What is Muskingum College's computer philosophy?

Muskingum College strongly believes that one aspect of an education is access to information and resources. Much of that information can be accessed on our campus network and the Internet.

Muskingum College does not require students to own computers, but we do encourage students to consider ownership. Every residence hall room features a port which enables students to connect to the campus network. In addition, students have access to a number of computer labs on campus.

Access to the network offers a number of benefits, including the potential for instant communication with instructors and fellow students at Muskingum and other institutions, and the ability to receive and complete course assignments from the residence hall at any hour of the day or night.

Additional benefits are 24-hour access to the College Library, the ability to request titles from among the 24 million book records of Ohio Private Academic Libraries (OPAL) and OhioLINK members, and access to an increasing number of online reference databases and full-text periodicals.

As Muskingum continues to advance its campus network, providing for multimedia resources and high speed access, computer ownership has become an essential component of a Muskingum education.

Will my student need an e-mail account or will the college provide one?

All students are given an e-mail/web account for their personal use. While students frequently have other e-mail or web identities, all official Muskingum College electronic communication is sent to the student’s Muskingum email account. While having more than one electronic identity is fine, it is imperative that the student use their Muskingum identity for internal communication and that they read it often.

What kind of computers should incoming students have? What about current students?

We recommend that incoming students arrive with the right equipment (see the following information), and we also encourage current students to consider upgrading older computers before the start of the next academic year to ensure their hardware and software remain current for today's computing needs.
Does the college have preferred vendors?

The college has reviewed the Gateway, Inc. product line as well as its “after the sale” service and support program. We consider Gateway’s offerings to be well-suited to our needs. This company has been chosen as the preferred personal computer vendor for Muskingum College. Purchasing one of Gateway’s E-series or other pre-configured computers will guarantee quick connection to the campus network. Other than Gateway, most name-brand computers with pre-installed and tested Ethernet capability should work with the Muskingum College network.

Should I purchase a warranty?

The majority of name-brand vendors provide three year warranties, with year one frequently being on-site. If you have selected Gateway and problems occur, Muskingum can help you determine what components may be faulty so that you can communicate with the service representative more effectively. Our relationship with Gateway will expedite part replacement and diagnosis services for you. If you feel that after year one you may need on-site assistance, then an upgrade to three year on-site maintenance may be in your best interest.

Is it easy to connect to the campus network?

Connection of a network-ready computer (one that features pre-installed Ethernet capability) is a simple procedure once the system has been checked and cleared. The Residential Network Program is responsible for initial certification and registration of all student-owned computers during the first part of each academic year. Once certified, the student uses his/her own network cable and/or hub to Complete the process in each residential room.

Is help available if I need it?

Computer connection assistance is provided, on-site, by Resident Computer Assistants (RCA) throughout the course of the year, including move-in weekend. If necessary, telephone based assistance is also provided by Computer and Network Services staff during regular business hours. As a last resort, in-room technical services by full time CNS staff members are available for a charge of $25 per hour (one hour minimum).

What if my roommate and I both want to connect computers to the network?

While there is only one port available in most rooms on campus, students may purchase small hubs or switches to expand the port count in their room. The Muskingum College Bookstore will have a quantity of 4-port switches available at a very competitive price, which will include the network cable necessary to connect the device to the network port. If you bring your own hub or switch, please remember this cable, as most commercially sold devices do NOT include it. Some rooms do feature a “port-per-pillow” configuration. Students should verify the room configuration before making any purchases.
What about Home Networking devices for Broadband Connections?

Because Muskingum’s network is not similar to a home network, devices designed for home application, known as routers, are not appropriate for use here. Therefore, we ask that you do not bring routers to campus.

What kind of software should I purchase?

While other products (such as Corel Office or Star Office) are acceptable for students, the institution primarily uses the Microsoft Office Suite for word processing, spreadsheet, database, and presentation applications. The college’s Education and Computer Science departments use the Microsoft Office Suite for most of their classes, so if you are majoring in either of these, you should have a personal copy of this software. If you are purchasing a new computer, you are advised that pre-installed and “bundled” software is frequently the more cost effective acquisition method. When purchasing software, always ask for the academic edition, which is exactly like the consumer edition only priced more attractively.

A word of caution about some presumably “free” software. The Microsoft Works product (which is different than Office) is NOT compatible with campus standards and you will experience difficulty printing its files in campus facilities if you choose this software.

Other software for use on the network is available at no cost for downloading from a campus server, including software for e-mail, telnet, FTP, and web browsing.

Where can I purchase a recommended computer?

The Gateway kiosk in the Campus Bookstore provides literature and allows you to configure a system, generate a price quotation, and even place an order. The kiosk page is also available on the internet at http://esource.gateway.com/MuskingumCollege. You may talk with Gateway’s higher education sales team by calling (800) 846-2754 and asking for the Muskingum College consultant. Financing is available through Gateway. The college’s Computer and Network Services department is always glad to assist with this process, so feel free to call them at (740) 826-8050.

What about Macintosh Computers and Linux Operating Systems?

Both Macintosh and Linux systems will work on the campus network, however neither is supported nor recommended. By using these systems, you will run the risk of incompatibility.
What other considerations should I account for when configuring a computer?

Just like a stereo, computer sound has the potential to cause conflicts between roommates. For this reason, we recommend the use of headphones instead of speakers for computer related audio output. None of our public computer labs have speakers, thus students are responsible for providing and using a personal pair of headphones.

Any computer connected to the campus network will need to subscribe to a virus protection program. While the college uses the Symantec Norton Antivirus product, most any other subscribed and updated virus protection software is satisfactory.

What are the college’s minimum requirements for incoming student computers?

Processor speed: Either 2.4GHz (or higher) Pentium 4, Centrino or 1.3GHz (or higher) Intel M-class processor or AMD AthlonXP 2500+ (or higher) Processor
512MB RAM Memory
80 Gigabyte Hard Drive
24x or higher CD-ROM or CD-R/RW Drive
256MB (or greater) USB Flash Memory Stick
Pre-installed Ethernet Network capability (Interface card or USB)
14’ or 25’ straight-through Ethernet patch cable with RJ-45 connectors on both ends
17” CRT or LCD Display
Sound Card and Headphones
Windows XP Professional with Service Pack 2 (Do NOT get XP Home Edition)*
Microsoft Office 2003 Standard Edition (See the Bookstore at a discount rate)**
Subscribed Antivirus protection  (Trial Editions are NOT sufficient)

These requirements have been set to insure student's computers will be compatible with the network and remain a useful learning tool for the duration of their full four year tenure at Muskingum College.

* PLEASE NOTE:  Windows XP Home Edition does NOT offer adequate networking functionality or security required for our network. For this reason, we strongly recommend XP Professional. For more information on Home versus Professional, please visit Microsoft’s Web Site at: http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/howtobuy/choosing2.mspx

** PLEASE NOTE: The Microsoft Office 2003 suite includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook. This Standard Edition is sufficient for most students, however, Computer Science and many Business majors should invest in the Professional edition which includes the Microsoft Access database software.