

## Education Division



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### **An Educator's Guide to Assessing the Cost of Donated Computers**

#### **Does the Donated Computer Fit With Your Technology Plan?**

As the calls for education technology are heard nationwide, more and more schools are finding themselves to be the recipients of donated computer hardware and software. The questions that follow can be used as an aid in determining whether to accept or not accept a donated computer that is offered to your school.

#### **Opportunity Costs**

- Will the acceptance of this hardware preclude the purchase of more current technologies?
- Will the acceptance of this hardware send the right message to your students and community?
- Will the benefits to the donating institution or business outweigh the problems faced when the equipment is used in an instructional setting?

#### **Software**

- Does the computer run the software that you currently have?
- Does it come loaded with software?
  - Has this software been transferred to the school per the specifications of the license agreement? (Although all license agreements vary, generally you should receive a copy of the license, original manual, and original

- diskettes.)
- If not, what is the cost of getting legal copies?
- Do you have legal copies of the manuals?
- Does the existing software meet your needs?
  - Does it fit into your existing program?
  - Do your teachers and students need training to use it?
  - What's the cost of developing a teaching program that takes advantage of the software?

## Hardware

- Is the donated computer a brand and model you already have?
- Does the donated computer work?
  - If not, what will it cost to fix?
- Does it have upgrades and peripherals you are using?
  - If not, what will they cost to install?
- Is it a current model?
  - What will maintenance cost?
- Are there parts still available for the hardware?

## Training

- Will your teachers or students need training to use the computer?
  - If so, who will provide the training?
  - How long will it take?
  - How much will it cost?
- Do your computer coordinators know how to use the computer or how to help teachers integrate the computer into their work with students?
  - If not, how much time will it take for them to become familiar with the donated computer?

## Maintenance

- Do your teachers or computer coordinators know how to troubleshoot or repair the computer?
  - If not, who will perform these functions and how long will it take?
- Do your teachers or computer coordinators know how to solve problems with the software?

- If not, where will they get help?

## **Networking**

- What is the cost of integrating the hardware into your existing networks?
- Will the hardware work with your current network strategy?
- Will the hardware support future network improvements?

## **Instructional Needs**

- Can the hardware run the software you use to support instruction today?
- Can the hardware be modified cost-effectively to run the software you use to support instruction today?
- Is the hardware useful for drill and practice, simulation, multimedia, or other everyday classroom tasks?
- Does the hardware speed impact the use of instructional time and materials?
- Is the hardware able to be used without additional student instruction?
- Is the hardware "student-proof"?
- Does the hardware work with the peripherals and software to support students with special needs?
- Is the hardware the best instructional tool for use in your classroom?

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