

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 member. 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.

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