

New Computer Recommendations for Alverno Students 2009-2010

Alverno students have access to computers in the Computer Center, computer classrooms and other areas on campus. You may decide, however, to purchase your own personal computer or bring in an existing computer. Here are recommendations and guidelines.

Most new PCs ship with Vista already installed. All PCs on campus are running Windows XP and have Office 2007 installed. All Macs are running OS X and have Office 2008 installed.

Desktop or Laptop? Some things to consider.

Desktop	Laptop
Not portable. Not easy to move to another location.	Portable. Can be used at many locations on campus. Check with your instructor if they will allow you to bring it to class. If your laptop has a wireless card, many areas on campus have wireless access. A complete list is available at http://depts.alverno.edu/techserv/students/wireless/wireless.html
Lots of parts to set up.	All components are contained in one unit.
Takes more space on a desk.	Takes less space on a desk.
Larger more comfortable keyboard	Smaller keyboard
Difficult to misplace or steal.	Easily stolen and misplaced. We recommend the purchase of a locking cable for security.
More powerful, bigger hard drive and less expensive to purchase.	Less powerful, smaller hard drive and more expensive to purchase.
Easy to install new and replace old/bad components.	More expensive to repair. Requires trip to service center.

Netbooks

A new class of laptops has recently become available. Netbooks are smaller than a standard laptop/notebook and as a result have a smaller keyboard and screen. They are usually less expensive than a traditional laptop. Since netbooks are very mobile most have built in Wi-Fi, a webcam and speakers.

Because of their small size, typically netbooks do not have internal CD or DVD drives. Software installation will require an external CD or DVD drive. Their size also limits the hard drive space and RAM (memory); in addition they have smaller and slower processors. Netbooks have either a solid state disk (SSD) for internal storage or a traditional hard drive. The traditional hard drives usually include Windows XP or Vista. The solid state disks usually run Linux. Battery life varies between models but ranges between two to seven hours.

Netbooks are not meant to replace a standard laptop/notebook or a desktop computer. They are mainly used for checking email and web browsing due to the limited processing speed and storage space.

Recommended Configurations (PC)

	Desktop Computer	Laptop
Operating System	Windows Vista Home Premium 64-bit (with SP1 installed) or better	Windows Vista Home Premium 64-bit (with SP1 installed) or better
Processor/CPU	Intel Core 2 Duo (2.9 processor speed) or AMD Athlon comparable	Intel Core 2 Duo mobile processor (1.83GHz processor speed)
RAM	6GB DDR2 SDRAM	4GB DDR2 memory
Hard Drive	640 GB	320GB hard drive
Networking Hardware	Built-in 10/100Base-T Ethernet networking interface	Built-in high-speed wireless LAN (802.11b/g/n); 10/100Base-T Ethernet LAN
Software	Basic Office suite and Anti-virus Software*	Basic Office suite and Anti-virus Software*
Graphics Card	Graphics Card with Direct X and at least 256 MB video memory	Intel Graphics Media Accelerator at least 256MB graphics memory
CD/DVD Drive	Multiformat DVD±RW/CD-RW drive	Multiformat DVD±RW/CD-RW drive
Media Reader	14-in-1 Media Reader	5-in-1 Media Reader
USB ports	At least six high-speed USB 2.0 ports	At least three high-speed USB 2.0 ports

Minimum Configurations (PC)

	Desktop Computer	Laptop
Operating System	Windows Vista Home Premium (with SP1 installed) or better	Windows Vista Home Premium (with SP1 installed) or better
Processor/CPU	Intel Celeron or AMD Athlon processor	Intel Celeron processor
RAM	3GB DDR2 SDRAM	2GB DDR2 memory
Hard Drive	320 GB Hard Drive	250 GB Hard Drive
Networking Hardware	Built-in 10/100Base-T Ethernet networking interface	Built-in high-speed wireless LAN (802.11b/g/n); 10/100Base-T Ethernet LAN
Software	Basic Office suite and Anti-virus Software*	Basic Office suite and Anti-virus Software*
Graphics Card	Intel Graphics Media Accelerator with 128MB dedicated video memory	Intel Graphics Media Accelerator at least 256MB graphics memory
CD/DVD Drive	Multiformat DVD±RW/CD-RW drive	Multiformat DVD±RW/CD-RW drive
Media Reader	14-in-1 Media Reader	5-in-1 Media Reader
USB ports	At least six high-speed USB 2.0 ports	At least three high-speed USB 2.0 ports

*Information on discounts for popular software for both PCs and MACs is available at:
<http://depts.alverno.edu/techserv/students/software/studentsoftware.html>

Recommended Configurations (MAC)

	Desktop Computer	Laptop Computer
Operating System	Mac OS X v10.5 Leopard	Mac OS X v10.5 Leopard
Processor/CPU	24" iMac with 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor	15.4" MacBook Pro 2.66 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo
RAM	4GB DDR3 SDRAM	4GB DDR3 SDRAM
Hard Drive	320 GB hard drive	160 GB hard drive
Networking Hardware	Internal 10/100/1000 Gigabit Ethernet built-in 802.11n (Wi-Fi)	Internal 10/100/1000 Gigabit Ethernet built-in 802.11n (Wi-Fi)
CD/DVD Drive	Slot-loading DVD±RW/CD-RW SuperDrive with double-layer support	Slot-loading multiformat DVD±RW/CD-RW SuperDrive
Software	Basic office suite and Anti-virus Software*	Basic office suite and Anti-virus Software*
Graphics Card	NVIDIA GeForce 9400M graphics	NVIDIA GeForce 9400M graphics
Ports	1 FireWire port and 6 high-speed USB 2.0 ports	1 FireWire port and two high-speed USB 2.0 ports

Minimum Configurations (MAC)

	Desktop Computer	Laptop
Operating System	Mac OS X v10.5 Leopard	Mac OS X v10.5 Leopard
Processor/CPU	20" iMac with 2.66 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor	13.3" MacBook with 2.13GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor
RAM	2GB DDR3 SDRAM	2GB DDR2 SDRAM
Hard Drive	250 GB hard drive	160GB Hard Drive
Networking Hardware	Internal 10/100/1000 Gigabit Ethernet built-in 802.11n (Wi-Fi)	Internal 10/100/1000 Gigabit Ethernet built-in 802.11a/b/g/n (Wi-Fi)
CD/DVD Drive	Slot-loading multiformat DVD±RW/CD-RW SuperDrive with double-layer support	Slot-loading multiformat DVD±RW/CD-RW SuperDrive with double-layer support
Software	Basic office suite and Anti-virus Software*	Basic office suite and Anti-virus Software*
Graphics Card	Graphics Card with 256 MB	NVIDIA GeForce 9400M graphics
Ports	1 FireWire port and 6 high-speed USB 2.0 ports	1 FireWire port and two high-speed USB 2.0 ports

*Information on discounts for popular software for both PCs and MACs is available at:
<http://depts.alverno.edu/techserv/students/software/studentsoftware.html>

Other Recommendations:

- 1GB or larger USB Flash Drive (removable storage device)
- Surge protector or uninterruptible power supply.
- Extended warranty.
- Check your homeowner's or renter's insurance policy to see if your computer is covered for damage or theft. Or consider purchasing accident insurance when you buy your laptop.

For more information about what to look for when purchasing a computer, one source of information is PC World's website. Two helpful articles are:

“How to Buy a Desktop PC” http://www.pcworld.com/article/125649/how_to_buy_a_desktop_pc.html
and “How to Buy a Laptop” http://www.pcworld.com/article/125647/how_to_buy_a_laptop.html

Alverno College does not endorse any specific manufacturer. A few vendors offer educational discounts towards the purchase of computers:

Apple: <http://www.apple.com/education/shop/>

Dell: <http://www.delluniversity.com/verification2.aspx>

Lenovo: www.lenovo.com/shop/deals/alverno

Students who are unable to afford a computer should check with the Financial Aid Office to discuss funding options available.

Software

We have installed Microsoft Office 2007 (Word, Excel and PowerPoint) on all our computers on campus. If you are using Office 2003 at home and do not have the compatibility pack installed on your computer, we recommend either saving any files created on Alverno computers as Office 2003, or downloading the compatibility pack from Microsoft for your home computer. More information is available from Microsoft's website at: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/products/HA101686761033.aspx>

Software packages commonly used on campus include:

- Microsoft Office 2007.
- Inspiration 8

While you don't have to purchase these software packages, you will probably use them for your classes. They can be purchased online. Microsoft is currently running a promotion for students on Office 2007. More information is available at <http://www.microsoft.com/student/discounts/theultimatesteal-us/default.aspx>

Other software is available for Alverno students at a discount. More details are available at: <http://depts.alverno.edu/techserv/students/software/studentsoftware.html>

Computer Repair for Students

Alverno College does not offer computer/laptop diagnostic and repair services to students. The following list may assist you in obtaining the services you need.

If your computer/laptop is under warranty, contact the vendor directly:

Dell	1-800-624-9896
Gateway	1-800-846-2301
Hewlett-Packard or Compaq	1-800-474-6836
IBM/Lenovo	1-800-426-7378
Mac (AppleCare)	1-800-275-2273
Sony	1-888-476-6972
Toshiba	1-800-457-7777

The following locations offer computer/laptop repair services:

Best Buy 4610 South 76th Street Greenfield, WI 53220 414-281-3434	Milwaukee PC 4160 South 108th Street Greenfield, WI 53228 414-427-6965	Apple Store 2500 N. Mayfair Rd. Wauwatosa, WI 53226 414-258-1614
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Or, you may call the “Geek Squad” for in-home service: 1-800-433-5778

Internet Security

Virus Protection:

We strongly recommend the use of antivirus software to help protect your machine from malicious programs. **If you will be living on campus, you are required to use Symantec AntiVirus which is provided by Alverno’s Technology Services department.** Check the Addendum below for additional information about antivirus software.

- Symantec AntiVirus offers a 30-day trial, and full versions, which can be downloaded from:
http://shop.symantecstore.com/store/symnahho/en_US/ContentTheme/ThemeID.106300/pbPage.Trialware_en_US
- McAfee VirusScan is another leading antivirus software. More information can be found on their website: <http://us.mcafee.com/root/downloads.asp?id=freeTrials>
- AVG offers a 30-day trial version of their software. Download the trial version at <http://www.grisoft.com/us/download> . A free version of the software for non-commercial use is available at <http://free.avg.com>
- Avast offers a free version of their anti-virus software for non-commercial home users. Download the software at <http://www.avast.com/eng/download-avast-home.html>
Registration is required.

It is also important to remember to keep the subscriptions current on your antivirus software. A current subscription gives you access to the latest updates to protect your machine.

Spyware:

We also suggest that you have some sort of spyware removal tool. Both Symantec and McAfee offer spyware removal tools that are packaged along with their antivirus software.

- AdAware is a free spyware removal tool which can be downloaded from <http://www.lavasoft.com/single/trialpay.php>
- Windows Defender is a free download from Microsoft for spyware removal and real-time protection available at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/defender/default.msp>
- SpyBot Search & Destroy is another popular (and free) tool available at <http://www.safer-networking.org/en/download/index.html>
- Sunbelt Software CounterSpy 15-day fully functional free trial: <http://www.sunbelt-software.com/Home-Home-Office/Counterspy/>

Firewalls:

For Internet and general network security, we recommend the use of a firewall which minimizes unauthorized and/or malicious access to your computer. Alverno College has a network-based firewall in place that provides a level of campus-wide protection. Both Windows XP and Vista do include a built-in firewall but the advanced features are turned off by default. Finding and enabling the advanced settings is complicated. As a result, we recommend the use of one of the free firewalls listed below.

Below are links with information about firewalls and service packs for off campus, home computers using Windows Operating Systems (Windows XP and Vista).

- Windows Vista users can learn more about securing their PC at: http://www.pcworld.com/businesscenter/article/156019/secure_your_vista_pc_in_10_easy_steps.html
- Read more about Vista's firewall at <http://www.pcworld.com/article/id,128834-c,vistalonghorn/article.html>
- Information about how and where to download the latest Service Pack for Windows XP can be found at: <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/322389>. Information about Windows Vista Service Packs is available at: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windows-vista/quick-start/service-packs.aspx>

There are several free firewalls available for download:

- Zone Alarm which can be downloaded via the following link: <http://www.zonealarm.com/security/en-us/anti-virus-spyware-free-download.htm> or http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,65012/description.html?loomia_ow=t0:s0:a41:g2:r3:c0.026293:b23491338:z0 for Vista.
- Comodo personal firewall: <http://www.personalfirewall.comodo.com/>

Keeping your computer secure will benefit everybody on the Alverno network.

Wireless Access

Wireless Internet access is available at several locations on Alverno's campus. For a complete list of wireless zones and other info please go to <http://depts.alverno.edu/techserv/students/wireless/wireless.html>

On-Campus:

Students who live on campus can get Internet access by connecting to the campus network. An Ethernet networking interface is required. See the “Addendum for Austin Hall and Clare Hall Resident Students” below for requirements. Application forms are available in Austin and Clare Hall. Twenty-four hour computer labs are available for resident students in Austin and Clare Halls.

Off-Campus:

If you live off campus, we recommend that you have Internet access so you can use the Interactive Online system (IOL) to register for classes, the Diagnostic Digital Portfolio, your Alverno email, Educator (course management software), Library materials and other resources, any time you need them. You will need to have an Internet Service Provider (ISP). There are a variety of options offered by ISPs including high speed cable, DSL or dial-up service. You may also choose to have an internet connection in your home. Many service providers can be found at <http://thelist.internet.com>

If you are unable to get Internet access at home, resident and non-resident students have access to computers in the Computer Center, the Library and the Media Hub.

Computer Center Hours are available at: <http://depts.alverno.edu/techserv/ccinfo/hours.html>

Library Hours are posted at: <http://depts.alverno.edu/library/hours.html>

Media Hub hours can be found at: http://www.alverno.edu/campus_resource/mediahub/hours.html

Addendum for Austin Hall & Clare Hall Resident Students

Application Form

To connect your computer to the campus network, you will need to complete a Residence Hall Network Connection Request Form when you arrive on campus in the fall. Because the form requires the Jack ID# in your room, you won't be able to complete the form until you're on campus and in your room. Forms will be available in Austin and Clare Hall.

Integrated 10/100 Ethernet or Network Port

Ethernet/Network ports are standard on most new computers. If this is not already included with your computer, you will need to purchase and install a 10/100Mbps Ethernet network interface card (NIC) in your computer.

Patch Cable

You will also need a network cable (CAT 5) to connect your computer to the network jack in your room. Please note that phone cables will not work.

Network cards and cables can be purchased with most new computers, locally from computer supply stores such as Best Buy. Network cables are available for sale at Alverno's bookstore.

Installation

You are responsible for the correct configuration of the network card and software in your computer.

Security

Residents who connect their personal computers to the Alverno college network will be provided with Symantec Antivirus software, free of charge. **This software will only be provided to students in the resident hall. Students who are not residents will still need to purchase antivirus software.**

Once you have completed your Network Account Request Form, you will receive an email message with instructions on how to obtain/install Symantec Antivirus. Residents will be **required** to install the provided antivirus software on their computers. They will also be required to install all Microsoft critical updates as they become available. Directions for running updates can be found at:

http://depts.alverno.edu/techserv/students/residence_hall/WindowsUpdateDirections2008.pdf

Backing up files:

Any files saved on a student's personal space (H: drive) on Alverno's servers is backed up. Files that are saved to a student's personal laptop are not automatically backed up. We recommend that students backup important files to a CD, CVD or USB drive.

If you need to backup several large files, such as multimedia and music files, consider purchasing an external hard drive. Most external hard drives plug into a USB port and quickly move files between your computer and the external hard drive.