

Discussion Questions for “Development Environment - Installation”

1. How long does it take the typical student to get a development environment for CS-140 up and running?
2. The CS-140 course throws a lot at you in the beginning of the semester – Java, git, UNIX command line processing, compile and run conventions, etc. Is it too much at one time? Can you think of any way to spread out some of the new stuff over more time? Or is it better to get this kind of thing resolved early in the semester so we can concentrate on more computer science concerns for the rest of the class?
3. In this class, the best option is to develop on your own laptop or desktop computer. Should all students have a laptop or desktop computer? Is there a concern that some students may not be able to afford high-tech equipment? How should BU handle the concern for fairness in terms of electronic equipment considered vital to a modern college education?
4. Virtually all students in this CS-140 class have chosen to install a JDK and git on their own computers, because that’s the most convenient way of working. (You can work on your Java code whenever you are next to your computer.) Can you imagine other development environments that would be just as convenient, but not rely on expensive hardware? For instance, what about a smart-phone app that would link in to a highly efficient and reliable BU hosted server?
5. There are some web sites, such as repl.it, that offer web editors, compilers, and execution environments “free” for all comers. Would such a web environment be more useful and convenient as a development environment for a class like CS-140? Would such environments prepare students for industry jobs better or worse than installing JDK on your own machine?