

Community News

A weekly update of One Laptop per Child November 17, 2008

G1G1 BEGINS!

Last week was a blur in Cambridge, New York and throughout OLPC world wide as we prepared for our first global campaign. Beginning with a Monday morning “war room” session in Patmos, 1CC deployed every available hand to ensure that all will be ready for tomorrow’s launch.

Everyone on the team contributed to G1G1 in some way, and everyone’s ready to jump into action should any new technical challenges suddenly pop up.

Seth Woodworth, C. Scott Ananian, Christian Schmidt, Stefan Unterhauser, SJ Klein, Eben Eliason and Henry Hardy worked many hours on servers and new content for laptop.org. The site went live on Friday afternoon. Check it out: <http://laptop.org>. Great job everyone!

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Mel Chua, Adam Holt, Frances Hopkins and SJ organized volunteers to restructure, review and update the many Frequently Asked Questions that have been collected over the last year, http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Support_FAQ. Paul Fox helped manage and send email thank you notes to last year's G1G1 donors, as well as to this year's list of interested people. More than a hundred thousand messages went out. SJ has helped manage many of the community efforts, website and news efforts ahead of the launch.

Eben created a Global G1G1 GoogleMap which allows everyone to post the location of their XO. In just a few days the map has been viewed more than 41,000 times, primarily by last year's G1G1 participants who received their email thank yous. Add your XO at <http://www.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=114558805698125207804.000001132ad0d5f3d14f8&z=0> (A direct link from laptop.org will be added shortly).

Adam and Kim Quirk helped prepare the Amazon storefront. They worked on everything from policy statements to help pages, links, terms and conditions, and release management. Many hours were spent on the phone with the very patient and helpful people from Amazon US and Amazon UK. The storefronts will be live at six am Monday, EST.

Mel announced that community testers have set themselves a short term goal of having all 28 G1G1 shipping Activities documented and tested before Christmas. She also reports that work on scripts for configuring XO/XS test beds now has some community volunteers. Our thanks go out to those volunteers!

Along with just about everyone else in the office, the test team was involved in a number of G1G1 activities, from organizing video footage to updating support documentation.

We have deployed a new machine at the MIT colo in anticipation of the G1G1 campaign. A major effort to prepare the website, wiki and infrastructure for increased traffic has been underway, as well. The infrastructure changes meant that OLPC's primary public-facing machines and services were unavailable from approximately 16:30 to 21:30 Tuesday, November 11th. Web, wiki, and mail services were impacted.

Scott Ananian spent much of the week shoring up web services in advance of the launch. Our wiki and web site are now running in well-documented virtual hosts, from content version-controlled in git. Our wiki now sits behind a reverse proxy, in a configuration closely matching that used by the Wikimedia Foundation for Wikipedia.

We also have in place low-bandwidth fallbacks in case of high load. Work will continue to gradually unload and untangle the over taxed pedal.laptop.org.

A highlight of the week was a visit to 1CC by Tom Brady, quarterback for the New England Patriots, who came by to shoot a video for G1G1. The XO amazed him. Brady asked if some machines could be sent to his sister's school in California, as well as a second shipment to his other sister, who is working in Uganda.

Our pro bono partners at Racepoint, Mediacom and Taxi have devised an impressive media campaign. Several new videos begin tonight (Sunday) on the OLPC You Tube channel, as well as on Google TV, laptop.org and elsewhere, and they include an excellent animation on our mission. New content will debut throughout the week.

FaceBook members can join the OLPC cause and invite their friends to do the same. Additional FaceBook and Google gadgets will be updated in the next few days.

Tomorrow, G1G1 will be featured on more than 4,000 billboards and other outdoor venues nationwide. Commercials will air on all major broadcast channels, cable and on radio. Newspapers and magazines will begin with print ads.

Don't miss Nicholas tomorrow night on PBS with Charlie Rose, who is devoting his program to OLPC. It also will run on charlierose.com.

If you're near Boston on Thursday night, the 20th, come to Hall D of the Science Center at Harvard to hear Nicholas and Calestous Juma speak. The topic of the 7:00-9:00 program is "One Laptop per Child: Changing the World." The OLPC staff will put on demonstrations. Sponsors include the Harvard College Global Hunger Initiative and multiple other Harvard groups. Light meals will be provided.

The European grassroots are struggling to assist OLPC in giving G1G1 in Europe a good head-start. On Monday, Walter de Brouwer of OLPC Europe contacted Christoph Derndorfer (Austria), Daniel Drake (United Kingdom), Bert Freudenberg (Germany), Frits Hoff (Netherlands), and Lionel Laské (France) with a request for help. The grassroots have been working all week in their countries to prepare for the unexpected though very welcomed situation. They immediately started to spread the news, worked on translations of packaging materials etc., although later it became clear how little is set for the European part of G1G1 yet. They even had to fend off the press inquiring for more exact details, which unfortunately are still unknown.

Meanwhile, OLPC Germany is trying to find a way to get German keyboards on the machines for German donors. Since orders in Europe are not going to be fulfilled immediately anyway, there might be enough time to get those keyboards manufactured. OLPC Germany had gotten many requests from teachers and parents who will only consider to donate/buy German keyboards.

OLPC's regular business proceeded apace as well:

Technology

Testing:

1. Joe Feinstein and Frances Hopkins have started to install and configure the next 50 laptops for the 1CC test bed, bringing the total to more than 100. The QA team (Joe Feinstein, Frances Hopkins, Mel Chua, Reuben Caron and Kim Quirk) spent quite a chunk of time helping the G1G1 event to happen successfully. We helped to "technically support" Tom Brady's visit, worked on increasing the OLPC Foundation cache of video footage that can be ascertained from both YouTube and DailyMotion, and were working on social media volunteers recruitment.

We continued testing multiple-laptop collaboration over the access point scenarios, with mesh enabled/disabled in laptops. This testing will continue next week. We also started to rolling out the additional 50-laptop testbed in the 1cc lobby.

Testing of the backup/restore feature of laptops connected to a school server is ongoing, as well as are our efforts to build the testing harness with a "command post"

observing every laptop in our testbeds. We will start looking at the set of outstanding 8.2.0 bugs to see whether the 8.2.1 release will be warranted.

2. Reuben Caron worked with deployments in Mongolia and Paraguay. He continued testing XS 0.5 and focused on testing SOTP. Reuben also tested Fedora on XO and DebXO. Thanks to Mitch for a conditional forth statement that allows Fedora to boot on older and newer versions of firmware. He worked with Ed and Darah to clarify the agenda for next weeks conference with Dubai.

G1G1:

3. Beginning volunteer recruitment posts, with many thanks to cK-12's Josh Gay for the lesson on how to advertise for good people! First call is for media volunteers, at SJ's request: <http://blog.laptop.org/2008/11/13/recruiting-olpc-social-media-warriors/#respond> Support FAQ <http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Support_FAQ> restructure - see the difference before http://wiki.laptop.org/index.php?title=Support_FAQ&action=edit&oldid=179337 and after http://wiki.laptop.org/index.php?title=Support_FAQ&action=edit&oldid=179594 . General wiki infrastructure work for G1G1 support.

Community testing group focusing on G1G1-2008-shipped Activities now, which will also mean tutorial-like documentation for each of the shipped-with Activities will be up by Xmas when XOs arrive. See below for more.

Test community: another week, another meeting full of updates. Log: http://meeting.laptop.org/olpc-meeting.log.20081113_1659.html Notes (includes links to log): http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Community_testing_meetings/2008-11-13 Next week's agenda: http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Community_testing_meetings/2008-11-20 NOTE: We won't have a 2008-11-27 meeting due to the U.S. holiday of Thanksgiving (which affects many of our current testers), unless at least 4 people email me before the 2008-11-20 meeting and say they'd like one and that they would be there. Our next meeting after 2008-11-20 will be on 2008-12-04.

Highlights: Our first short-term goal (proposed thanks to Caryl): All 28 G1G1-2008-shipped Activities tested by Dec. 25, 2008. Definition of "tested" well on its way to being solid - this time next week we'll have a metric-o-riffic progress report! See http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Community_testing for our current progress and measurements of such.) Longer-term plan: this will enable us to stress-test a good community testing participation framework so that we can recruit Lots Of New Volunteers (G1G1 donors?) starting in January. Resources: http://wiki.laptop.org/go/How_to_test_an_Activity, http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Reporting_test_results

Tabitha and Alastair from the NZ Wellington OLPC community test group introduced themselves and their work - they have great procedures, months of experience testing Activities and are going to lead the charge in putting up oracles and reaching out to

Activity developers. Their group meets again tomorrow. A warm welcome to all our NZ testers – and thank you to Martin for the introduction!

Many thanks to Anna from the Birmingham deployment for her work on <http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Dsh> on the XS - looking forward to hearing more about her + Kevix's experiments with the school server!

Ben, Gary, Kevix, and Mel have drafted an http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Activity_testing_automation design, and experimental implementation has begun in parallel with a design review, and Gary has begun to work on Sugarbot-on-XO implementation with Sugarbot's original developer, Zach.

More participants in meeting leading to more exciting - but also noisier, faster, and more chaotic - meetings. Still ok, but maybe time to think of ways to scale?

Suggested test completion metric: Ponies, supplemented by pony-eating dragons. (You had to be there.) <http://www.berlinwallpaper.com/PrissPrints/images/Stickups/MLP.jpg>
Software Development:

4. Work is underway on XO Software Release 9.1.0. The release is planned for March, 2009. Goals, strategy, and target features should be defined by the first week of December. Detailed bug tracking conventions, branch strategy and release management tactics should be defined before the end of December. Greg is collecting all well motivated feature suggestions here: http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Feature_roadmap. Please add your feature requests to this page (or e-mail them to greg@laptop.org).

5. Michael Stone and Chris Ball reported in from Montevideo on their productive visit to Uruguay. We're looking forward to welcoming them back to Cambridge next week.

6. Paul Fox spent a bit of time thinking about shutdown menus and touch pad jumpiness.

7. Mitch Bradley refined the multicast NAND updater program, adding partition support and automatic wireless channel selection.

XS School Server Software:

8. Martin Langhoff has spun what is hopefully the last RC for XS-0.5. OLPCXS-0.5-dev10 is going through a final round of testing. Douglas Bagnall tried to find things wrong with XS-0.5 release candidates. Along the way, the documentation has been updated so installation and upgrade instructions now cover 0.5. Planning for 0.6 and 0.7 is taking place right now -- if you want to participate, now is the time! The planning is strongly based on the list of open tasks and bugs (<https://dev.laptop.org/query?status=assigned&status=new&status=reopened&group=milestone&component=school+server&order=priority&col=id&col=summary>).

Sugar / Activity Software:

9. Marco Pesenti Gritti and Tomeu Vizoso worked mainly on the upgrade to Fedora 10. He learned about pilgrim and the rest of our build system to be able to get things started. While waiting for packages to build and builds to bake, Tuomo Vizoso worked on smaller bits as recorded on his TODO list about which he still welcomes feedback: <http://sugarlabs.org/go/User:Tomeu>. Dennis Gilmore has been wonderful and not only handed the Fedora side of the work, but also moved pilgrim to use the new branch and fixed various critical issues on boot time. There is a lot of work left but we are already booting into Sugar and basic features are working, which means everyone can help out with the work! Marco also helped the awesome Simon in his work on the NetworkManager port, which is also getting into shape. Finally Marco spent some time organizing next week Sugar meetings.

10. Sayamindu worked on the language pack generator script in preparation for the proposed new language pack mechanism. He also started identifying the language specific packages needed for SCIM (eg: Chinese and Amharic). He also landed the patch which adds support for selection of multiple languages in Sugar, and worked a bit on the ImageViewer activity in preparation for the upcoming Sugar 0.83 release. Over the week, Sayamindu also put some of the G1G1 related content into Pootle for translations.

11. Morgan Collett worked on presence service to improve its communication with Sugar, to allow for some way of visually representing the state of connectivity, and for configuring which connection is preferred or active. Morgan also started working on porting PS to NM 0.7.

12. Simon Schampijer landed the reviewed patches for WPA support and the storing and saving of the connections in sugar head. He updated as well the patches for F10. He is now finishing the device icon support to fully land the F10 patch.

13. Walter Bender's Sugar Digest can be found at <http://lists.laptop.org/pipermail/sugar/2008-November/009835.html>

Networking:

14. On Tuesday, the IEEE 802.11 TGs accepted Javier's proposal to modify the 802.11s draft standard so that it uses 3-address broadcast/multicast frames. The proposal was based on the work performed about a year ago at OLPC to improve compatibility with existing access points that misinterpreted the 4-address frames originally used in the draft standard. This is the second example of a major change in the standard following OLPC's experience (the first was the mesh frame type change).

15. Ubuntu 8.10 is the first major Linux distribution to include the open802.11s code in its kernel. Open80211s is a project initiated by Cozybit, OLPC and Nortel to create a completely open source implementation of the 802.11s draft standard. Besides shipping

on current Linux kernels, there are already shipping products from multiple vendors that incorporate the code.

So between Meraki, the XO and open80211s-based implementations, OLPC has helped realize most of the low cost mesh nodes. Not a bad outcome given our level of direct investment into mesh technology development.

16. Ricardo continued testing the Wakeup On Lan functionality and discovered a bug in the firmware where if the rule's offset is larger than the frame, a match is (erroneously) produced. A fix will be incorporated in the next scheduled firmware release in the first week of December. However, the bug is not affecting most of the common use cases.

Learning

Mongolia: This week the new Mongolian OLPC project manager is restructuring the core team. There is now office space dedicated to the laptop initiative. Yanjama is still transitioning out of her position at the Khan Bank. The project manager, Yanajama and Elana Langer of OLPC met the chairman of ICTA, who remains very supportive, and wants to make sure there is coordination of connectivity in places where computers are distributed.

This weekend, 520 computers are being delivered to a school in the capital of Arhangay Province. One of the project unit members will lead a basic introduction for the teachers. The school was told to use an old computer as a server and to purchase their own access points and switch. A tech rep from the PMU will install everything. Peace Corps volunteers in the province will be at the training session, and will help with both educational and tech support. Various Peace Corps volunteers remain deeply engaged throughout the country, supporting schools and helping schools create local content.

We are waiting for an updated Mongolian translation of Scratch to finalize the 8.2 Mongolian custom key. The local Linux community has worked hard on beta testing. A core team teacher has translated Turtle Art and Scratch. Both will be included in this upgrade. We hope to have it all finished by the middle of next week and to get 8.2 out to schools across the country.

Paraguay: There is a training session scheduled for this month. Juliano Bittencourt is traveling from nearby Porto Alegre to support that effort and also to participate in meetings about the future of the OLPC initiative there.

Cecilia Alcala reports that *Paraguay Educa* plans to sign an agreement with the ministry of education. The minister is very academically-minded, so she will make certain that the proposal addresses his specific points of concern.

Cambridge: Topper Carew, a film and TV director/producer/writer, discussed how he might use the XO with kids. At the conclusion of our meeting, Topper proposed designing a video challenge for kids which would be supported by sharing results with

other kids from different countries. The proposed work is very exciting. More details coming in the next few weeks.

Dan Bricklin came by to discuss the state of SocialCalc with Cynthia, Ed, David and Jim Gettys. Dan will add a few features to the XO SocialCalc to make it more kid-oriented. He would add some graphing capabilities, saving and other features. Ed would take up finding help to make other improvements.

From the Field

Colombia: Fundación Merani signed a contract for the purchase 1000 XOs. They will begin with four primary schools located in Cartagena, Boyacá, Bogotá and Armenia, but the project's ultimate goal is much broader.

And in Other News...

The school year commences at Reaksmay with a brand-new junior high school building, a new batch of XOs courtesy of G1G1, a burst of solar power and much more. Check it out in the inaugural issue of Cambodia~P.R.I.D.E.'s newsletter.

<http://web.mac.com/megabroad/newsletter.html> .

Laptop magazine issued a weekend press release that summarizes its very promising experience with a 30-machine deployment in Mali (Weekend, August 31st), supervised by Salimata Fandjalén Bangoura.

<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2008/11/prweb1620564.htm>

User link of the week (Spanish): <http://sextosdela37.blogspot.com/>. Blog from 6th grade class in Uruguay. Built with XOs, it includes eToys projects, Google doc graphs, poems, slide shows, pictures and technical tips for optimizing XO performance!

User link of the week (English):

<http://www.reactivated.net/weblog/archives/2008/10/ethiopias-second-olpc-deployment/>

Blog post about roll out of XOs in Ethiopia.