

To: Incoming Cornell Law Students

Re: Computers and Cornell Law School

From: Paul R. Weber, Director, Information Technologies

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It is strongly recommended, but not required, that all law students own a personal computer for law school use. A significant majority of students use a laptop for taking notes, drafting papers, and writing exams. If you wish to type your exams on your laptop rather than write them by hand, your computer must meet the minimum requirements noted below.

Minimum Laptop Securexam System Requirements:

- **PC running Microsoft Windows Operating System 2000 or XP (North American Version) needed to participate in electronic exams**
- **Minimum Pentium III processor 300 megahertz or greater**
- **Microsoft Word. US Versions needed to participate in electronic exams**
- **40 GB or larger hard disk**
- **Minimum 128 MB of RAM**
- **Minimum of 800 x 600 video resolution**
- **Securexam software (see www.softwaresecure.com)**
- **Bear Access—distributed by Cornell Law School's IT department**
- **Wi-Fi certified wireless network card needed to connect to the Internet at the Law School**

(Please review the above SecureExam web site before purchasing a computer as requirements may change)

As with the practice of law, the business of being a law student is becoming increasingly computer based. Many of you already own personal computers and are wondering how you will use them in law school. Others are contemplating an upgrade or purchasing a computer for the first time. This memo is intended to answer some of the questions you may have at this point.

Is owning a computer required? How much will I need one?

Owning a computer and printer is not required by the Law School but is strongly recommended. A computer is an invaluable writing and note-taking tool. Most Law School writing assignments implicitly require close, careful, and repeated drafting and redrafting, and the editing power of the PC is a significant help. Much legal research is conducted online using services such as Westlaw and Lexis. Course documents are distributed through the Campus BlackBoard Web Site requiring students to view and print course material online. In addition, information about what is going on in the Law

School is delivered electronically, and the student body makes extensive use of email as a means of communication. You may make use of the PCs and printers in the Law School's computing center, but the number of PCs available is limited and printing capacity sometimes creates a bottleneck. There is no guarantee that a computer will be available at the exact time that you want or need one, and it would be very unwise for anyone to rely on the computing center to meet all of their computing and printing needs.

Should I have a laptop or desktop?

Our recommendation is to acquire a laptop. The majority of the Law School's exams are offered on computers and a laptop will be necessary to take advantage of this. Also, a laptop will be more convenient for use in the variety of contexts available in the Law School. Because the law school uses wireless network technology, a properly equipped laptop will also make the internet a mobile resource for you.

What sort of computing facilities exist at the Law School?

Public computing facilities in the Law School building consist of about forty-five high-end Dell computers running Windows XP operating system. Also, we have several other machines located throughout the building. The Student Computing Center is available 24x7 on a first-come, first-served basis, with access provided by a Cornell ID card reader system installed on the front door. Computer support related to computers in the center lab is available during regular business hours 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM Monday through Thursday and 7:30 AM – 3:00 PM on Friday. Also, student consultants provide limited support in the Center during normal Library hours on weekends.

Machines in the public facilities are attached to the Law School's local area network, which are in turn connected to the Internet. Various software services are offered through the network, including access to WESTLAW and LEXIS, word processing, various legal-instruction programs, electronic mail that reaches the Internet, and a wide variety of other programs.

Access to the Law School's network is also available to students with laptops through wireless connections in the Library, Atrium and Student Lounge. There are no fees associated with the use of this service.

Three high-speed laser printers are available for use by all Law School students. Each Law School student is given a free printing allocation of 500 pages per semester. Students who print over 500 pages are charged at a rate of 10 cents per page for each additional sheet printed. Also, the Computing Center has a resume printer available for students to use. The resume printer is a free service.

The Law School uses PC based computers running Windows XP professional operating systems. No Mac support is provided. Cornell University operates much larger Mac facilities in nearby buildings, but be warned: these become very crowded with undergraduates at times that may conflict with your most important needs.

Can I access the network resources of the Law School from home?

The University, through Cornell Information Technologies (CIT) offers Ethernet access to the network from the dorm rooms in Hughes Hall as part of the ResNet program. This service allows students direct Internet access and access to the Law School's network. There is a per semester charge for this service. CIT also provides limited dial-up access for many Internet services. Use of these services requires a Cornell University NET ID, which is provided free of charge to each student. Students living off campus may use the CIT dial-up Internet access or contract with an Internet service provider (ISP) for dial-up Internet access. Current ISP costs are in the \$15-\$20 per month range. Ithaca has Road Runner high-speed cable access through Time Warner cable, which can be arranged at a higher cost. Students using an ISP will be able to access certain Law School resources as well as email and web sites. For more information concerning pricing for the above CIT services please contact the CIT help desk at (607) 255-8990 or Residence Hall Network Service hotline at (607) 255-9627.

Word processing, electronic exams, and Vista what do you recommend?

The primary word processing packages in use in the legal world are WordPerfect and Microsoft Word. For these reasons, Cornell Law School supports only PC-compatible computers and recommends Microsoft Word for word processing. **Note:** At the time of this writing, Securexam software only runs on Microsoft Windows Operating System 2000 or XP. Also you will need Microsoft Word 2000, Word XP, or Word 2003 preinstalled. For more information on supported versions of Word and operating systems please check the Securexam Web site at <http://www.softwaresecure.com/faq.htm>.

Microsoft Vista and Office 2007 are not supported for use with Securexam at the time of this writing. Also, please review the Cornell Information Technologies web site for more information about Vista at Cornell. Please review this link before making any computer purchase at www.cit.cornell.edu/computer/recommend/winvista.html.

There is a version of Securexam for the Mac that runs under Mac OSX v10.3; however, the Law School computer staff does not provide support for Apple laptops.

I want to buy my own machine, what do you recommend?

When purchasing a computer for your own use you will need to look at a number of issues. You will need to answer questions concerning preferences, affordability, life expectancy, and options.

You will need to weigh some trade-offs in deciding to how much to spend on specific components of a new system. The following section summarizes some of these considerations.

Any current system bought from a mainstream manufacturer should work in the Cornell environment. Technology continues to evolve at a very rapid pace, but a system that

meets or exceeds the targets outlined should serve general needs for at least three years. Systems at the bottom of the current product line are often available at considerable savings, but will have a shorter useful lifespan.

The Law School does not recommend any particular make or model or any specific source for purchases. Laptops from Gateway, Toshiba, Lenovo, and Dell are good choices. These can be purchased via the Internet, mail order, or in retail outlets. An excellent source for information about what is available is the magazine Computer Shopper, available at newsstands everywhere. Also you may want to take a look at what the Cornell Campus Store has to offer.

Cornell Campus store link: http://tcop.cbs.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/webc.exe/st_main.html

As noted above, the Law School does provide some access to printing. However, we recommend that you buy your own printer. Inkjet and laser printers in the \$100 - \$500 range are widely available from Hewlett-Packard, Canon, Epson, and others. Owning a printer will help you avoid the crunch as last-minute writing deadlines approach.

Also, if you are considering purchasing a laptop, a **wireless card** will provide you with access to the Internet. **Note: If your laptop is already equipped with a wireless card you should be able to access the campus RedRover wireless system with your existing card. RedRover supports the 802.11g protocol in the Law School.**

Special Note: If you plan to use student loan funds allocated through our financial aid office to pay for a computer to use in law school, you should not make the purchase prior to August 1st, 2007.

Can I get discounts on software and hardware through Cornell?

<http://www.store.cornell.edu/tc/>

Computer hardware is available at the Campus Store. You can review the selections online; click on the Law School link.

Software is available through the Campus Store, often at substantial discounts made possible through site-volume educational licensing.

What about email?

Law students are given a Cornell University NET ID that doubles as an email address. The NET ID is issued by the University and will be mailed to new students before orientation with activation instructions.

How do I learn to use the Law School Network?

The staff of the Law School Information Technologies department will offer large group sessions that will introduce new users to the Computer Lab. Please see orientation

schedule for more information. These sessions will introduce incoming students to the Computer Lab and its features. You are only required to attend one session out of the three. In addition, the computer lab will be open and staffed by the IT Department throughout Fall Orientation so that students can log in and try things out.

In addition, special-topic classes will be offered throughout the semester; watch for announcements. We should probably stress that we do not make a comprehensive attempt to teach word processing software. We have found that it is difficult to do given the number of people involved and the level of attention we would need to give each student. Our advice to novices is to, if at all possible, acquire and learn a word processing package sometime before the semester (and its attendant workload) begins.

Getting in touch?

We hope that the above has been of some help to you. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to call or stop by and see us in the fall (481 Myron Taylor Hall).

Phone: (607) 255-2829

Email: helpdesk@postoffice.law.cornell.edu).

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