



One Laptop Per Child

Creating a US\$100 laptop computer for underprivileged children in developing countries was the idea of Professor Nicholas Negroponte. Since 2002, his dream has been turning into reality, with the first laptops expected to be supplied to children next month.

The computers will be running open source software, including *Xappy* - the core search component of Lemur's Flax search software - which is scalable from tiny to enterprise-scale applications. It is being used in this international project to provide system search facilities.

The laptops have 1GB of memory, no hard drive and a specially designed operating system adequate for children's learning needs. The hardware has been designed to withstand harsh operating environ-

ments; the casing is waterproof, the screen can easily be read outdoors and the laptop can be powered by solar, foot-pump or pull-string chargers.

Field testing has been undertaken in Nigeria and Brazil amongst other countries and laptops have been kept running in ovens at 50 degrees to make sure they can withstand the heat!

Professor Negroponte stresses that this is an education project, not a laptop project, a view shared by Kofi Annan, ex-secretary General of the UN. Kofi Annan regarded the venture as an "expression of global solidarity" opening up new fronts for children's education.

The laptops will be able to display books, providing vital reading material to

children who otherwise would not have access to the texts. Many other software products will be available for the laptops enabling children to develop their learning and discovering skills as well as having fun.



photo from www.laptop.org

The first laptops will be produced by the world's largest laptop manufacturer, Quanta in Taiwan and incorporate low energy chips from AMD. The laptops currently cost US\$176 each, but the aim is to get the price down to supply governments at US\$100.

Bamboo for Archivists

The first of two workshops for archivists featured Bamboo, Lemur's information retrieval software for academics and researchers.

The workshop at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol was on large collections in museums and galleries and focused on the challenges these can pose for archivists. Lemur's Tom Mortimer explained how Bamboo provides a user-friendly web-based collaborative database system which is ideal for digitised collections containing large amounts of unstructured text and other multimedia files, such as images, sound and video.

Bamboo's powerful probabilistic search capabilities enable archivists and researchers to find information quickly and accurately in the collection and also to make associations in the data which were perhaps previously unknown.

Bamboo is being used in a £423k Rhodesia Project being undertaken by the University of the West of England (UWE) in collaboration with the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum. Project leader Dr Diana Jeater, said: "We needed a package which could handle and search across mixed media and unstructured materials, quickly and accurately, and then present findings clearly. Bamboo is excellent for this."

8 years of Xapian

This month marks the eighth anniversary of the Xapian open source project. Xapian (pronounced 'Zap-ian') is a software library; a set of routines for building searchable indexes of text data. It sits at the heart of Lemur's open source enterprise search system, Flax, used by organisations such as the Newspaper Licensing Agency (NLA).

Since its inception, developers have improved and extended Xapian which is now used by organisations across the world, including public and private sectors. The open source community of developers and users are celebrating Xapian's anniversary with informal gatherings in London and Taiwan.

About Lemur

Lemur is highly active in the information retrieval market with international clients from sectors including academia, public relations, e-commerce, government and private businesses.

Lemur's Flax™ project delivers a cutting-edge enterprise search solution, using the power of open source software to drive down costs and provide world beating search performance with no software licence fees.

Lemur's Bamboo™ software is a collaborative, web-enabled, multimedia database system used by academics and researchers.

Lemur also provides general expertise and development in technologies such as Java, C++, Linux, Windows and XML.