CNS /Update Newsletter Feature

Office Computers and Enterprise Systems

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UF Information Technology

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There are approximately 26,000 computers on the university network. Many are "office computers" used by faculty, staff and students to perform routine office tasks such as word processing, e-mail, Web access and data analysis. These computers are used to access the university enterprise systems. The enterprise systems are changing and, with that change, there are possible changes for the office computers.

The new systems require the use of a "modern" browser. Web browsers change routinely and keeping up with a current version is important. Newer versions have improved security features and improved ease of use. When browsers are kept up to date, the incremental changes in the browsers are easier for people to accommodate. The new enterprise systems have specific versions of browsers that are supported. See http://my.ufl.edu and select myUFL browser requirements.

To use a modern browser, you'll have to have a reasonably modern computer. Computers that are more than four years old are typically unable to run a modern operating system and in turn, run a modern browser. Unlike other equipment, computers do not continue to be useful until they no longer operate. Computers gradually become unable to run modern software. Security patches eventually become unavailable for older systems. Older computers take a disproportionate amount of staff time to maintain, driving costs of ownership very high; think of the old car in constant need of repair. Eventually older computers can not be used to access enterprise systems. They can not be secured.

Older computers need to be replaced before their operating system is no longer supported, before security patches become unavailable and before they can no longer run the versions of software that are needed to work with enterprise systems and other computers users. Based on personal computer experience over the past 25 years, a four-year replacement cycle for most office computers would keep support costs down and productivity high.

New office computers can be purchased from well-known vendors for well under $1,000. With a four-year life cycle, this means the computer costs about $250 in acquisition costs per year. This seems a small price to pay to enable a faculty member, staff member or student to do the learning, teaching, research, service and support the university expects.

As new enterprise systems are put in place, some of the computers at the university will be just too old to be used. Computers to be used for access to the university systems will need to be replaced. IT personnel and administrators in each university unit will need to review their computers and determine which computers are ready for enterprise systems and which should be replaced.

Your Comments are Welcome

We welcome your comments and suggestions on this and all UFIT documentation. Please send your comments to:

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