There are approximately 3,500 computers on the PLU campus, and we leave the majority of these on continuously despite a lack of use. These computers are simply sitting idle through the nights and weekends, costing PLU about $124,173 annually. On top of the cost, this puts PLU further away from our goal of carbon neutrality. To make matters worse, PLU's electric provider Parkland Light and Water has just announced a 7% raise increase. The most common reasons for not turning off computers at night include old ideas and superstitions such as turning computers on and off is bad for them, or that important processes like updates will be missed or forced to be done during prime use hours. So let's go myth-busting.

Back in the old days it was true that computers could be damaged by going through too many power-on cycles, and it was recommended to avoid unnecessarily rebooting the machine. Things have developed a lot since then, computer chips are longer affected by the startup process. IT experts also no longer recommend avoiding shutdowns:

"*Of course it makes sense that a machine that is meant to last 40,000 hrs will last longer if only used eight hours a day, turning off a computer cannot ever hurt the machine, it will only help to make it last longer,"* this according to PLU's Dell sales rep.

Most software updates run seamlessly in the background without any issues for the end-user. As for major updates and those that require restarts, I&TS is capable of remotely booting up and installing software during the night. So there aren't really issues there either.

So unPLUg! You can't miss out on updates or damage the machine. For those who want to go further there are also special powersaving modes on most computers. You can set your computer to hibernate after so long without use, or standby.

Directions on how to set your computer up to do the work for you can be found at the Sustainability Blog at www.sustainabilityPLU.wordpress.org, or contact the help desk at 7525 for more questions.

I&TS Information and Technology Services