

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNICATION

General Computing Recommendations



The College of Charleston and the Department of Communication do not require that students purchase a computer or any specific computer platform. However, the Department of Communication strongly encourages communication majors and minors to purchase and bring their own personal computers to campus.

Microsoft Office is the institutional and departmental standard for course work. Communication majors or minors should know (or are expected to learn, on their own time) the basic features of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

To answer the questions we regularly receive on this topic, the great majority of communication majors choose to purchase and use PCs. Most of the campus computers available for communication student use are PCs. All computer laboratories and smart classrooms used for Department of Communication courses are equipped with PCs. The majority of Department of Communication faculty members have PCs as their primary computers. However, some students do purchase and use computers on the Macintosh platform. Macs are available in some campus computer labs and in the Center for the Documentary.

A Firewire (1394) interface is recommended for any new computer purchase made by a communication major or minor, as is a DVD-RW drive. In general, students with

photojournalism, documentary photography, and video production interests should purchase the best computers they can afford, with large hard drives and higher-end processors.

PC vs. Mac. A few schools and departments of communication and journalism continue to recommend the Macintosh platform. Others, including our own department, leave the decision to the student. Both platforms can and do support the needs of converging media in the communication industries, so buy the platform you like best.

Laptop Computers. To take full advantage of the College of Charleston's award-winning campus wireless network, new students should consider the purchase of a laptop computer. While the current generation of inexpensive netbook laptops work very well for basic computing tasks, netbooks usually are not satisfactory for photojournalism and video production applications.

Flash Drives. For use in making classroom presentations and in moving large files from one computer to another, new students are strongly encouraged to purchase a USB flash drive with at least 1GB of memory. A USB flash drive of 2GB or higher is recommended. Common brand names for USB flash drives include Lexar, Memorex, PNY Technologies, and SanDisk.

Other Computer Hardware and Software. Additional hardware and software recommendations for photojournalism, documentary photography, video production, and digital media courses may be available on the Course Offering page of the Department of Communication Web site. For example, photojournalism and documentary photography students have been asked for several years to purchase or secure access to a personal computer with Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Photoshop Elements installed. As another example, the purchase of a USB portable hard drive sometimes is recommended for video production courses.

Student Computing Support at the College of Charleston. Minimum recommendations for computer purchase, information about software, guidelines to the College of Charleston's discount program for computer purchases, and a great deal of institutional information about computing are available at the Student Computing Support Web page at <http://www.cofc.edu/it/helpdesk/>. Support is available at the Helpdesk on the first floor of the Addlestone Library.

This recommendations document is updated from time to time and is subject to change without notice. Students always should seek advice from course instructors if they have equipment questions about a specific course. Please contact the department chair or the associate department chair if you have questions about the advice contained in this document.