Overview

The BGSU School of Art, Division of Graphic Design (BGSUGD) is an intense, studio-based program taught within the context of a traditional art school model. This “traditional” approach—while built around the historical underpinnings of an art foundation structure (First-Year Program)—does not preclude majors from utilizing computers in their learning experiences; in fact, for over twenty years, quite the opposite has held true. The School of Art, as a whole, encourages all students and faculty to explore this progressive, and at times, vital medium, and to incorporate its use whenever and wherever appropriate. As a consequence, all School of Art majors have access to Microsoft® Windows-based and Apple Macintosh® computer labs outfitted with the latest and most common software applications. These labs are routinely upgraded on multi-year cycles, or as required, to ensure that our students are gaining access to the latest and most powerful equipment available.

BGSUGD Computer Labs Access

BGSUGD maintains two separate Macintosh labs, both located within the Fine Arts Center building. These labs provide teaching spaces for classroom instruction, as well as allow individual students the opportunity to utilize and experiment with yet another tool in their proverbial artist’s toolbox. When classes are not being held in our primary lab (FAC 1030) CAVE Lab), and if the lab has open use hours (when class is not in session) and it is being monitored, student access is unlimited. This lab typically operates seven days a week: M–F from 8:00am–10:00pm or later; weekends from 11:00am–9:00pm or later (upcoming hours dependant on available funding). Since our primary lab has historically met the demands of the entire School of Art population during non-class meeting times, our secondary lab (FAC 1104) operates solely as a teaching lab, with access limited to class meeting times only.

Self-Purchasing Guidance

Currently there is no mandated laptop program in place for BGSUGD majors (nor School of Art majors in general). That stated, if a prospective or current Graphic Design major wishes to consider purchasing hardware and/or software, to be used as a supplement or substitute to the open computer labs in the Fine Arts Center building (School of Art) and across campus, and they wish to use the computer primarily and specifically in their Graphic Design courses, certain minimum requirements must be met, to ensure parity with the University-provided and -maintained computer labs, and most importantly, to ensure that hardware and/or software performance remains at an acceptable level for proper productivity in and out of the classroom.

Thus, the Division is voluntarily offering hardware and software specifications and advice for independent review purposes only. While the Division takes extreme care to keep this information up-to-date and in-line with the overall requirements of its curriculum and faculty, it assumes no liability or responsibility for final purchase decisions, the maintenance of such purchases, or the direct or indirect result of such purchases on individual performance in any BGSU course or degree program. The Division hopes that the information provided herein is helpful to you in making an informed hardware/software purchasing decision. If you have any questions or comments concerning anything outlined in this document, please don’t hesitate to contact us at any time.

Best regards,

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Chair, BGSUGD
Associate Professor of Art
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art.bgsu.edu/graphicdesign
Recommended Laptop Specification

The Division highly recommends Apple Macintosh computers, since the vast majority of the professional graphic design industry works on Mac’s. The expectation upon graduation is that students know the Apple Macintosh operating system and the software that runs on it, inside out. In addition, both of our BGSUGD labs are outfitted with state-of-the-art Macintosh workstations, and all of our faculty work on them every day (true, Windows-based computers can run most of the graphic-design oriented software applications taught in our program, but please note that all program instruction will be Mac-based only).

Students are encouraged to purchase an Apple laptop over a desktop unit. Logically, the portability factor far outweighs the slight increase in purchase cost. Students routinely use their laptops in the classroom, rather than having to temporarily relocate to our main lab. In addition, there is now adequate screen resolution and computing power across the entire Apple MacBook and MacBookPro line to make the laptop choice an appropriate one (see “Recommended,” below).

There are far too many vendor choices and possible configurations to recommend a specific Windows-based laptop configuration, but, if you are considering a Windows-based laptop, a good rule of thumb is to match or exceed the specifications of the recommended Apple laptops, below. There are numerous online and brick-and-mortar stores that sell Apple computers, but its is highly recommended that you instead purchase them from an online educational re-seller or the official Apple.com BGSU online store. The pricing discounts are typically 10–15% off retail pricing.

(All specs as of May 2011, store.apple.com; purchasing an AppleCare 3-Year Protection Plan is strongly recommended)

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<tr>
<th>17” 2.2 GHz Macbook Pro (RECOMMENDED)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Part Number:</strong> MC725LL/A</td>
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<td><strong>Specs:</strong> 1920 x 1200 native screen resolution, 4GB RAM, strong graphics processor, very high native screen resolution that allows for numerous palettes and large application windows, plenty of ports, large internal, hard drive, fast wi-fi, long battery life.</td>
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<th>15” 2.0 or 2.2 GHz MacBook Pro (MINIMALLY RECOMMENDED)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Part Number:</strong> MC721LL/A (2.0 GHz model); <strong>Part Number:</strong> MC723LL/A (2.2 GHz model)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Specs:</strong> 1440 x 900 native screen resolution, 4GB RAM, strong graphics processor, high native screen resolution that allows for several palettes and application windows, plenty of ports, large internal, hard drive, fast wi-fi, long battery life.</td>
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<th>13” Macbook Pro (NOT RECOMMENDED)</th>
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<td>The 13-inch models screen size is too small for working with modern applications that have numerous palettes. Thus, the Division can only minimally recommend this laptop.</td>
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<th>13.3” MacBook (NOT RECOMMENDED)</th>
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<td>A MacBook® has adequate horsepower, and ports necessary for expansion and external devices, but, its 13.3” screen size is too small for working with modern applications that have numerous palettes and large working canvases, i.e. screen real estate is critical to productivity and ease of use. Thus, the Division can not recommend this laptop line.</td>
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<th>11” &amp; 13” Macbook Air (NOT RECOMMENDED)</th>
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<td>Although beautiful and ultra-thin, the Division cannot yet recommend this laptop line due to its largest-size offering (13-inch), lower processing power, limited expansion, small hard drive, lack of sufficient ports, and shorter battery life (5 hours).</td>
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Recommended Additional Hardware

There are numerous external devices and internal upgrades that can be added to most computer systems. None are more important than upgrading your computer’s memory (RAM) and purchasing an external hard drive for back-up (all hard drives fail eventually) and additional storage. The Division highly recommends that students consider both purchases, to accompany their main computer purchase.

There are plenty of online and brick-and-mortar stores that sell these products, but it is highly recommended that you instead purchase software from an online educational re-seller or the BGSU’s bookstore. The pricing discounts can be substantial.

**Memory Upgrade (RECOMMENDED)**
Extra RAM (computer memory) is always a cheap way to boost speed and performance, and can be obtained very cheaply from sources other than Apple (whose pricing on RAM is consistently above market rate). High quality, Apple-approved RAM can be obtained from these trusted sources:

- **OWC (Other World Computing)**
  www.macsales.com
- **Crucial**
  www.crucial.com
- **MacMall**
  www.macmall.com
- **MacWarehouse / CDW**
  www.macwarehouse.com

**External HD storage (RECOMMENDED)**
The Division highly recommends that all students owning a laptop or desktop computer purchase an external storage hard drive, in order to back up all personal files, in the chance that one’s internal CPU hard drive fails (external hard drives can also supplement storage limits on your internal hard drive). Options and storage sizes are now cheap and plentiful, and all major manufacturers offer drives that can be formatted to run on either Mac’s or PC’s. External drives with multiple port options are highly recommended: USB 2.0 / 3.0 and Firewire 400/800 are the two most common port types, with super-fast throughput eSATA and Thunderbolt drives becoming increasingly common and more competitively priced (note: your computer must have an eSATA or Thunderbolt port in order to use these newer ports). Solid State Drives (SSD) are still quite expensive, but are extremely fast and have no moving parts, so they are also much less prone to failure compared to traditional optical hard drives. A few quality drive manufacturers follows:

- **OWC (Other World Computing)**
  www.macsales.com
- **G-Technology**
  www.g-technology.com
- **LaCie**
  www.lacie.com/us/index.htm
- **Western Digital**
  www.wdc.com
- **Maxtor**
  www.maxtorsolutions.com

**NOTE:** Although cheap and easy to transport, Memory Sticks are NOT considered safe or reliable storage devices, and should never be used to as primary storage for original files.
Recommended Software

There are only a few, but vitally important, software applications that graphic designers utilize each and every day in their studios. These software applications cover the two main areas of graphic design: print and web. Adobe Systems is currently the Division’s software vendor of choice for page layout, image manipulation and illustration application solutions. All classroom instruction revolves around using these applications. Alternate applications are not recommended by the Division at this time. Most hiring companies specifically demand that exiting graphic design graduates have a general proficiency and competency using the Adobe Creative Suite. The Division constantly monitors application preferences in the workplace and makes adjustments accordingly, in order to graduate the most prepared students possible.

There are plenty of online and brick-and-mortar stores that sell these products, but it is highly recommended that you instead purchase software from an online educational re-seller or the BGSU’s bookstore. The pricing discounts can be substantial (10–90% off retail pricing).

Further info: http://www.adobe.com/education/products/creativesuite/design/

ADOBE CREATIVE SUITE (CS) 5.x
DESIGN STANDARD (MIN. RECOMMENDED)
This suite of software applications includes the following:

Photoshop
Illustrator
InDesign
Acrobat Pro
Bridge
Device Central

ADOBE CREATIVE SUITE (CS) 5.x
DESIGN PREMIUM (RECOMMENDED)
This suite builds upon Design Standard by including additional software (in black) that includes web and new media-based software and tools that are beginning to be more fully taught and utilized in the BGSUGD program. This suite of software applications includes the following:

Photoshop Extended
Illustrator
InDesign
Dreamweaver
Flash Professional
Flash Catalyst
Fireworks
Acrobat Pro
Bridge
Device Central

Online educational re-sellers:

Academic Superstore
www.academicsuperstore.com

JourneyEd
www.journeyed.com
Recommended Typefaces

Most computer companies bundle typefaces with computers. Some are required to run the operating system, others are just thrown in for various reasons, and some even come with software applications. Regardless, the Division has a strict typeface usage policy that becomes less restrictive as students progress through the program. The following typefaces are approved through one’s Sophomore and Junior years, respectively. Purchasing at least the “Foundation Typeface Library” typefaces is recommended as it will meet most design needs for at least the first three years of the program. **NOTE: All of these fonts are installed on all computers in both Division labs, but cannot be transferred (copied) to another, or personal computer, due to strict software licensing terms. Further, the Division does not tolerate, and will report to the proper authorities, all cases of software piracy of any kind.***

There are numerous online typeface foundries that sell the below typeface families (each listed typeface has multiple styles and weights included, such as bold, italic, etc.). Adobe being the largest. Look for OpenType (OTF) versions over PostScript or TrueType, as OpenType versions work cross-platform and are more comprehensive in character style and weight offerings.

**Foundation Library**  
(RECOMMENDED)  
ITC New Baskerville Std  
Bodoni Std  
Adobe Caslon Pro  
Centaur MT Std  
ITC Franklin Gothic Std  
Futura Std  
ITC Galliard Std  
Adobe Garamond Pro  
Goudy Oldstyle Std  
Helvetica LT Std  
Helvetica Neue LT Std  
Adobe Jenson Pro  
Letter Gothic Std  
Myriad Pro  
Optima LT Std  
Palatino LT Std  
Times Std  
Univers Lt Std

**Advanced Library**  
(RECOMMENDED, after passing GD Sophomore Review)  
All of the “Foundation Typeface Library,” plus the following:

ITC Avant Garde Gothic Std  
Avenir LT Std  
Bell Centennial Std  
Bembo Std  
Bernhard Modern Std  
ITC Bookman Std  
New Caledonia LT Std  
Centennial LT Std  
New Century Schoolbook LT Std  
ITC Cheltenham Std  
Clarendon LT Std  
Copperplate Gothic Std  
Didot LT Std  
Frutiger LT Std

Simoncini Garamond Std  
Stempel Garamond LT Std  
Janson Text LT Std  
Lithos Pro  
Memphis LT Std  
Minion Pro  
News Gothic Std  
Nuptial Script Lt Std  
OCR A & B Std  
Perpetua Std  
Poetica Std  
Rockwell Std  
Sabon LT Std  
Serifa Std  
Snell Roundhand LT Std  
Stone Sans & Serif Std  
Trade Gothic LT Std  
Trajan Pro  
Trump Mediaeval LT Std  
Waters Titling Pro  
Weiss Std