housing's ResNet will actively support the standard software. In addition, most titles will be available for student use in the general-purpose computing clusters maintained by OIT.

Software costs to the student should be minimized by the use of this standard software suite. Professors are strongly encouraged to use standard software in their courses. If a professor chooses to use non-standard software, he/she will be solely responsible for providing software support to their students since ***OIT will only support the standard software***. Furthermore, if a student chooses to use any non-standard software, he/she will be solely responsible for providing support. No software can be added or removed from this suite without the specific approval of the Student Computer Ownership Committee and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs.

### **PURCHASING STANDARD SOFTWARE**

The operating system software is preinstalled in new computer systems. If you need to upgrade, either operating system can be purchased at the Technology Center @ The Georgia Tech Bookstore or elsewhere.

The communications/security software is available to all Georgia Tech students under campus-wide licenses. You should obtain this software soon after your arrival on campus since it will be used immediately in your classes. You may download the software free of charge from a GT server for no additional cost to you. See <http://software.oit.gatech.edu> for further details.

The productivity and educational software can be purchased individually from the Technology Center @ The Georgia Tech Bookstore. Students should buy software packages at the time they are needed for use in their courses. However, students should purchase or already have Microsoft Office when they arrive on campus since this software will be used immediately in their classes.

The standard software suite indicates the most current version of the software at the time of this printing. At the time of purchase, students should acquire the latest versions for the computer (Windows or Mac) they will be using. If the software is purchased from the Technology Center @ The Georgia Tech Bookstore, you will receive the most current version at the time of your purchase.

**Note:** While the standard software may be purchased from any vendor, the prices at the Technology Center @ The Georgia Tech Bookstore are particularly attractive because of large educational discounts. It is recommended that students starting in the fall semester wait until the Technology Center @ The Georgia Tech Bookstore computer purchase information is sent in late spring/early summer before making any purchase decisions.

## HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS

A student's computer should effectively run the standard software suite described above. The computer should be fast enough and have enough memory and disk space to provide satisfactory performance over a usable life of at least **two to three years**. All student computers should have the following components (see the information on currently owned hardware under the Purchasing Hardware section, to see if you reach a minimum with your existing system).

**Laptop Requirement:** Starting in summer & fall 2008, all students entering Georgia Tech are required to have a laptop computer.

<b>Processor:</b>	Intel Core 2 Duo 1.6 GHz or better (or equivalent dual processor)
<b>Memory:</b>	2 GB (using one slot only in a 1/2GB configuration – this allows for easy expansion over the life of the computer)
<b>Hard Drive:</b>	120 GB or larger
<b>Video Memory:</b>	128 MB or greater through integrated graphics adapter or separate video card
<b>Communications:</b>	802.11a/b/g/n, Bluetooth 2.0 EDR
<b>Display:</b>	Supports 1024 x 768 resolution or better
<b>Accessories:</b>	CD/DVD writer, Sound capability, Wired Ethernet port

### Network Connections

All rooms in campus residence halls are wired for computer network access. Each room has as many connections as beds. Housing fees cover access; there is no additional charge. To access the network, students *living in campus residence halls* will need an Ethernet port and a CAT-5 Ethernet cable for their computer.

Students *not living in campus residence halls* will need to purchase broadband internet service from an ISP (Internet Service Provider).

### Wireless Access

Georgia Tech currently provides wireless access at many campus locations. Visit <http://www.lawn.gatech.edu> for more information and coverage maps.

### Printing

Although owning a printer is not required, many students purchase a printer for their own convenience. Limited printing services are available in the Commons at the Georgia Tech Library and the Student Center Computer Cluster (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Student Center adjacent to Music Listening Room). Currently, each user is provided with print credits to use for laser printing services in these areas. Limited printing is also available from the Central Printing Services (Central PS) at no charge to the student (print credits or otherwise). Detailed information about these services can be found on the Commons Website – <http://librarycommons.gatech.edu>.

## PURCHASING HARDWARE

Whether you choose to purchase a new computer or already own a laptop, make sure that it has all of the components listed in the “Hardware Requirements” section above. The fastest processor available will provide great performance, but it comes at a cost premium. A good compromise between speed and cost is a processor one or two speeds slower than the fastest. It is not recommended that you purchase a new computer with a processor that is significantly less powerful than the current generation. The standard software suite at Georgia Tech will evolve during your time as a student, and at some point, a machine with a slow processor may not be able to run this software effectively. When this happens, you will need to upgrade or buy another computer. It is likely to be more cost effective to purchase a more powerful machine now than to upgrade later. It is not recommended that you purchase the low-end system from any manufacturer, because some computers are not network-ready and even after being upgraded do not work well on the GT network. Please feel free to check with the Technology Center @ The Georgia Tech Bookstore or The Office of Information Technology if you are not comfortable with any of these directions.

## COMPUTER SUPPORT

Georgia Tech will actively support student computers and the standard software.

The Department of Housing provides full support to residents of the on-campus residence halls through the ResNet Program. ResNet utilizes Residential Technology Advisors (RTAs) who are available to provide telephone and on-site technical support to residents. RTAs are available to assist students in connecting their computers to the GT network.

Georgia Tech’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) Support Center is available to students to answer questions about *hardware configurations, and can help to troubleshoot software applications*. The OIT Resource Center in the bottom level of the library is available for walk-in support. User Assistants are also available in the computing labs on campus.

During the warranty period, students who have purchased new computers will have hardware service provided by the manufacturer.

In addition to the above hardware and software support, Georgia Tech will provide the following support facilities and services:

- Printing (limited)
- Internet access
- Computer accounts for electronic mail
- Computer labs for short-term access to computers running the standard software
- Departmental clusters or labs with major-specific software (e.g., mathematical manipulation and calculation, CAD, compilers, and databases)
- Special classrooms and labs for computer-enhanced presentations

## COMPUTER SECURITY

As a member of the Georgia Tech community, we all play a role in protecting the Institute's information assets and systems. To help facilitate this effort, we ask that you do the following:

- Read the Georgia Tech Computer and Network Usage Policy located at <http://www.security.gatech.edu/policy/usage>
- Do not use your computer to download, copy, store, or redistribute copyrighted materials for which you do not have the legal right to do so.
- Complete the GT Information Security on-line tutorial located at <http://www.security.gatech.edu/information/safe/>
- Install a virus protection and personal firewall application on your system and update it often. See <http://www.sco.gatech.edu>.
- Install anti-spyware software on your system. See <http://www.sco.gatech.edu>.
- Create strong passwords and do not share them with anyone for any reason. A strong password has at least eight characters, uses a combination of numbers, upper and lower case letters, and uses at least one special character (@#\$\$%^&\*).
- Keep software applications, operating systems and security patches current by visiting vendor websites regularly.
- Perform regular backups and store them in a secure location.
- Verify that websites are secure prior to entering personal information.
- Do not give your social security number to anyone—use your gTID instead.
- Log off or lock your keyboard when away from your computer.

Call OIT's Support Center, 404-894-7173, if you need assistance with any of the above.

## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Through an appeals process, computer ownership costs and expenses may be added to the Institute's Cost of Attendance (Student Budget) for entering freshmen and undergraduate transfer students. Applicants who apply for student financial aid through the Office of Student Financial Planning & Services (OSFP&S) may request to have a maximum \$1500 allowance added to the other direct and indirect educational expenses that comprise the student's budget. Procedures on how to initiate this request can be found at <http://www.finaid.gatech.edu/costs/other/>. Contact a financial aid advisor, listed at <http://www.finaid.gatech.edu/contacts>, with any questions.

**NOTE:** As a public institution, Georgia Tech is not in a position to fully fund all of its financially needy students. As set forth in both Admission and Financial Aid publications, "Georgia Tech offers a variety of financial aid programs to assist students in meeting normal college expenses; however, the amount of aid granted seldom meets all educational expenses."

## POLICY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q1:** How can I find out if my current system will meet Georgia Tech's hardware requirements?

**A1:** Refer to the "Hardware Requirements" and "Purchasing Hardware" sections of this document, the SCO website, or the OIT Support Center for current hardware requirements.

**Q2:** Is it better to upgrade my current computer or to buy a new one?

**A2:** This choice is dictated largely by your personal budget considerations. However, it is generally better to buy a new machine if you can. This machine will be faster, will have the latest technology, and generally have a longer usable life.

**Q3:** If I purchase a new computer, how should I decide on the processor speed?

**A3:** The best strategy is to purchase a relatively fast machine since it would have a longer usable life and would be able to meet your educational needs for most of your time at Georgia Tech. A good compromise between speed and cost is a processor one or two speeds slower than the fastest. A computer at the low-end of the speed scale will just adequately run the standard software and provide no room for expansion. Since the price of computers keeps coming down, a number of good choices exist in the \$1,000 to \$2,000 price range. Beyond this price range lie the high-end machines, with multiple processors, high-speed graphics capability, and other such technology. The gain in performance offered by such machines comes at a substantial premium in price, and such an investment is not necessary for most students. If, at some point in the future, a student develops a need for such power, it will probably be much more economical to buy it then.

**Q4:** What should I do if I have a problem with the network connection in my residence hall room?

**A4:** All rooms in Georgia Tech residence halls have the necessary network connections for your computer. These connections are fully supported by ResNet. If you have any problems, you should first call the ResNet office. Contact information is listed at the end of this document.

**Q5:** If I do not own a printer, how will I print my documents?

**A5:** Printing is available to students in public labs or by sending print jobs to a central printing service. See page 3 for specific information about printing.

**Q6:** If printers are optional, is it worth it for me to buy my own?

**A6:** While limited printing facilities are available in the computing clusters on campus, it is certainly more convenient to have your own printer. Clusters may not always be available when you need to print a document. Also, printing at no cost will be limited.

**Q7:** I already have some of the standard software. May I purchase only certain packages from the Technology Center @ The Georgia Tech Bookstore?

**A7:** Yes, you may purchase any package separately from the Technology Center @ The Georgia Tech Bookstore. Call or e-mail them for specific software prices. Be aware, however, that the Small Business Edition of Microsoft Office, which ships with many computers, does not include PowerPoint, a required application for Georgia Tech.

**Q8:** How can I obtain the communications/security software?

**A8:** Georgia Tech has site licenses for several software packages for use on your computer. Georgia Tech recommends using these packages since their updates/upgrades are also available. These applications are available to all GT students. The software can be downloaded at no cost from a GT server. See <http://software.oit.gatech.edu> for details.

**Q9:** I don't want to use one of the components of the standard software suite. Can I use something else?

**A9:** Two key goals in establishing a standard software suite are to minimize software conflicts and to increase the quality of software support. To help achieve these goals, the Georgia Tech Office of Information Technology *will only support* the software in the standard software suite. If you decide to use something other than the standard software it is your responsibility to purchase, maintain, and support the software. It will be your responsibility to eliminate any software conflicts with the standard software as you start to share documents with your fellow students and submit homework assignments to your professors. Given the difficulty and the time associated with doing this, it is recommended that you use the standard software suite listed under the "Standard Software" section.

**Q10:** Can I create PDF files without Adobe Acrobat?

**A10:** If you have a Mac, this functionality is built in and no other software is required. For Windows users, see the previous question about support; OIT supports Acrobat. However, there are other ways to create PDFs using freely available software or ad-ware. One is to use Ghostscript and GhostView, free from <http://www.cs.wisc.edu/~ghost/>. Another option is the pdf995 print driver for Windows, which is distributed as ad-ware (<http://www.freeware995.com/bin/pdf995.exe>).

**Q11:** Can I use Linux and open source software?

**A11:** Red Hat Enterprise Linux is offered free of charge to students.

**Q12:** I have an older computer that I am going to upgrade to meet the hardware requirements listed in this document. What can I do if I want to continue to run an older OS, such as Win 98 or *Me* or Mac OS 8 or OS 9?

**A12:** These older systems are no longer supported by their vendors and are insecure when connected to the Internet. OIT supports only the software listed in this document.

**Q13:** Is there somewhere on campus that will service computers?

**A13:** You can call or take your computer to the Resource Center (bottom level of the library) for assistance but not repair of your computer. The Resource Center can provide you with a number of local vendors if your computer is no longer covered under warranty.

**Q14:** Where can I find more information about using the Georgia Tech network and computer systems?

**A14:** The following web pages contain detailed information and links to other useful pages: <http://www.security.gatech.edu/policy/usage/>, <http://www.resnet.gatech.edu/>, and <http://www.sco.gatech.edu>.

**Q15:** What can I install to remove pop-up ads and spyware from my computer?

**A15:** Georgia Tech has a site license for McAfee Anti-Virus. It is available via the software distribution page, <http://software.oit.gatech.edu>.

**Q16:** Should I purchase a USB flash drive?

**A16:** These devices allow you to easily store and transfer files via the USB port on your computer and can prove to be invaluable.

**Q17:** How can I protect my laptop from theft?

**A17:** In addition to careful handling and storage, there are products available for tracking stolen laptops. One product that can be purchased with the machine is Computrace from Absolute Software. For more details please consult their web site at <http://www.absolute.com/Public/computracecomplete/laptop-tracking.asp>.

## IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES

More information:

Georgia Tech Student Computer Ownership Initiative

Website .....<http://www.sco.gatech.edu>

Technical/connectivity/compatibility questions:

GT Office of Information Technology Support Center

Telephone.....404-894-7173

E-mail..... [support@oit.gatech.edu](mailto:support@oit.gatech.edu)

Website .....<http://www.oit.gatech.edu>

Walk-in support .....Resource Center (library lower level)

ResNet (Department of Housing)

Telephone.....404-894-0044

E-mail..... [support@resnet.gatech.edu](mailto:support@resnet.gatech.edu)

Website .....<http://www.resnet.gatech.edu>

General pricing/availability/ordering:

Technology Center @ The Georgia Tech Bookstore

Telephone.....404-894-2377

Fax.....404-894-2530

E-mail..... [Tech.Center@bks.gatech.edu](mailto:Tech.Center@bks.gatech.edu)

Website .....<http://gatech.bkstore.com>

Financial aid/alternative loans:

Georgia Tech Office of Student Financial Planning and Services

Telephone.....404-894-4160

E-mail..... [finaid@gatech.edu](mailto:finaid@gatech.edu)

Website .....<http://www.finaid.gatech.edu>

Georgia Tech is a unit of the University System of Georgia  
and an equal opportunity, affirmative action educational institution.

Copyright 2008  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Office of Enrollment Services