Basic Technology Advice for Faculty

(adapted from a document written and shared by [George H. Williams](#))

General Advice

Work on getting smarter as a computer user:

- "[Top 10 simple things every computer user should know how to do](#)," by Whitson Gordon | *Lifehacker*
- "[Tech support cheat sheet](#)," by Randall Munroe | *xkcd*

Don't use technology as an excuse

I will not grant you an extension based on problems you may be having with the devices or services you're using.

Technological problems are a fact of life, and so you should develop work habits that take them into account. Start early and save often. Always keep a backup copy of your work saved somewhere secure.

Inkless printers, computer virus infections, lost flash drives, corrupted files, incompatible formats, a malfunctioning WiFi access point. . . None of these unfortunate events should be considered an emergency. Take the proper steps to make sure your work will not be lost irretrievably.

Stay secure by maintaining a backup of your files

What does it mean to have a backup? It means that you have an identical copy of all of your files saved in at least 2 different locations, as in the following examples:

- your flash drive; and your computer's hard drive; or
- dropbox.com and your computer's hard drive; or
- emailing it to yourself and your computer's hard drive; or
- some other combination of at least 2 different locations where you save identical copies of all of your files.

Relevant links

- "[How to back up your computer](#)", by Whitson Gordon | *Lifehacker*
- "[The Dropbox Tour](#)," by Dropbox

Stay secure by choosing good passwords

A good password protects your data and your privacy. A good password can be hard to remember, which is why you might [consider using a password manager](#). A good password has the following characteristics:

- as many characters as are allowed, and
- a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, and
- a combination of numbers, symbols, and punctuation.

Do not use the same password for every account you have.

Relevant links

- "[Choosing a Good Password](#)," by Joe Sanjour, Andrew Arensburger, Anne Brink | University of Maryland
- "[Maintaining Sanity and Security: Why Use a Password Manager?,](#)" by Amy Cavender | *ProfHacker*

Save time by using keyboard shortcuts

This might sound like trivial advice, but you'll become a much more proficient computer user if you take advantage of common keyboard shortcuts instead of using the mouse to point and click every time you want to do something.

- "[Six keyboard shortcuts every computer user should know](#)," by Adam Dachis | *Lifehacker*
- "[Back to basics: learn to use keyboard shortcuts like a ninja](#)," by Thoron Klosowski | *Lifehacker*
- "[Keyboard shortcuts for Windows](#)," by Microsoft
- "[OS X keyboard shortcuts](#)," by Apple
- "[Keyboard shortcuts for Google documents](#)," by Google