

To: Dr. McCord
From: Toby Stauss
Date: February 17th, 2009
Subject: Proposal for students gaining easier access to expensive computer programs that are otherwise unaffordable.

I will discuss the availability of computer programs to students enrolled in computer related fields. Ways that we can put these programs in student's homes with them, instead of the students having to drive to school every day or pirate the software off of the internet.

Minnesota State University Moorhead has great computer related fields, many different computer labs around campus, and professors that are ready to help with any project you may have trouble with. Dr. Mike Ruth (ruthm@mnstate.edu) is the head professor/advisor of the Graphic Communications department at Minnesota State University Moorhead. He has already showed his support of this proposal and looks forward to getting more information from the feasibility study. As much as you learn with these advanced computer related fields, the students are required to use several different computer programs, all of which cost in the thousands of dollars to purchase. As a current student I find it very hard to drive to school every day including weekends and sit in the labs for hours on end working on all of my projects.

The problem is the cost of schooling after tuition. The only access to most of this computer software that students have is by driving to school and sitting there to work in the labs. Certain programs require you to sleep at school just to make sure nobody shows up and turns off your computer that you have your work running on. This means you are spending money on gas driving back and forth every day, plus the added cost of eating and drinking while you are there waiting for your homework to be completed. This problem does not only occur in the graphic comm. department. The mass comm., computer science, music, and film departments are affected by this also. All of this spending occurs because of the price that these programs cost from their manufacturers, all of them being well over \$1000. The significance of this is that most students struggle just to make ends meet while going to school, and now we have to use these applications to get any sort of homework done.

With our feasibility study we hope to discover a way for students to be able to have access to these programs at home. Students will save on gas and food money required to go to school to get this work done. MSUM stands to benefit as well; server space will be freed up, machines will run faster, and overall wear and tear on machines will be reduced. Additionally with fewer students going in and out of the computer buildings and labs there is much less of a chance that something will get vandalized.

To show the need for these programs at home we plan to conduct surveys, talking to students in the various departments as well as with professors to get their input, support, and feedback. We will price out these applications used in the classroom to show how much it would cost students to purchase. We believe that compiling price information will show just how much more these programs cost. Our timeline for this study will be conducted starting on March 23 throughout the rest of the spring 2009 semester. It will be completed and delivered by April 27th 2009.

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| 1. March 23th | First meeting with group/Plan of action |
| 2. March 30 th | Price gathering of Computer Software required/Surveys conducted |

3. April 6 th	Gathering information from students/Preliminary Draft started
4. April 13 th	Revisions to preliminary Draft
5. April 20 th	Revisions to final documents
6. April 27 th	Delivery of final document

There are many solutions to this problem. The first and possibly most expensive would be for the school of MSUM to give students in computer related fields a laptop that is theirs for the duration they attend the institution. This laptop depending on their major would have all the programs and applications they would need throughout their schooling. Another solution would have to be worked out with the retailers of the software. They could set up school portions of their website, and after you enrolled in a course you would have to wait for the drop/add period to be over. Once this period was over, usually a week after school starts, your professors would give you a code that you could go to the manufacturer website and type in. This code would give you access to download a four to five month trial of the program which you would install on your computer. This code would only work one time and you would need a new one for each time you took a class that related to that application. The last solution would be that the instead of the professors giving you a code, the manufacturers would be the ones who sold the class reading material to the school. In turn the school would sell that to the students and the code would be in this book, and would still only work for a 5 month period.

We expect to find that all of these solutions are feasible. They could all work and in some cases for other Colleges or even classes at MSUM they do work. The major goal would be to see which of these solutions is the most cost effective for the school. Also the cost and time students will save from this study will produce higher grades as well as being more financially satisfied.

Do hesitate to contact me via email if you have any questions, concerns, or would like to discuss this matter further.

Thank you and we look forward to working with you,

Toby Stauss

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