

DESIGN DIVISION
Interior Design Laptop Program 2007/2008
Frequently Asked Questions

What factors did you review in making our decision to recommend the Precision Latitude system?

Precision Latitude notebooks are designed for users who require a flexible, reliable, and stable mobile system. They are ideal for use in a highly-networked environment and for users who want standard and relevant technology at the lowest available price.

We are recommending Dell Precision Latitude systems because they are designed to provide you with the lowest possible total cost of ownership, meaning these systems are designed with the thought of providing longer technological lifecycles. This means if you decide to upgrade your CD-ROM to a DVD/CDRW combo drive in a couple of years or if you want to add a docking station or port replicator to their system, Dell and the Precision systems can help you do so.

Dell also produces Inspiron notebooks that were created to provide users with the latest notebook technologies with the most aggressive prices. This means that Dell's Inspiron systems are typically equipped with the latest and greatest technology (such as DVD/CDRW combo, Nvidia Graphics, etc.). Inspiron systems are designed for use in stand-alone environments (not networked) and are the ideal system for multimedia and gaming programs.

Because Inspiron systems often have the latest and "hottest" technologies, the system's lifecycles are much shorter. In addition, the Inspiron family does not provide the ability to leverage peripherals and components, meaning you can't borrow your roommate's Precision DVD player or AC adapter if you left yours at home during fall break. Typically, users who choose Inspiron are high-end "techies" searching for the latest and greatest technology at the most affordable price. All of these are factors we took into account in making the decision to recommend the Latitude models to you.

Need Assistance in Comparing Prices?

If you are looking at computers from other vendors, be sure when you are comparing our system to one you see in an advertisement that you are comparing apples to apples. There are a few key items that are typically not on aggressively advertised promotions that may be on our school configuration as follows:

- Review the warranty information and ensure that it is right for you. Typically your school will select a Next Business Day On-Site warranty, while promotional systems often offer a mail in or a return to depot service.
- We recommend selecting a business class/professional operating system rather than the home edition.
- Review each item in the configurations you are reviewing to allow for an accurate comparison.

Why these models of computer?

Comparing the prices and qualities of different laptops and understanding the software needs of the interior design programs, the faculty feel comfortable recommending the Dell M65 and M90 Precision Latitude laptops for interior design students. Of course other models or brands will also work, but you need to make sure they have the necessary software compatibility, speed, memory and other functions if you are using another computer. We believe that students need to be using a commercial or business grade laptop computer that stands to last long and be supportable while attending UNT. These models come equipped with a "wireless capability" to allow students to access the Internet in certain "wireless-ready" locations on campus.

Why are we recommending a laptop for Interior design students?

Technology is becoming a critical component in a growing number of courses offered in the Interior Design program. Our research has shown us that there are benefits to having a laptop. They include:

- Students have access to computing capability at all times and places.
- Students have access to their files—even very large files—at all times and places.
- In the future, several courses will require the use of laptops in classroom activities.
- Students become less dependent upon institutional labs.
- Research has proven that communication between faculty and students increases across the campus.
- Students see a more realistic representation of the way course content is applied in the working world.
- CD-ROM textbooks and other technology-based course supplements can be adopted as they become available.
- Most official communication on campus happens via e-mail.
- Laptops ensure that all students have equal access to these official communications.

Where can I purchase appropriate software for the computer?

Software packages are not included with the computer because the UNT bookstore can provide the software at better rates. This allows students to purchase software as needed in the program.

Which models are included in the Dell Program?

The Latitude Precision M65 and M90 are the models specified for Fall 2007. Please note that even though there are different variations of Dell Latitudes currently available, we suggest that student select one of these as they have the appropriate structure for future uses of the computer in the ID program.

Can I order the specified Dell laptop computer with different features?

We have worked to select a computer that can meet the anticipated need of our students for the remaining years at UNT. We encourage students using other machines to confirm that they will end-up with the same specifications. You may order the selected Dell computer with some hardware options and accessories. For example, you can select a larger hard disk or more memory. In addition, you can select a backpack or carrying case as an option. Personal printers, security locks and other accessories also will be available.

When should I purchase the laptop?

Our research shows that students who receive their laptops at home and who have the opportunity to work with them over the summer are more comfortable using them by the start of classes in late August. If you are using financial aid to cover the cost of this purchase, you will have to wait until the money is available at the time you normally receive funding in the fall. You are encouraged to check with Student Financial Aid and Scholarships to ensure your financial aid file is complete for the upcoming fall. Juniors will not need to bring your computer to class the first week of classes, so any delay in receiving your machine will not be detrimental to your coursework. We expect the systems will ship within three to five business days from the time of order. Your system will be shipped to your home address or the address you specify when ordering.

How is payment made?

Payment is made via credit card if ordered over the Web. If ordered by phone, a credit card, check or money order is acceptable, but checks and money orders may cause delays in delivery. Financing the machine is the responsibility of the individual. Dell will make credit terms available similar to terms offered by major credit card services.

Can I apply for additional financial aid to cover the cost of my computer?

SOVA has worked with Student Financial Aid and Scholarships (SFAS) to facilitate the requirement for Interior Design students to purchase a laptop. Students who receive financial aid can be considered for an increase to their Cost of Attendance (COA) budget. Students are required to provide the following to SFAS: (1) a letter from SOVA indicating that the computer is required and (2) an estimate of the cost of the computer or a copy of the receipt. The increase to your COA budget will be the cost of the computer not to exceed \$3000. Please be aware that you may only receive an increase to your COA budget once during your UNT career for the purchase of a computer. Once your COA budget is increased, SFAS will review your eligibility for additional funding. Please be aware that most students are initially awarded their maximum eligibility through the federal and state programs before any increase is processed, so increasing a student's COA will usually provide for additional Parent PLUS

(Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students) funds or alternative loan eligibility. Please consult SFAS if you have any additional questions about your eligibility.

How can I be sure that my computer will remain safe on campus?

You are responsible for the care of your own laptop. All Dell systems purchased under this program come with “Dell Complete Care” for a period of three years. In addition to normal warranty service, the care package covers the following: liquid spilled on or in the unit; drops, falls and other collisions; electrical surge; damaged or broken LCD due to a drop or fall; and accidental breakage (multiple pieces).

There is an optional lock offered with the computer at the time of purchase. Locking your computer is a good idea if you are in the residence halls and leave your room unattended for an extended period of time. Students also may want to consider checking with their personal home insurance plans for coverage in the event of theft.

Options to Consider:

- Carrying Case: You will be carrying your computer around and a case will protect your investment.
- Portable Drive: For “unlimited” storage and large file portability, consider a high-capacity removable-media drive. You will find these quite useful in taking large files to the lab for printing or back and forth to school. There are many USB “Flash” drives available.
- External Monitor (for home): An external flat screen monitor can be attached to your laptop, and will make long sessions working with detailed drawings easier. We suggest a flat screen monitor.
- Additional Battery Pack: If you intend to do a lot of mobile computing, extra battery power will allow longer sessions. While we are renovating one of the design studios this summer so that we can accommodate the use of computers in advanced studios, the other studio will not have sufficient power. We do not expect the other studio to be electrically updated before fall of 2009. Having a back-up battery also gives you freedom of location for your mobile computing.