

OFE release

One Laptop Per Child comes to BETT show through OpenForum Europe

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The innovative laptop that forms the product of the one laptop per child programme, currently bringing fresh educational opportunities across the developing world, is seen for the first time in Europe this week. The laptop is demonstrated on the OpenForum Europe stand at the BETT show, brought over by OLPC's Chief Operating Officer in Nigeria Tomi Davies. Graham Taylor, Director of OpenForum Europe said *"we are delighted to welcome OLPC to this country. OLPC utilises open source software and open document formats to allow children to really interact with their machines without the cost and restrictions licensed products impose. OLPC is a brave venture and one that accords with the best traditions of open source to innovate, educate and free up the user"*.

One Laptop Per Child was devised by Nicholas Negraponte, back in 2005 following successful smaller-scale projects he had carried out in Cambodia. Its mission is to provide children around the world with new opportunities to explore, experiment and express themselves. Rather than just providing the children with a programmed machine, the OLPC project is designed to allow the child to interact with the laptop on as deep a level as he or she desires, and develop their programming skills. As well as educational, the project promotes community. Every OLPC school will be part of a content network that spans their country and the world. Each school will have a server with a digital library of materials, storing what children and teachers create as well as collections from every subject area. In short, OLPC connects children with their communities and the broader world around them.

This sense of community is not the only reason OLPC is such a good fit with OpenForum Europe, as the whole project works on open source software and open document formats. OLPC utilises open source for transparency and freedom to reshape, reinvent and reapply software, hardware and content. The lack of proprietary formats also makes file sharing easier and communities stronger. OLPC being present at BETT represents a valuable opportunity to see the power that open source and OLPC can bring to the developing world.

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Notes for Editors.

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1. OpenForum Europe is a not-for-profit, independent organisation launched in March 2002 to accelerate, broaden and strengthen the use of Open Source Software (OSS) in business and government.
2. OLPC is being demonstrated at stand SW105 at the BETT show in Olympia from the 9th - 11th January, and representatives from OLPC and OpenForum Europe will be there for comment.

