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India rejects One Laptop Per Child

By John Oates
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India has decided against getting involved in Nicholas Negroponte's One Laptop Per Child scheme - which aims to provide kids in developing countries with a simple $100 machine.

The success of the project depends on support, and big orders, from governments. The loss of such a potentially huge, and relatively technically sophisticated market, will be a serious blow.

The Indian Ministry of Education dismissed the laptop as "pedagogically suspect". Education Secretary Sudeep Banerjee said: "We cannot visualise a situation for decades when we can go beyone the pilot stage. We need classrooms and teachers more urgently than fancy tools."

Banerjee said if money were available it would be better spent on existing education plans.

Banerjee told *the Hindu*: "We do not think that the idea of Prof Negroponte is mature enough to be taken seriously at this stage and no major country is presently following this. Even inside America, there is not much enthusiasm about this."

OLPC's original schedule was to deliver machines by the end of 2006, but it will not start production until it has received orders, and payment, for between five and ten million machines.

But in better news it also emerged earlier this month that Nigeria is ordering one million machines. Allafrica.com has the story here. (http://allafrica.com/stories/200607120369.html)

The idea is backed by AMD, Google, MIT, Nortel and Red Hat.

China, India, Brazil, Argentina, Egypt, Nigeria, and Thailand were all named by the OLPC organisation as governments which had expressed an interest.

More info on the OLPC project here. (http://www.laptop.org/index.en_US.html)®

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