



2008 Computer Hardware Guidelines

Introduction

This document provides the following information:

- Hardware guidelines for laptop and desktop computers
- Manufacturer recommendations.
- ITS computer support policies.

Minimum Laptop Hardware Guidelines

Information Technology Services recommends that HKS students purchase a laptop computer for both campus and home use, according to the minimum guidelines below:

Operating System	Windows XP Professional
Software	Microsoft Office 2003 / 2007 Anti-virus software
Memory (RAM)	1024MB
Hard Drive	80GB
Optical Drive	Multiburner-RW CDs and DVDs
Ethernet Networking	Integrated 10/100/1000
Wireless Networking (WiFi)	802.11a/b/g

Laptop Guidelines Explained

Purchasing a computer can be a daunting experience, especially for first time computer buyers. Below are explanations of the configuration options and terms used in the guidelines above.

Operating Systems

1. What about Vista?

Answer: Microsoft Vista is supported at the HKS. Vista is NOT preferred due to the slower speeds and lack of compatibility with older versions of STATA and SPSS but many students have no problem using it at the Harvard Kennedy School.

2. What about Macs?

Answer: The HKS Lab supports Macs in a limited role. The HKS lab can assist in backing up

data from a Mac and in re-installs. We can also assist in setting up wireless access and downloading e-mail using a POP client. Wireless printing is available on Macs.

Software

1. What software do I need to purchase and where can I buy it for a lower price?

Answer: MS Office 2007 is the main product used for all classes. Students also use STATA or SPSS in specific classes. Academically priced software is available from Harvard University. Our plan for the 2008-2009 academic year is to make Office 2007 available for free so check with the lab before purchasing a copy. For more information, visit the software section of the following website:

http://www.uis.harvard.edu/technology_services/

2. What anti-virus program should I use?

Answer: Many laptop computers ship with free or trial versions of popular anti-virus programs, the most popular being Norton AntiVirus and McAfee VirusScan. Both work equally well in protecting your computer against viruses.

3. Do I have to buy Office 2007 or can I use an older version?

Answer: MS Office XP and MS Office 2003 are both compatible with our current system. MS Office 2000 and earlier versions are not recommended.

Manufacturer Recommendations

Students are welcome to purchase computers from any manufacturer they choose. As such, there are a number of manufacturers that produce quality computers, including Toshiba, Dell, and Compaq.

Harvard University has an exclusive purchasing agreement with Lenovo (formally IBM) that offers significant discounts to faculty, staff, and students.

Enrolled Students: students with a Harvard University ID and PIN and Harvard email address can visit this site for purchasing information:

http://www.uis.harvard.edu/technology_services/