
Why do I have to buy a CSU standard PC or notebook computer?

By P. Phillips

The CSU standard allows the university to operate its PC environment economically. In this day and age of shrinking funds, we need to make wise purchases that help the university preserve its budget. According to the computer industry analyst organization, Gartner Inc., the purchase price of a PC is only 20% of a computer's cost. The remaining 80% consists of installation, configuration, maintenance, updates, software installs, etc. We are trying to minimize the purchase dollars and also the after purchase support. We can do this best with one vendor and one standard set of equipment.

Professionally managed computer lines allow the university to purchase consistent equipment in one year increments. All computers purchased each year match each other in their internal components. This allows software standards to be created to reduce the cost of installation (all our PCs are factory installed with a standard university image) and for the maintenance of the computer (if the hard drive crashes, the OS blue screens, or the OS become corrupt, we can quickly re-image the machine). This allows us to rebuild a computer in 1-2 hours instead of 1-2 days. We are self maintainers, and this allows us to work with a limited number of computer designs and parts, also speeding up repair times.

Consumer products do not adhere to this consistency and the particular model purchased today may have different components from that purchased tomorrow, as the vendor purchases controllers, disks, memory, graphics, etc. from different vendors. This is why consumer models may have a cheaper purchase price. Professionally managed computer lines tend to go through a more rigorous quality assurance process to ensure that they are sound, problem free, and all the parts are consistent with one another.

While a consumer model is OK for small quantity purchases such as home use or small office or school, they are not good for large institutions that are trying to manage technology in a cost effective way. This means that it may cost you a little more to purchase the computer you want, but it will cost the university less in the long run.

The University's policy on this is clear. All purchases using CSU dollars must follow the PC Procurement Policy. That policy limits you just to the models specified on the IS&T web page. Small variations from those standards can be made where there is a clear need - 17" screens for Disability Services notebook computers, extra large screens for sight impaired people, etc. Variances are also made as a result of special research needs when grant dollars are being spent, but in this case, written justification

will be required. In the latter case, IS&T does not support the equipment; the purchaser takes on the responsibility for maintaining the computer.

This policy was issued jointly by IS&T and the Dean's IT Council. It was approved by CSU executives and the Board of Trustees and has been in effect for six years now. Each college has a voice on this Council and is involved in the selection of the vendors and the setting of the standards. The policy saves the university over \$400,000 each year in purchases alone and much more in support. We saw this very clearly the first year we implemented the policy and program.

If you have questions about the PC Procurement Policy, feel free to contact Peter Phillips at p.phillips@csuohio.edu or x3779.

Announcing our new depot drop-off service for computer equipment

By P. Phillips

IS&T is introducing a new service for faculty and staff this fall. Faculty and staff will be able to drop off their CSU owned computer equipment for repair in RT 1106 between the hours of 9:00am and 5:00pm regular CSU work days (M-F excluding university holidays). A Technician will check in your equipment, provide you with a receipt, and add your work order to our help-desk backlog.

Will the depot drop-off service get your equipment serviced quicker? Probably not, but it will allow you to drop off your equipment at your convenience as opposed to waiting for a Technician to come and visit you sometime within the next couple of days. It will also provide you with the opportunity to explain your problem directly to the Technician while checking your equipment in. Once the equipment is repaired, you will be notified that the equipment is ready for pickup. You can either pick up your equipment or have us deliver it to your office or to your department's main office.

What equipment can you bring in via this service? Definitely bring in your laptops since they are very portable. You can also bring in your desktop computers and monitors; however, it may be more convenient, based on the size of these units, to open a ticket through x5050 so that a technician can visit your equipment in your office.

Can you get your personally owned computer equipment repaired? Personally owned computer equipment can be taken to the PC Repair Shop in SH 128 for fee based repairs. The fee schedule is located on the IS&T web site.

Depot Drop Off (cont.)

If you have questions about the depot drop-off service, feel free to contact Peter Phillips at p.phillips@csuohio.edu or x3779.

What to do with old Laptop Batteries

By P. Phillips

CSU faculty and staff currently own about 1500 institutional laptop computers. Typically the batteries in these laptops wear out within 2-4 years depending on usage, and will no longer hold a charge long enough for the laptop to be useful. Most laptops have a one year battery warranty, so there is no warranty replacement available for these units. When batteries go bad, users typically contact IS&T and ask us to get a new battery for their laptop. In most cases, we find a reseller who can provide replacement batteries at a reasonable price and purchase a new battery for the user.

The issue at hand is what to do with the old battery. In order to protect the environment in the disposal of old batteries, they should not be thrown into the trash, but properly disposed of. IS&T and Property Control have a contract with a computer disposal company to dispose of and recycle computers and related equipment. Please send your old batteries to IS&T or Property Control when you receive a new one and we will take care of ensuring that they are properly disposed of through our disposal company.

Hey, it's getting green in here! (and out there too.)

By J. Grigsby

IS&T began processes in our data center three years ago to “virtualize” our server equipment. “Virtualize” is a computer term that means to consolidate many smaller servers onto a larger one. Among other benefits, we wanted to minimize the amount of electricity our equipment uses both directly and indirectly. The direct power usage of a server is obvious: computers need large amounts of power to keep those billions of computing cycles per second rolling along and one large server requires less electricity than many smaller ones. The less obvious indirect power consumption comes from the air conditioning needed to keep temperatures optimal in the data center. The average server targeted for removal produced about seven times the amount of

heat as compared to a personal computer.

The net result of our efforts has been to reduce the number of servers from 85 to 13. We can brag that the environmental impact of this process so far is equal to taking about 128 cars off the highway or that we have reduced our CO2 emissions by over 754,466 lbs. During the next two years we will continue an aggressive plan to increase the total number of physical servers we retire and increase our current compression ratio of 6.5 (85/13) to over 11.

We are moving this green train out into our General Purpose Labs as well. A project has begun to use smaller more efficient computers called ‘Thin Clients’ instead of full-blown PC’s. These Thin Clients probably aren’t the same devices you thought you knew. Our students need a reasonable computing experience to make use of media rich content, so our new equipment needs to be able to play anything they can find on iTunes or anything they can stream from YouTube. Our new Thin Clients can do this just about as well as a PC, but they run on about 11% of the power. This means that when we finish replacing a select number of our PC’s, we will have taken another 50 cars off the road. We are well on our way to a cleaner and more efficient digital campus.

IE Tip of the Month

Creating Favorites

Internet Explorer uses a feature called Favorites to put Web sites you visit often within easy reach. With Favorites you don’t have to remember or type the site address in the browser’s address area. Instead, just click your mouse twice and you’re there. In other words, Favorites are shortcuts to your commonly-visited Web sites. During the day, do you often go into PeopleSoft, myTime, the CSU phone directory, etc.? Then follow these steps to bookmark these pages and you can get to those sites without having to navigate through the main CSU Web page.

1. Go to the web page that you want to add to your **Favorites**.
2. Click on **Favorites**, and then click **Add to Favorites...**
3. In the **Name:** box, type a new name for the page if you want, and click **Add**.

Option: if you want to create your CSU web page shortcuts in a CSU folder, click on the **New Folder** button, type **CSU Web Sites** in the **Folder Name:** field and click the **Create** button. You need to do this only once and then you can store all your CSU web site shortcuts in this folder.

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