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## **\$100 laptop for world's poor children**

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**1 October, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **\$100 laptop for world's poor children**

**BNE:** The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has unveiled plans to produce a laptop computer for under \$100 that will revolutionize computer accessibility to children in developing countries. Nicholas Negroponte, head of MIT's Media Lab, has set up a new initiative called One Laptop Per Child. It is a non-profit organization that will distribute the new machines en masse and ensure the world's poor don't end up on the wrong side of a digital divide. Mr. Negroponte stumbled across the idea after observing how children in a Cambodian village learned from a laptop. He decided to design a computer that was cheap and robust enough to be used anywhere in the world and that did not need electricity or batteries.

The laptops are powered by clockwork. One minute of winding up a hand crank produces ten minutes of power. They are foldable in more ways than a conventional laptop and are encased in rubber to increase their sturdiness. They will be able to do almost everything a \$1,000 model can do except store huge amounts of data. The machines have color screens, 1GB of memory and four USB ports. Negroponte is aiming at one laptop per child rather than per community as he wants computers to be personal learning tools. He explained: "One does not think of community pencils." He added: "They are a wonderful way for all children to 'learn learning' through independent interaction and exploration." Plans are now in place to distribute 15 million of the devices over the next five years.

## WARM-UPS

**1. MY COMPUTER HISTORY:** In pairs / groups, talk about your history with computers. Can you remember the first time you used one? Do you have a love-hate relationship with them? How important have they become in your life?

**2. ENABLING:** Talk with your partner(s) about how computers benefit the lives of the following people:

- Children in Cambodian villages
- Senior citizens
- The US President
- Soccer players
- Four-year-old children
- Backpackers
- Artists
- English students

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Technology / laptop computers / \$100 computers / developing countries / non-profit organizations / digital divides / batteries / clockwork / pencils / learning*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. LAPTOPS:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with laptop computers. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. COMPUTERS:** In pairs / groups, agree on the endings to the following sentences about computers. Talk about what you wrote. Change partners and share your sentences and ideas.

- a. Computers are \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. Computers should \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. Computers can \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. Computers can't \_\_\_\_\_.
- e. Computers will \_\_\_\_\_.
- f. Computers may \_\_\_\_\_.
- g. Computers could \_\_\_\_\_.
- h. Computers have \_\_\_\_\_.

**6. COMPUTERLESS:** With your partner(s), talk about what the world would be like without computers. What things would suddenly stop working? What would you have to do differently every day?

## **BEFORE READING / LISTENING**

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Third World children can buy recycled laptop computers for \$100. T / F
- b. A university head wants developing world children to have computers. T / F
- c. The idea came from children in a Massachusetts elementary school. T / F
- d. The computers need lots of batteries. T / F
- e. A wind-up hand crank gives the computers ten minutes of power. T / F
- f. The laptops cannot do most of what more expensive computers can. T / F
- g. Each laptop will come with a free pencil. T / F
- h. Plans are to produce 15 million of the laptops over the next five years. T / F

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| a. unveiled      | guarantee   |
| b. revolutionize | connections |
| c. initiative    | usual       |
| d. ensure        | machines    |
| e. robust        | transform   |
| f. crank         | sturdy      |
| g. conventional  | made public |
| h. ports         | contact     |
| i. interaction   | starter     |
| j. devices       | enterprise  |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| a. unveiled                    | en masse                                 |
| b. set up a new                | by clockwork                             |
| c. distribute the new machines | anywhere in the world                    |
| d. Mr. Negro ponte stumbled    | to increase their sturdiness             |
| e. robust enough to be used    | learning through independent interaction |
| f. The laptops are powered     | plans                                    |
| g. winding up a hand crank     | initiative called One Laptop Per Child   |
| h. encased in rubber           | produces ten minutes of power            |
| i. One laptop per child        | across the idea                          |
| j. learn                       | rather than per community                |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

### \$100 laptop for world's poor children

**BNE:** The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has \_\_\_\_\_ plans to produce a laptop computer for under \$100 that will revolutionize computer \_\_\_\_\_ to children in developing countries. Nicholas Negroponte, \_\_\_\_\_ of MIT's Media Lab, has set up a new initiative called One Laptop Per Child. It is a non-profit organization that will distribute the new machines en \_\_\_\_\_ and ensure the world's poor don't \_\_\_\_\_ up on the wrong side of a digital \_\_\_\_\_. Mr. Negroponte \_\_\_\_\_ across the idea after observing how children in a Cambodian village learned from a laptop. He decided to design a computer that was cheap and \_\_\_\_\_ enough to be used anywhere in the world and that did not need electricity or batteries.

The laptops are \_\_\_\_\_ by clockwork. One minute of \_\_\_\_\_ up a hand crank produces ten minutes of power. They are \_\_\_\_\_ in more ways than a conventional laptop and are \_\_\_\_\_ in rubber to increase their sturdiness. They will be able to do almost everything a \$1,000 model can do except store huge amounts of data. The machines have color screens, 1GB of memory and four USB \_\_\_\_\_. Negroponte is aiming at one laptop per child rather than per community as he wants computers to be personal learning \_\_\_\_\_. He said: "One does not think of community \_\_\_\_\_." He explained: "They are a wonderful way for all children to 'learn learning' through independent interaction and exploration." Plans are now in \_\_\_\_\_ to distribute 15 million of the devices over the next five years.

*masse*  
*accessibility*  
*stumbled*  
*divide*  
*unveiled*  
*robust*  
*head*  
*end*  
*encased*  
*place*  
*tools*  
*winding*  
*ports*  
*powered*  
*pencils*  
*foldable*

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'lap'** and **'top'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "CHEAP LAPTOP" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about Mr. Negroponte's plan to equip developing world children with their own personal laptops.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| • unveiled      | • winding  |
| • revolutionize | • encased  |
| • initiative    | • store    |
| • en masse      | • tools    |
| • stumbled      | • pencils  |
| • robust        | • in place |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think of the idea of \$100 laptops?
- d. Why do you think laptops in stores are at least ten times that price?
- e. Would you buy a \$100 laptop from Mr. Negroponte?
- f. Do you think the computers will work properly?
- g. How will the children learn how to use the laptops?
- h. Is your computer a personal learning tool or a mailing tool?
- i. Do you think computers are overpriced?
- j. What other expensive products do you think can be produced for \$100?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Are you surprised at anything you read in the article?
- d. What do you think of Mr. Negroponte's initiative?
- e. Where do you think the money will come from for 15 million children to have their own laptops?
- f. How do you think having a laptop will change the lives of the children?
- g. Why do you think these computers are not being sold in stores?
- h. What other, similar initiatives could help poor children?
- i. Do you think these computers should also be given to poor children in the developed world?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## **SPEAKING**

**\$100:** In pairs / groups, discuss what you think of the idea of the products in the left hand column being sold for \$100. How would they be different from conventional, more expensive products? What differences would they make to the world? How possible is it to produce / offer these products for \$100?

PRODUCTS	DIFFERENT	DIFFERENCES	\$100?
Computer			
Car			
Small house			
Water purification unit			
Long-haul air tickets.			
Your idea			

Change partners and tell each other what you discussed with your previous partners.



## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on the \$100 computers. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. THOUGHTS:** You are a child living in a remote village in a developing country. You have had your wind-up computer for a month. Write your thoughts on the computer. What did you do the day it arrived? How has it changed your life and expectations? Read what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you have similar thoughts?

**4. LETTER:** Write a letter to Mr. Negroponte. Tell him what you think of his idea. Suggest other ideas that could help poor children around the world. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about or suggest similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. T      c. F      d. F      e. T      f. F      g. F      h. T

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| a. unveiled      | made public |
| b. revolutionize | transform   |
| c. initiative    | enterprise  |
| d. ensure        | guarantee   |
| e. robust        | sturdy      |
| f. crank         | starter     |
| g. conventional  | usual       |
| h. ports         | connections |
| i. interaction   | contact     |
| j. devices       | machines    |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| a. unveiled                    | plans                                    |
| b. set up a new                | initiative called One Laptop Per Child   |
| c. distribute the new machines | en masse                                 |
| d. Mr. Negroponte stumbled     | across the idea                          |
| e. robust enough to be used    | anywhere in the world                    |
| f. The laptops are powered     | by clockwork                             |
| g. winding up a hand crank     | produces ten minutes of power            |
| h. encased in rubber           | to increase their sturdiness             |
| i. One laptop per child        | rather than per community                |
| j. learn                       | learning through independent interaction |

### GAP FILL:

#### **\$100 laptop for world's poor children**

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