Software Advice

General Tips

1. In past 3 years, modern operating system (OS) releases have added hurdles if you seek to install software from non-approved vendors. The warnings typically invoke viruses or security concerns. Free and open-source software, generally maintained by academics, often designed originally for servers and UNIX operating system, has been around longer, relies on volunteer labor, and is not going to start jumping through OS vendor hoops, because the work on software is not for-profit and because many people who do the work on software have other jobs. Therefore, when installing open source software, your Windows or Macintosh OS may issue ominous security warnings. You are an adult: if you trust me, you should override the OS settings.

2. To install software, you must have an administrator account on your computer. And you must also be logged in as the administor when installing. In Windows, especially, you may be required to install or run software in administrator mode.
3. Much open-source software will be available through GitHub or SourceForge and sometimes on web sites that look dicey to you because they still employ frames and fonts out of 1990s. Despite my advice that you trust me, SourceForge is a private company that has been known to take advantage of newbie users. See SourceForge Warning. I will try to warn you of potential pitfalls, but I encourage you to warn one another if you encounter problems. GitHub is generally more widely used today for distribution of open source software.
4. Likewise, open source software originally designed for UNIX may have less support for mouse, may demand a whole arsenal of arcane commands, may have minimal availability of handholding tutorials, and may offer almost no immediate rewards during first hours of use, first days of use, or even first weeks of use. That is, expect 20 hours of struggle to reach minimal competence. Ask me about how long it took to achieve basic competence with LaTeX, PanDoc, Vim Text Editor, GitHub, etc. Thr answers: 4 mos., 4 weeks, 2 mos., 1 week, etc.
5. Operating Systems:

- Apple Macintosh, you should be on Snow Leopard, Snow Lion, or Maverick. You may install and run UNIX-based software on Macintosh, which has been a UNIX OS for several years. Often, such as for Vim, you may have a choice of a UNIX-style version (shipped with OS) and a ported Macintosh version that you can download from a separate web site, which will have better support for usual Macintosh interface and user behaviors.

- MS Windows, you should be on Windows 7 or later. Windows XP is no longer supported. Windows Vista is generally OK, but it is fading in use.
- UNIX implementations like Ubuntu, Red Hat for laptop or desktop system. Any modern UNIX implementation should work fine. But you're on your own, like always.
- Apple or Android Tablets, Google Chrome, etc. These are not supported, and I have no idea whether you can do the work using them. I have no recommendations for OS-level hacking, emulation, dual boot modes, etc. I am not a hacker: I am relatively proficient for an English professor.

5. I am not a substitute for trained computer troubleshooters or technicians. For software, contact KSU HelpDesk. For virus and component repair, contact KSU TechSpot.

Managing Your Own Web Identity and Projects

Reclaim Hosting

WordPress

Omeka

Plain Text Editors

It is very important to use a plain text editor instead of a word processor when preparing text-based documents. Word processors like Microsoft Word and Google Document and Open Office and Apple Pages create documents that are difficult to read outside of the software and are often difficult to translate into plain text documents that can be used by other software. Learning all the vagaries of an individual word processor is a less valuable skill than learning to encode plain text documents so that they easily translate from one operating system and one processing system to another. The latter is a goal of this course. Another course goal is to reduce or eliminate your dependence on any particular software vendor. Both are valuable for professions in which you have to prepare documentation and analyze data—because software development professionals will recognize and trust you as a fellow professional. I do not care which of the following you use, but Vi and emacs are entire worlds of their own, into which considerable immersion is necessary to achieve basic competence. But they are very powerful and very widely used.

Vi Improved (Vim), for UNIX, Macintosh, and Windows

- Download: Vim Installer. Select the appropriate executable installer for Windows or Mac (MacVim), and follow instructions for installation.
- Complete the basic online tutorial (browser-based VIM emulation) at Open Vim.
- Within actual VIM, complete the vimtutor. 1) Open VIM, 2) Click . 3) Type "vimtutor" (exclude quote marks) and press . If that does not work, type ":help vimtutor" and follow the instructions. Or, type ":echo $VIMRUNTIME" to figure out where vimtutor is located. Typically, it's located in "tutor" folder within the $VIMRUNTIME location. For browser-based emulation of text file, see vimtutor. To "read" the tutorial here is not enough. Complete each exercise within VIM, about 45 minutes.
- For higher proficiency, see Daniel Miessler, VIM Tutorial and Primer And see Laurent Grégoire, VIM Quick Reference

emacs for UNIX, Windows, and Macintosh

- Download (Hard Way): [emacs Home Page]("http://www.gnu.org/software/emacs/emacs.html" http://www.gnu.org/software/emacs/emacs.html). Select the "Nearby GNU Mirror" in "Obtaining/Downloading GNU emacs."
- Download (Macintosh, Easy Way): If you are on Macintosh, emacs is already installed. But for the latest version, see http://emacsformacosx.com/. For a more Mac-like emacs, see Aquamacs
- Download (Windows, no Easy Way): If you are on Windows, select "windows" folder and then download "emacs-24.3-bin-i386.zip". Instructions on successful Windows setup are available at [Claremont McKenna Faculty Page on emacs Windows Setup]("http://www.claremontmckenna.edu/pages/faculty/alee/emacs/emacs.ht http://www.claremontmckenna.edu/pages/faculty/alee/emacs/emacs.html)
- For introductory tutorial, see Jess Hamrick's Absolute Beginner's Guide. For a more amibitious overview, within emacs, type C-h t.

Other Plain Text Editors

- BBEdit (paid) or free TextWrangler (Macintosh): Bare Bones Text Wrangler Download
- Notepad ++ (Windows, free): Notepad ++
- Sublime Text, test and then buy (Macintosh or Windows) http://www.sublimetext.com/3

Working Together

Working together is difficult, but you will be working in teams. And you need to develop routines to ensure that you can work together efficiently. The only required tool will be GitHub, which you will use to manage your source text documents, but you may also use other tools to organize your collaboration with other members of your team.