



Ask the

Computer Gurus

Computer Technology
Question & Answer

Reasons for skipping class rarely good, experts advise

By ELANA ASHANTI
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Laptop or desktop best?

Q. I am a college student and want to purchase a computer. I am a little confused as to what I should buy: a laptop or a regular PC? I am also wondering how much "speed" is enough so that it isn't obsolete in a year?

A. Consider what you are going to do with your computer first before buying. Laptops were designed for people on the go and offer great portability. Desktop computers were designed to stay in one place and are not as delicate as the laptops. The big difference is the price. Laptops cost approximately 50 percent more than a desktop or tower PC.

For normal college work and projects such as word processing and Internet connectivity, I would suggest a 233 MHz system with 64 megabytes of RAM. You may consider it obsolete in a year, but as long as it is doing what it is supposed to do, then you can hold on to it. The term "speed" usually refers to the processor speed in MHz. However, a system functions on a total sum of all the hardware components such as the motherboard, memory, hard drive seek times, etc.

Q. Are there any benefits to buying a custom built system versus a name brand systems like Dell, Gateway, and Packard Bell?

A. The brand name of a computer is the least important thing you should consider when buying a computer. Buying locally assembled, custom-built computers have some benefits and pitfalls. First, these computers are relatively cheaper than brand

name computers. Secondly, they are easier to upgrade on hardware components.

Brand name computers, like Packard Bell, use "proprietary" hardware, which means you have to buy a motherboard, or some other hardware component, from their company. A generic motherboard will usually not fit into any of these cases. On the other hand, custom-built computers usually do not come with "bundled" software, so you may have to buy them separately (software such as MS Office '97 are a bargain at the college bookstore!).

The most important things to consider when buying a computer is service and support. As long as you can get a one-year parts and labor guarantee, you may save up to \$500 for a custom built system. Shop around and get a price comparison, you'll see what I mean. Gateway and Dell are direct-order companies and have good reliability ratings and technical support.

This week's answers were supplied by Arnel Orig, a Systems Consultant for ABACO International Group, Inc. Arnel is also a 1997 CIS graduate of North Carolina Wesleyan College. He currently resides with his family in Carrollton, Ga.

"Ask the Computer Gurus" is a regular feature. If you have a question you would like us to submit to our Computer Gurus, please send your question via email to Theedecree@ncwc.edu. Please be sure to put Computer Gurus in the subject box so it can be submitted to them.

Some students sleep through morning classes because they worked or played too hard the night before. Others skip lectures to churn out what they hope will be a tip-notch paper. And still others need nothing more than a warm, sunny day to lure them away from what they're sure will be a boring, repetitive lecture.

"All of my friends skip classes," says Tim Wang, a first-year student at Columbia University in New York. "It's no big deal." Or is it?

Robert Mattox, a counselor at Kennesaw State University in Georgia and president of the American College Counseling Association, says that skipping classes leads to troubles just about any student could predict: bad grades, low self-esteem, and, in some cases, grounds for dropping out of school.

"In certain subjects, you could get so far behind that it's difficult to catch up," he said. "You sit in the next class and realize you're lost."

That makes sense to Oliver Jardine, a second-year film student at Columbia. "Something in me justifies not going to class when I haven't done the reading," he said. "Why sit there and not know what's going on?"

There are plenty of reasons, Mattox said. Among them, he added, is that if students sit in class often enough, they will know what's going on. And being on the ball in class, he said, cuts down on student's stress and anxiety.

It also earns them the respect of their classmates, said Sunny Reisenauer, a senior at Washington State University, who said she strives to attend every single lecture, regardless of whether it's in her major.

"(Classmates) know I was there," she said. "They really look up to me, and that's a good thing."

Even chronic ditchers say they make it a point to attend classes required for their major. Zach

Question...

We would like to know if you feel as though skipping classes is okay? Why or why not? If you feel it is okay, how often do you skip?

Please email response to Theedecree@ncwc.edu. We will compile the answers and include them in the next edition.

Miller, a third-year student at the University of Wisconsin who is majoring in computer science, said he'll "ditch to watch a movie if I know the class is going to suck." But miss a computer graphics course? Never, he said.

"Once you miss a class, it's easy to think you don't have to go to other ones," he said. "You have to be careful about that."

Counselors at colleges across the country suggest that students ask themselves a few questions before they ditch their next class:

Would I be doing this if I were

paying for my education? Studies show that older, no-traditional students who are working to pay for books and tuition don't skip as many classes as the just-out-of-high-school crowd.

"They're more task oriented because they're spending their own money," Mattox said. "They have less time to waste."

Reisenauer agrees. "I had strep throat once, and I still made it to class," she said. "I pay so much money, why would I want to miss out? I just don't think it's worth it."

How will I feel about myself if I miss this class? Is what I'm doing now more important than going to class?

"Students need to look at the long-term cost from the short-term benefit of staying in bed," Mattox said.

How will missing this class and others affect my grade? Wang, Jardine and Miller said they skip classes and still have at least B averages to show for it.

"We all tell ourselves things that contribute to our habits," Mattox said.

Attention Campus Organization -

The Decree will be publishing an student organization who's who in the next edition. This will benefit you by helping students learn about your organization. Please fill out the form below and drop it by The Decree office in the Hartness Center, or email us the information at theedecree@ncwc.edu. We must have this information by September 18th. (If we do not receive anything, we will not be able to include you and WE DON'T WANT TO LEAVE ANYONE OUT!) If you have any questions, please contact Mike Hoppe via The Decree email or at 434-1681 (x1681 on campus)

Information:

Organization Name: _____

Organizational leader's title (President, etc.): _____

That person's name: _____

Contact how? _____

Adviser: _____

Contact person (if different) _____

Contact how? _____

Attach a single page only (prefer just a couple of paragraphs) about the organization. This is to be more informational and less PR, so includes things you would want someone to know who doesn't know a thing about you.

Sample form:

Organization Name: The Decree

Organizational leader's title (President, etc.): Editor-in-Chief

That person's name: Michael Hoppe

Contact how? phone - 434-1681; email - Theedecree@ncwc.edu

Adviser: Chris Lalonde

Contact person (if different) same as above

Contact how? same as above

Religious Life busy

Religious Life's upcoming activities...

- Celebration! — A weekly worship experience celebrating the life of the spirit at work in our lives. Celebration! will be led by a student based worship team in the Hartness Center and will include music by local artists, lots of singing, and fellowship. Celebration! will start Sept. 13 at 8 p.m. Rev. David and his band Peculiar People will join us!
- Franklin Graham Crusade — will be in Greenville on Monday, Sept. 28. We will be having a van leaving around 4:30 p.m.

In the hopper, with more in-

formation forthcoming....

- Faith for the Journey Fall Retreat — Oct. 9-11 at the Outer Banks.

- Concert on campus — Coming in December.

Regular, weekly activities...

- Chapel Service — Wednesdays, Noon-12:30 p.m. in Russell Chapel.

- Celebration of Mass — Fridays, Noon-12:30 p.m. in Russell Chapel.

If you have any questions, contact Rev. Kirk Oldham at koldham@ncwc.edu or call him at 985-5181.

Get well soon!

Everyone at The Decree would like to send our very best wishes to Mel Oliver and Dr. Dale Therrien.

Here's hoping that both of you are feeling your best very soon and that we will once again enjoy your presence here at Wesleyan.