Community News

A weekly update of One Laptop per Child   January 4, 2009

Technology

Software:

1. The support, testing, and software development teams spent an otherwise quiet week keeping track of the end of our Amazon G1G1 activities, and in preparation for the upcoming 8.2.1 software release for testing. The team worked to get a test release posted and to upgrade our test bed of machines for network QA.

2. Michael Stone helped get the web team unstuck by simplifying the procedures for testing changes to the laptop.org website. He ran a couple of 8.2.1 test cases.

3. Sayamindu Dasgupta polished the specs for SCIM support and the enhanced language pack support for the 9.1 release. He also helped the Uyghur translation project get started. Many thanks to Mehmud Abliz for taking up the initiative.

Hardware:

4. One of the remaining laptop problems is the inability to activate them due to failure of their real-time clocks. If the date kept by the laptop is wildly incorrect, it will not activate, or will lose activation. This problem affects some small number of laptops (< 0.3%) during initial delivery, but is also apt to occur after delivery. In order to correct this failure mode, Quanta has improved their production process to incorporate a full test of the RTC battery after assembly.

They have also designed a small rubber piece which will sit on top of the battery. This piece will press against the back plate of the laptop, preventing the battery from dislodging when jolted or vibrated. Both measures will be in place on all future laptops.

5. In future design iterations (XO or Gen-2), OLPC will move away from reliance on the laptop's real-time clock for theft-deterrence. In addition to the activation problems when the clock fails, the current scheme requires either that regular Internet connectivity be provided or that users be unable to alter the laptop's clock.

6. A spare part containing the newer, tougher keyboard and the new touchpad (the upper base assembly) is now available from Quanta. Providing this as a single unit facilitates updating the touchpads on older units. It was requested by Uruguay to simplify keyboard replacement. The price is slightly more than $15 when purchased in orders of three thousand units or more direct from Quanta.

Networking:

7. Thanks to last minute heroics by Clyde Rodriguez, Rebecca Gonzalez and Erik Salo at AMD, the work order for the open firmware / XP testing by bSquare was signed before the end of 2008 and work has started by bSquare.

8. Keith Tzeng and his team at Quanta are testing XP running with OFW on the XO. Their first testing results didn't uncover any serious issues or any issues that are unique to open firmware. This was another amazing performance from Mitch Bradley, who developed OFW's XP support layer with no help from Microsoft.

From the Field

Afghanistan: Now that the Afghan education minister has agreed to deploy OLPC in line with our basic philosophy, things have started moving. Salim Hayran, the OLPC lead in the ministry, has informed Habib Khan that Estiqlal High School in Jalalabad (enrollment: 1020) will be the first school to deploy 500 XO donated by OLPC NPA . Sevetlana Senjova, manager for technical implementation of PAIWASTOON for OLPC in Afghanistan, will be work with Habib to make a smooth deployment. Salim has asked Habib to prepare a group of teachers as master trainers in Kabul. He has yet to finalize a date for this activity.

Pakistan: As a next step following Habib's very productive meeting with Kiramtullah Khan (Weekend, December 7th), speaker of the North-West Frontier provincial assembly, the chief planning officer for the NWFP department of education visited Habib in Islamabad to discuss deployment, localization, teacher preparation and maintenance issues. Habib reports that the CPO, an experienced educator, was very happy to discover some of the potentials of XO and was eager for early deployment and involvement of donors focused on his province to help children learn. A memorandum of understanding awaits Kiramtullah Khan's signature.

Habib also sent along the following reading activities developed by OLPC Pakistan.

http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Image:Animals_in_Urdu.pdf
http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Image:Historical_Places_in_Pakistan.pdf
http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Image:Plants.pdf
http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Image:Sayings_of_Imam_Ghazali.pdf

Below, the Dari version of animals and plants was translated by Sohaib who is a long time OLPC volunteer:

http://wiki.laptop.org/go/Image:Animals_and_plants_in_dari.pdf