PONDICHERRY UNIVERSITY

(A Central University)

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

M.Sc. Computer Science

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IT ASSETS IN LAB

1. Desktop Computers

Ownership: IT Department / Lab Administrators

Usage:

Desktop computers are central to student work, research, programming, and accessing online resources. They are equipped with various software applications tailored for academic needs, serving as the primary tool for most lab activities.

Risks:

- **Physical Damage:** Accidental spills, drops, or wear and tear can render computers unusable.
- **Unauthorized Access:** Insecure environments may lead to unauthorized individuals accessing sensitive data or applications.
- **Malware Infection:** Users may inadvertently download malware, leading to data breaches or system failures.
- **Data Theft:** Sensitive academic work can be stolen if devices are not properly secured.

Mitigation:

- **Physical Security:** Lock computers to desks to prevent theft and secure access.
- **User Privileges:** Limit user access rights to only necessary functions to minimize risks.
- **Antivirus Software:** Install and regularly update antivirus and anti-malware software to protect against threats.
- **Usage Policies:** Enforce strict usage policies to educate users about safe practices, including avoiding suspicious downloads.

2. Monitors

Ownership: IT Department / Lab Administrators

Usage:

Monitors display output for users, making them essential for all lab activities, including coding, research presentations, and group projects.

Risks:

- **Physical Damage:** Monitors can be damaged through mishandling or accidental impacts.
- **Theft:** Monitors are portable and can be easily stolen if left unattended.
- **Component Failure:** Internal parts can fail, rendering the monitor unusable.

Mitigation:

- **Security Cables:** Use locking cables to secure monitors to desks or walls.
- **Regular Inspections:** Conduct routine inspections to identify physical damage early.
- **Asset Tags:** Label monitors with asset tags for tracking and accountability, which also discourages theft.

3. Network Routers & Switches

Ownership: IT Department / Network Administrators

Usage:

Routers and switches enable internet and intranet connectivity within the lab, facilitating communication between devices and resource sharing.

Risks:

- **Unauthorized Access:** Poorly secured networks can be accessed by unauthorized users, leading to potential breaches.
- **Data Interception:** Network traffic can be intercepted, compromising sensitive data.
- **Hardware Failure:** Failures can disrupt connectivity and lab activities.
- **Exploitation of Vulnerabilities:** Unpatched hardware can be targeted by attackers.

Mitigation:

- **Physical Security:** Keep routers and switches in secure locations with limited access.
- **Strong Passwords:** Implement strong passwords and encryption protocols to secure devices.
- **Traffic Monitoring:** Regularly monitor network traffic for unusual activities that may indicate a security breach.
- **Firmware Updates:** Keep router and switch firmware up to date to protect against known vulnerabilities.

4. Printers & Scanners

Ownership: IT Department / Lab Administrators

Usage:
Printers and scanners are used extensively by students and faculty for producing hard copies of documents, scanning physical materials, and sharing information.

Risks:

- **Unauthorized Use:** Open access can lead to misuse of resources or waste of supplies.
- **Data Leakage:** Sensitive documents can be printed and left unattended, exposing information.
- **Hardware Wear:** Frequent use can lead to wear and tear on machines.
- **Paper Waste:** Excessive printing can result in unnecessary waste and costs.

Mitigation:

- **Authentication for Print Jobs:** Require users to authenticate before printing to control access and monitor usage.
- **Access Logs:** Implement logging mechanisms to track printer and scanner use.
- **Usage Monitoring:** Regularly review usage reports to identify and curb waste.
- **Eco-Friendly Policies:** Encourage double-sided printing and digital submissions to reduce waste.

5. External Storage Devices (USB, HDDs)

Ownership: Individual Users / IT Department (for shared devices)
Usage:
External storage devices are commonly used for data transfer, backup, and providing additional storage capacity for users.

Risks:

- **Malware Transfer:** External devices can carry malware that infects lab computers.
- **Data Leakage:** Sensitive information can be easily copied to untrusted devices.
- **Loss or Theft:** Portable devices can be lost or stolen, compromising data security.

Mitigation:

- **Disable Unused Ports:** Disable USB ports on computers that do not require them for increased security.
- **Antivirus Scans:** Enforce antivirus scans on all external devices before connecting them to lab computers.
- **Encryption Requirements:** Require encryption on all external storage to protect data in case of loss.
- **Limit Access:** Only allow trusted users to connect external devices to lab computers.

6. Operating Systems (Windows, Linux, etc.)

Ownership: IT Department / Software Management Team
Usage:
Operating systems provide the necessary environment for running applications and managing resources, enabling students and faculty to complete their work.

Risks:

- **Vulnerability Exploitation:** Outdated systems can be targeted by malware or hackers.
- **Unauthorized Access:** Misconfigured settings can lead to unauthorized system access.
- **Data Breaches:** Inadequate security can result in the exposure of sensitive information.

Mitigation:

- **Regular Updates:** Ensure that operating systems are updated regularly with the latest security patches.

- **Access Restrictions:** Limit administrator access to qualified personnel only to prevent unauthorized changes.
- **Firewall Protection:** Use firewalls to monitor incoming and outgoing traffic.
- **System Logs Monitoring:** Regularly review system logs for unusual behavior that may indicate security issues.

7. Software Licenses (Microsoft Office, Adobe, etc.)

Ownership: IT Department / Software Management Team

Usage:

Software licenses provide access to essential productivity tools needed for coursework, research, and projects.

Risks:

- **License Expiration:** Failing to renew licenses can result in software being inaccessible.
- **Unauthorized Usage:** Non-compliance can lead to financial penalties and legal issues.
- **Financial Loss:** Non-compliance with licensing agreements can lead to unexpected costs and loss of reputation.

Mitigation:

- **Centralized Software Management:** Keep track of all software licenses and their expiration dates.
- **Usage Monitoring:** Regularly review license usage to ensure compliance and address unauthorized use.
- **Renewal Reminders:** Set up reminders for renewal dates to prevent lapses in licensing.

8. Learning Management Systems (LMS)

Ownership: IT Department / Academic Affairs
Usage:
LMS manages assignments, tests, and other learning resources, streamlining the academic experience for students and faculty.

Risks:

- **Data Breaches:** Sensitive student information can be exposed if the system is compromised.
- **Unauthorized Data Access:** Insufficient access controls can lead to unauthorized viewing of sensitive information.
- **System Downtime:** Outages can disrupt academic activities and access to resources.

Mitigation:

- **Access Controls:** Enforce strong access controls and role-based permissions to limit who can view or edit sensitive information.
- **Two-Factor Authentication (2FA):** Implement 2FA for faculty and student accounts to enhance security.
- **Regular Backups:** Conduct frequent backups to recover data in case of a breach or system failure.

9. Antivirus Software

Ownership: IT Department
Usage:
Antivirus software protects systems from malware and virus infections, ensuring the integrity of lab computers.

Risks:

- **System Slowdown:** Heavy antivirus operations can impact system performance.
- **Outdated Definitions:** Failing to update virus definitions can leave systems vulnerable.
- **Compatibility Issues:** Some antivirus programs may conflict with other installed software.

Mitigation:

- **Automatic Updates:** Schedule automatic updates for virus definitions and software to ensure protection against the latest threats.
- **Regular Scans:** Conduct regular scans to identify and remove threats.
- **Compatibility Checks:** Test antivirus software with existing applications to prevent conflicts.

10. Firewall (Hardware or Software)

Ownership: IT Department / Network Security Team
Usage:
Firewalls control and monitor incoming and outgoing network traffic, providing a critical layer of protection against unauthorized access.

Risks:

- **Improper Configuration:** Incorrect settings can create vulnerabilities in the network.
- **Failure to Monitor:** Lack of regular monitoring can result in undetected attacks.
- **Hardware/Software Failure:** Firewalls may fail, leaving the network unprotected.

Mitigation:

- **Secure Configuration:** Configure firewalls securely and review settings regularly.
- **Real-Time Monitoring:** Enable real-time monitoring to detect and respond to threats promptly.
- **Regular Audits:** Conduct periodic audits of firewall rules and logs to identify and address potential vulnerabilities.

11. Surveillance Cameras

Ownership: IT Department / Security Team
Usage:
Surveillance cameras monitor the physical security of the computer lab to deter unauthorized access and ensure safety.

Risks:

- **Privacy Concerns:** Users may feel their privacy is compromised by constant monitoring.
- **Tampering:** Cameras can be disabled or tampered with, rendering them ineffective.
- **Data Theft:** If access to video feeds is not secure, recordings can be stolen or misused.

Mitigation:

- **Controlled Access:** Limit access to camera feeds to authorized personnel only.
- **Secure Storage:** Store video footage securely and implement encryption for offsite storage.

- **User Notifications:** Inform users of surveillance through visible signage to address privacy concerns.

12. Backup Storage Solutions (NAS, Cloud)

Ownership: IT Department / Data Management Team
Usage:
Backup storage solutions store critical data to recover in case of data loss or hardware failure, ensuring continuity of operations.

Risks:

- **Data Leakage:** Unauthorized access to backup data can expose sensitive information.
- **Unauthorized Access:** Poor access controls can lead to data breaches.
- **Data Corruption:** Backup data can become corrupted, rendering it useless.

Mitigation:

- **Data Encryption:** Encrypt all backup data to protect against unauthorized access.
- **Secure Storage Locations:** Use secure physical and cloud storage solutions with strong access controls.
- **Access Restrictions:** Limit access to backup systems to administrators or IT staff only.

13. Network Security Software (Firewall, IDS/IPS)

Ownership: IT Department / Network Security Team
Usage:
Network security software detects and prevents network threats, intrusion attempts, and unauthorized access.

Risks:

- **Incorrect Configuration:** Misconfigurations can expose the network to threats.
- **Missed Threats:** Failure to update definitions can result in missed security alerts.
- **Unauthorized Configuration Access:** Access to security configurations by unqualified personnel can lead to vulnerabilities.

Mitigation:

- **Update Threat Definitions:** Keep threat definitions and security software updated regularly.
- **Best Practices Configuration:** Follow industry best practices for configuring security software.
- **Limit Admin Access:** Restrict administrative access to qualified staff only, ensuring they have the necessary expertise.

14. User Accounts and Authentication Systems

Ownership: IT Department / User Account Management Team
Usage:
User accounts provide personalized access to systems and resources in the lab, facilitating collaboration and individualized learning.

Risks:

- **Weak Passwords:** Users may create easily guessable passwords, increasing vulnerability.
- **Account Compromise:** Phishing or social engineering attacks can lead to account takeovers.
- **Unauthorized Access:** Failure to manage account privileges can result in unauthorized access to sensitive resources.

Mitigation:

- **Strong Password Policies:** Enforce strong password requirements, including length and complexity.
- **Two-Factor Authentication (2FA):** Mandate 2FA for all user accounts to enhance security.
- **User Education:** Provide training on phishing risks and safe online practices.
- **Access Logs:** Monitor access logs to track account activity and detect suspicious behavior.