

# STUDENT COMPUTER OWNERSHIP

## Georgia Institute of Technology

### Summer & Fall 2009 Information

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

Welcome to the Georgia Institute of Technology! Georgia Tech requires all undergraduate students to own a laptop computer that can be used in your residence and carried to class. This document describes minimum hardware and software requirements, support and security guidelines, and computer ownership financial aid information. In late spring or early summer, the Technology Center @ The Georgia Tech Bookstore will send detailed information on purchasing a laptop computer.

#### PURCHASING HARDWARE

Whether you choose to purchase a new computer or you already own a laptop, make sure that it has all of the components listed in the “Hardware Requirements” section below. A good compromise between speed and cost is a processor one or two speeds slower than the fastest. We recommend that you do not purchase a new computer 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. We do not recommend that you purchase a low-end system from any manufacturer. Please feel free to check with the Technology Center or with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) ([newstu09@gatech.edu](mailto:newstu09@gatech.edu)) if you have specific purchasing questions.



## HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS

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:

<b>Form Factor:</b>	Laptop.
<b>Processor:</b>	Intel Core 2 Duo 2.0 GHz or better (or equivalent processor).
<b>Memory:</b>	2 GB or more (Exception: students planning to run virtualization software on Mac OS X should get 3 GB or more).
<b>Hard Drive:</b>	120 GB or larger.
<b>External Hard Drive:</b>	120 GB or larger, USB compatible.
<b>Video Memory:</b>	128 MB or greater.
<b>Networking:</b>	802.11a/g/n wireless network card, and wired Ethernet port.
<b>Accessories:</b>	DVD writer, USB flash drive, Ethernet cable, and laptop anti-theft cable lock.

### *Network Connections*

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

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 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).

### *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 (2nd Floor of Student Center adjacent to Music Listening Room). Currently, each student is provided with print credits to use for laser printing services in these areas. Pay-for-print capabilities are also available. 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>.

## STANDARD SOFTWARE

Georgia Tech supports a standard software suite for both Windows and Mac OS X systems. Standard software minimizes software incompatibilities between students and faculty, helps meet educational goals, improves the effectiveness and timeliness of software support, and helps minimize support costs. The Office of Information Technology (OIT) and the Department of Housing's ResNet will actively support the standard software. Most titles will additionally be available for student use in the general-purpose computing clusters maintained by OIT. (See <http://librarycommons.gatech.edu>.)

Students should buy software packages at the time they are needed for use in their courses; many packages are available for free at <http://software.oit.gatech.edu>. We encourage professors to use standard software. If professors choose to use non-standard software, then they will be responsible for providing software support to their students since OIT will only support the standard software. If students choose to use any non-standard software, they will be solely responsible for providing support.

Students should bring the media for the OS and productivity suites to campus with them so that these may be re-installed in the event of a serious problem.

The standard software suite is as follows:

### *Windows Systems*

#### **Operating System**

Title: Microsoft Windows XP Professional; or Windows Vista Business, Enterprise, or Ultimate

Note: Included with new computer purchase.

#### **Email**

Title: My GaTech

Note: Online at <https://my.gatech.edu/>. No purchase or installation required.

#### **Data Backup**

Title: Microsoft Windows Backup

Note: Included as part of Windows XP Professional and Windows Vista Business, Enterprise, or Ultimate. Requires external hard drive.

#### **Security**

Title: McAfee VirusScan & Antispyware Enterprise 8.7i

Note: Free to students. Download at <http://software.oit.gatech.edu>.

#### **Productivity**

Title: Microsoft Office 2007 Standard

Note: Available for purchase at the Technology Center and other vendors.

## *Mac OS X Systems*

### **Operating System**

Title: Apple Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard) or better

Note: Included with new computer purchase.

### **Email**

Title: My GaTech

Note: Online at <https://my.gatech.edu/>. No purchase or installation required.

### **Data Backup**

Title: Apple Time Machine

Note: Included with Mac OS X. Requires external hard drive.

### **Security**

Title: McAfee VirusScan 8.6

Note: Free to students. Download at <http://software.oit.gatech.edu>.

### **Productivity**

Title: Microsoft Office 2008

Note: Available for purchase at the Technology Center and other vendors.

### **Windows Compatibility**

Windows compatibility software is not required campus-wide. However, some classes may require the use of specific, Windows-only applications. Students in these classes choosing to use Mac OS X systems will need virtualization software and a copy of Windows in order to run Windows applications.

Title: VMware Fusion 2.0

Note: Available for purchase at the Technology Center and other vendors.

Title: Microsoft Windows XP Professional

Note: Available for purchase at the Technology Center and other vendors.

The standard software suite indicates software versions known at the time of this printing. At the time of purchase, students should acquire the latest versions for the computer they will be using. If you purchase software from the Technology Center @ The Georgia Tech Bookstore, then you will always receive the current version.

## **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 Scholarships and Financial Aid (OSFA) 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.

## COMPUTER 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

OIT's Technology Support Center is available to students to answer questions about hardware configurations and can help troubleshoot software applications. The Center is in the bottom level of the library and is available for walk-in support and at 404-894-7173. User Assistants are also available in the computing labs on campus.

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, in-office, and on-site technical support to residents. RTAs are available to assist students in connecting their computers to the GT network.

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

## COMPUTER SECURITY

As members 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:

- Complete the GT Information Security on-line tutorial located at <http://www.security.gatech.edu/information/safe/>.
- Install anti-virus and anti-spyware on your system and update it weekly. We recommend McAfee AntiVirus, which is available for free on our software download site. Many packages that come with a system are trial versions and will expire.
- 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.
- Prevent theft of your computer: use a cable lock to secure your laptop to a table or desk if you need to step away.
- 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.
- Read the Georgia Tech Computer and Network Usage Policy located at <http://www.security.gatech.edu/policy/usage>.

## 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 Student Computer Ownership (SCO) website, or the OIT Technology 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. A number of good choices exist in the \$1,000 to \$2,000 price range.
- 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.
- 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. 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 software from Georgia Tech?  
A8: Georgia Tech has site licenses for several software packages for use on your computer. 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: Standard software minimizes software conflicts and increases the quality of software support. If you decide to use something other than the standard software, then 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.
- Q10: Can I create PDF files without Adobe Acrobat?
- A10: If you have a Mac, this functionality is built into OS X and no other software is required. For Windows users, OIT will support your use of Adobe Acrobat. However, there are other ways to create PDFs using freely available software or adware, such as Ghostscript and GhostView from <http://www.cs.wisc.edu/~ghost/>, or the pdf995 print driver for Windows, which is distributed as adware at <http://www.freeware995.com/bin/pdf995.exe>.
- Q11: Can I use Linux and open source software?
- A11: Yes, although you will be responsible for your own software support and for ensuring that you can interoperate with students and faculty using the standard software, as described in answer 9 above. Georgia Tech offers Red Hat Enterprise Linux, without support, free of charge to students.
- Q12: What can I do if I want to continue to run an older OS?
- A12: Do not continue using old operating systems. 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 Technology Support Center (bottom level of the library) for assistance but not repair of your computer. The Technology Support 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 AntiVirus. It is available via the software distribution page, <http://software.oit.gatech.edu>.
- Q16: Should I purchase a USB flash drive?
- A16: Yes. These devices can be easy to lose, so do not keep personal information on flash drives.
- Q17: How can I protect my laptop from theft?
- A17: Always lock your laptop to something sturdy using a cable lock. In addition, there are products available for tracking stolen laptops.

## 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://helpdesk.oit.gatech.edu>
- Walk-in support .... Technology Support 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 Scholarships and Financial Aid

- Telephone ..... 404-894-4160
- E-mail..... [finaid@gatech.edu](mailto:finaid@gatech.edu)
- Website ..... <http://www.finaid.gatech.edu>

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