

Annan to present prototype \$100 laptop at World Summit on Information Society

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U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan will unveil the first working prototype of the \$100 laptop tonight at the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, Tunisia. Annan will be joined by Nicholas Negroponte, chairman and co-founder of the Media Lab at MIT, in presenting the laptop to the gathering.

The \$100 laptop, first announced by Negroponte at the World Economic Forum in January 2005, is an ultra-low-cost, full-featured computer designed to dramatically enhance children's primary and secondary education worldwide. It is a joint project of the Media Lab and the

nonprofit One Laptop per Child (OLPC) association, which aims to equip the world's schoolchildren and their teachers with a personal, portable, connected computer.

"The \$100 laptop is inspiring in many respects," said Annan. "It is an impressive technical achievement, able to do almost everything that larger, more expensive computers can do. It holds the promise of major advances in economic and social development. But perhaps most important is the true meaning of 'one laptop per child.' This is not just a matter of giving a laptop to each child, as if bestowing on them some magical charm. The magic lies within -- within each child, within each scientist-, scholar-, or just plain citizen-in-the-making. This initiative is meant to bring it forth into the light of day."

"Children are the greatest natural resource of any country, and educating these children is at the root of solving our largest and most complex problems," said Negroponte. "Yet the best education may not come from sitting in a traditional classroom, but rather through independent interaction and exploration. The development of a \$100 laptop will now make this possible for all kids -- especially those in developing nations. It will redefine how we 'learn learning.'"

OLPC is a Delaware-based, nonprofit organization created by faculty members from the MIT Media Lab to design, manufacture and distribute laptops that are sufficiently inexpensive to provide every child in the world access to knowledge and modern forms of education. The laptops will be sold to governments and issued to children by schools on a basis of one laptop per child. These machines will be rugged, Linux-based, and so energy-efficient that hand-cranking alone will generate sufficient power for operation. Mesh networking will give many machines Internet access from one connection. The pricing goal is to start at approximately \$100 and then steadily decrease.

The World Summit on the Information Society is the culmination of three years of planning, turning the global spotlight to developing strategies to bridge the digital divide and harness the power of information and communication technologies to spur progress towards the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals. More than forty-five heads of state and delegations from more than 150 nations are among the 16,000 attendees.

Source: MIT

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