



## 2007 OES Technology Recommendations for US Students

Most US students have access to a computer and Internet connection at home. This is beneficial for productivity and research, and students are expected to have access to a computer for many homework assignments. Some families may chose to not have Internet access at home, and most work is structured so that online work can be done during the school day or immediately afterwards.

In the past four years, we have seen significant increases in the number of US students who choose to bring a laptop to school. Over a third of US students may bring a laptop to school on a daily basis, and over two-thirds of students bring in laptops during examination periods and for project work. We do not require laptops, but the Upper School is a “laptop friendly” environment with wireless connectivity to the Internet and printers. We also have a loaner fleet of school-owned laptops that students can check out.

We have observed clear benefits from laptop use. For many students, using a laptop as an organizational tool can be very beneficial. Students with their own laptops have an opportunity to develop more confidence and independence with technology, as well as access to advanced software tools of their own choosing.

If a student chooses to bring a laptop to school, we will gladly help to connect the laptop to the Internet, our printers and other academic resources. The main requirement for this opportunity is to have and update **active anti-virus software** at all times. Infected laptops or those without active and up-to-date antivirus software will be removed from the network. All students must make a concerted effort to keep computer files virus free.

The best way to transfer files between home and school computers is a **USB flash drive**. Flash Drives are reusable, and most are now fully compatible with both Macs and PCs. 1 Gigabyte flash drives can be purchased for as little as \$9.00.

### Software Recommendations

- Windows XP or Vista Home editions. OS X can also be used for most applications
- Office 2003 or 2007 (Word, PowerPoint, Excel) or Office 2004 for Macintosh
- Firefox as the main browser (less vulnerable to spyware), and Internet Explorer for system updates
- MacAfee Antivirus or a comparable active antivirus program
- Spyware Removal Tool (AdAware, for example)
- Adobe Photoshop Elements (optional)
- TI Interactive Software (optional)

- Geometer’s Sketchpad (optional)
- Inspiration Software (optional)

See the “Cost-Saving Recommendations” section of this letter for information about purchasing software.

*\*Critical programs like Windows, OS X and Internet Explorer should always be patched and up-to-date.*

### **Hardware Recommendations**

- Intel Core Duo Chips (in Macs and PCs)
- 40 gigabyte hard drive or higher
- At least 512 megabytes of RAM
- Internal 802.11 b or 802.11g wireless network card (for on-campus wireless access)
- DVD/CD-RW optical drive
- Three year repair warranties (including accidental damage coverage if possible). The importance of a good 3 year warranty on all laptops can’t be over-emphasized.

### **Example Systems**

For families considering a computer purchase, we’d suggest the following systems as examples (as of May 15, 2007). Please note that the estimated prices do not include Microsoft Office (see cost-saving recommendations below). We also suggest that the mobility benefits of the laptops are worth the investment, as long as they are handled responsibly.

#### **Windows Laptop:**

Dell Latitude 520. Core Duo Intel chip. 14.1 inch screen. 1 Gig memory. 60 GB hard drive. Windows XP Home. CDRW/DVD drive. 3 year mail-in warranty. Approximate price: \$897.

Note: we always recommend the Latitude series of laptops by Dell—they tend to be more standardized and robust than the less expensive Inspiron series.

#### **Macintosh Laptop:**

Apple MacBook. Core Duo Intel chip. 13.3 inch screen. 1 Gig memory. 80 GB hard drive. CDRW/DVD drive. 3 year warranty. Approximate price: \$1,350.

#### **Windows Desktop:**

Dell Optiplex 320. Core Duo Intel chip. Any 17 inch flat screen monitor. 1 Gig memory. 80 GB hard drive. CDRW/DVD drive. 3 year warranty. Approximate price: \$900.

## Macintosh Desktop:

Mac Mini. Core Duo Intel chip. 1 Gig memory. Any 17 inch flat screen DVI monitor. 60 GB hard drive. CDRW/DVD drive. 3 year warranty. Approximate price: \$1,000.

## Cost-Saving Recommendations

All OES Upper School students will soon receive an email with a username and password for [www.techhead.org](http://www.techhead.org). This website is run by the Oregon Educational Technology Consortium ([www.oetc.org](http://www.oetc.org)), and it enables OES students to buy reduced-priced software and TI calculators. For example, Office 2007 Standard is \$69.70. Office 2004 for Mac Standard is \$65.60. A TI-89 Titanium calculator is \$136.00. To make purchases, students simply log in with their names and an ID code we'll provide to them in the introduction email. If they lose the email, they can contact [kuhnsb@oes.edu](mailto:kuhnsb@oes.edu) for the information.

To spend less on a Dell computer, we recommend that you visit the Dell Outlet store at [www.dell.com/outlet/](http://www.dell.com/outlet/). We have purchased several systems from this source over the years (with standard 3 year warranties), and we've had no problems with them. For example, the Latitude D520 laptop listed above could be had via the Dell Outlet site for \$778.00 (with a 40 gig hard drive, 3 year warranty, etc.).

To spend less on an Apple computer, check the refurbished and specials page at the online Apple Store ([www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)), but don't forget to add the three year warranty option. The website [www.dealmac.com](http://www.dealmac.com) also does a good job of tracking special deals on Mac systems. MacBooks have appeared for as low as \$1,100 with three year warranties via these sites.

Additionally, if you work for a school or are taking college courses, you are eligible for Apple educational discount pricing on most systems. I believe these discounts are also available at the local Apple stores, as well as the online store. K-12 students, however, are not eligible unless they are being home schooled.

Another way to reduce cost is to **time your investments** in technology. There will be OES eighth graders who are anxious to have laptops next year in the ninth grade, and it might be worth investigating four-year warranties on Apple and Dell laptops if you purchase a new system for the ninth grade. Extra care may be needed to enable the laptop to last four years. For ninth graders who want to take a break from having a laptop, there are four computer labs in the Upper School and laptops that can be checked out. Buying a new laptop for the senior year may be risky in that many colleges and universities now have specific recommendations about which laptops should be purchased.

*Revised May 16, 2007: Jim Heynderickx*