CSE/ISE 300 Communication  F11

- Time: Tue/Thur 5:20-6:40PM
- Location: Room 102 Light Engineering
- Required Book: The Elements of Style, 4th edition (2000), Authors: Strunk and White $10 (or $4 2007 reprint by Coyote)
- Online Technical Writing, Author: David A. McMurrey  http://www.io.com/~hcexres/textbook/
- Instructor: Professor Larry Wittie TA: Sean Munson
- Office: CS Building, Room 1308 TA Office: 2110 CSB
- Phone: 631-632-8750 (not 2-8456) TA Hours: 11AM-1PM, Weds
- Email: lw@ic.sunysb.edu TA Email: smunson@cs.stonybrook.edu
- Office Hours: 3:45-5:15PM Tue & Thu or by appointment
- Course Homepage: http://www.cs.sunysb.edu/~lw/teaching/cse300

Memo2 is an English essay due Thursday, 13 Oct 2011
Bring a pen to class Thursday to start Memo2 grading.
CSE/ISE 300
Required Two-Page Memo2

Memo2 is an English essay due Thursday, 13 Oct 2011 as one printed copy in class & a .doc file emailed to lw@ic.sunysb.edu
Subject: 300 memo2  Why I Need a New Work Computer.

Put a title, your name and the paper’s last print date centered on a cover page for your “2.2-page” memo. Use 1.5 lines spacing. 1.25 in. margins. Make memo lines 6 inches long with 30 lines per text page. Make the text of your memo from 60 to 75 lines (2 to 2.5 pgs, 850 to 1150 words). Address your boss politely. Number pages.

Assume the reader is your computer-savvy, but non-expert boss in a company with 20 or fewer employees. The boss has announced that the firm will buy new computers for some employees, those most needing one for their jobs. Justify why the firm will benefit from buying you (or your team) new computer(s). Be specific on why you need a new machine, what computer model with what features, and what price from what source. After the 2.2 pages of memo text, list all web and printed references used for your paper.
Write a technical essay in English on the topic: 

Why I Need a New Work Computer

Explain why you need a new computer, what type, and how it will increase your value to the firm. (In doing so, let me know what is the business of your company, but in a way that will not bore your boss, who knows about the business, but not why you need a new machine for your own job.) Describe the key features of the new computer and why they are critical. Tell what brand, model, cost, and vendor precisely. (List websites with these details in a References section at the end.) Convince your boss to spend a little money.

(Cover page, salutation, headings, and the final References list do not count in the 2 to 2.5 pages. Just memo paragraphs count as text; feature lists, quoted material, and images do not. Headings do help your grade by improving the organization of your memo.)
CSE/ISE 300
Two-Page Memo2: Questions & Answers

> Should the salutation addressing the boss be a “Dear Boss,” statement? Or is that unnecessary?
Dear Ms. Sanford, OR Dear Mr. Thomas, OR Dear Charlie, Salutation preferred for this assignment.

> Do the cover page and reference page have to have page numbers on them?
Yes, try to put References at bottom of last text page so no more than 4 pages, including the cover sheet, are submitted.

> Lastly, does the title, name, and date have to be in the middle of the page on the cover page or just centered?
Centered in a way to make your paper look well organized.
I am in desperate need of a new computer. I believe I have become an asset to Eduware, and believe that for a small investment in my work computer I could become a much more valuable asset. I have found a perfect replacement computer and have customized it to better do my job. The total price for my recommended computer would be $1,486, and I would have it within five days of purchase. My computer is outdated and there is not enough memory to continue work on the Edugame and Math Motorway. These are huge applications, that use a lot of memory a processor power. The high end graphics and large database files can be demanding on a slow computer.

My computer is far too slow, and if nothing else, needs an upgrade for memory. I barely have 512 megabytes (512MB) of random access memory (RAM) on my current desktop. Just having multiple applications running on my computer at once can cause the whole computer to freeze up. I also spend a lot of work time waiting for programs to load, waiting for files to copy, and waiting for our concurrent versions system (CVS) to update. Speed will also become more important as we upgrade our version of Visual Basic.

We, as a company need to stop using Visual Basic 6 (VB6) for programming projects and upgrade to Visual Studio 2008 (VS-08). The Edugame and Math Motorway would be compatible with more operating systems if we used Visual Basic .net from VS-08. The .net application programming interface (API) provides many functions that will be useful while writing Visual Basic office utilities and is a worthwhile investment for us to start using. The problem is, the company computers have very little spare disk space, and the memory demands for VS-08 are steep.

The total cost of all these improvements would be $1,486, the price of a new high technology computer. The OptiPlex™ 755 from Dell has the technology needed to perform my job. I recommend purchasing the OptiPlex™ through the Dell website, at http://www.dell.com/computers/products/productdetails.aspx?optix_755. The OptiPlex™ 755 Mini Tower comes with a Intel® Pentium® Dual Core processor at $679, but with my recommended processor, the Intel® Core™ 2 Quad Q6700 chip, the cost increases to $1,296. The memory must be upgraded from one gigabyte (1GB) to four gigabytes (4GB), which will increase the price by another $90. The OptiPlex has 80GB of disk space on every model, so hard drive space will no longer be a problem. My recommended OptiPlex™ 755 Mini Tower in total costs $1,486, and 3-5 day shipping is included. The computer can be shipped directly to the office. The most important part of my office computer that needs to be upgraded is the processor. My current desktop has a Intel® Celeron® 430 chip, and the computer I am recommending has a Intel® Core™ 2 Quad Q6700 chip. The Q6700 chip is far better at performing multithreaded executions, since it is a dual core processor. This is essential, because the majority of the programming I do at Eduware is multithreaded. In addition, the Q6700 is much faster than the Celeron 430, so I should not have any more problems loading the high-end graphics of the Edugame or Math Motorway. I waste nearly two hours a day waiting for my computer to load when I run the Edugame.

I spend a lot of time waiting for my computer’s current graphics card to render the screen when running the Math Motorway. My current computer has an Integrated Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator 3200, which uses up to 256MB memory shared. My recommended computer has a ATI Radeon™ HD 2400 XT, which has 256MB of dedicated RAM. The Radeon will speed up the execution of the Math Motorway because it is multithreaded and the Radeon has its own dedicated memory rather than using shared memory. We can also use all the extra monitors lying around the office to increase productivity with the Radeon, because it supports multiple monitors. My current graphics card, the Intel Graphics Media Accelerator, is unable to support multiple monitors. The Radeon also supports high definition (HD), so we will be ready to upgrade to HD output whenever we want.

As the world upgrades, so should we. New technology is becoming more and more out of our reach, but with a new computer, we could be state of the art again. With a new computer, I could spend my time more efficiently and get more work done. It would be a useful investment not just to buy me this new computer, but buy one for every programmer in the office. If you are skeptical, a cheaper graphics card and less memory may be adequate for the improvements discussed, but the processor is non-negotiable since it would be much harder to upgrade later. The cost of the computer would easily pay for itself from increased productivity after the first month of working with it. Thank you for taking the time to read my proposal, I hope to discuss this further with you in person.
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CSE/ISE 300
Edited Page 2 of Memo2: A - Past Sample #1

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Thank you for taking the time to read my proposal. I hope to discuss this purchase further with you in person.
CSE/ISE 300

Two-Page Memo2: A- Past Sample #2

Why I Need A New Computer

I need a new computer. My current machine is slow and unreliable. It is beginning to severely affect my work in ways that neither of us want. A new computer will not be costly if we plan the purchase correctly. I do not need a top of the line model, just something that will allow me to efficiently complete my work.

During most of my day, there are two programs that I use – Visual Studio (VS) and 3ds Max (3DS). Both of these programs are resource hogs, and most of the time I have to use both of them at the same time. VS is extremely bloated, like most Microsoft software. It needs up to 200 megabytes (MB) of random access memory (RAM) at a time because of the large number of VS documents that I have open at all times.

3ds Max typically uses 100 MB of RAM, but can use significantly more when I have to render a scene. The speed at which 3DS can render is also greatly dependent on the graphics processing unit (GPU). 3DS can become more processor and RAM intensive depending on the complexity of what I am currently working on as well.

My system slows to a crawl with the combined weight of VS and 3DS and the necessary system processes of Windows XP. I often use nearly all of my available 512 MB of RAM. At times, even the painting of windows comes nearly to a halt until some greedy process finishes its job. During these times, there is nothing I can do but wait. Even the simple task of minimizing a window can take several seconds. Further development during this time is all but impossible.

I work in a continual cycle of graphical level development in 3DS and programming level mechanics in VS. It is imperative that I can quickly switch between the two tasks so changes in one aspect can quickly be reflected in the results of the other. The faster that I can get the levels working, the faster they can be sent off to the character developers and quality checkers. The only thing that holds me back is the speed of my computer. I wish I was able to work faster to see this game developed quicker than scheduled, and could if I was able use my computer more effectively.

In order to facilitate bringing my computer up to speed, I have done a bit of research and outlined what I believe would be a good purchase to fit my needs. I think that you should purchase a Dell computer as they offer warranties with on-site repairs. Dell offers well made computers that can be greatly configured to meet my specific needs. It will be repaired free of charge if anything goes wrong, as long as you purchase a reasonable warranty plan.

The model that you should purchase is the Dell Vostro 400. It is made for small businesses and comes with a 30-day money back guarantee. It also comes with no trial software, so the computer will only have applications that I absolutely need on it. The computer comes with either Windows XP or Vista preloaded. Since I am familiar with XP, I see no need to upgrade to Vista and introduce new bugs into the system.

In total the Vostro will cost $823, including a three year warranty. After three years the computer will be slightly outdated, so it is not worth it keeping a warranty past that time. Going down to a one year warranty will subtract $149 from the cost, but I would not advise it, as replacing any parts will probably cost more than $149.

The Vostro has a 2.0 gigahertz (GHz) dual core central processing unit (CPU). Compared with my current 1.5 GHz single core CPU, this processor will perform about twice as well. Also, since it has two cores, I will be able to multitask more efficiently. Instead on having a single 1.5 GHz processor to run both VS and 3DS, I will have a separate 2.0 GHz processor for each process, so the resources that one is using will not affect the other as much.

RAM is probably the greatest limiting factor in my current computer. I have only 512 MB of RAM, but the Vostro will give me 2 GB of RAM. Especially when rendering, a lot of RAM has to be used to store all the data that is being processed. More RAM will allow me to do more things at one time, and work more efficiently.

I also opted to get a better video card for the computer. Currently, I have an ATI 9600XT, which is not a bad GPU, but an updated card can be better taken advantage of by 3DS, so that it can render faster. I have chosen to get the Nvidia 8600GT, which was a top of the line card only about 2 years ago. It may even be more powerful than necessary and you can choose to downgrave to the Nvidia 8300GS to save $90. The 8300GS is about 25% as powerful as the 8600GT, but should still suit my needs.

A 160 gigabyte (GB) hard drive will be more than enough to store the programs that I use now and any additional software I will need in the future. I chose not to have Microsoft Office installed as we already have a license to it on my current computer, so I can just reinstall it. No other extra options are necessary either since I can just move everything from my current computer to the new one.

Dell’s website does not allow me to link to the exact specification of the computer that I have described. If you go to http://www.dell.com you can build the computer for yourself, and adjust anything that you believe should be different. Hopefully I have convinced you that a new computer will greatly improve my productivity and save the company money in the long run. I look forward to your response.
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Two-Page Memo2: B+ Past Sample #3

Why I Need a New Computer

This is in reference to your announcement about the purchase of new computers for employees who need them the most. I hope you are considering me for an upgrade since my job is among the handful which require extensive computer use, and as we discussed last week, my computer’s performance has recently become inadequate for my work.

Most of the software that our company produces is initially tested on my computer. I am certain that I will get a lot more work done in relatively little time if I had a new, faster machine.

My current computer has exhibited many problems recently. After prolonged periods of use, it automatically shuts itself off. This defect means that I cannot use my computer for more than two or three hours at a time. These frequent restarts act as a major distraction, and at times have resulted in loss of unsaved data. This has often forced me to re-do some of the work that had already been completed. The time put into such data losses could have more efficiently been used on other projects.

The new generation of programs that we started using last year, especially the Computer Aided Design (CAD) systems have been transformed into extremely useful, yet graphics- and power-hungry application programs. My computer has always struggled to run such programs, and fails to open more than one copy of each program. The ability to work with multiple copies would undoubtedly result in less time spent on program testing and debugging.

My current computer is based on the old motherboards which are limited to single processors. Further, its Random Access Memory (RAM) is only upgradable to 1 Gigabyte (GB) - a limit that really affects me since with all the programs I am required to run, 1 GB is inadequate. A simple process such as the daily database backup currently takes up to 3 hours to complete.

With a new computer, I would initially have 2 GB of RAM and the ability to upgrade to a maximum of 8 GB, if needed in the future. This would be sufficient for all my programming needs.

I will undoubtedly be a lot more productive and of much more value to the company if I do not have to deal with frustrating issues such as slow performance, frequent equipment failure and limited program accessibility.

The computer I have been considering is the M4300 Workstation from Dell and is available on Dell’s website at the following address:

http://www.dell.com/content/products/productdetails.aspx?precm4300

The M4300 incorporates Intel’s new Dual Core technology for double the processor speed of ordinary computers. It includes 2 GB of RAM and a 512 MB graphics card from NVIDIA. This configuration would be able to run multiple copies of our CAD applications without any delays. I will also be getting 200 GB of hard disk space – enough to store all the data for our current projects. This would give me instant access to any data I may need when I am on the road or during a presentation or a meeting.

The addition of a wireless adapter on the new system would enable me to connect to the company network from anywhere in the building. I would no longer be confined to my office for internet access. Wireless connectivity would be extremely beneficial in situations where I need to access information from the network during a meeting or a presentation. The lack of this feature on my current computer has at times prevented me from verifying questionable data put forward during numerous presentations, only to find out later that it was in fact erroneous.

The M4300 is priced at $1,629 and is currently being shipped at no extra charge.

The page I mentioned above also includes some reviews which I found very interesting when making my decision. I would appreciate it if you could take a look at this system and the reviews it has been getting and consider it as an upgrade for me. I know the price may seem expensive, but the value this new computer will give to me and to the company will definitely make up for the initial cost.
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The computer I have been considering is the M4300 Workstation from Dell and is available on Dell’s website at the following address:

http://www.dell.com/content/products/productdetails.aspx?precn_m4300

The M4300 incorporates Intel’s new Dual Core technology for double the processor speed of ordinary computers. It includes 2 GB of RAM and a 512 MB graphics card from NVIDIA. This configuration would be able to run multiple copies of our CAD applications without any delays. I will also be getting 200 GB of hard disk space – enough to store all the data for our current projects. This would give me instant access to any data I may need when I am on the road or during a presentation or a meeting.

The addition of a wireless adapter on the new system would enable me to connect to the company network from anywhere in the building. I would no longer be confined to my office for internet access. Wireless connectivity would be extremely beneficial in situations where I need to access information from the network during a meeting or a presentation. The lack of this feature on my current computer has at times prevented me from verifying questionable data put forward during numerous presentations, only to find out later that it was in fact erroneous.

The M4300 is priced at $1,629 and is currently being shipped at no extra charge.

The page I mentioned above also includes some reviews which I found very interesting when making my decision. I would appreciate it if you could take a look at this system and the reviews it has been getting and consider it as an upgrade for me. I know the price may seem expensive, but the value this new computer will give to me and to the company will definitely make up for the initial cost.