

Computer Hardware and Software Standards for OSU Extension

Sections

1. Executive Summary
2. Criteria for Establishing Standards
3. Computers
 - a. Primary Choices for Highest Level of Support
 - b. Secondary Choices for a Lower Level of Support
 - c. A Note on Switching Platforms (Mac vs. Windows)
 - d. Non-Supported Computers
 - e. End of Life
4. Printers
 - a. Columbus Campus
 - b. County Offices
5. Smart Phones and Other Mobile Devices
 - a. Compliance with University Policy
 - b. Personally Owned
6. Software
7. Process for Changing Standards

Appendices

- A. Recommended Smart Phones and Other Mobile Devices
- B. Best Practices for Using Smart Phones and Other Mobile Devices

1. Executive Summary

In an effort to improve the quality of information technology (IT) support, reduce the cost of support, and to ensure the best possible use of Extension funding, the Extension Administrative Cabinet recently adopted a new policy for the standardization of IT purchases. A summary of the policy, as adopted in the February 11, 2011 meeting, is as follows:

- Effective March 01, 2011, all computers and IT peripherals must be purchased using the Extension Technology Acquisition Process.
 - Failure to follow the process will result in the return of equipment at the operating unit's expense.
- All OSU owned computers must be serviced by Extension IT Services.
- Non-standard computers and IT peripherals may be subject to an additional support charge.
 - The additional support charge will be \$40 per hour.
- Extension IT Services will assemble a listing of standard computers and IT peripherals approved for purchase and refresh it on at least a quarterly basis.
 - The listing will include handheld devices (such as iPhone, BlackBerry, Android, iPad, and Windows Mobile 7 devices).

2. Criteria for Establishing Standards

University owned computers and the data they contain must be in compliance with University computing and security policies. Information on these policies can be found on OSU's Buckeye Secure website:
<http://buckeyesecure.osu.edu>.

These policies state that to use University owned computers and access University owned resources, the computers and data must be secure to protect the computer from harm, other users' computers from being harmed and to protect OSU data.

Specifically, it means that your computer must have a firewall turned on, the software and operating system must be current, it must have anti-virus and anti-malware software, it must have an ID and password (no auto-logout) for access, and all mobile devices must be encrypted.

The specific policies can be found here:

- a. The Client Computer Security Standards (CCSS), formerly known as the Minimum Computer Security Standards (MCSS).
<http://buckeyesecure.osu.edu/Policy/MCSS2>
- b. The Institutional Data Policy
http://cio.osu.edu/policies/institutional_data
- c. Although there is no policy in writing, in 2008, the University Provost decreed that all laptops must be encrypted.

In addition to the policies described by the university, there are other criteria which factor into a user's experience with a university owned device and the IT support provided. For example,

- To provide a high level of support to a user, the IT technician must be familiar with not only the hardware, but also the process of resolving problems on a particular make and model of device.
- The device should have a minimum three year warranty.
- The tech support of the manufacturer must be easy to work with to resolve issues outside of the Extension IT tech's scope.

Similarly, the Extension IT tech must be familiar with the software installed on the computer, and the configuration of that software.

It is with these criteria in mind that the following levels of support are described next.

3. Computers

a. Primary Choices for Highest Level of Support

Dell (running the Windows OS) and Apple (running OSX)* are the preferred brands of the Extension IT staff, based on reliability, technical support provided by the manufacturers and a broad install base.

Specifically, there are options for both laptops and desktops, in which the University has negotiated significantly reduced pricing when compared to home consumer models. These models can be found on OSU's purchasing website:

http://purchasing.osu.edu/FileStore/PDFs/contract_dell.pdf

http://purchasing.osu.edu/FileStore/PDFs/contract_apple.pdf

Your Extension IT tech can also send you a quote upon request. Note that all computers will be shipped to the Columbus campus for setup and configuration.

**Note that Extension IT techs are currently undergoing training to support Apple computers. This may add additional time to service requests until all techs have been trained.*

b. Secondary Choices for a Lower Level of Support

Extension understands that a Dell or Apple computer may not always be the right choice for its users. In these cases, the University has negotiated pricing with Lenovo and HP for additional options.

Before purchasing one of these models, users should consider that the level of support they will receive will not be as high as with a Dell or Apple. For example, the time it takes to resolve an issue may be longer since the Extension IT services are not as familiar with these brands and the vendor's technical support.

http://purchasing.osu.edu/FileStore/PDFs/contract_hp.pdf

http://purchasing.osu.edu/FileStore/PDFs/contract_lenovo.pdf

c. A Note on Switching OS Platforms (Windows to Mac OSX or Mac OSX to Windows)

Users that wish to change from a PC platform to the Mac platform (or vice-versa) should understand that not all software is cross-platform compatible. Therefore, the conversion of some documents, emails, contacts, etc. may not be possible. In some cases, the data may not be transferrable at all. Additionally, a user should assess his/her software needs to ensure an equal or comparable option is available on the new platform. Finally, there is a learning curve when moving from one platform to another. Different users will require a different amount of time to become accustomed with the new operating system and software.

d. Non-Supported Computers

Computers that fall outside of the two support models above are not supported and should not be purchased. Extension IT services are not familiar with other options and cannot guarantee a positive user experience. However, if a business case can be made and should an exception be granted, the setup and configuration, as well as any troubleshooting will be charged back to the user/office/department at a rate of \$40 per hour as determined by Extension administration.

e. End of Life

Laptops and Desktops that can no longer be made compliant with the CCSS, or computers over the age of five years will be given end of life status. At this point, the computer will no longer be supported by Extension IT services at no additional charge. The user or department can decide to surplus the computer or continue using it as an unsupported device. Should assistance be needed, a \$40 per hour charge will be applied.

4. Printers

Extension has contracted with UniPrint for support of its laser-based printers by enrolling in the [Printer Cost Management program \(PCMp\)](#). The PCMp provides for all support and maintenance of laser-based printers, including parts, labor, and all disposables except for paper, for one low monthly fee. By enrolling its laser printers in the PCMp, Extension expects to reduce its overall costs for printing, extend the life of its installed laser printers by five (5) to seven (7) years, and improve the overall quality of printing. This program is part of a larger effort to reduce the overall cost of printing across the university. The PCMp also features the university's Soy Toner

initiative, aimed at providing certain printer types with environmentally friendly soy-based toner products.

a. Columbus Campus

The Extension staff on the Columbus campus are required to register all existing laser printers with this program. Ink jet printers cannot be a part of this program.

If a new printer needs to be purchased, the make and model selected should be chosen in consultation with UniPrint.

b. County Offices

At this point, the PCMp has not yet been extended to the county and regional offices. For these locations not covered by the PCMp, HP LaserJet printers are the preferred models due primarily to reliability and cost savings per print versus inkjet printers.

5. Smart Phones and Other Mobile Devices

a. Compliance with University Policies

It is the responsibility of all Extension faculty and staff to be aware of university policies regarding computer use, data, and security. One of the primary uses of a smart phone and newer tablet-based mobile devices is access to email. Information in a user's university e-mail account is considered university data and must be treated accordingly when present on mobile devices. Please see section 2 of this document for links to these policies.

b. Personally Owned Devices

Even though OSU Extension does not provide university-owned mobile phones to its employees, Extension IT Services will attempt to assist users with the use of their personally owned devices in the performance of their duties as university employees. Extension IT Services recommends the purchase of certain devices in order to ensure that they function and can be supported in our environment. Users need to be aware that not all smart phones and mobile devices function properly with our e-mail service.

Despite these recommendations, Extension IT Services may not be able to provide the same level of support for smart phones and mobile devices as it can for personal computers.

Extension IT Services does recognize the importance of smart phones and mobile devices in the workplace and is committed to support emerging consumer-based devices such as the iPad. To ensure an adequate level of support for these devices, the following process is recommended:

- i. Users should consult with Extension IT Services before purchasing a phone or mobile device. The IT technicians will be able to advise what models work with our e-mail service and environment. Please see Appendix A for a list of recommended devices.
- ii. Extension IT Services will provide necessary login information to the faculty or staff member for setting up e-mail.
- iii. If a smart phone will not connect properly to the e-mail service, or if the phone's software does not work as intended, the user has the option of returning the device for a model that does work, or using the existing device as is, with limited support.
- iv. Extension IT services will provide a list of best practices for smart phone and mobile device use. Please see Appendix B for a list of best practices.

The intent of this document is not to limit the computing device choices of Extension staff, but to ensure a positive user experience and compliance with OSU policy. Therefore, the devices accepted as standard by OSU Extension ultimately have to do with whether or not they meet the criteria laid out by the CCSS and Institutional Data Policy,

described in section 2 above, as well as how a device integrates into the Extension computing environment.

It simply is not possible to meet OSU policy for all the devices used for Extension tasks. It is the responsibility of the Extension employees to know the risks and follow the requirements described in the Institutional Data Policy.

6. Software

Users will be provided a set of software that contains all the tools needed for basic computer use, and meets the university's CCSS requirements. The standard software configuration consists of Microsoft Office, Adobe Reader, CD/DVD creation, a media player and antivirus. Extension IT services can offer a high level of support for this standard software configuration.

The University offers additional software and has negotiated pricing and licensing options for it. A list can be found on the [Site Licensed Software](#) site. Extension IT services offer a lower level of support for this software which includes basic installation and in some cases configuration. Higher levels of support can be obtained via the University's [IT Service Desk](#) for most of these software packages.

7. Process for Changing Standards

As technology improves and more of these devices can be made compliant with the CCSS, they may be added to this standard. Extension IT staff will test compliance with the CCSS, as well as seamless integration into the Extension computing environment, and will update this document accordingly.

This document, the appendices and the lists of supported computers will be reviewed quarterly by Extension IT services and be updated accordingly.