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Should I get a Mac or a PC?

There are several factors to consider when deciding what kind of computer to get.

First, what are you used to using?

People who are accustomed to using a PC might want to stay with a PC. Same goes for Mac users. Switching to a new operating system (i.e. from a PC to a Mac or vice versa) is a learning process that you need to be prepared for.

On your new computer make sure you know how to:

- Access files and folders
- Run System Updates (i.e. Windows Updates/Apple Software Updates)
- Install/Update an Antivirus Program

If you don't know how to do these things, please ASK the Helpdesk! We would be happy to sit down with you and walk you through some basic maintenence steps to get the most out of your computer.

Secondly, what is your intended field of study?

Most of the time it won't matter whether you have a Mac or PC for your field of study. Some fields have an easier time with one operating system over another though. If you aren't sure if there would be a preference, ASK! Call the Helpdesk, or send an email to a faculty member or advisor for your program of interest.

Generally:

- Social Sciences (English, History, Political Science...etc...) Most of the faculty use PC. Students it may be an even split between Mac and PC. Preference lies entirely with the user.
- Natural Sciences: Fairly even split between Mac and PC. May be helpful for you to know the basic workings of both systems (much of that knowledge will be learned as you go along in your studies).
- Music and Visual Arts: Generally Mac users. Apple computers tend to dominate these fields because the software needed for these programs is generally more accessible for Macs. PC's can still be used, but software can be an extra expense.

Finally, what is your budget and what are your personal expectations about your new computer?

Pros and Cons for PC:

- Pro: Generally Cheaper
- Pro: More Readily Customizable
- Pro: More Options for Software (especially for Gamers)
- Con: Currently more susceptible to Viruses and Spyware
- Con: For some users the amount of customizability can be overwhelming and requires a higher learning curve if you're not used to using a PC
- Con: Software for Music and The Visual Arts can be less accessible/more expensive than Mac versions.

Pros and Cons for Mac:

- Pro or Con: Less Customizable. This is great for people that don't want a lot of "options" but simply want to use the machine. This can be disagreeable for people who like to have a lot of options and want the ease of changing them frequently.
- Pro: Much less likely (though not unheard of) to get Viruses or Spyware
- Pro: Much less likely (based of number of PC's vs. Macs that are brought down to the Helpdesk) to have software or hardware malfunctions.
- Con: When a Mac does have a software or hardware malfunction it usually requires a Mac

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specialist to fix. The Helpdesk does support minor software malfunctions for Macs. If we are unable to solve the problem we can direct you to the nearest Apple Support Center for more assistence.

- Con: Software is nearly always Mac Specific. (This can be frustrating for avid gamers. If you still really want a Mac but need software that is specific to a PC, consider a Dual Boot Mac)
- Con: Apple computers are generally more expensive up front.

So it all comes down to your personal preferences. Either operating system will work smoothly with our campus network. If you have further questions about bringing a computer to campus, please contact the Helpdesk.

Unique solution ID: #1210
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Last update: 2015-08-13 01:01