

The laptop program in the School of Architecture is designed to provide students with the most current and widely used softwares in the field, as well as the most comprehensive technical support and theft prevention programs available. The disciplines of architecture and urban design have undergone radical transformations in the digital age, and the architecture programs at Pratt are at the forefront of digital design, imaging and modeling techniques. Our laptop program has been carefully formulated to ensure that students receive the best possible education in our digital courses, while receiving prompt support when their laptop is not functioning properly or is stolen.

The most basic component of our program is, of course, the laptop itself. We have selected the Dell M6300 for purchase by students. This machine is really a mobile workstation, with memory and speed equal to a stationary device. Three-dimensional drawing files are often enormous in size, and students must be skilled in handling a number of these files at once. The Dell PC is fully capable of handling this type of work, and smaller machines are therefore strongly discouraged, as students will literally not be able to keep up in class.

We also require the Dell because it is consistent with industry standards. While there are some exceptions, mostly found in firms based outside the United States, the vast majority of architecture firms in the United States are PC based. There are several reasons for this, but a very important one is that engineering firms and architectural sub-consultants are exclusively PC based. Architecture firms generally find coordination and file sharing with these firms significantly easier if they are PC based as well. Advances in non-PC technology and softwares have made coordination with PC's easier, but the fact remains that American architecture firms are generally PC based. We therefore have organized our laptop program in order to provide the best professional preparation for our students and ensure a successful transition to their chosen profession.

The second component of our laptop program is the support system, and we feel that the Dell technical support program is unmatched. Dell offers next day on campus support for 3 years that includes both labor and parts. Students can contact Dell via the web

<http://support.dell.com/support> or call Dell directly at 1-800-915-3355. Also included in the cost of the laptop is Computrace Plus, a tracking device that will lead police back to stolen machines. This device works extremely well, and also acts as a deterrent to theft.

The third 'pillar' of the laptop program is the menu of softwares that we require. The combinations of softwares provide professional preparation second to none in current architectural education. AutoDesk drafting programs serve as a platform for architectural drawing, while Photoshop and InDesign allow students to create sophisticated graphic presentations in a short period of time. Following these basic tools come the more sophisticated modeling tools of Maya, Rhino and 3D Studio Max, which also have rendering capabilities. The most advanced softwares are parametric programs, which assign intelligence to three-dimensional models, and are rapidly replacing conventional drafting programs. The Pratt program provides instruction in all these softwares as well as teaching students how to print their work on paper and fabricate their work in our productions labs on laser cutters and three dimensional printers. Our laptop program and digital courses are now producing students that are capable of joining the most digitally sophisticated firms in the world.

For all these reasons, we consider conformance to our laptop specifications and software requirements mandatory. Students with laptops that do not conform to these specifications will not only be poorly supported in case of a breakdown, but will also have difficulties in the classroom. Please read our specifications carefully and make sure your purchase is in complete conformance. Not only will you have a more rewarding and successful educational experience at Pratt, but you will also look forward to an equally rewarding professional career in architecture and urban design.