

# First Look: OLPC's XO Laptop

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To say the \$188 XO laptop produced by the One Laptop Per Child organization is not your typical laptop is an understatement. For one, the XO is a tech triumph for its low price and rugged design, and will amaze any child in a developing nation (the laptop's intended recipient) lucky enough to get one. On the other hand, anyone familiar with a Windows-based notebook and who expects a similar experience with the XO will be sorely disappointed.

The production notebook supplied by the OLPC group is chock full of impressive technological firsts. It has a power-saving display that can be viewed in direct sunlight, a laptop chassis that can withstand a monsoon or sandstorm, and innards with no moving parts (fans or disk drives) which in turn reduces potential parts failure.

## Tradeoffs

Technological innovations aside, I found some harsh tradeoffs with the XO compared to today's Windows-based notebooks. First, don't expect to touch-type on the XO -- the rubberized keyboard is too small for most adults and geared toward child-sized hands. My fat fingers couldn't cope and I had to resort to hunt-and-peck typing. But anyone comparing the XO to a Windows laptop is missing the point. It's the tradeoffs that help keep the XO inexpensive, durable, and kid-friendly.

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