School of Architecture Recommended Laptop Technical Specifications

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While we do not endorse a specific brand or model, The School of Architecture does provide recommendations of minimum laptop technical specifications to ensure optimal performance for architecture-related software. As long as a device meets or is close to meeting the specifications, selecting a laptop ultimately comes down to individual preference and budget considerations.

It is recommended that the laptop has a powerful processor (at least i7, but i9 is ideal), a GPU graphics card (ideally should say RTX), and at least 16GB of RAM (ideally 32GB). Students will be provided 1TB of cloud storage for files via University BOX; therefore, hard drive space on the laptop can be just for software.

Students will have access to virtual computers - Illinois Anyware. This functions as a virtual computer lab with powerful processing that students can access through less powerful laptops. The University also provides access to physical computer labs on campus with software needed to get students through courses. This is support the University provides for students who may wish to delay their purchase or may later require access to more advanced hardware.

The School of Architecture recommendations for a personal laptop are as follows:

HARDWARE:

- Minimum

  Intel® Core™ i7-10875H (8-core, 16MB Cache, up tp 5.1GHz w/ Turbo Boost 2.0)

  NVIDIA® GeForce® RTX 2080 SUPER™ 8GB GDDR6

  32GB DDR4 2666MHz

  Up to 4TB SSD

- Recommended

  Intel® Core™ i9 11900H (8-Core, 24MB L3 Cache, up to 4.9GHz with Turbo Boost Max 3.0)

  NVIDIA® GeForce® RTX 3080 8GB GDDR6

  32GB DDR4, 3200MHz

  4TB Solid State Drive

SOFTWARE:

- Academic versions at reduced prices are available from the UI Webstore (http://webstore.illinois.edu)
- Microsoft Office 2016 or Office 365 - includes full versions of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Adobe Creative Cloud - includes full versions of most Adobe products
- AutoDesk Student Software - AutoCAD, Revit Architecture, etc. are available and free to students (http://students.autodesk.com)
- Rhinoceros 3D CAD (http://rhino3d.com) or Sketchup (https://sketchup.com/)

*Apple (MacBook) laptops are not ideal. All tutorials in class will be given using the Windows operating system and may cause confusion if students are not familiar with software.

**First year students may use regular laptops; however, it is wise to purchase a laptop that supports architecture programs by second or third year.

***If you would like to learn more about selecting a laptop, feel free to check out the following resources:
    Laptop Guide for Architecture and Design video
    Laptops for Designers-Architects spreadsheet