Technological Considerations and Requirements for Online Courses

Not all distance learning (DL) courses will require all of the technological capabilities listed below. Before enrolling in any DL course, carefully check the technological requirements to ensure that you currently have or can purchase any necessary hardware or software.

1) Computer Hardware
   a. Basics – All DL students need regular access to a modern computer. If your computer is more than 5 years old, carefully check whether your computer meets the course requirements for:
      i. Memory (RAM)
      ii. Processing speed
      iii. Audio and video card capabilities
   b. Peripherals – Not all courses require video conferencing and interaction with a digital whiteboard, but if yours does, you’ll likely need the following:
      i. Webcam
      ii. Scanner
      iii. Video camera
      iv. Tablet (usually optional, but does make using a digital whiteboard easier)
   c. Course/discipline-specific equipment requirements

2) Computer software
   a. Plug-ins for: flash video and any publisher-specific content
   b. Software to access: MPG, MP3, PDF, RTF
   c. Document authoring software for word documents and spreadsheets (OpenOffice, GoogleDocs, Microsoft Office)
   d. Other specialized software may be require for: graphics/photo editing, audio recording/editing, and/or video recording/editing
   e. Any course-specific or publisher-specific software

3) Bandwidth
   a. High-speed/broadband (i.e. not dial-up) internet is recommended for all DL courses and required if the course includes any of the following:
      i. Streaming media from the internet
      ii. Video conferencing

4) Software Skills
   a. You must be a proficient user of diverse computer technology to be successful in online courses
b. Students must have competency with the following:
   i. Basic operating system and computer operations
   ii. Basic internet browsing and email
   iii. Navigating and utilizing the course management software (usually Blackboard at UNF)
   iv. Basic keyboarding/word-processing
      1. Type at least 15 words per minute
      2. Keep both hands on home-row
      3. Proficient with formatting
         a. Margins, tables, and lists
         b. Text, using appropriate menus/controls for font, color, paragraph styles, line spacing, etc.
   v. File management and folder operation
   vi. Saving documents and files to specified formats with appropriate filenames and extensions
      1. Downloading and uploading documents and files to the course management software (Blackboard)
   vii. Course specific software

c. Self-assessment resources:
   i. Keyboarding
   ii. Word processing and formatting
   iii. General technology (computer operations, word processing, internet/browsing, email)
      1. http://dl.austincc.edu/students/techcheck.php