

LibraryCrunch

Service for the Next Generation Library: A Library 2.0 Perspective by Michael Casey

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More on the \$100 Laptop

From today's New York Times comes [this update](#) on the \$100 (\$150) laptop, a project I have been following closely and with much anticipation:

Mr. Negroponte, the founding director of the M.I.T. Media Laboratory, said he was amused by the attention his little machine was getting. It is not the first time he has been challenged for proclaiming technology's promise.

"It's as if people spent all of their attention focusing on Columbus's boat and not on where he was going," he said in an interview here. "You have to remember that what this is about is education."

Seymour Papert, a computer scientist and educator who is an adviser to the project, has argued that if young people are given computers and allowed to explore, they will "learn how to learn." That, Mr. Papert argues, is a more valuable skill than traditional teaching strategies that focus on memorization and testing.

The idea is also that children can take on much of the responsibility for maintaining the systems, rather than relying on or creating bureaucracies to do so.

"We believe you have to leverage the kids themselves," Ms. Jepsen said. "They're learning machines." As an example, she pointed to the backlight used by the laptop. Although it is designed to last five years, if it fails it can be replaced as simply as batteries are replaced in a flashlight. It is something a child can do, she said.

[Full story.](#)

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