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The Hundred Dollar Laptop-Computing for Developing Nations

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Chairman and Co-Founder, MIT Media Laboratory
Wiesner Professor of Media Technology
Chairman, One Laptop Per Child (OLPC)

ABOUT THE LECTURE:

Imagine a world where all school-age children own a laptop computer, even those living in villages lacking power and telephone service. **Nicholas Negroponte** has, and his **One Laptop Per Child (OLPC)** non-profit has propelled this vision into the real world. With backing from News Corporation and Google, among others, Negroponte has begun to line up millions of orders from Brazil, Thailand, Egypt, China and South Africa. Even the United Nations has bestowed its imprimatur on the concept. Negroponte's prototype computer is a "skinnied down" version of what he describes as the typical "obese" laptop. Remove sales and marketing costs, and set the machine up with a 7.5" screen, Linux software, a hand crank for power, rugged rubber case, and super bright display so "it can be taken into the sun and read like a book," and you've got a very inexpensive tool for helping 800 million children explore, interact and create. Don't fret about connectivity; the Media Lab's got that covered: each laptop becomes a "node in the mesh" of other local users, creating a novel network perfect for remote locations. For email and web browsing, just two MB can serve 1,000 kids, says Negroponte. The key to churning out these cheap educational devices is volume -- and the more countries that join the bandwagon, the sleeker and less expensive the computers are likely to be. Negroponte casts a wary eye on the potential grey market appeal of the machines, and is determined to make them so distinctive as a government-distributed, educational tool that taking one would "be like stealing a post office truck." Negroponte concludes, "Changing education on the planet is a monumental challenge," taking decades. But OLPC will "seed the change," and help "invent the future."

ABOUT THE SPEAKER:

Nicholas P. Negroponte has been on the MIT faculty since 1966. He was the founder of the Architecture Machines Group. In 1995, he published the bestseller *Being Digital*, which was translated into more than 40 languages.

Negroponte was a founder of *Wired Magazine*, and serves on the board of directors for Motorola, Inc. He has been an 'angel investor' in more than 40 start-ups.

[More on Nicholas Negroponte Laptop site](#)

NOTES ON THE VIDEO (Time Index):

Video length is 55:23.

Jason Pontin, Editor in Chief and Publisher, *Technology Review*, introduces the event.

At :58, **Bob Buder**, Editor at Large, *Technology Review*, introduces **Nicholas Negroponte**.

At 2:48, **Negroponte** begins.

At 37:59, **Q&A** begins.



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