WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING A COMPUTER TO BRING TO TRANSYLVANIA

Just about any new personal computer that you can buy today will come with more than the minimum requirements to function on our network. Virtually all desktops and laptops have some sort of network connectivity either via a built-in wired Ethernet connection and/or wireless connectivity. While we do provide wireless access across campus, we always recommend that you consider a wired adapter for optimal connectivity. Some new, thin laptops such as the MacBook Air do not have a built-in wired connection, so you might consider purchasing an Ethernet adapter, as well.

We recommend shopping for brands that come with a multi-year warranty or that you consider purchasing additional warranty service. If you want your student’s computer to last as long as possible, an extended warranty may help. Our helpdesk provides software assistance, including removal of virus/spyware infections. However, we do not provide hardware repair service, so an extended warranty of some type is good insurance. For laptops, you may also want to consider an accident policy that covers spills, drops or any other physical damage that would not be covered under a normal warranty.

Transy is a mostly Windows campus and our computer lab PCs are Windows based, but Apple Mac and Linux based computers will function just fine on our network, and we provide support for all types of systems.

For PC-based hardware specifications, we recommend:

- Intel Core i5 or better processors over Celeron and Atom models; AMD A-Series, Athlon or better processors over Sempron models.
- At least 4 GB of RAM (memory), 8GB recommended.
- At least a 250GB hard drive, larger if your student saves lots of large files like digital pictures or music.
- Maybe a DVD/RW drive that can burn DVDs, depends on your student’s usage. Most new computers come with at least a DVD/CD reader, but we are starting to see lightweight models that do not. We normally recommend at least a DVD/CD reader in case your student needs to access that type of media.
- A sizeable USB stick/jump drive, such as 8GB or larger, great for backing up important files from your computer and taking them with you to labs. You may also want to consider a larger external hard drive, such as a 250GB, for additional storage for backups and other files.
- We do NOT allow wireless access points in the dorm rooms, so please do not bring a router with wireless. Unsecured wireless allows our neighbors to access our network, and the student is responsible for any activity coming from their connection. These devices will be blocked by our network software.

Other considerations:

- We have a volume discount plan with Dell. Please visit http://www.dell.com/transy, shop around the site, then compare those prices as you shop at other places. We offer this method of purchase as a service only; we receive no incentive from Dell, nor assume any liability about this purchase or support of this equipment.
- We recommend that you purchase the most/biggest/best that you can afford now so that you will be less likely to have to replace or upgrade the computer over your student’s four years at Transy.
More memory is the cheapest way to improve performance, followed by a faster processor and more disk space.

- As stated above, we recommend that you purchase a USB jump drive/stick drive for use as a personal, external storage medium. These can be purchased at the campus bookstore, any computer supply store, Wal-Mart, Staples, Office Depot, online, etc. Encourage your student to back up their own data! Transy is now a Google Apps for Education campus and your student will have virtually unlimited storage in the Google Drive cloud for email and data files.

- If you buy a Windows computer, it will most likely come with the Microsoft Windows 8 operating system. Most of our lab PCs use Windows 7 Professional, but Windows 8 functions perfectly well on our residential network.

- We are a mostly Microsoft campus with Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc. of Microsoft Office 2010/2013 available on all lab computers around campus. Your student may want to purchase their own copy of Office in order to be able to use it on their computer. Transy is pleased to offer students the opportunity to purchase this software at a substantially reduced rate. Once your student receives their Transy login credentials, they can visit http://transy.onthehub.com to purchase their own copy of Office and other software at a discounted rate. That said, we have recently started using the Google Apps for Education suite for our e-mail, calendar and other productivity software. Google Apps provides the Drive service which offers Google Docs. Students could easily use their Transy Google account and Google Docs to create their writings and other materials, so keep that in mind as you decide whether to purchase Microsoft Office. Your student might want to try out Google Docs first and talk to their faculty members or other students about it, then make a decision about purchasing Office later on.

- We recommend that you run modern anti-virus software (yes, even Macs). We recommend several free versions of anti-virus such as Microsoft Security Essentials for Windows and Sophos Home Edition for Mac. Your new computer may come pre-loaded with a brand that provides 30 or 60 days of free service – you might consider one of these free alternatives before paying for one. Once your student receives their Transy login credentials, they can find links to the free software that we recommend on our IT help site.

- As stated above, you will have wireless access throughout campus, but we recommend that you consider adding a wired network connection to your computer. Every dorm room provides wired ports to plug in to, but you will need to bring your own Ethernet cable. We recommend getting one that is 25 feet long – this length will allow you to arrange your room and put your computer anywhere that you want. **DO NOT BRING A WIRELESS ROUTER TO CAMPUS - THIS INCLUDES APPLE AIRPORT.** If you end up with more wired devices than network jacks available in the room, you can purchase a small 4 or 5 port SWITCH ONLY.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our helpdesk at any time.

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