

## **Policy/Procedural/ Service/Support Guide**

**ARE Information Technology Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics  
N. C. State University**

**Revised April 12, 2004**

**Purpose** – This document defines the role of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics Information Technology group (ARE-IT) and outlines computer related procedures for faculty, staff, students, and ARE-IT. It is updated as necessary. Hard copies are distributed to faculty and staff on a semiannual basis, and an up-to-date version is available at <http://arehelp.are.ncsu.edu>. Comments and suggestions are always welcomed. Online feedback forms are provided on the AREHelp web.

**Overview**- ARE-IT's mission is to serve as a point of contact for faculty, staff, and students in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics for all issues relating to IT support, service, and planning. Our goal is to provide centralized management of information technology resources for our users which is efficient, responsive, and courteous. ARE-IT staff includes Scott Cravens, Network Administrator; Position Vacant, Computing Consultant; and Luana Smith, Web Master. David Parker is the department's Information Technology Manager.

**Software** - A standard \*software suite provides economic advantages by allowing discount purchases through contract, site license, and multi-user license. Focusing support on a standardized suite of applications allows us to keep up with new technology, communicate and interact with other departments, colleges, universities, and private businesses to ensure compatibility and ease of information exchange. Since the same software is installed on all computers, new hardware can be set up quickly, and existing computers can be quickly restored in the event of a serious problem, freeing staff to deal with other support issues. ARE-IT will review any request to add additional software to the standard software suite. We will also provide general consultation for software not included in the standard software suite. This consultation will include recommendations for purchases, and to the extent possible, installation on a "test" PC to ensure functionality and compatibility with our operating system, network environment, and print services. We will consider requests to add software to the suite. Due to the complexity of the network environment, requests for software changes to economics graduate student computer must be made no later than 60 days prior to the beginning of a semester in order for the software to be available for that semester. Software updates to student computers are made only during class breaks. Please use the appropriate online request form to request software assistance.

**Hardware** - The Standard Computing Environment includes specifications for desktop computers and associated hardware. Desktop computers must be capable of running the supported software and must function in our complex network environment. To ensure compatibility with software, network, and other hardware, ARE-IT should be involved in

all desktop computer purchases. ARE-IT maintains specifications for a "standard" desktop computer. These specifications are reviewed and updated regularly, based on user needs, current technology, and compatibility. Consultation for specialized or non-standard hardware and portable computers is available from ARE-IT. Please contact David Parker for assistance with any hardware purchase.

Support for a non-standard computer will be limited to ensuring that the computer will operate within our computing environment and will not adversely effect general network performance, that it can communicate with primary network devices, and that standard network services are available. Any network device which adversely effects or otherwise interferes with network performance will be removed from the network until corrective action is taken to ensure network compatibility. The purchaser of non-standard hardware will be responsible for having the system repaired in the event of a failure. ARE-IT is not able to provide any support for Apple/Mac systems at this time.

**Network** - Network services include server maintenance, application testing and delivery, user account maintenance, email administration, print services administration, and network security. Please contact Scott Cravens with questions regarding these services.

**Web Development and Desktop Publishing** - Luana Smith provides web development and maintenance services which include general consultation, site and page design, graphics design, multi-media development, and server space allocation and maintenance. She also provides desktop publishing services which include layout and design, publishing, and distribution.

**Standard Software Suite** – ARE-IT will install, manage, and troubleshoot software applications and desktop operating systems provided in the ARE-IT standard software suite. ARE-IT will also provide consultation for the purchase, and upon request, the installation of software not included in the standard software suite. After initial installation, ARE-IT support for software not included in the standard software suite will be limited to assisting the user in locating resources for problem resolution. User manuals and other documentation are maintained by ARE-IT for each application in the Standard Software Suite and are available for loan upon request. Please refer to Appendix 1 for a description the standard software suite.

\* **Standard Software Suite**

ACS Access - PeopleSoft (Support Provided by ACS)

Anti-Virus -Norton AV, F-Prot (servers)

Calendar/Scheduling - Corporate Time (Administrative Users Only)

Database -ELDB

Database Manager - MS Access

E-Mail - Pegasus Mail, Netscape Mail, WebAccess (NetMail), Thunderbird

File Compression -EnZip

FTP -Ipswitch FTP LE

Internet Browser -Netscape Communicator, Internet Explorer, Mozilla  
OCR - OmniPage Pro (Image Workstation only)  
Office Suite - MS Office 97, MS Office XP Enterprise  
Operating Systems - NT4, XP Professional  
Presentation Software - MS PowerPoint  
Spreadsheet - MS Excel  
Statistics - SAS for Windows, Stata  
Word Processor - MS Word  
Web Development - MS FrontPage, DreamWeaver

**Computer Hardware** - ARE-IT will install, upgrade, troubleshoot, and repair supported computer hardware owned by the department. Certain situations may require the services of outside vendors. Supported hardware includes computers and associated peripherals, printers, scanners, modems, laptop computers, network equipment, and file servers. ARE-IT will provide consulting for the purchase of new hardware, including system and component specifications, vendors, part numbers, and pricing. ARE-IT will assist in moving computer equipment when users or offices relocate and will have sole responsibility for disconnecting and re-connecting network connections. Due to University regulations governing telecommunications equipment security, ARE-IT will not assist with telephone or fax equipment installation, repairs, etc.

ARE-IT maintains an Image Workstation, located in Suite 4221. The Image Workstation is a networked computer equipped with a color optical scanner for graphics, text, and 35mm slides and negatives, 250 Mb Zip Drive, CD Burner, and a color printer. Please refer to the instruction book located with the Image Workstation.

**User Accounts** – ARE-IT will add and maintain user accounts on the primary file server(s). Requests for user accounts will be processed within two business days of receipt of a completed new user application. ARE-IT strives to have user accounts activated and computer hardware in place prior to the arrival of new employees. A lead-time of four weeks is needed for delivery of new desktop computers. The department head or his designee should complete the appropriate ARE-IT on-line form regarding newly hired, separated or transferred employees so that user accounts can be created, deleted, or deactivated.

**Help Facilities** – The primary means of requesting help or service should be made by completing the appropriate on-line request form <http://www.ag-econ.ncsu.edu/it/index.htm>. An ARE-IT member will respond to your request as soon as possible. Alternately, if your computer is down or your email is not working, please call the ARE Help Desk at 5-6095/6097. If no one is available to answer your call, please leave a voice message and we will respond as soon as possible. If you are calling to report an emergency, please call the help desk numbers, 5-6097 and 5-6095. You can also report emergencies to ARE-IT members via pager.

**Pager numbers are as follows:**

**Scott Cravens 983-0124 David  
Parker 983-0125**

You can deliver an emergency page with a text message to ARE-IT from <http://arehelp.are.ncsu.edu/>. Emergencies may include multiple users without network access, the server is broadcasting error messages, all network print services are unavailable, or any time critical situation. Help requests will be handled according to an assigned priority.

Requests for service will be handled according to an assigned priority and available staff resources. Computing service priorities are based on the scope and severity of the problem.

**Critical** - Affects all users (Ex. server or network down)

**High** -Use of system diminished for many users (Ex: network delivered software not available, network print services down)

**Medium** - Individual User Request (Ex: software or hardware service, purchasing advice)

**Low** - Non-supported issues (Ex: assistance with non-supported software)

**The AREHelp** web site contains instructions and information, useful links and other pertinent information, and can be accessed through the ARE-Help Web Site icon in the ARE Network Apps. Group or through <http://www.ag-econ.ncsu.edu/it/index.htm>.

**Scheduled Requests for Service** - Requests for scheduled service should be made by completing the appropriate on-line request form at <http://www.ag-econ.ncsu.edu/it/index.htm>. Requests for service include hardware installations and upgrades, faculty/staff re-locations, software installations, etc. After submitting a request for service, you will receive within 1 business day, an acknowledgment and estimated time for the work to begin. Requests for service will be scheduled according to an assigned priority. Jobs of a higher priority could arise which may require us to re-schedule your work. You will be notified you as soon as possible if we are not able to keep an appointment, and your work will be re-scheduled.

**Training** - ARE-IT recommends the computer training programs offered by NCSU Human Resources, CALS IT, and NCSU's Learning Resource Service. ARE-IT will assist in coordinating training from outside sources upon request.

**LAN Infrastructure** - ARE-IT will install, manage, and troubleshoot network file servers, network operating systems, network printing services, network file systems, and other network hardware and software components. Our goal is to provide a fault-tolerant production network available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, with the exception of scheduled downtime, of which you will be notified in advance. We will make every

effort to schedule down time after normal business hours or on weekends or holidays. However, it may be necessary to re-boot the server or perform other tasks during regular hours which may limit or disable network access for short periods of time in order to correct problems that could lead to extended down times. We request your understanding and patience in these rare instances.

**Backups** - ARE-IT will backup the primary file server(s) hard drives each weeknight. Backup tapes will be stored on-site in a secure location. The backup will include the server's operating system and associated applications, user applications, and data contained on users "M" drives. In the event that backed up data is needed, ARE-IT will restore the requested data, if available, within two business days or sooner if possible. Users are responsible for backing up data on their local hard drives. It is not necessary to backup your entire hard drive. Your computer's operating system and ARE-IT supported applications can be promptly and efficiently re-installed in the event of a critical hardware failure. You should regularly backup the data and files that you create and save on your hard drive. These files include text documents, databases, spreadsheets, presentations, Netscape bookmarks, etc. You can back up (make copies of) individual files or groups of files to floppy disk or local Zip disk, if installed. All users have a network drive allocation of approximately 25 Mb (your "M" drive) which may be used to back up your data. Your new e-mail occupies a portion of the 12 Mb allocation, and depending on how your P-Mail is configured, all of your saved e-mail could be contained on your "M" drive, so you may have less than 25 Mb available for backups. Please contact ARE-IT for questions about your P-Mail configuration or available "M" drive space.

**Web Development/Publishing Services** - ARE-IT will provide web design, maintenance, and general consultation and assistance with departmental web pages, faculty pages, and departmental program web sites and pages. Desktop publishing services include design, publication, and distribution of departmental newsletters, reports, and other materials for printed or electronic distribution.

Requests for web development and desktop publishing services are generally handled according to the following priority:

1. 1. Time critical updates to existing web pages (posting class notes, etc.)
2. 2. Time critical desktop publishing jobs (publications due on a specified date)
3. 3. Maintenance and updates to the department's main web pages
4. 4. Maintenance and updates to faculty pages and departmental programs and centers web sites
5. 5. Web design and consultation services for new pages or re-design of existing

pages

**Student Computing Services** - ARE-IT provides full computing support for the Economics Graduate program. A student computing environment with hardware and software support for university owned equipment is provided to all graduate student computers located in the ARE Mini-Lab and graduate offices and labs located in Nelson Hall. Please contact arehelp@ncsu.edu for assistance with graduate computing.

**Documentation and Instructions** - ARE-IT will produce and disseminate, as appropriate, documentation, instructions, guides, notices, and other relative information concerning the computing environment, support, policy, and procedure.