

Tablet Computers For Faculty March 2006

UT Martin currently has a 3 year rotation program for faculty computers. Two years ago, in 2004-2005, we decided that it was the right time to provide faculty with the latest and greatest systems. We asked faculty what they would like and what would make them comfortable in moving from a desktop to a tablet. They choose to have a flat panel monitor, keyboard, mouse, docking station, carrying case, and tablet computer. This configuration provides the faculty with a desktop, a powerful tool in the classroom, and a laptop/tablet to use in meetings, conferences, presentations, and more. The configuration also includes Microsoft Office Professional 2003, Microsoft OneNote, and all of the standard Tablet PC tools.

By the beginning of fall 2006, all full-time faculty will have had the opportunity to receive this configuration. We will have about 240 faculty tablets in the field. After seeing the benefits of the tablets, many administrators have also chosen to use a tablet, including the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration.

The following are informal quotes on the usage of the tablets.

Dr. Bonnie Daniel – Senior Research Associate - Over the past two years, UT Martin faculty and staff have been awarded four grants that included the use of Tablet computers in professional development for K-12 teachers. The projects focused on various disciplines of math, social studies, English as a second language, and education. Teachers were given instruction in the functionality of the Tablets. Feedback from the projects indicate that the Tablets afforded the teachers: (1.) new ways to infuse technology into their teaching methods, and (2.) novel ways to manage their classrooms. Upon completion of the grant activities, the Tablets and accompanying software became the property of the school teachers.

Dr. Philip Osburn – Chemistry - For me the tablet PC has been an incredibly useful tool. I use it in every single lecture. All of my lectures are given in Powerpoint format, allowing students to focus more on listening and learning and less on frantic scribbling of lecture notes (although they still do have to write some notes down). It has made it very easy for me to highlight specific features about chemical structures, to draw out chemical reactions in detail, and to solve problems in class directly on the same lecture notes the students have copies of. I also use the tablet to show completely lecture-integrated quicktime movies, flash animations, etc. about specific topics that are difficult to visualize without the aid of some 3D representation. Sometimes, I will even draw a funny face on a molecule to get students' attention, lighten the mood a little bit, but still make a relevant point about the structure, behavior, etc. of the molecule. All in all, I am very happy with the tablet and truly feel it has enhanced my students' in-class experience.

Dr. Andy Sliger – Biology

I am too much of a novice to be of much help here but I have listed below some ways I use the tablet in the classroom.

1. I carry the tablet to every class as a backup to the COW in the room
2. I carry the tablet home and use it to upgrade notes, make out tests, examples, etc for use in the classroom.
3. I do, on occasion, use the tablet to write notes in class and save them so that students have access.
4. I use the tablet to record absences in my classes by use of a seating chart.
5. I have just purchased a digital camera and hope to use the tablet to help me learn students names.

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Dr. Paula Hearn Moore – Accounting, Finance, and Economics - I used the tablet extensively in my graduate tax class during the Fall semester. Some of its use during class time could have been done with a regular P.C. and internet connection, but there was one big benefit specific to the tablet.

Each week students had research assignments to do and report on for a grade. They submitted the information through the Blackboard dropbox under an anonymous name (with the true identity known only to me). (I am sure there was a better way but I'm new at all the Blackboard stuff.) When I got the transmissions each Friday evening, I graded them directly on the tablet. I corrected grammar, research skills, presentation, etc. At the next class meeting on Tuesday, I pulled up each paper on the screen, and we reviewed the problems that each anonymous student had. Everyone got a chance to see what I thought was good and bad about each presentation. After class, I emailed the graded product back to its writer with a grade on it. No paper was ever used. It was labor intensive, but I think it worked out well. I have not gotten the student evaluations back for the class, but I think they liked seeing other students' papers in their original state including corrections. I saw a drastic improvement in writing skills and research methodology that semester. I only had fifteen students in the class. I think it would have been too hard if I had any more than that.

Dr. Charles (Rick) Thomas – Chemistry - I always felt it was terribly inefficient for my general chemistry students to copy everything I wrote on the board and that they had little time to think during lectures. As soon as I got my tablet I decided I would do all of my in-class writing on it while projecting onto a screen, save the product from each class, and post it on my page on the server so that my students would have a copy. Once Craig solved my format problems (I do everything in "Flashpaper") I was ready and able to do it. Based on student feedback, it seems to work well for them. Once I got into the mode of using my computer in class, I decided to do something I could have done years ago: convert my Biochem lectures to PowerPoint. I had been using the overhead to project transparencies of word documents (not easy for students to focus on) interspersed with many many transparencies of figures/images (cumbersome). By putting each image on the same slide with the related text and breaking up the text into "bite-sized" chunks (the amount that fits on one slide in a large font) it is much easier for the student to focus on the issue being discussed. I feel the tablet has been a valuable tool and that it has helped me and my students.

Dr. Robert (Bob) LeMaster – Engineering - I use PowerPoint lectures containing lots of figures and mathematical equations. The tablet feature allows me to write on the slides as I am explaining the material. Annotating the slides provides several benefits: 1) it aids student understanding, 2) allows a more thorough explanation, and 3) forces me to go at a slower pace.

Dr. David Barber – History & Philosophy - I use the tablet pc in the class every class session. I accompany each of my lectures with a powerpoint presentation and post those powerpoints on blackboard. At the beginning of the semester, not only do use the tablet pc for the powerpoints, but I also am able to help students navigate the blackboard web site.

Dr. Mahmoud Haddad – Accounting, Finance, and Economics - I used tablet PC in my distant education class in stead of the white board, for PPP and notes writing on the journal (interchangeably, moving between windows), as well as web presentation.

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Dr. Jeff Hoyer – Communications - I'm not using it in my classroom yet, but without it, I would not have survived my online class that I teach. My PR techniques class is a performance based class with up to four assignments per class. That means I have to grade about 120 papers each week in just that class. Before when I "wrote" on students papers to give them comments I either had to use a "text box," or insert items in brackets. You can imagine how long this took for each item. NOW, I just flip the screen over, pull out my stylus and hard copy edit and comment right on the students word documents. It has speeded up grading for me by at least two to three times as fast.

Ms. Kristy Crawford – Educational Studies - I am using the tablet computer, but not in the classroom. I am using it to take minutes for faculty meetings. I open the agenda so the items are in the correct order, and it is set to convert what I write immediately to text. There is some clean-up involved, of course, but it definitely speeds up the process.

Dr. Jim Byford – Dean – Agriculture and Applied Sciences - I use the "sticky notes" option like a blackboard when giving talks, where I need to diagram something for a large audience.

Ms. Brandy Cartmell – Registrar and Director of Academic Records - Mine isn't in the classroom, but I do use it for teaching. I have an external monitor set up for my use and the tablet set up to pivot toward the student when I need to demonstrate something to him/her. This keeps the keyboard out of his/her reach and yet he/she can watch what I am clicking on, etc.

Drs. Devenyi, Osburn and Solomons – Chemistry - are using their tablet computers in the classroom to teach organic chemistry. Dr. Charles "Rick" Thomas is using his tablet computer even more extensively in the biochemistry classroom.

Ms. Theresa Rushing – Mathematics - I am using the tablet computer to write on documents such as test keys that I can place on BlackBoard for the use of the students. Mathematics is very tedious to type. I like to be able to write on a document. I can write on documents in my office, save the document to a jump drive, and project it in the classroom. Having the capability to write or draw on the computer is a great tool for me. It has improved my communication with the students considerably.

Dr. Mohammad Obadat – Engineering - teach my engineering courses using tablet PC. I use Powerpoint slides on my tablet along with the projector.

Dr. Louis Kolitsch – Mathematics - One of the main ways I am using the tablet PC is that instead of writing out a test key using pencil and paper, I simply write out the key on my tablet and can then post it for all students in the class.

Information Technology Services staff use the tablets for many functions, including meetings to take notes using One Note. Some use the Journal. It is less obtrusive and offensive during meetings than hearing the keyboard. The tablets are also used in Statewide IT meetings and campus meetings. Several use it to enhance power point presentations. Some of our staff are taking inventory with a bar code scanner, the tablet, and a filemaker pro application with large buttons setup to use with the stylus. Others use them for drawing setup diagrams for events and classroom layouts, electronically signing T-64 and T-66's, and several other internal documents that are signed online. This

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operation makes it easier to have a paperless office. We are using the tablet with an air projector in one of our conference rooms for team meeting for requirements definition, analysis, and project planning.