

# Computing for Freshmen at MIT 2008

## MIT Information Services and Technology

### What's Here For Students

New students soon discover MIT's rich array of information technologies and resources. Many of these, including networks and telecommunications, are the responsibility of MIT's Information Services and Technology (IS&T). Using these resources, members of the MIT community can take advantage of educational technology, share information and programs, communicate with each other, and work together on problems and ideas in creative ways. In addition to information about IS&T on our web site, we encourage you and your new MIT student to call or send email with questions, and to visit us at events during Orientation.

[web.mit.edu/ist/](http://web.mit.edu/ist/)

The campus is fully wireless, and MIT faculty are increasing the use of laptops as part of their course work. We recommend purchasing a laptop computer, as it can be taken to class, study areas, or anywhere else a student would like to work. Our recommendations for computing options meet Institute guidelines, are competitively priced, and have a variety of purchasing plans.

While MIT does not require that every student own a computer, the vast majority do. We understand that not every incoming student will be in a position to make such a purchase. IS&T has made special provisions, so that if a student is unable to acquire a computer, he or she will not be at a significant disadvantage. For example, if a student who does not own a laptop is enrolled in a subject in which the instructor makes laptops an integral part of the class, the professor will be able to request one from the Laptop Loaner Program.

What follows is information on the computing environment at MIT, and how this could affect computer purchasing decisions before your student arrives on campus.

### MITnet

The campus network and MIT's connection to the Internet.

[web.mit.edu/ist/start/mitnet/](http://web.mit.edu/ist/start/mitnet/)

### Athena

MIT's academic computing environment, with a wide range of applications and tools, is available to all students for free.

[web.mit.edu/ist/topics/athena/](http://web.mit.edu/ist/topics/athena/)

### Recommended Laptops

For new computer purchases, laptops offer distinct advantages, including portability and size. The systems recommended by MIT are configured with the capacity and power to handle most applications people need to run at MIT. They come from vendors with reputations for producing reliable products, and who offer educational discounts to the MIT community. The systems' built-in wireless and wired network cards are compatible with MITnet. Following MIT's recommendations will ensure compatibility with the MIT computing environment and that connection to MITnet will be trouble-free. MIT also has recommendations for desktop systems. Check the laptop web page for the latest recommendations, as new systems are tested and added to the list.

[web.mit.edu/ist/topics/hardware/laptops.html](http://web.mit.edu/ist/topics/hardware/laptops.html)

### Computer Buying Advice

The Computing Help Desk provides advice about MIT's recommended systems and about what to purchase for your student's needs. The Computing Help Desk showroom, located at 211 Massachusetts Avenue (Building N42), has a selection of recommended systems to try out.

[web.mit.edu/ist/services/hardware/presales.html](http://web.mit.edu/ist/services/hardware/presales.html)

### MIT Support

IS&T provides full support for the recommended systems and software through a range of technical help services. The starting point for help is the IS&T Computing Help Desk.

[web.mit.edu/ist/helpdesk](http://web.mit.edu/ist/helpdesk)

### Recommended Operating Systems

IS&T recommends Macintosh OS X, Red Hat Enterprise Linux, and Windows Vista and XP Professional. Check for current releases and upgrade paths. If your student needs to upgrade an OS, wait until on campus to do so. MIT has site licenses for recommended operating systems, and IS&T can assist with upgrades.

[web.mit.edu/ist/topics/os](http://web.mit.edu/ist/topics/os)

### Software

MIT provides a wide range of software for free or at a discount, including networking utilities and virus protection. Most of the free software is available for downloading. Details on other software needed for course work will be available with that course's information.

[web.mit.edu/ist/topics/software/](http://web.mit.edu/ist/topics/software/)

### **Hardware Services**

MIT offers on-campus certified warranty repair, installation, and upgrades for the following manufacturers: Apple, Dell, and Lenovo/IBM.

**[web.mit.edu/ist/services/hardware/hws.html](http://web.mit.edu/ist/services/hardware/hws.html)**

### **Security**

MITnet is an open network. An unprotected computer in this environment may be vulnerable to outside attacks, spam, or other threats that can compromise a student's identity, or undermine the security of a computer's hardware and data. IS&T security services help raise awareness of such threats and foster correct computer behavior. The security team handles cases of electronic harassment, misuse of MIT computing resources, and copyright-infringement claims arising from illegal uses of peer-to-peer services involving music, movies, and games, thereby ensuring the network is safer and more productive for everyone at MIT.

**[web.mit.edu/ist/topics/security/](http://web.mit.edu/ist/topics/security/)**

### **Residential Networking**

All undergraduate and graduate students can connect a computer to MITnet quickly and easily. All dorms have full wireless coverage, and all dorm rooms are equipped with at least one network (Ethernet) connection per student.

**[web.mit.edu/rescomp](http://web.mit.edu/rescomp)**

### **Telephone Services**

Each dorm room contains a phone providing basic, on-campus and incoming call service, with other service options available. Student long-distance plans are available, as are discount cell-phone and mobile-device services.

**[web.mit.edu/ist/tel/studentinfo.html](http://web.mit.edu/ist/tel/studentinfo.html)**

### **Mobile Devices**

Smartphone/PDA devices combine a cell phone and Internet access in a small package. For access to MIT's email, web pages, and TechTime calendar, IS&T currently recommends and supports devices running the Windows Mobile operating system; IS&T also supports the Apple iPhone and iPod Touch, and BlackBerry devices. If your new student currently owns a mobile device, or is considering one, check for the latest information on mobile devices in the MIT environment.

**[web.mit.edu/ist/topics/pda/](http://web.mit.edu/ist/topics/pda/)**

### **Bringing a Computer You Already Own**

If your student owns a computer and plans to bring it to campus, review MIT's recommended hardware specifications, as well as the minimum specifications.

**[web.mit.edu/ist/topics/hardware/guidelines.html](http://web.mit.edu/ist/topics/hardware/guidelines.html)**

### **Adaptive Technology for Information and Computing (ATIC)**

ATIC provides consultations, services, and technologies for students with disabilities. Technologies include screen reading, voice recognition, alternative keyboards and mice, and scanning and reading of printed or electronic text. If an adaptive technology is needed, contact ATIC regarding purchasing a laptop or other solutions.

**Web: [web.mit.edu/atic/www](http://web.mit.edu/atic/www)**

**Phone: 617.253.7808**

### **MIT Cable Television**

Each dorm room has an outlet providing cable television service. The cable offerings include MIT-specific channels, foreign-language programming, news, and entertainment. Most Boston-market television stations are available in HDTV.

**[web.mit.edu/mitcable](http://web.mit.edu/mitcable)**

### **Student Consultants**

Student consultants are an important and active part of IS&T's help services teams. Alongside members of the full-time staff, student consultants provide computing assistance to faculty, students and staff using Macintosh and Windows computers.

**[web.mit.edu/ist/helpdesk/hiring/](http://web.mit.edu/ist/helpdesk/hiring/)**

### **Questions?**

Contact or visit the IS&T Computing Help Desk.

**Web: [web.mit.edu/ist/helpdesk](http://web.mit.edu/ist/helpdesk)**

**Email: [computing-help@mit.edu](mailto:computing-help@mit.edu)**

**Phone: 617.253.1101**

### **211 Massachusetts Avenue**

**MIT Building N42**

**Monday-Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

A version of this page, with links, is at:

**[web.mit.edu/ist/start/students](http://web.mit.edu/ist/start/students)**



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