

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

July 2009 - Technology News & Tips

Information for College of Charleston Students and Parents

Discounted Computer & Software Purchases:

The College offers discounted computer and software purchases for students through our program with Dell. Apple offers their standard educational discount when you present proof of your status as a student. Links to these vendors are on the IT [Student Computing Support](#) web page. We have selected laptop computers from each vendor with recommended configurations, accessories and warranties as a complete package. These models, plus a printer of your choice, are designed to meet the complete needs of the vast majority our students over four years of college.

Basic requirements for new computers are listed on the last page of this document. These minimal recommendations will not change very much because we want to keep the cost of our packages as low as possible. You can see our recommended Dell packages by going to www.dell.com/cofc and click the link "Systems Recommended By Your University." The address for Apple's site is www.apple.com/edu/cofc.

Since our last newsletter Apple has introduced their new line of MacBook Pros. They come with 13-, 15- and 17-inch screens. We are considering limiting our recommendation to the MacBook Pro because of these varied options. The MacBook is still an excellent choice for anyone who prefers the compactness this model provides.

Questions about laptop features can be submitted via email to computerinfo@cofc.edu. Software discounted for academic use and several recommended accessories can be purchased from the CofC Bookstore. You may also save money by checking the Sunday supplements of your local newspaper for sales on software and accessories. The competition for you wallet will be cut-throat between now and September.

Tablet Computers:

Dell's Latitude XT Tablet PC is now an option among our recommended computer packages which you can find by going to www.dell.com/cofc. The Tablet allows a student to take notes by hand without disturbing the class, or possibly use their computer in classes where professors might not permit laptop use. Written text or drawings can later be converted to readable files. This type of PC costs more, but such capabilities could be very useful. You can learn more about the Latitude XT by going to www.dell.com/tablet. Please use the web page address or toll-free number shown in our Dell web page if you decide to purchase a Tablet. (Note: Several popular manufacturers also offer Tablets if you wish to make comparisons.)

Computer and Electronic Equipment Recycling:

Should you decide to purchase a Dell computer online or over the telephone, please be sure to ask about Dell's equipment recycling program. If you have an old computer or other electronic equipment (e.g. VCR or CD/DVD player) you want to dispose of properly, Dell will send you the appropriate packaging and shipping label. You simply ship the item to Dell at no expense to you. There is no credit towards your purchase from such turn-ins, but you will have the satisfaction of knowing that the potentially toxic materials contained in many electrical components will not enter the environment as would happen if thrown into a landfill. If you would like additional information, please go to www.dell.com/recycle.

Windows Vista Support:

Microsoft's Windows Vista (w/Service Pack 1) operating system is now standard on all new Windows-based computers. Few problems have been noted and students are generally using their Vista computers effectively on campus. However, residual Vista issues remain (see [Student Computing Support](#) web page) and we can only state accurately that we provide Vista support for CampusWide Wireless and our antivirus software at this time. You can still downgrade from Vista to Windows XP on our recommended Dell Latitude laptops. The version you will get is XP Professional at a cost of \$50. This is possible because the Latitudes are premium grade laptops. (NOTE: I am now using a new E6500 Latitude with XP. It replaced my D800 Latitude with XP that I used for almost four years without any trouble whatsoever.)

Parents are encouraged to contact Student Computing Support (computerinfo@cofc.edu if you have any concerns about Vista. See Microsoft's [Vista](#) website for guidance on buying a new PC or upgrading an older one.

Norton Antivirus Software:

The College has made Symantec's Norton antivirus software (PC and Mac versions) available to all students at no charge. Its use is **mandatory** for student computers connecting to the *ResNet* Internet service in campus residences. You can [download](#) the appropriate version of Norton and other software from the IT web site. **Please read the instructions before attempting to download or install the software!**

Laptop Setups at Orientations:

Students who have acquired laptop computers prior to their scheduled Orientation session may bring them and have them configured for the CampusWide Wireless network and have the Norton Antivirus software installed at the same time. Bring your laptop to the Addlestone Library (Bldg. #13 on your campus map) computer lab. We provide this service between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday all year, so you can have this done if you plan to be in Charleston at any time during the summer. We strongly recommend you also take time to have your laptop registered with [Public Safety](#) as a deterrent to theft

Saving Money On Computer Purchases:

SC Sales Tax Holiday

There is another way to save money on a computer purchase if you can postpone the purchase until the SC Sales Tax Holiday, 7-9 August, to buy. You can avoid paying sales tax on computers and other eligible items, and you don't have to be a SC resident to qualify. Eligibility is determined by where the computer is shipped. A student's official CofC mailing address qualifies. You can get the mailing address by visiting Mail Services during your Orientation visit. Details and an eligible items list are currently available at www.sctax.org/2009SalesTaxHolidayDates. Contact us at computerinfo@cofc.edu if you have any questions.

(NOTE: Other states such as GA and NC have similar tax free weekends. Check with your state's tax office for information.)

Potential Savings for Military Personnel/Dependents:

Dell as well as other brands of computers can be purchased through the Military Exchange online catalog (www.aafes.com). Use our recommended laptop features as a guide and compare the pricing in order to get the best deal possible. In addition, the Exchange system has preferred vendor relationships with Office Depot and Books A Million. Enter the web sites of these vendors through the Exchange online and you can purchase computers, school supplies, electronics, and textbooks at reduced prices and no sales taxes. You owe it to yourselves to check out qualifying vendors and compare pricing.

(Personal Note: The Charleston area has Air Force, Navy, and Coast Guard facilities where you can find and use eligible services and benefits. Army and Marine Corps facilities are within two hours driving time. In addition, there are military retirees and reserve component members among our staff and faculty who are available and willing to assist you if you have the need. Simply contact New Student Programs and identify yourself to a senior staff member. Tell them what help you need and they will arrange a contact with someone who can help you. Self-identification is strictly voluntary and all contacts are private and confidential.)

Computer and Data Security:

Backing up the content on student computers is strongly emphasized as a major security issue during Student Computing Support's New Student Orientation presentations. Inevitably, we have students coming to us later in the year whose computers have malfunctioned and content lost beyond any capability we have to recover it. Such incidents have prompted us to increase our emphasis on data security by offering other solutions. Until now we have recommended ordinary writable CDs for data backup—one set to keep locally, another to send home as a hedge against catastrophic loss. This is still an efficient, cost effective method, but there is newer technology available. Several manufacturers (e.g. Western Digital Passport, Iomega Desktop, etc.) market portable hard drives that may or may not require external power and plug into a USB port just like the popular flash drives—also an option—that have replaced the old 3.5-inch floppy disk. Many models contain more storage space than the computer itself and can be purchased for less than \$100.00. For this reason we are recommending that parents/students consider purchasing one of these drives to backup the data on their computers. We are not including them in our recommended packages because of the added cost, but you can certainly buy such a drive as an addition to any computer package, or purchase one separately online, from discount stores, and computer retailers including our bookstore.

Our Dell packages come with the ComputracePlus asset/security tracking service (a.k.a. [LoJack](#)). The service is designed to track a computer that has been lost or stolen. However, our primary emphasis is to deter theft through the use of laptop locking cables and registering student computers with Public Safety. Lojack is a subscription service that currently costs \$97. Subtract this amount from the cost of our Dell packages should you choose not to order it. Click the LoJack link above to learn more about this service.

Apple-Cougar Trail Compatibility:

Cougar Trail is not able to support Apple's Safari web browser. Go to the **Cougar Trail** login page and click "Browser Requirements" at the bottom of the page to see a list of alternative browsers.

Internet Access in Campus Residence:

Internet service (*ResNet*) in campus residences is provided by Campus Technologies. Information about *ResNet* is available on their [web site](#). Students who experience access problems should contact them (315 King Street, Suite 200 or 723-1312) for service. Here is a current list of campus residences by type of access:

Wired Residences:

- Berry
- Buist Rivers
- Craig
- George St. Apts.
- Liberty
- McAlister
- McConnell
- Rutledge Rivers
- Warren Place
- 90, 99-107
Wentworth St.

Wireless Residences:

- College Lodge
- Kelly House
- All historic houses except Wentworth St. above

CampusWide Wireless Network:

The College maintains a comprehensive wireless network ([CampusWide](#)) to provide wireless Internet access within the boundaries of its downtown campus. Laptop computers, equipped with wireless cards, can be used throughout this area. Students who want their laptop computers configured for CampusWide, have questions about their CampusWide access, or problems other than *ResNet* access can call 953-5457 or bring their laptops to the Addlestone Library computer lab between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Please be aware that students living in college residences may also receive wireless signals that are neither CampusWide nor *ResNet*. Internet access through these outside sources is not secure and should never be used for communicating sensitive personal information! The Student Support Desk staff will gladly show students how to identify non-college wireless signals.

Audio Digital Recorders

Here is a low-tech device that could enhance academic performance for any student and could be a valuable asset to any student who has a learning disability. A student can record lectures and then upload it to a PC as a .wav file and play it back for study and reviews prior to exams. The model shown below is an Olympus VN-4100PC. Unfortunately, it does not work with Macs, but there are other brands that might. If you pay more than \$60 for this particular model you've paid too much! It has a tremendous capability at a bargain price. Our bookstore stocks them and you can find it and other brands with similar capabilities at most office super stores and electronics retailers. (NOTE: Be sure to get permission to record from your instructor first!)



One-stop Laptop Setup Service:

Student Computing Support and Campus Technologies will be providing one-stop Laptop computer setups for CampusWide Wireless & ResNet during Move-in Weekend. We will be situated on the first floor of the Addlestone Library (Bldg. #13 on campus map). Hours of operation are 10:00 – 4:00 on Saturday and Sunday, 23 & 24 August. We will also provide one-stop service Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 5:00 for the first two weeks of school (25 - 29 August & 1 – 5 September).

MINIMUM COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

WINDOWS-BASED COMPUTERS:

Recommended Features:

- 2.0 GHz processor speed
- 2GB RAM
- Intel Integrated Graphic Media Accelerator X3100
- 120 GB hard drive (5400rpm)
- Windows Vista Home OS (Windows XP Professional remains an available option on CofC's recommended Dell PCs)
- 90 Watt AC Adapter
- 24X CD-RW/DVD-R
- Dell Wireless 1490 802.11a/g or other manufacturer's equivalent
- 6-cell primary battery
- Mobile broadband – None
- 3-yr Next Business Day (NBD) warranty with CompleteCare
- MS Office 2007 Home and Student
- Standard protected carrying case
- CompuTrace (Lojack) service (3-yr)
- Cable lock

See our Dell packages online at www.dell.com/cofc. Buying a Dell by phone? Call **1-888-973-3355**. You must mention CofC's Member ID number (**US9901310**) to assure entry into Dell's Educational Sales unit and receive appropriate discounts. You will also receive any promotional incentives available at the time of purchase.

APPLE COMPUTERS

The College of Charleston fully supports student use of Apple computers. However, Apple only offers CofC students their standard educational discount; whether buying online (www.apple.com/edu/cofc), or at an Apple Store when presenting their CofC ID card--or other acceptable proof of student status--at the time of purchase.

The MacBook and MacBook Pro are the models we recommend, but, as advertised, they greatly exceed our basic recommendations and pricing intent. Also, several items considered essential in our student packages are classified as "popular options" or "recommended add-ons" and may be overlooked. Therefore, we have compiled the following list of features to guide you when purchasing an Apple computer. We emphasize these are recommendations only and that students are free to choose whatever model they prefer and configure it to meet their perceived needs.

Recommended Models: MacBook with 13.3" screen or MacBook Pro with 15.4" screen

Recommended Features:

- Operating System 10.4 or greater
- 2.0 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo-processors
- 2 GB of random access memory (RAM)
- 120 Gigabyte hard drive
- CD-Read & Write/DVD-Read Drive
- Airport Wireless Card
- AppleCare Protection Plan (3 Years Extended Support)
- Microsoft Office for Mac
- Laptop locking cable
- ComputracePlus (Lojack) tracking service (3-year)
- Padded carrying case

SUGGESTED OPTION FOR ALL COMPUTERS:

A portable high-capacity external hard drive is strongly suggested for backing up student files and storing files not needed on the primary hard drive, but is not included in our recommended packages.

Questions

If you have any questions, please email inquiries to computerinfo@cofc.edu.