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TRENDS

Computer know-how is almost essential

By Nick Henderson
Emerald Contributor

A whole generation of graduates in the workplace don't know anything about computers, but need to, according to micro computing support lab specialist Linda Fernandes.

"Learning to use either a Macintosh or IBM will help you," she said. "Crossing between the two is getting easier."

On this campus, computer use is about 90 percent Macintosh and 10 percent IBM. Fernandes said IBM sales have doubled over the last year, while Macintosh sales have increased approximately 15 percent.

The new breed of portable computers, called laptops, aren't nearly as popular with University students as are personal computers.

Buyers for laptops here are primarily faculty, according to Dan Bregar of the Micro Computer Support Lab. But busi-



Photo by Steve Card

Laptop computers are efficient and handy, but they still leave something to be desired pricewise.

ness applications outside of the campus environment rely heavily on their flexibility. "Just look around the airport

sometime," Fernandes said.

The laptop's portability isn't always to your advantage, however. As Bregar points out, if you are using it in the library to help your research, "every time you want to go get another book, you have to shut it down and take it into the stacks with you."

Low sales among undergraduates comes as no surprise to anyone who has priced a laptop. Macintosh laptops run about \$3,500 at the EMU's Computing Center.

Screen and memory technologies are also on the list of drawbacks, as most laptops only have the battery power to last up to 12 hours.

The compact laptop has a pop-up screen about half the size of the computer itself. The computers can be very versatile and though they seldom weigh more than 15 pounds, some people consider this "luggable" and not truly portable.



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