

Frequently-Asked Questions

Beginning Fall 2011 all entering freshmen art majors will be required to have an Apple laptop computer. Surveys show that more than 90 percent of students coming to the university own their own computer. With this requirement, we're attempting to assist students in getting the computer that will best serve their academic and professional needs.

Q. What brand should I buy?

A. The department has designated Apple Computer as its preferred provider for these reasons: (1) Apple is the dominant platform for graphic designers and visual artists. (2) Departmental technical support and peripherals have been assembled based on students using an Apple computer. (3) Apple's current operating system is far less susceptible to viruses than other computers. Viruses are a serious problem on university campuses.

Q. What if I prefer a Windows-based machine?

A. The EIU Art Department does not recommend a Windows-based machine. Apple is the dominant platform for graphic designers and visual artists. The EIU Art Department has functioned as an all-Apple computer environment for more than 20 years. We have found Apple computers to be easier to support and troubleshoot than their Windows counterparts.

Q. Should I buy one now or wait?

A. We strongly recommend that you wait and buy through the EIU Bookstore. The EIU Bookstore can offer computer and software bundles with a three-year warranty, which we highly recommend. The EIU Bookstore is located in the MLK Student Union and can be reached at 217-581-7234 or 800-242-0757 or on the web at www.eiubookstore.com. Be sure to mention that you are an art major.

Q. Why can't I get information about models and pricing earlier?

A. Apple regularly refreshes its product line and changes prices. We want to make sure you start with the latest model. If you were to order now, you almost certainly will be buying a model that will be fine - but not the latest - by next fall. Information about current models and prices at the EIU Apple Store web site should give you a good indication of what to expect.

Q. Will this computer suffice for all four years?

A. It will. However, a three- or four-year-old computer sometimes frustrates the user. Some current students have told us they are buying less-expensive models now with plans to upgrade in the junior year. And remember that many students today take more than four years to complete college. Think about your likely needs.

Q. Can I get financial aid help to purchase the computer?

A. The Higher Education Amendments of 1998 allow for the purchase of a required personal computer to be added to a student's educational expense budget that is used to determine financial aid eligibility. A budget increase does not necessarily result in

additional financial aid to cover the cost. Students who have borrowed their annual or aggregate loan limits may not have eligibility remaining. The EIU Office of Financial Aid reviews requests for additional financial aid as the result of a required personal computer on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the EIU Office of Financial Aid for further information at 217-581-6405.

If you have other questions, please contact the EIU Art Department at 217-581-3410 or by e-mail at art@eiu.edu.