

New technology gadgets released for the holiday season

Laura Cunningham
Columnist

Editors note: This elite column will be the first of four discussing product purchasing for students.

With the holiday season just around the corner, it's time to begin making that list of desired holiday gifts. As a college student, you may find it

difficult to think of items outside the boring old clothes and cash. The truth is there are tons of useful technology toys out there perfect for every college student. There sky is the limit when it comes to options, so how will you know which one to ask for? Over the next few weeks, the elite column will introduce you to some of these toys, such as computers, digital cameras and Personal Digital Assistance.

These gadgets may be exactly what you want under your tree come Dec. 25. This series of articles will help you answer those questions.

One of the largest purchases students make is the purchase of their personal computer and software. What seems like limitless options makes purchasing seem chaotic. What size hard drive do I need? What drives should I get? CD-RW, DVD, Zip?

What are the benefits and challenges of laptops or desktops? What programs do I really need? And, what are all these other specifications that no one outside the computer world can comprehend on their own?

The questions can stop. Elon has created a solution for every student that is easier (and cheaper) than you expected. The key is to take advantage of these offers while you are still a student.

Elon University has partnered with Dell, Gateway and Apple to allow students to purchase computers through these companies' Web sites for a discount. According to Darryl McIntyre, student computer support specialist, students can visit www.elon.edu/technology/purchases.html and click on the corre-

sponding computer company links to view computer systems with discounts of up to 10 percent off. Each company features Elon-recommended systems.

The following computer systems are listed on the corresponding company Web site under "Elon Recommended Systems."

elite

These systems were selected based on the computer needs of

students and criteria established by Student Computing Services.

Dell features the Latitude X200 Notebook (currently priced at \$1,955.20). Apple features the PowerBook G4 12", 15" and 17" monitor (currently priced at \$1,489.00, \$2,069.00, \$2,699.00, respectively) and the iBook 12" and 14" monitor (currently priced at \$999.00 and \$1,444.00). Gateway features the 200 Series and 450 Series laptops (currently priced at \$1709.00 and \$1794.00 respectively).

Elon recommends a laptop-based computer over a desktop, as clearly shown in the "Elon Recommended Systems" list. "You can't really lug around a desktop to class," said McIntyre, Student Computer Support Specialist. "It's the versatility of laptops." According to university records, more than 50 percent of students have a laptop. For those students interested in creating a computer to their own style and requirements, Elon has a few



KRT Campus

Elon has created a solution for every student that is easier and cheaper. Elon University has partnered with Dell, Gateway and Apple to allow students to purchase computers through these companies' Web sites for a discount.

guidelines to help in the process. It is important to keep them in mind when purchasing your next computer. These requirements are available online at www.elon.edu/technology/purchases.html.

It is important to understand the computer specifications so the computer you purchase provides you with what you need and only what you need. It's pointless to pay for hardware or software you will never use, but you also don't want to be left behind by purchasing something that is not up to speed.

Processor. This is your computer's "brain." The faster the processor, the faster the computer can work. For example, a 1.8 GHz (gigahertz) computer is better than an 800 MHz (megahertz). A Pentium processor offers the

fastest processor and best features.

Memory. RAM (Random Access Memory) is the workhorse behind the performance of your system. RAM is measured in megabytes (MB), and the more RAM you have, the more programs you can run smoothly and simultaneously. According to Dell's Web site, average systems have 128 MB recommended, but at least 256 MB for those who will use their computers for digital video editing.

Drives. The hard drive, measured in gigabyte (GB), is where your computer stores your startup files, operating system, data and software programs. As with previous components, the larger the hard drive the better it will operate. It is recommended that the computer you purchase

has a Zip disk. Zip disks are more reliable than floppy disks, and they can hold much more data. Compact drives allow your computer to read, write, and record data to blank CDs. The speeds of a CD-RW drive are listed in three numbers (e.g. 16X/10X/40X). The first number is the write speed to CD-R discs which can only be burned once. The second number is the write speed to CD-RW discs which can be burned multiple times. The third speed is how fast the CD can be read.

Software. The operating system runs basic functions and enhances user interaction. Microsoft Windows XP Professional Edition is the latest Windows operating system, offering powerful and professional features. While Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition is available, Elon does not recommend this operating system because it does not support domain login which is used on campus.

According to Student Computing Services, Elon has a site license for Microsoft Office. Students to have a copy of the latest office software for their campus computers. The Microsoft Office XP Professional CDs are available for check-out (or sale) to current students at Student Computing Services located at 108 Williamson Avenue. Microsoft Office for OSX and Office 2001 for OS9 are available for Mac users as well. Microsoft Office includes Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint and Access. Microsoft FrontPage and Publisher are also available on a separate CD.

If you are thinking about purchasing a computer, do your research first.

Ask your professors within your field of study to find out what hardware and software you will be using throughout your studies. For more information on purchasing a computer, please contact Student Computing Services at ext. 5100, visit them at 108 Williamson Avenue or view their information online at www.elon.edu/technology/purchases.html.

Minimum Recommended Computer Levels

Windows Apple

Processor Pentium IV 1.8GigHz or faster Powerbook G4, iBook
500 MHz or faster

Memory (RAM) 256 megabytes or more 256 megabytes or more

Hard Drive Size 30 gigabyte or more 20 gigabyte free or more

Operating System Windows 2000 or XP Pro Apple OS X

Ethernet Card Any 10/100 card with twisted pair interface

Included...

Optional Wireless Capabilities 28 bit encryption Wi-fi Certified 128
bit encryption Wi-fi Certified

Note: Windows XP Home Edition does not support domain login. Our network works best with operating systems that include Windows 95, 98, ME, NT 4.0, 2000, and XP Professional.

Contact Laura Cunningham at pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247.