OES Technology Recommendations for US Students

Currently, it is common for most US students to 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 three years, we have seen a significant increase in the number of US students who choose to bring a laptop to school. A survey this year indicated that 25% of US students may bring a laptop to school on a daily basis, and around 50% bring in laptops during examination periods. We do not require laptops, but the Upper School has created a "laptop friendly" environment for those who choose to bring laptops. We also loan laptops to students who need them for special projects or class work.

During this time, we have observed clear benefits from laptop use. For many students, using a laptop as an organizational tool can be very beneficial. We have also noted that students with their own laptops will have greater depth of use and understanding of advanced software tools. If a student wishes to bring a laptop to school, we will gladly help to connect the laptop to the Internet, our printers and other educational needs provided by our wireless network. 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.

Transporting large files to and from school has become more of a challenge with the increased number of viruses. We expect all students to make a concerted effort to keep all computer files virus free. The best way to transfer files between home and school is by a **USB flash drive** or by **CD**. Flash Drives are reusable, unlike CDs, and our Tech Department has found that Lexar Jumpdrives are the most compatible with different operating systems.

For home computers, or student laptops at school, we would recommend the following:

Software

- Windows XP Home or Professional edition. OS X can also be used for most applications.

- Office 2003 (Word, PowerPoint, Excel) or Office 2004 (Macintosh OS X)

- Internet Explorer or Firefox Internet browsers.

- 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)

Critical programs like windows and Internet Explorer should always be patched and up-to-date.

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Hardware

- Pentium 4 chip or higher (equivalent chips in Macintosh Systems)

- 40 gigabyte hard drive or higher

- 512 megabytes of RAM

- 802.11 b or 802.11g wireless network card * (for on-campus wireless access)

- CD-RW

- Three year repair and replacement warranties (including accidental damage coverage if possible).

*If you are purchasing a laptop we recommend an integrated (internal) wireless network card.

Example Systems

For families considering a computer purchase, we'd suggest the following systems as examples (as of May 19, 2006). Please note that the estimated prices do not include Microsoft Office Student Edition which costs around $100.00 - $140.00. We would also suggest that the mobility benefits of the laptops are worth the incremental cost increase, as long as the laptops are handled responsibly.

Windows Laptop:

Dell Latitude 520. Dual Core Intel chip. 512 MB memory. 40 GB hard drive. Windows XP Home. CD-RW/DVD drive. 3 year mail-in warranty. Approximate price: $950.

Macintosh Laptop:

Apple MacBook. Dual Core Intel chip. 13.3 inch screen. 512 MB memory. 60 GB hard drive. CD-RW/DVD drive. 3 year warranty. Approximate price: $1,350.

Windows Desktop:

Dell Optiplex 210. Pentium 4 chip. 15 inch flat screen monitor. 512 MB memory. 80 GB hard drive. CD-RW/DVD drive. 3 year warranty. Approximate price: $900.

Macintosh Desktop:

Mac Mini. Dual Core Intel chip. 512 MB memory. Any 15 inch flat screen monitor. 60 GB hard drive. CD-RW/DVD drive. 3 year warranty. Approximate price: $1,050.

How to Contact Us

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