

Policy/Procedural/ Service/Support Guide

ARE Information Technology Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics

N. C. State University

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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://www.ag-econ.ncsu.edu/it>. Comments and suggestions are always welcomed.

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; Vikram Ragukamar, Computing Consultant; David Parker, 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 nonstandard 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 affect 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.

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.

*** Standard Software Suite**

ACS Access - PeopleSoft (Support Provided by ACS): **Anti-Virus** - Symantec Endpoint Protection, Trend Micro OfficeScan: **Calendar/Scheduling** - WolfWise (Administrative Users Only): **Database MS Access**: **E-Mail** - Pegasus Mail, Squirrel Mail (web access), Thunderbird: **File Compression** –EnZip: **FTP** – WinSPC: **Internet Browsers** -Internet Explorer, Firefox: **OCR** - OmniPage Pro (Image Workstation only) Office Suite - MS Office 2007: **Operating Systems** - XP Professional (32 and 64 bit), Vista Business (32 and 64 bit): **Presentation Software** - MS PowerPoint: **Remote File Access** - Web Drive **Spreadsheet** - MS Excel: **Statistics** - SAS for Windows, Stata: **Word Processor** - MS Word: **Web Development/Editing** - Dream Weaver, Studio MX, Adobe Contribute: **Security** – Trend Micro Office Scan

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. AREIT 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 with sheet feeder for graphics, text, and 35mm slides and negatives, 9-in-1 Card Reader, DVD Burner, CD Duplicator, and a color laser 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 email to arehelp@ncsu.edu . 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 515-6095 or 515-6097. If no one is available to answer your call, please leave a voice message and we will respond as soon as possible.

Pagers are for emergencies only! Scott Cravens 983-0124, David Parker 983-0125.

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 according to the following criteria:

Critical - Affects all users (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 (software or hardware service, purchasing advice)

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

Scheduled Requests for Service - Requests for scheduled service should be made by email to arehelp@ncsu.edu . 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. There are also a number of reputable web sites offering free tutorials and instruction.

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-fours 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 - Our disaster recovery/business continuation plan starts at the user level. We regularly remind and encourage users to backup their data to local media (flash drive, CD, DVD, etc.) and provide hands-on assistance when necessary. Beyond that, we offer all users an across-the-network backup option where we install a client on the user's PC and backup their data to the server, either on a regular schedule or whenever the user requests a new backup. This is a background process and can be run at any time without disrupting the user or compromising the performance of the PC being backed up. An incremental backup of critical server files and user data stored on servers ("K" drive, "M" drive, etc.) is backed up every morning (Tue - Sat). A full backup of server files and user data is performed monthly and is copied to a removable hard drive. This hard drive is stored off-site in a secure location. We have a total of 12 removable hard drives in rotation, so we effectively keep a full monthly backup for 12 months.

Web Updates - ARE-IT will provide assistance with content updates to departmental web pages, faculty pages, and departmental program web sites and pages.

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.