Information Regarding Computers and Accounts

A. Account Setup/Activation

You will only need to request account activation if you registered late for the semester. If so, go to the following website from a GSAPP workstation (you will be given a temporary login to do so): http://www.arch.columbia.edu/resources/help/accounts.If you registered on time you will be given a default login at the beginning of the semester.

B. Backups

Once you've received your computer account and have logged into the computers you may have some questions about how things operate. Before you start generating digital data and portfolios please consider the importance of your data. We STRONGLY RECOMMEND that you all develop a regular back-up plan. Weekly, daily or at whatever interval you decide, you should be conscious of the possibility of data loss. All of our workstations are equipped with CD or DVD burners, and we strongly recommend that you purchase a portable/external drive. They can be had for relatively little money (~$100-$200, depending on the size), and it will make your life much easier, especially when working with large video files. Even these devices can fail, however, so you should always plan to burn your most important data to optical media at some regular interval.

C. Hard Drives/Network Drives

When you log into the computer you will see a C: and D: drive on the lab computers.
C: is for the storage of applications only. You cannot install and save items to this drive. The D: drive is your local storage and you should put/save all files that you are working on in this drive. GSAPP makes no backups of the information on the D: drives so you are responsible for making back-ups of files stored in this location. You can also access shares on other computers throughout the studios and the school. If you create a folder on your D: drive and share it you can access data on one computer without leaving your desk. This is especially useful, but you should be aware of a significant limitation. You should not open files, or launch applications from a shared drive as this will at the very least result in poor performance but, more significantly, could result in software crashes, file corruption and data loss.

You may also see any number off remote/server drives. These can be for data access (the GIS share, usually x:) or student storage (U: drive). You should not work from a network drive. Even with the new infrastructure the performance hit you will experience will make it worth your time to copy items from your U: to your D: drive before opening and working on them.

D. Reporting Problems

It is likely that you may run into a computer problem. Some examples of things that you may encounter:

- A software error
- A printer out of toner or paper
- Question about your network drives
- A request for your personal digital camera drivers to be installed on your workstation

We use an online problem reporting/tracking system that allows you submit problems 24 hours a day and track updates to your problem report. In order to submit a problem/help request you will need to go to:

www.arch.columbia.edu/help

Click the button to submit a problem ticket, enter your user name and password, and create a new ticket or view an existing ticket. All you need to do is fill in the blanks, use the pop-down menus and provide a description of the problem and then click the "submit" button. A clear problem description helps us to resolve the problem quickly. For example "Computer is broken" is far less effective of a description than say, "The power to my monitor doesn't seem to be working" or "I'm having trouble burning a DVD" and will require more time for the staff to determine the best course of action needed to resolve your issue. If you are not sure about what the problem might be please include as much information as you can so we can be better prepared to address it.

Once you've filled out the form, the system will then assign the problem to one of our tech staff, who will address problems in the order they are received. We are available from 9-5 Monday through Friday. When any updates or changes are made to your help request you will receive an e-mail at the address you specify (you should ONLY specify your Columbia e-mail address). It is important to check your e-mail or the problem ticket itself to ensure that you are following up on the problem's resolution.

E. Program Usage

Please understand that we are not experts in the usage of all the broad variety of software that is available here at GSAPP. If you are having a problem with how to perform a particular function, or trying to utilize a software package in a particular way to generate specific output, you should first check with your critic or TA as they will likely be a better source for this type of information. We'll try to help if we can, but we all aren't AutoCAD experts (or Maya, or 3D

Studio Max, etc.). Additionally, most of the software packages have help within the programs and on the company websites. A Google search can also usually be a big help. Additionally please understand and respect the fact that all of the hardware and software found within the GSAPP is for EDUCATIONAL USE ONLY. This means you cannot use this software for paid or volunteer work outside of the context of your classes and education at the university. We are not able to turn a blind eye to this licensing infringement and are obligated to assist if contacted by the university network security or copyright/licensing departments. Generally, we will not install any additional software on the studio computers during the course of the semester. If we receive a request for specific software from a professor during the semester for his/her studio we will consider installing it. However, under no conditions will we install beta versions of any software.

F. E-mail and Wireless

We often receive questions about e-mail and or wireless. We do not support your Columbia e-mail address and cannot help if you are having problems with your Columbia e-mail or wireless computer access. If you have problems or questions about either of these subjects you can e-mail consultant@columbia.edu or go to 102 Philosophy Hall for assistance.

G. Printing Quota

Your quota for the semester is 1300 b + w prints and 100 color prints. You can purchase additional color and black and white prints during the semester. Please submit a ticket to www.arch.columbia.edu/help if you have any questions about your quota.