

What's New in the ITS Student Computer Labs

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THE ITS THIRD AVENUE NORTH COMPUTER LAB The ITS Video Editing Lab

The all-digital Video Editing Lab at the ITS Third Avenue North Computer Lab, 75 Third Avenue, doubles as a teaching lab when a hands-on session is required. When not in use as a teaching space, the ITS Video Lab is used by students to post-produce their video projects, often overnight. In-person reservations are required (call 1-212-998-3500 for information), but the 15 Video Editing stations provide adequate time-shares on a 24 x 6 schedule.

This lab has a new look. ITS Academic Computing Services redesigned the Video Lab to meet the dual requirements of this teaching and experiential space. The new workstations are oriented toward an instructor's station—an interactive whiteboard (SMARTBoard) and lectern. New lighting controls provide choices between incandescent and fluorescent lighting to enhance video viewing. Faculty can play VHS, DVD, CD, and DV content from the instructor's station. Each student workstation measures 48" x 48", with a cutout that provides

room for a swivel chair (see figures 1 and 2). The work surface includes a leaf that faces the Instructor's domain, providing a convenient writing surface for note taking. The leaf also provides additional space for books, video-editing supplies, and the other paraphernalia students carry around. The leaves form natural shared workspaces between students who wish to work in a team and natural barriers for students who prefer to be in their own space.

Each Video Editing workstation contains an Apple G4 Dual GHz computer, NTSC Monitor, Cinema Display, and Sony DSR-11 DV deck, all of which fit snugly but comfortably in the workspace. The operating system has been upgraded to OS 10.2.8, and new applications have been added to the video editing software suite, including but not limited to Combustion, for applying special effects to video; DVDStudio Pro, a sophisticated authoring tool; and FinalCut Pro 4.



Photo by Mitch Shultz.

Figure 1. The new workstations at the ITS Video Editing Lab.



Photo by Mitch Shultz.

Figure 2. Students at work in the ITS Video Editing Lab.

Windows Training Room

The hands-on Windows Training Room at the ITS Third Avenue North Computer Lab accommodates 17 student workstations positioned along the two long walls of the room. An instructor's station at the end of the room is equipped with a Dell Optiplex 270 computer. A new ceiling-mounted projection unit and a wall-mounted screen enable ease of use and clear viewing. The computer workstations have a robust suite of software installed, reflecting the course requirements of our faculty and students. Each workstation includes a Dell Optiplex 270 Pentium 4 2.4GHz computer.

Faculty requests for the installation of additional software on the computer workstations in either the Video Editing Lab or the Windows Training Room can be made by sending e-mail to Robyn Berland at robyn.berland@nyu.edu or John Bako at john.bako@nyu.edu, respectively. Of course, software must be appropriate to ITS Lab and

classroom environments and meet licensing requirements.

THE ITS MULTIMEDIA LAB

The ITS Multimedia Lab at 35 West 4th Street, 2nd floor, has new Apple G5 1.85 GHz computers. The computers have a large footprint, creating natural aluminum divides between workstations (see figure 3). What's really new and surprising about the G5s is the absence of troublesome floppy and Zip drives. Zip drives can be borrowed, if needed, for 100MB, 250MB and 750MB disks. However, if a file is small enough to fit on a floppy disk, it can be transferred using the file storage capabilities of NYUHome, or it can be stored as an e-mail attachment.

The StuffIt Standard suite of applications has been added, to enable our clients to compress larger files, which further facilitates the use of NYU-NET as a personal communication and transportation medium. The "Dropbox" feature in NYU Blackboard is also available to students for communicating

and storing their work. Using the Internet in this way makes it simple for students to dynamically store and retrieve their work from anywhere...in the labs, at home, or on a laptop connected to NYU's wireless network, NYURoam. (For information on NYURoam access locations, e.g., @ the Square, 80 Washington Square East, visit <http://www.nyu.edu/its/wireless/>.)

The Apple G5s have a SuperDrive and, like the Apple G4 computers at the ITS Third Avenue North Lab, can write data to CD and DVD media. The recent addition of Toast Lite to our application suite allows multiple sessions to be written to a CD, providing an inexpensive and relatively reliable way for students and faculty to submit their work. For larger storage needs, Toast Lite can be used to store data files on DVD.

Articles and information found on the Internet do not have to be printed and carried from place to place. Using the software tools available in the ITS Labs, research information can be saved in Adobe PDF format, or collected in a text document, then archived to a CD-R or CD-RW, stored in NYUHome or transferred via e-mail. An added perk: since this information remains in electronic form, it can be cut and pasted into



Photo by Mitch Shultz.

Figure 3. The New Apple G5 computers at the Multimedia Lab.

research papers without retyping, making students' data less cumbersome to carry and easier to store. NYUHome provides 50MB of storage (<http://home.nyu.edu/help/files/fileupdownload.nyu>), and e-mail attachments (<http://home.nyu.edu/help/mail/>) can be up to 20MB in size.

When preparing documents for print, use text formats such as .rtf (rich text format) or .doc (Microsoft Word document format) or .txt (text format). Documents saved in .rtf preserve formatting across word processing applications. Use a .txt file when building a collection of information that does not require special formatting. Printing PowerPoint presentations and PDF documents (graphic formats) is slow in comparison to the text formats mentioned above. Providing course materials in both view and print formats will help students work more efficiently across environments.

ITS Academic Computing Services is introducing new help documentation on the Macintosh computers at both the ITS Multimedia and Third North Labs to help students and faculty use our computer resources more productively. The new documentation, "ITS Multimedia Lab Help and Information," is located on the Macintosh Dock. This documentation is tailored to the lab environment. For help using additional ITS resources, go to <http://www.nyu.edu/its/faq/>. Faculty and student feedback is integral to producing good documentation; we encourage you to use the suggestion boxes posted in each facility.

EXTENDED HOURS AT THE ITS COMPUTER LABS

The ITS Multimedia Lab's hours are now extended at the end of each semester to accommodate the additional student workload. Through May 9, the ITS Multimedia

Lab at 35 W. 4th Street will be open on Sundays from noon to 11:30 pm and will remain open for an additional two hours on Saturdays, from 8:30 am until 7:30 pm. This extension includes access to the ITS Faculty Technology Center Drop-In Areas, the Arts Technology multimedia, rendering and imaging stations, and the Multimedia Lab workstations. The ITS Third Avenue North Lab will be open from noon on Sundays to 7:30 pm on Fridays (a two-hour Friday extension) through the end of the spring 2004 semester. The Tisch Hall Lab will extend its Saturday hours to 7:30 pm through May 8.

For details about the ITS labs, including locations, complete hours, and equipment, please see <http://www.nyu.edu/its/labs/>.

Robyn Berland is the Computer Lab Manager of the ITS Multimedia Lab.

A Day in the Life of NYUHome

NYUHome, the University's web portal to a wide variety of information and services, is being used by NYU students, faculty, and staff on an ever-increasing basis. For example, on March 10, 2004, a typical recent day in the life of NYUHome, the portal received more than 12 million "hits" across the day. During the peak period of this average day, NYUHome accommodated 722 hits per second, with 1,464 community members using the site concurrently! As we anticipate that this trend of increased usage will continue, ITS is in the process of engineering the portal to handle a capacity of ten times that amount: up to 7,200 hits per second.

We are pleased that the ever-evolving NYUHome portal has proved to be so popular with the University community, and are committed to continuing to meet your needs—both by expanding and adapting the services NYUHome offers, and by delivering those services to you with speed and convenience. We encourage you to help us guide the future of NYUHome by sharing your feedback with us. Please send e-mail to home@nyu.edu, or submit your comments through the Feedback channel of NYUHome.