Policy Name: WNMU Computer Procurement Policy

Responsible Department: Information Technology

Approving Body: Policy Committee

Approved Date: Tuesday, December 15, 2014

Purpose:
N/A

Policy:
Overview
Computers play a vital role in fulfilling WNMU’s educational and administrative needs, and over the years, we have seen a significant growth in the number of computers at our institution. However, the resources necessary to support these computers and keep them working efficiently—basically systems administration—has not kept pace with the increase in computers and is spread thinly across an expanding number of workstations. We are putting more computers into service than are being retired and must work to manage computer procurement thoughtfully if we are to avoid further widening the gap between support needs and support resources.

Since most computer equipment is considered capital equipment and requires Information Technology (IT) support, WNMU IT is responsible for approval and maintenance of all such equipment.

Background and current practices
WNMU IT recognizes that computers are essential tools for most forms of administrative work and are being used progressively more for educational opportunities. Computers provide an increasingly important means of communication, analysis and in providing a vehicle for educators. We therefore accept the obligations of providing the institution with access to computers, as well as carefully stewarding WNMU’s computing-support resources.
To meet these obligations, WNMU IT’s goals include the following. Note: achievement of these goals is predicated on funding availability.
Provide a computer that meets current minimum standards at the workspace of every full-time, permanent faculty and staff (knowledge worker) member. The current computer standard may vary somewhat by user, based on discipline and task-specific needs.

Provide computers for other purposes, as needed and as supportable, subject to fair and impartial review of the needs and the costs.

Provide a unified local area network configuration to support all educational and administrative users with file, print, mail, and Internet access.

WNMU will be making large investment in the internal local area network, and as such, it must be protected and access must be limited to those systems and users that meet predetermined criteria. At the same time, WNMU does not wish to impose inflexible rules and requirements on anyone who may have special needs or receive computer equipment from donations or grants.

Providing computers and access to them does not stop with simply purchasing and delivering the equipment. Provision of access requires ongoing support for the computer during its use at the WNMU. Computers require continual investment of professional effort, time, and money in order to keep them performing adequately. The initial purchase of a computer is a very small portion of its total cost of ownership. The majority of the expense lies in keeping it functioning on our network, providing licenses for its software, installing software upgrades, and providing some level of help to support it and its use.

Resource constraints dictate that we should facilitate our support effectiveness through such means as the following:

Maximizing system uniformity with standards-based configurations, purchased from a small number of approved vendors.

Sustaining our program by periodically upgrading and replacing WNMU owned computers on a reasonable cycle.

Ensuring that WNMU owned computers—and their support resources—are allocated to meet needs based on the institution’s overall mission.

There are important parameters affecting the procurement of computers:

For the computing investment to be worthwhile, the equipment provided must meet the expressed needs of its user.
Commercial computer software is provided under specific use criteria. WNMU must maintain its values and ethics by ensuring that software used on any WNMU owned computer has been properly licensed.

Studies show that purchase cost represents only about 25 percent of the total cost of ownership of microcomputers. The remaining 75 percent of the ownership cost consists of technical support, user support, and administration.

Unlike some other forms of equipment, computers represent a long-term resource commitment for administration, technical support, user support, and continuing upgrades of the machines. Thus, initial procurement through grant funds, gifts, and similar means are not ‘free’ and should be subject to careful consideration due to resources required to support these computers. WNMU IT provides central support of:

A select number of desktop operating systems (Windows NT, 98 and above, and Apple OS 9 and above). We do not currently support Windows XP.

Designated computer vendor(s) for each OS (chosen for customer support, technical design, and value).

Compatibility with WNMU’s network operating system.

Peripheral components that have broad support in the marketplace and that are of reasonable cost.

Currently, WNMU acquires computers through several different revenue sources, each of which has different oversight and decision-making. These revenue sources include the annual operating budget, designated gifts, and grants to a program or group. With, perhaps, the exception of the operating budget, there is no formal, central oversight of all of these purchases or any procedures for considering the impact of the purchase on the institution. Some of the problems that arise because of this situation are listed below:

Because computers can be acquired through multiple funds, there is no enforceable mechanism to ensure that equipment purchased conforms to any standard. This results in purchases of equipment that cannot be adequately supported, to the detriment of our overall mission.

Older computers or peripherals that have been donated have the same impact, and use of this equipment may not be cost-effective. This widens the gap between the most and least powerful/flexible computers, and increases the number of versions of software (applications, operating systems, printer drivers, etc.) and hardware (including parts) that must be actively supported. Before donated computers can be linked to the WNMU LAN or supported by IT, they must be reviewed and approved by IT.
As the number of WNMU owned computers grows, the number of staff dedicated to supporting their use is not growing proportionately. We cannot expect to continue growing our computing facilities without significant staff growth to aid in supporting WNMU owned computers.

Purchases of computers made by departments through departmental funds or grants may become points of contention, as the purchasers seek to protect ‘their’ resources. ("We bought this with our funds, so we will decide what happens with it.") To alleviate this situation, the following statement overrides all other considerations. All computer equipment/software that is purchased by university personnel by any funding source (University, State, Federal, Foundation or Gift), other than personal funds, belongs to WNMU and is subject to WNMU policies.

**Procedures:**

**Procurement procedure**

It is not the intention of this document to suppress or complicate the procedure for obtaining additional new or used computing equipment. The process will be a simple one:

1. **Request for IT equipment/software**
   Any faculty or staff member should request computing equipment through their department supervisor, chair or committee chair via the purchase requisition process.
   The request should include the equipment/software required, the purpose for the equipment/software, where the equipment will be located (or who will be responsible if mobile), the cost via an authorized quote (three quotes are required if the purchase price is between $1,500 and $10,000 and you are not using an existing price agreement), and the source of funding (account information). Please ensure that shipping charges are included in your requisition, as well as warranty information.

   All of this information needs to be included on the purchase requisition.

   WNMU IT will be glad to answer questions and provide vendor addresses or suggestions to help with determining your needs, whether they are hardware or software. **However due to time constraints and resource limitations we are unable to get your quotes and prepare your purchase requisitions.**

   After the department chair or supervisor has confirmed that money is available and approved the purchase requisition it should be forwarded to the Information Technology department, attention Alice Casares, for approval.

2. **WNMU IT approval**
   Purchasing requires that IT approve the purchase requisition prior to them issuing a purchase order. After IT reviews the requisition they will either approve and forward it to Purchasing (stamped approved) or send it back to the issuer with a reason.
3. Equipment from unapproved manufacturers.
Any faculty or staff member, or recognized WNMU department may procure computing equipment from any manufacturer. WNMU IT will review the suitability of the equipment and determine if it is compatible with our support criteria. Without a review, the equipment will not be connected to the local area network, nor will a WNMU IT systems administrator maintain it. The group procuring such equipment will have sole responsibility for its maintenance and operation, and as such should order a minimum of a three-year warranty. When possible, please order equipment from one of the approved manufacturers listed in this policy.

Other considerations
Personal equipment

Faculty and Staff are not encouraged to bring their own computers to work for extended time periods. WNMU is not responsible for loss or damage of such equipment or for maintenance and support. The individual takes full responsibility for such risks.

Removing WNMU owned computers from workplace

If a staff member needs to take equipment home in order to complete a task, he or she may do so upon approval from their department chair or supervisor. Note: WNMU owned equipment will not be supported when removed from University offices.

Authorized IT signatures
The following people have signature authorization for approving purchase requisitions regarding computing equipment.

Director of Information Technology
Help Desk Manager
Senior Network Administrator
Junior Network Administrator
Systems Administrator
Academic Labs Manager
Telecommunications Manager

Approved manufacturers
Servers
Compaq
Dell
Gateway
Apple
Desktop and notebook PC’s
Gateway
Dell
Apple
Printers
Epson
Lexmark
HP
GCC
Handhelds
Palm
Handspring
Operating Systems
MS 98 and above, except XP
MS NT
Apple OS 9 and above