

Why does the Macintosh platform has be to current?

September 16, 2004

OS X 10.3 is required for its built-in 802.1X client. Mac Operating Systems prior to OS X 10.3 didn't include 802.1X as a feature, so the only way to get it is to upgrade to 10. The built-in 802.1X client does only work with Apple-branded Airport and Airport Extreme cards, so that wouldn't help an old system and external wireless NIC (such as Lombard with an Asante-branded). The Education price for the OS X upgrade is only \$69 though.

Also, Meetinghouse has an AEGIS 802.1X client for OS X 10.2, at:

<http://www.mtghouse.com/products/aegisclient/mac/index.shtml>

It's not a free piece of software, but they do offer a free 30-day demo. While we haven't had a chance to try this software, nor do we have an older Mac to test it on, we are optimistic that it'll work with our system. We think the price for the client is in the \$40-\$50 range.

We understand the frustration with attempting to connect a 5-year old laptop to our wireless network, but we have made security our primary concern, not only for the integrity of our network, but for the privacy of the students whose data is being sent over it. It's very easy to do wireless networking in an insecure fashion, but that would place our students, their data, and the integrity of our network at risk. We've opted for a more secure infrastructure, at the expense of connectivity with some older hardware and software.

The Apple 802.1X client is the best implementation we've worked with so far, and we tested with it before even attempting to use Windows. It's just unfortunate that Apple hasn't back-ported the 802.1X client to their older operating system revisions, nor do they allow it to work with third-party wireless cards though it's somewhat outside our control.