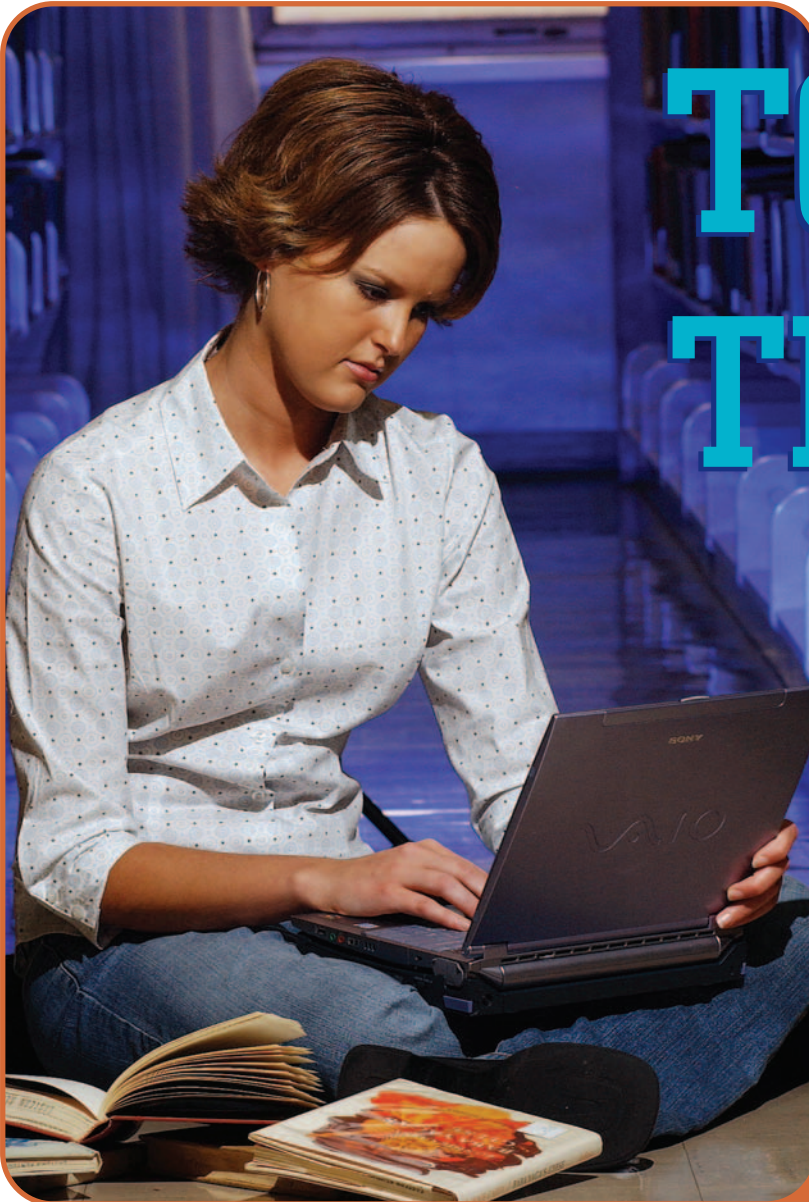


Tom Webb photo



# TOOLS OF THE TRADE

One of the key components to getting your college career off to a good start is organization. (Well, that and showing up for class!) Fortunately, there's all kind of technology out there to help you stay on track!

For most college students, a laptop computer is an invaluable tool. Though notebooks aren't usually quite as fast as desktops, have smaller displays, and are priced slightly higher, the freedom they give students on campus is immeasurable. Notebooks can easily handle term papers and note-taking, and during downtime, they can play DVDs or burn songs on CDs. You will come to depend on your computer, so make sure you take care of it.

The tips below will help you protect the most important tool of the students' trade.

## Tech Tips

- @ Buy a security cable for your laptop. Having a thief make off with both your computer and your papers will only add insult to injury if it happens.
- @ Don't depend on the spell check to proofread your papers. A recent study suggests that students who use the grammar and spell-check functions tend to have more errors than if they had used their own judgment. Take the time to proofread. Your grade will thank you.
- @ RAM drives are a great way to transport big chunks of data. The 32 and 64 MB drives are less than \$20 dollars and will keep you from having to carry a stack of floppies around.
- @ Create back-ups of all your work. And ALWAYS put the backup on CD rather than floppy disk, if possible. They're more durable and don't degrade if exposed to magnetic fields from things like televisions and stereo speakers. Hard drives are more durable these days, but they still fail, especially in laptops that are moved about so much. Always have a back-up in your student profile or on your computer at home.
- @ Don't open that email unless you know who sent it. Viruses can wreck your hard drive and cause a lot of damage. Unfortunately, it's all too easy to get infected. A good virus scanning program and some caution are a requirement these days, but you can still get zapped.
- @ When downloading files from the Web, always use the option "open from location." DO NOT click download. Once you can view your document, then "save as" into your student profile on the server or on the desktop.