

14 computing questions...

...new students (and their parents) frequently ask

This handout is designed to answer the most common questions new students and their parents ask about computers and computing at the University of Oregon.

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Visit the UO Information Technology website at <http://it.uoregon.edu/>

1 *Should I buy a computer?*

- Personal computers have become an extremely valuable tool in the university environment. Many classes use network resources as a regular part of their course content. Whether you own one or use one in a campus computing lab, you'll find personal computers essential for preparing term papers, doing research, and staying in touch via email. Even if you're not thinking about buying a computer soon, you should be aware that educational discounts are available on a number of popular computer products through many sources—direct, retail, and mail order. See Question 3 on the following page for information about buying a computer on campus.

2 *What kind of computer should I buy?*

- Some UO departments emphasize Apple Macintosh computers; others are dominated by Microsoft Windows. Check with your department before you make a decision.

If you're unsure which computer system will work best for you, consider visiting the University of Oregon Bookstore (895 E. 13th Avenue) or your local computer store. This is one of the easiest ways to sample a variety of computers before actually buying one.

You may wish to generate price quotes online prior to shopping locally. In some cases, vendors will match the online quote. For Apple equipment, we recommend visiting their online education store. For Dell equipment, you'll sometimes find better pricing on their Home & Home Office or Small Business website than at their Education store. Because Oregon has no sales tax, you can save nearly ten percent off the purchase price if you buy new equipment and have it shipped to your Oregon address.

You will usually need more RAM and disk space than the minimum requirements listed on software packages. Most modern laptops include integrated wireless Internet capability. We do recommend that you purchase a model with this capability. For full access to network resources from off-campus, you should consider subscribing to high-speed cable modem or DSL service. Aside from email and casual web browsing, a traditional modem is unlikely to be fully satisfactory for network-intensive work at home. Those residing in campus residence halls or family housing have Ethernet access to the campus network and the Internet. For additional guidelines on computing purchases, see the Microcomputer Buyer's Guide at <http://it.uoregon.edu/help/buyersguide/>.

3. *Where can I buy a computer on campus?*

- The University of Oregon Bookstore offers a wide selection of hardware and software from popular vendors—most with educational discounts. Systems range from low-end to high-end, including desktops and laptops.

Because the availability of these systems changes from time to time, it's best to contact the Bookstore directly to get sales advice and current information about eligibility and pricing. The staff can also tell you about financing plans for qualified purchasers. Stop by the UO Bookstore's Digital Duck electronics shop at 895 E. 13th Avenue or call them at **(541) 346-4331**. They are open from 7:45 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday through Friday, 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. on Saturday, and noon to 6 P.M. on Sunday. You can also check the Bookstore's website at <http://www.uobookstore.com>.

4. *Where can I find computers to use on campus?*

- You'll find several types of public computing facilities on campus:

1. **Open-Access Computer Labs (for students, faculty, and staff):**

- CC-EMU Microcomputing Lab - 22 EMU; **346-1769**
- CC-McKenzie Lab - 101 McKenzie Hall; **346-0787**
- CC-Millrace Lab - 113 Millrace I; **346-0316**
- Knight Library Information Technology Center (ITC) - second floor; **346-1935**
- Science Library ITC - Onyx Basement; **346-1331**
- Social Science Instructional Lab (SSIL) - 442 and 445 McKenzie; **346-2547**

2. **For DuckWeb access only:**

- DuckWeb Center, Oregon Hall - second floor
- Academic Advising, Oregon Hall - first floor

3. **Instructional Labs (for class use only):**

- CC-Klamath labs (B13 and B26 Klamath)
- CC- McKenzie lab (101 McKenzie Hall)
- Knight Library electronic classrooms - Rooms 144, 235, and ITC

Some academic departments maintain instructional labs that are restricted to use within their respective areas. Check the IT website at

<http://it.uoregon.edu> to find departmental IT resources.

4. **Laptop Checkout** (currently enrolled UO student with valid ID only)

For details, call **(541) 346-1807** or go to <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/commons/laptops/>

For a map and a complete list of all computing labs on campus, see <http://it.uoregon.edu/campuslabs.shtml>.

5. *If I buy a computer, will it be safe in my dorm room?*

Protect your computer much as you'd protect an expensive bicycle or stereo—engrave or stamp your ID number on major components of your system (or see <http://www.stoptheft.com> for another good equipment tracking option), investigate insurance coverage, and lock your property down with a cable when you're not using it.

You should also consider purchasing a surge suppressor or an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) device. Residence hall power circuits are often shared by students using a variety of appliances (such as popcorn poppers and refrigerators) that may impact your system's power. Spilled liquids pose another common threat to your computer. Avoid eating and drinking around your computer, and consider protecting it with a water-proof cover when it isn't being used.

6. *Do I need to worry about computer viruses and spyware?*

Computer virus and spyware infections can cause you grief and often require several hours of work to remove.

The University of Oregon has a site license for McAfee VirusScan for both Windows and Macintosh. This software is free to all currently enrolled students. By using current virus protection software and avoiding software, email attachments, and links of suspicious origin, you can substantially control the risks you face. Other essential precautions include routinely running Windows Update if you use a PC, and using a firewall product.

Also remember to routinely back up your important files. Frequent backups will allow you to recover from any software or hardware problems that may arise. To get help with McAfee VirusScan, contact Microcomputer Services at **346-4412** or stop by 151 McKenzie Hall.

7. *What if my computer breaks down? Is repair service available?*

The Information Services department has factory-certified hardware technicians who work on many brands of computers and peripherals, including Apple Macintosh and Windows machines. These technicians can also offer advice regarding upgrades. For more information, call the Electronics Shop at **(541) 346-3548**, visit them in 151 McKenzie Hall, or check their website at http://cc.uoregon.edu/e_shop.html.

For assistance with software problems, call Microcomputer Services at **(541) 346-4412**, visit the Help Desk in 151 McKenzie Hall, or email microhelp@lists.uoregon.edu.

8. *Can my dad copy software from his system and give it to me?*

Unless he purchased a multi-user license for the software, the answer is “No.” The UO respects copyright laws and insists that its students, faculty, and staff do likewise. Copying proprietary software is theft, just like stealing a TV or someone’s wallet, and won’t be tolerated on campus.

Illegally copied software subjects the university to risk of litigation and denies software authors the compensation they deserve. Help desk consultants will not help you with problems you’re having with illegal software. Moreover, using such software could result in your suspension from the university and either criminal prosecution or a civil suit for copyright infringement, or both.

Buying your own software not only provides you with vital instruction manuals and the original media, but also guarantees help from the vendor if you find a bug. In addition, you can usually upgrade to new versions at minimal cost. So play it safe: factor in the cost of software when you buy a computer system, or consider using inexpensive shareware or freeware programs that have a good reputation and are known to be virus-free. One reliable source of virus-free shareware and freeware is Microcomputer Services public domain software libraries.

To learn how to copy public domain software over the campus network, see Microcomputer Services “Software Download” page at <http://micro.uoregon.edu/pd/>. Some public domain software is also available on the Duckware CD-ROM.

9. *How will I know what software to buy?*

It’s best to wait to buy until you see what you need and what you like. Some software may be bundled and pre-installed as part of the overall price of a system you purchase, although it may not necessarily be the best combination of packages for your needs. The UO Bookstore and other outlets also sell selected software products at educational discounts to qualified students, faculty, and staff.

When you do buy software, you’ll want a word processing package for term papers and the like. One popular word processing package on campus is Microsoft Word. Selection of one program over another is largely a matter of personal preference. However, less popular programs may make it difficult for you to share files with others

Some specific disciplines may require additional software. Check with your department to see if they have any specific requirements or recommendations. Before buying, make sure you have enough RAM and disk space to handle the software you’re getting. See what other people are using, talk to your instructors, and look through computer magazine software reviews for a sense of what might work for you.

10. *Do I need to buy a printer?*

A printer is one of the most valuable of all the peripheral devices you can add to your personal computer system. However, if your budget is tight and your printing needs modest, one option is to print your documents in one of the public computer labs on campus (<http://it.uoregon.edu/campuslabs.shtml>). Be sure the lab has the software you need for printing your document. (Note that most labs charge for printing.)

11. *Where can I find computer magazines and books or instructional CDs and videos on campus?*

For one of the most complete collections of popular computing magazines, books, and other related resources, visit the Collaboration Lab (175 McKenzie Hall). Here the most recent editions of periodicals such as *Wired* and *Linux Journal* are available for reference, while books, manuals, instructional CDs and videos, and back issues of magazines may be checked out for various periods. You can also find computer-related books and magazines in the Knight Library and in the Science Library. The UO Bookstore and other local retail computing stores and bookstores also stock computer magazines and books.

12. *Can I access the Internet from my dorm room or apartment?*

On campus: Most university housing has high-speed Ethernet connections to UOnet, the UO's campuswide computing network. Nearly all computers come equipped with an Ethernet port, and connecting to UOnet is usually simple. For assistance, contact Residence Networking in 101 Douglass Hall. Call (541) 346-4223, email reshelp@resnet.uoregon.edu or see <http://housing.uoregon.edu/resnet/>.

For those with laptops, wireless access is also available throughout many public areas on campus. For more information about accessing wireless, see <http://it.uoregon.edu/help/getconnected/>. A map of campus wireless coverage is available at <http://geography.uoregon.edu/infographics/wireless/>.

Off-campus: Modem service provides access to UOnet from home or any remote location where a telephone line is available. The UO modem number is 225-2200. DSL and cable modem subscribers can connect via the UO's Virtual Private Network (VPN). See http://it.uoregon.edu/help/getconnected/vpn_overview.shtml. Information on how to configure your computer to connect to the UO modem pool is available on the Duckware CD or at <http://it.uoregon.edu/help/getconnected/>.

13.

How do I get my email address and initial password?

After you register for classes, a UOregon email account (Duck ID) is automatically generated for you. Your Duck ID gives you access to Blackboard, wireless, modem, VPN and your email, including AlphaMail, the UO web email program.

New to the UO? If you're new to the university, you can claim your account by visiting <http://account.uoregon.edu>. Enter your UO ID number and PAC to log in the first time.

Already have a UO email address? If you already have a UO email address, you already have a Duck ID. Your Duck ID will be your username—the part of the address to the left of the @ sign—and your current password.

For tips on creating a valid password, changing or resetting your password, and other information about Duck ID, see <http://it.uoregon.edu>.

14.

Where can I learn more about computing and using the network?

- 1. Workshops on Demand.** The University Libraries' *Workshops on Demand* program provides free customized technology training to faculty, staff, and students. Details on this program, including links to a list of training topics and alternative resources, are available at <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/cet/workshops/>.
- 2. Workshops on video and CD/DVD.** In addition to a good selection of books on a wide variety of computer topics, the Collaboration Lab stocks an assortment of recorded workshops on VHS tape, CD-ROM, and DVD. Sets usually include modules for beginner, intermediate, and advanced users and cover all Microsoft Office products, Adobe products, and various multimedia and web development topics such as Dreamweaver, Flash, and HTML. Students, faculty, and staff can borrow the workshops for a one-week period and renew them twice.
- 3. The University of Oregon's IT Website.** The website at <http://it.uoregon.edu> has links to information technology services offered at the university, as well as software documentation, consulting resources, and help for common computing problems.

The Help Resources link (<http://it.uoregon.edu/help/>) is a good resource for students, faculty, or staff who have questions about accessing their email, changing their passwords, connecting via modem, using wireless networking, implementing antiviral protection, and many other common questions and problems.

S *till Have Questions?*

If you still have some computing-related questions, feel free to contact one of the following:

- For **account information and help with password changes**, visit Microcomputer Services in 151 McKenzie Hall.
- For **Mac or PC questions and problems**, contact Microcomputer Services' consultants in 151 McKenzie Hall:
 - Telephone: **(541) 346-4412**
 - Email: ***microhelp@lists.uoregon.edu***
 - Web: **<http://micro.uoregon.edu>**
- For DuckWeb questions and problems, contact the Registrar's Office:
 - Telephone: **(541) 346-2935**
 - Email: ***registrar@uoregon.edu***