

forward: A low-cost laptop for every child

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.fractals/2005-11/msg00020.html>

- *From:* Roger Bagula <rlbagulatftn@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 17 Nov 2005 14:53:43 GMT
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http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/techinnovations/2005-11-15-one-laptop-child_x

A low-cost laptop for every child

By Christa Case, The Christian Science Monitor

In Cambridge, Mass., Nicholas Negroponte and his team at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have been chipping away at a long-held dream: producing a laptop so cheap that governments could afford to link every child in the world to the Internet.

'One Laptop Per Child' aims to make \$100 computers that are rugged and capable of wireless connection to the Internet. 'One Laptop Per Child' aims to make \$100 computers that are rugged and capable of wireless connection to the Internet.

By Kirk Wagner, The Appleton Post-Crescent via AP

Wednesday, that idea could be lifted to a whole new level.

Mr. Negroponte, chairman of MIT's Media Lab, will unveil his brainchild with United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan at a technology meeting in Tunisia. The meeting of the U.N.'s World Summit on the Information Society is aimed at beginning to put into effect its stated goals where "everyone, everywhere should have the opportunity to participate" in the benefits of information technology.

To do that, MIT and other groups have been pushing hard to create a low-cost laptop.

For example, the Indian government in cooperation with the U.S.-based Jhai Foundation, has plans for developing a \$200 machine for rural villages.

Negroponte's goal is even more aggressive: a \$100 computer.

So far, the MIT group has whittled production costs down to less than \$130.

To save money, it will run off the free Linux operating system instead of

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a proprietary system like Microsoft Windows. But the proposed machine will be full-color, capable of wireless connection to the Internet, and rugged enough to survive getting dropped in the mud.

Five corporate sponsors, including Google and Advanced Micro Devices, have chipped in \$2 million apiece to form a non-profit group, One Laptop Per Child, to oversee the project.

Nearly a half-dozen developing countries have expressed serious interest in ordering 1 million or more units, says Alexandra Kahn, spokeswoman for the MIT Media Lab.

Also, the U.N. Development Program has agreed to help distribute the machines, particularly to countries whose orders fall short of the million-unit bar Negroponte had originally set to help keep costs down.

American students could benefit, too.

Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney has proposed a \$54 million program to equip each of his state's 500,000 middle- and high-schoolers with the laptops, which the students would be allowed to keep. Other states may follow suit.

OLPC officials estimate they'll need another six months to complete development of the machine. Production will begin in the third quarter of 2006, with distribution late next year or early in 2007, says Ms. Kahn.

Ultimately, "this is not about machines," says Seymour Papert, a pioneer of childhood learning and a principal with Negroponte of the OLPC effort.

"It is the next big step toward a vision of learning being transformed as radically as medicine, communications, and entertainment," he says.

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Roger Bagula wrote:

From a Gates biography at Microsoft:

"Gates attended public elementary school and the private Lakeside School. There, he discovered his interest in software and began programming computers at age 13."

<http://www.microsoft.com/billgates/bio.asp>

The point is that students are not really educated about computers, but educated to become blind users.

Fundamental computer education as it existed in the 60's, 70's and early 80's is gone.

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http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0JVP/is_2003_Spring/ai_10211971

<http://www.erzwiss.uni-hamburg.de/Sonstiges/Logo/logolite.htm>

It is very hard to do much with fractals unless you know at least the basic fundamental of computers and some programming. Most children are taught in school to use computer programs and not to make them.