Software

Per Wikipedia, software is “any set of machine-readable instructions that directs a computer's processor to perform specific operations”. Without software, computers would just be paperweights or boat anchors, depending on size. Of course without computers, software would just be a bunch of meaningless code. Coming from an era of typewriters, calculators, and duplicating machines, software is a blessing. It is so much easier to compose a newsletter on a computer, than typing it with a bottle of white-out close at hand.

There are numerous types of software available and the industry has its own language, e.g. operating, application, embedded, plug-in, bugs & viruses, algorithms, etc. Sometimes a new software is required for two other software programs to communicate with each other. Whew!

Enter the Office of Information Technology Services:

Also known as ITS, one of this department's many functions is to assist in the acquiring of software. A website (http://www.k-state.edu/its/site-licenses/) is available to help determine where to acquire a specific software. ITS owns master licenses for several software programs. The site also references the two State of Kansas contracts, 36093 Software House International and 36094 En Pointe, for software. ITS guides departments in their software purchases to make sure it works for the department as well as the University when applicable.

Things to be aware of when purchasing software:

Access for Disabled – When considering software for delivery of content to students or to the public, it is important to ask questions related to accessibility. Many companies offer similar products and it is important to purchase from the company that has taken accessibility into account. Accessibility is broadly defined and it may be helpful to ask specific questions. The Student Access Center (formerly Disability Support Services) is available to answer questions and provide support regarding the purchasing of any software to ensure accessibility. For more information, visit their website at www.k-state.edu/accesscenter. FYI – several universities are involved in lawsuits for failure to provide accessible materials.

Security & Compliance – Another topic to fill a computer’s memory chip. ITS has a division for security and compliance. So whether protecting credit card numbers, student information, acquiring anti-virus protection, etc, ITS can assist with writing specifications.

Dollar Limits – As always, when the item is not on contract and costs $5000 or more, send a purchase requisition to Purchasing for the bid process. Purchasing is sharing software requests with ITS to keep them in the loop on what is being acquired by the University. When the cost to purchase & implement software is estimated to reach $250,000 or more, the State of Kansas Office of Information Technology Services needs to be notified. The total cost of the project, i.e. software, labor costs, hardware, consulting, training, upgrades, etc. is considered and ITS helps in the preparation and submission of the report to KOIT.

Student Revolving Door

Dylan Buessing is back to assist Purchasing. Ericka Manring is working with Animal Sciences, an area keeping with her degree program. Welcome back, Dylan. Good luck Ericka.