Community News

A weekly update of One Laptop per Child December 15, 2008

Change The World

Cambridge: The Change the World (CTW) program is creating a new opportunity for OLPC to reach a wider audience interested in bringing XOs to the world's children. Under CTW, with a minimum donation of 100 XOs an individual, organization, business or any other donor can now be an active member of the global XO community, with support from OLPC.

Jennifer Amaya, Nia Lewis, Julia Reynolds, Darah Tappitake, Mel Chua, Reuben Caron and Frances Hopkins have devoted considerable time over the past two weeks to building a foundation for the program. They've ascertained that the key audiences for CTW are teachers, charity groups, corporate sponsors, and people in all of our communities. To hone their message's tone and content, the CTW team reflected on why an OLPC experience is unique. They went back to the basics, focusing on the elements of an XO program that make learning about the learners, and enable the learners to connect with the world around them.

In addition to the message, the team is developing key resources. One is the "Change the World Planning Guide." Another is the "Change the World Technical Manual." The planning guide will provide practical information on XO programs to help interested parties make informed and educated decisions moving forward. It focuses on the importance of core teams, the creation of local support networks, development of

individual approaches, infrastructure requirements and other key factors in the planning process.

The technical manual is being designed as a resource for establishing and maintaining a successful program of 100 or more XOs. When rough drafts of these documents are developed, we'll circulate them for advice and feedback. Please bear with us as we develop the support and resources for CTW. It's our objective to create a quality program that advances OLPC principles, and values the individual XO experience.

And there's more.

Nia, Cynthia and Calestous Juma are helping Julia to develop a new university program. Please find more info here: http://wiki.laptop.org/go/University_program.

Judging from the student response to the "Changing the World" talk that Calestous and Nicholas recently delivered at Harvard, it is clear that non-technical students are in particular need of some hub or nexus where they can learn how to volunteer for OLPC, or to provide the XO laptop to children in their lives.

Students have been major G1G1 participants and advocates. We hope this page, mailing list and mailing address (students@laptop.org) will provide them a place where they can share their stories as they empower and promote OLPC in a self-sustaining long-term way.

One component of the new university program is the "demo team," which for now is comprised of Julia, Lidet Tilahun, Brian Jordan and Calestous. Their first official demo team event was this past Tuesday at the Northeastern University Ghanaian Scholars Reception. Calestous gave a talk - "Technological Innovation and Development: Policy Lessons from Africa" - which he opened by demonstrating the XO laptop. Julia followed with a brief presentation and Q&A. Then came team demos.

On Sunday, Lidet spoke at a meeting organized by MIT's African students. Afterwards, Robert Fadel met with some of the students, and recruited 40 potential interns.

Lidet also met with Kenyan students from Harvard and MIT to discuss how they can help OLPC efforts in Kenya. The students have now formed an OLPC- Kenya group that would work to mobilize the Kenyan Diaspora to raise funds for 20,000 Xos.

G1G1

Brussels: The campaign officially went global last week as the first pallets of XOs arrived at OLPC Europe. Adam Holt deplaned from Boston at almost the same moment, and went straight to work on the repackaging assembly line, which hard-laboring OLPCers there call "The Sweatshop."

The French OLPC Foundation program, known as *Un chez toi, un chez moi*, is building momentum. They've created a viral action to get to the maximum number of people in a

minimum amount of time, and have produced supplementary Zimi videos in 12 languages on Dailymotion (http://www.dailymotion.com/olpcfoundation/video/x7f7jj_one-laptop-per-child-zimis-story-fu_school). As we reported last week, they also have a French TV star video on the Dailymotion France homepage (http://www.dailymotion.com/fr).

Articles have started to appear: http://www.mood-for.fr/one-laptop-per-child-france-olpc/. Their objective is 1725 new orders in the next two weeks. The European country that books the highest sales gets a red XO.

In the UK, Daniel Drake has been working with Racepoint UK, which has secured one big TV spot just before Christmas, plus two radio spots with Nicholas and three significant print spots.

The Dutch group has set up meetings for next week. http://wiki.laptop.org/go/OLPC-NL_meetings. Christophe in Austria is working on a program for Amazon's German-language webpage, Amazon.de, which will debut next week.

In Belgium, OLPC began the SWIFT internal project of G1G3 and conducted demonstrations and seminars at the various SWIFT campuses. In its second week of "telephone boom" for G100(0), the OLPC team contacted 200 corporations with first calls, and had promising results from four of them.

Learning

Rwanda: Worldfocus on PBS recently featured OLPC's Rwandan initiative. http://worldfocus.org/blog/2008/12/11/rwanda-aims-for-one-laptop-per-child/3194/

Mongolia: Yondon Otgonbayar, a cabinet minister as well as the minister of education, culture and science, continues to be OLPC's champion. He has assured the program that funds will be found for distribution, compensation of the core team and Program Management Unit (PMU), as well as for teacher training and the development of materials. He also discussed with OLPC staff his meeting with Mark C. Minton, the U.S. ambassador. Otgonbayar said that Minton emphasized the support role that the Peace Corps can play in the project. The minister approved of this idea as well.

A Mongolian version of 8.2 has been installed in the Ulaanbaatar schools. The feedback is overwhelmingly positive. When David Cavallo visited a school where the new version is in use, the teachers actually shook his hand because they liked it so much. There is also a bug reporting system in place.

The core team teachers have arranged to conduct teacher training on their own time. The investment in the core team has had a long term effect on both their own teaching and the entire program.

EBRD is creating a large scale awareness campaign for using clean coal. The bank and Elana Langer of OLPC discussed running a grassroots project through schools

saturated with laptops where they design posters and television commercials teaching about the benefits of burning clean coal. In an effort to scale the campaign to areas the current computers haven't reached, the bank was interested in purchasing XOs for all the students in the district, or roughly 50,000 machines. The team running the project will be back in late January to follow up with this idea.

Perú: Carla Gòmez Monroy remained in country to continue working with the technology and pedagogical consultants from the ministry of education. She visited several schools to support teachers in their class activities and their interaction with parents. She also helped fix broken laptops, batteries, software and chargers in the schools.

Peruvian kids in Rumisapa interviewing an adult as part of a project. Their teacher took this photo with an XO.

The teachers presented the projects they produced during the past workshop. Representatives of the local educational groups and the president of the local parents' association joined the presentations.

This first stage of the project will help teachers and principals produce the 2009 Annual Plan, which will be based on children's learning needs as well as community issues. The teachers were very motivated and enthusiastic about the project-based work with community involvement and impact. And the students enjoyed the learning experience much more. Next school year, teachers will continue with the second phase, which is called Participative Community.

Cambridge: December 17-18, ten or so kids aged 6-12 will visit OLPC to work on storytelling projects with Barbara Barry. This exercise is part of Edith Ackerman's "Making Learning Visible" initiative to create a new assessment framework for the digital world. After the test run, we'll launch the project with kids in laptop countries, supported by a network of coordinators and core team members.

Technology

G1G1:

1. Kim Quirk and Brianne Connolly spent many hours working on the financial reports from Amazon to find appropriate reports, verify data, and be able to move the money from one account to another. There are still quite a few hours left of this work as there are five different accounts being tracked for the G1G1 program (including donations and sales of laptops).

2. Gustavo Mariotti, working with Nicole Dallow and others from the Brightstar Miami office, repackaged laptops for the UK shipments. Kim and Gustavo have figured out how to work with Amazon UK to accept two types of orders - those fulfilled by Brightstar and those fulfilled by Amazon. Next week, we expect to prove that we actually can ship through this program. We should also have our WEEE Certification for UK (recycling electronic goods) by next week.

Testing:

3. Joe Feinstein, Reuben and Mel focused on testing the 8.2.1 release. Mel has taken the role of "test project lead" for this release. The school server is now operational, and the new, 48-laptop, test bed is up and running. Test cases for 8.2.1 are under development. Reuben worked on testing School Server 0.5 and now has the QA test server up to date and back online.

Support:

4. Frances went through many of the unassigned donor services tickets in an effort to categorize and answer questions and concerns from donors. She did the receiving paperwork on many re-donated laptops, and is working with Adam to offer better solutions for people who want to donate their laptops to a good cause.

5. SJ Klein traveled to Chester, PA., to work with the teachers and technical staff at Chester Community Charter School, the first group to be given a thousand or more laptops through our new program. They are rolling out 1400 XOs for their 3d-8th grade students over the next two months. Reuben helped SJ to set up a school server for this demo. Nicholas, the president and CEO of the school, the current and former mayors of Chester and two state representatives spoke. Two Philadelphia Eagles also put in appearances.

6. The next major feature release (9.1.0) is scheduled for March. Weekly planning meetings are held on Wed. at 2PM US ET on IRC freenode.net #olpc-meeting.

7. The software development team organized the process of building and releasing an 8.2.1 update, targeted for January. This interim release will primarily serve to address a specific set of issues that are obstacles to wider deployments, with a few enhancements to make large-scale deployments easier.

XO OS Software:

8. Michael Stone provided the framework for the 8.2.1 release by creating an 8.2.1 build stream and by writing patches which resolve the regression which triggered the minor release; namely, #8976. He also worked on getting a clearer definition of OLPC's working relationship with Sugar Labs as that group takes more responsibility for Sugar development.

9. Chris Ball worked on closing bugs for the 8.2.1 release, power management specifications and power management wakeup timer code. Paul Fox continued with miscellaneous tasks related to helping push out OLPC's emails supporting the G1G1 campaign, bug chasing, EC firmware work. Chris tracked a customer return that turned out to be the result of a manufacturing issue. He also began prototyping his ideas for a power button shutdown/suspend feature. Several members of the team worked with John Watlington to follow up on production questions and issues raised during his trip to Uruguay.

XS School Server Software:

10. This week a few issues with XS 0.5 have been reported and fixed. Thanks to Anna Schoolfield, Reuben and Jerry Vonau for their substantial help in diagnosing the problem. One issue is significant, so a 0.51 revision may be planned shortly to fix it. In addition, Martin Langhoff focused on roster management and roster-splitting features for XS 0.6.

Sugar / Activity Software:

11. Marco Pesenti Gritti figured out how to better organize the Sugar development team work and produced a short-term "to do" list (http://sugarlabs.org/go/DevelopmentTeam/TODO) for review. He set up a Jabber server with Gadget to test collaboration and got positive early results. Reliability seems to be much improved. He will continue to test, track down, report and fix issues in the coming weeks. Finally, Marco started working on regressions in the 0.83 release, intended to ship with the 9.1 XO software release.

12. Simon Schampijer packaged and tested the Journal update for 8.2.1, which fixes #8745 ("Your journal is full" Sugar message isn't translated in Spanish). He released git snapshots of Sugar, Sugar-toolkit and Sugar-artwork for Joyride. He again took up the work on the remaining bits for Network Manager integration, which is top priority for next week as well.

13. Morgan Collett worked on the ability to restart Telepathy connections from the control panel. This will allow switching Jabber servers without restarting Sugar, as well as a way to restart the current connection if the neighborhood view has an inconsistent display.

14. Sayamindu Dasgupta worked on Browse to enable plugins to be shipped with the Browse bundle itself. He also released a Browse bundle with mozplugger and a PDF viewer so that PDF files can be viewed (embedded) from Browse (http://dev.laptop.org/

~sayamindu/Browse-101.xo). This should partially solve the problems of disks filling up due to multiple copies of downloaded PDFs getting saved in the Journal (#8155), and will be a helpful update for the 8.2.1 release. Sayamindu also worked on adding language-specific plural form information to all the translations of the activity updater of the Sugar control panel, and added Finance, Color and TurtleArt activities to Pootle to make them available for translators.

Regulatory Compliance

15. Richard made sure the AU regulatory conformance testers received a testing kernel rpm, as well as instructions for installing and using the kernel for their tests of RF absorption from the wireless networking interface. We have already gained certification in the US. This separate test is required for conformance in Australia and New Zealand. We confirmed that we are not certified for sale in Mexico, and are looking into what is required for China and India.

Open Firmware:

16.Richard created and configured a new firmware build vhost on weka.laptop.org called 'firmware' and used it to release the first release of the 'F' series firmware q2f01. After a few releases to undergo some testing this vhost will replace the old fc5 host on grinch. The 'F' series firmware has nifty new Open Firmware features like NANDblaster (simultaneous update of many laptops from one), and USB cdrom support. A new EC feature is a quick blink before power off. New suspend code turns off the WLAN LEDs, so it is really hard to tell if you have just suspended, or if you had truly powered off. You will now see several quick blinks of the power LED as the laptop turns off, when powering off using the power button.

17. Mitch Bradley worked on lease delegation support in OFW. He released OFW version Q2E24 so that the NANDblaster can receive wider testing. So far, the test results have been encouraging.

Multi-Battery Charger:

18. Ten new power supplies are en route to RCAL for installation in ten test units. These supplies have additional support and a much stronger PCB to prevent them from self-destructing after they are installed inside the unit and are subjected to various shocks. These then machines will be used for verification tests.

19. Lilian Walter landed support for NiMH chemistries, with Richard helping to test and sort out the bugs.

Networking:

20. Michail worked with AMD and Microsoft to facilitate Windows Hardware Quality Labs testing of Windows XP running under Open Firmware on the XO.

21. Ricardo and Michail tested and checked off a variety of wireless stack improvements that are now scheduled for incorporation into the 8.2.1 build.

22. Deepak Saxena backported some wireless patches into the 767 kernel for use in the AU G1G1 certification process. Deepak also moved the Joyride kernel to 2.6.27.8, and made some progress in the power management realm. Specifically, in the midst of testing, he discovered that enabling CONFIG_USB_SUSPEND in our master kernel shaves 20% (1.1s -> 900ms) in our resume time. Not bad for basically zero work.