ITS Policy on College-owned Computer Technology

Commitment and rationale

Union College is committed to providing each faculty member, staff member and administrator with the necessary computer to do his or her job. For faculty members, the College will provide one standard configuration, networked, college-owned computer. These purchases will include 3-year warranties, technical staff time for setup and support, and basic software licenses. In order to best meet the needs of the Union College community, standards for hardware and software have been set. Each year these standards are reviewed and revised to reflect industry and higher education trends. This is done to insure that hardware and software that is supported is up-to-date, cost effective and fit to the task.

Desktop or Laptop Computer

Faculty members may elect to have either a desktop computer or a laptop computer as defined by the Union College Desktop and Laptop Policy. Each year Information Technology Services (ITS) will select standard models for purchase. ITS has funding to provide for the replacement of faculty computers and it is the goal to replace computers on a regular basis, usually on a timetable from 3-5 years depending on need and availability of funding.

ITS maintains an inventory of all college-owned computers. It is this list that will be used to generate a list of computers for replacement. Working with departments and individual faculty members a replacement schedule is drafted and in general, those with the oldest computers are moved to the top of the list. Each year replacements are scheduled for those deemed to be most in need.

The current standard supported models are located at

http://its.union.edu/supported-hardware-and-software/supported-hardware.

Policy

College-owned computers assigned to faculty and staff will be purchased from approved vendors and configured with a standard set of software licensed by the College. The standard software is listed at http://its.union.edu/supported-hardware-and-software/supported-software.

ITS will configure college-owned computers and will be responsible for ongoing maintenance and support. Beginning with the standard configurations, departments may select (at their expense) upgrades to the standard configuration

College-owned computers are to be used primarily for college-related work. Support for software that is not related to the individual's work is the responsibility of the individual to maintain. If such software interferes with other software or causes problems the individual will be asked to remove the offending software.
College-owned computers, either desktops or laptops, are not to be used regularly by other people (e.g. family members) and should not be loaded with software that is unrelated to the faculty member's work.

To ensure virus protection and other security patches are current, college-owned computers will be configured to automatically update Windows critical patches and virus protection software. In addition any computers that connect to the College's network must have up-to-date virus protection.

**Support**

ITS staff are trained to troubleshoot hardware problems on the standard computer configurations. Standard 'disk images' are maintained for a limited number of configurations. The supported vendors for personal computers are located at http://its.union.edu/supported-hardware-and-software/supported-hardware. ITS will provide limited support for a few Linux distributions, as defined on their website.

ITS does not troubleshoot problems on privately owned computers although general support will be given, especially if the computer has been purchased from one of our standard vendors.

ITS will provide support (including troubleshooting, configuring, etc.) for the standard software that is loaded on a college-owned computer. ITS will make a "best-effort" to assist with support that is related to the faculty member's work. In most cases the best support for special purpose or special use software will be provided by the vendor of the software.

**Privacy and Security**

ITS is committed to protect the security of all College-owned computers (and in fact of all computers that connect to the College's network) and the privacy and security of data that may be stored on them.

However, in today's environment it has been noted that individuals should not consider electronic communications (e.g. e-mail) either private or secure. In fact, e-mail should be considered similar to a postcard. It is too easy for an e-mail message to be misdirected (incorrect address, outdated address, etc.). In addition, information stored or transmitted electronically may be considered by courts as a public records and might therefore be subject to disclosure and discovery in litigation.

The College is responsible for operating the computing facilities it provides in a manner that offers security and integrity of computing. In order to protect users from viruses and other threats from operating in a networked environment ITS installs some special software on College-owned computers. For example, virus protection software is licensed by the College for use on college-owned computers and for any computer that will be connected to the College's network. It is also important that this software is updated frequently. For this reason the virus protection software is configured to regularly check for and install updates. We continue to have incidents in which
machines with old virus protection software get infected and cause problems for the campus network. College-owned computers are also set up to regularly check for and install security patches. This process has been automated so that computers are enabled to accept these patches and updates automatically (for virus and security updates).

The College will treat your files and information as both private and confidential and will not examine your information without just cause or due process, nor disclose that information to a third party unless required for use in a disciplinary or criminal investigation.

The College does not normally monitor individual usage, although all usage of a general nature may be monitored, especially network performance. Monitoring of individual usage is only done when it appears that network performance is being degraded due to a particular computer or group of computers on the network.

The College, however, reserves the right to inspect, copy, remove, or otherwise alter data files, system resources, or user files in the regular conduct of its duty to maintain efficient and well-run computing facilities. The College may track user activities and access any files or information in the course of performing normal system and network maintenance or while investigating violations of policy or statute.

**Summary**

Information Technology Services is responsible for making sure that Union's computing facilities and network is available on a 24-hour, 7-day a week basis. ITS is also responsible for making sure that Union's faculty members, students, staff and administrators have the computing resources necessary to do their work in a productive and efficient manner.

The above policies have been established to insure that these goals are met in as efficient, effective and cost-effective manner as possible.