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Price of MIT Professor's '\$100 Laptop' Hits \$200

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By Jim Finkle, Reuters

BOSTON (Reuters)—A computer developed for poor children around the world, dubbed 'the \$100 laptop,' has reached a milestone: Its price tag is now \$200.

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The One Laptop per Child Foundation, founded by MIT Professor Nicholas Negroponte, has started offering the lime-green-and-white machines in lots of 10,000 for \$200 apiece on its [Web site](#).

Two weeks ago, a foundation executive confirmed recent estimates that the computer would cost \$188, which was already higher than the \$150 price tag in February and \$176 in April.

The laptops are scheduled to go into production next month at a factory in China, far behind their original schedule and in quantities that are a fraction of Negroponte's earlier projections.

It is unclear when the machines will be ready for customers, as the Web site said version 1.0 of the software that runs the machine will not be ready until December 7.

Foundation spokesman George Snell declined comment on the pricing or release schedule.

When Negroponte said he could produce the laptops for \$100, industry analysts said it had the potential to shake up the PC industry, ushering in an era of low-cost computing.

He hoped to keep the price down by achieving unprecedented economies of scale for a start-up manufacturer, and in April, he told Reuters he expected to have orders for 2.5 million laptops by May, with production targeted to begin in September.

But that has not panned out. So far the foundation has disclosed orders to three countries—Uruguay, Peru and Mongolia. It has not said how many machines they have ordered.

Wayan Vota, an expert on using technology to promote economic development who publishes [olpcnews.com](#), a blog that monitors the group's activities, estimates orders at no more than 200,000 laptops.

"One-hundred dollars was never a realistic price. By starting with an unrealistic price, he reduced his credibility selling the laptop," Vota said.

Negroponte, a charismatic technologist who counts News Corp chief Rupert Murdoch and Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim among his friends, has attracted a lot of attention for the foundation.

He has met with leaders around the globe and promoted the introduction of computers into classrooms in the most impoverished regions of the world. As he has done that, big technology companies have boosted spending on similar efforts.

The laptop features a keyboard that switches languages, a video camera, wireless connectivity and Linux software.

Microsoft Corp is trying to tailor Windows XP to work on the machine and recently said it is a few months away from knowing for sure whether it can accomplish that task.

The display switches from color to black-and-white for viewing in direct sunlight—a breakthrough that the foundation is patenting and may license next year for commercial use.

The laptop needs just 2 watts of power compared with a typical laptop's 30 to 40 watts and does away with hard drives. It uses flash memory and four USB ports to add memory and other devices.

Earlier this year the foundation teamed up with Intel Corp, which is developing a rival machine. The two may work together on a second-generation laptop. This first machine runs on a microprocessor developed by Intel rival Advanced Micro Devices Inc.

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