Tablet PC Program
Fall 2007 Update

During Fall 2007 faculty continued to experiment with and adapt tablet PCs for use in and beyond
the classroom. The Duke Digital Initiative (DDI) provided support in the form of semester-long
tablet PC loans to 15 faculty; student worker assistance to 5 faculty in engineering using
departmentally-owned tablet PC equipment; and in all cases, consultations and assistance from
OIT and CIT staff. Twelve faculty participants in the loaner program also participated in monthly
meetings with other faculty to share their experiences, view demonstrations, and discuss
technical, pedagogical and logistical issues. These monthly meetings were facilitated by the
Center for Instructional Technology.

Tablet PC loans through DDI for Fall 2007 were made to faculty from Romance Studies (8),
Biology (3), Theater Studies (1), Engineering (2), and the University Writing Program (1).

Classroom use
Use of tablets in the classroom by faculty was primarily aimed at enhancing lecture presentations
and increasing classroom interaction.

1. Enhancing lecture presentations
   • Faculty made **annotations directly on PowerPoint slides** to enhance their
     presentations with explanations of diagrams and pictures or to add emphasis to important
     points. In some cases these annotated presentations were shared with students after
     class via Blackboard.
   • Faculty also used the tablet PC as a **digital whiteboard**, enhancing their presentations
     with freehand sketches, schematics, figures or live lecture notes. Faculty were pleased
     that tablet PCs generated increased engagement by allowing instructors to face the
     students while writing and sketching. Faculty in some large lecture courses have found it
     useful to have dual projection where the tablet is used for digital sketching in conjunction
     with another computer that projects a prepared presentation.

2. Increasing classroom interaction and collaboration
   • Faculty reported a variety of uses of **digital notetaking** to spur student engagement
     including taking notes during brainstorming, annotating projected text from student
     papers, and providing rapid feedback on grammatical errors during student oral exercises
     in language instruction. One humanities faculty member who planned to use the tablet PC
     for digital notetaking during student presentations did not find using the tablet for this
     purpose as smooth as she had hoped and returned the tablet mid-semester.
   • Students also created **interactive presentations** with the tablet PC. In some instances
     faculty simply let students use their tablet for classroom presentation in the same manner
     as a faculty memebr. In other cases, student group work was shared with the rest of the
     class using the tablet PC. In one language course, students developed an interactive
     crossword puzzle for their final presentation.

Use beyond the classroom
Faculty also reported both instructional uses outside of the classroom, such as providing feedback
on student written work, as well as tablet uses to support research collaborations.

1. Providing feedback on student work
Several faculty have used the tablet PC to provide **annotations on electronic copies of student documents**. Although many have enjoyed this feature, others have found the stylus to
be awkward compared with a pen and paper.

2. Supporting research collaborations
At least one faculty member reported finding the tablet PC highly useful in collaboration during
science lab meetings as well as for scientific presentations.
Software tools for tablets
Most faculty continued to use either PowerPoint or Windows Journal as their primary software for tablet activities. Several faculty have expressed a need for additional software tools in order to maximize the capabilities of the tablet. Specific software mentioned by multiple faculty to consider including in the standard suite of tablet PC software include PDF Annotator and Camtasia (screen capture and recording software). Faculty are also interested in having CIT and OIT investigate software tools that would enable easy annotation of web pages using a tablet.

Tablet PC program support
Faculty were very satisfied with training and tech support provided by the program. Faculty found the interdisciplinary monthly meetings with other tablet PC users valuable. Faculty in both related and unrelated disciplines reported a productive exchange of ideas and experiences. Faculty thought less frequent meetings and more flexibility in options (as proposed for Spring 2008) would not diminish the quality of the program.

Faculty were asked to provide input into how changes in the support designed to increase the reach and scalability of tablet support might impact future program participants. Most faculty continued to feel that loans of a minimum of a semester in length were needed. Although currently available only through the DDI pilot program, tablet PCs could potentially be considered as an option for replacement computers for faculty in the future. Faculty participants were asked whether they would choose a tablet PC as their primary faculty computer, if the choice were available. Only a minority of participants saw this as a viable option at this time; for example, Mac users universally felt strongly that the advantages of the tablet interface were not strong enough to entice them to switch from a Mac to a PC. Others reported being dissatisfied with the slowness of the tablet model available through the loaner program or reported simply not having enough experience with the tablet to consider using it for all of their computing needs.

Plans for Spring 2008 and beyond
Participation in the tablet PC program for Spring 2008 will include faculty from sciences, social sciences, and humanities: the University Writing Program (3); Romance Studies (8); Art, Art History & Visual Studies (1); Biology (2); Economics (1); and Engineering (2). As mentioned above, the number of meetings will be reduced for loaner program participants; instead, faculty will be encouraged to share their experiences with colleagues in wider range of venues including departmental demonstrations and classroom observations. Due to faculty satisfaction with tablet PC experiences and their word of mouth promotion to colleagues, demand for tablet PCs currently exceeds the number of tablets available for loan. Discussions continue as to how to broaden tablet PC offerings to more faculty and provide sustained support to faculty for whom the tablet PC has become an essential tool, such as through school-based computer purchase programs. Tablet PCs are also planned to be available in the Perkins Library Teaching & Learning Center opening in Fall 2008.

Special thanks to Andrea Novicki, CIT and Kevin Davis, OIT, co-leads for the DDI Tablet PC program, for their assistance in preparing this summary