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Uruguay poised to make first governmental OLPC purchase

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Uruguay's government this week announced the results of a study indicating that XO computers from the One Laptop Per Child project were a better value for the nation's schoolchildren than Intel's similar offering, the Classmate PC. The next step is likely to be a purchase agreement between OLPC and Uruguay for at least 100,000 laptops. Though nothing has been finalized yet, when asked what needs to happen for formal agreement to occur, OLPC founder Nicholas Negroponte simply says, "business closure."

OLPC has been in talks with the Uruguay government for about a year. When the country decided to pursue the idea of giving portable computers to all its schoolchildren, it issued a Request for Proposals to solicit bids from suppliers. A months-long study was conducted by Uruguay's Technological Laboratory (LATU), in which Brightstar Corp. presented the OLPC's XO unit and Grupo Positivo de Brasil offered the Classmate PC from Intel. The XO edged out the Classmate by a narrow margin, with scores of 56.84 and 53.06 respectively.

While other nations have done small test programs within a school or village, Uruguay's study represents the first time a government agency has done a comparitive analyis of the XO and another computer to determine their applicability to its country's educational system.

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OLPC

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