MIT’s computing environment consists of a rich array of technologies and information resources for academic, research, and administrative use. MIT Information Systems and Technology (IS&T) provides services and facilities available to every member of the MIT community, including MITnet (the campus network), the Athena Computing Environment (centrally provided hardware and software resources), the on-campus telephone system, co-location services for high-performance research computers, centrally licensed and downloadable software, cloud-based offerings, and a variety of support services.

MITnet connects tens of thousands of computers across the campus and connects MIT to networks around the world. All buildings on the MIT campus offer high-speed wireless connectivity in addition to wired network connections.

Athena, used for academic computing, is available in computer labs ("the clusters") and on departmental and personal machines throughout campus. Based on the Linux operating system, Athena provides a large collection of third-party software, including popular scientific and engineering software such as MATLAB, Maple, and Mathematica.

Graphics software such as SolidWorks, LabVIEW, and Tableau is available through IS&T’s software grid, along with operating systems and math, programming, database, and security software. Online training on software and technology is available through lynda.mit.edu.

Cloud-based services at MIT include Dropbox, the file-hosting service; CrashPlan, the recommended backup solution for desktops and laptops; and Office 365 for mobile devices, which includes integration with Dropbox.

Even though a laptop is not required, most students use a laptop on campus in addition to MIT-provided computers. IS&T provides recommendations, advice, and discounts from recommended vendors for laptop bundles that meet MIT's course and software requirements.

IS&T provides full support for recommended hardware and software through its Service Desk, which offers email, web, and phone support, a walk-in center, and assistance with connecting to and using the MIT network in the residence halls. The Service Desk also provides certified warranty repair for Apple, Dell, and Lenovo ThinkPad hardware.

Visit the website (http://ist.mit.edu) for more information on IS&T and computing at MIT or for details on getting started with IT as a student (http://ist.mit.edu/students), including an overview of MIT’s student computing environment, details on available services, computer recommendations, and software downloads.