

Sugar Gets Sweeter: Former OLPC Exec Walter Bender on Netbooks, E-books, Blueberry, and Cloudberry

By *srlinuxx*

Created *14/12/2009 - 11:31am*

Submitted by srlinuxx on Monday 14th of December 2009 11:31:35 AM Filed under [Interviews](#) [1]

Every so often, we like to check in with Walter Bender, the former president of software and content for the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) Foundation. He's always busy with something interesting?and lately, it's been Sugar, the classroom-oriented software environment that he and a team of software engineers originally developed for the OLPC's \$200 XO Laptop. Bender left the OLPC Foundation in 2008 to start Sugar Labs, a Brookline, MA-based non-profit organization that continues to make improvements to Sugar.

The most recent, which Bender told us about back in February, is Sugar on a Stick, a version of Sugar that fits on a USB key. Insert Sugar on a Stick into the USB slot of your Windows, Mac, or Linux computer, and you can start up the computer in Sugar instead of the native operating system. The implications are exciting: for the first time, any classroom or consumer with a computer can try all of the educational software built into Sugar without having to obtain an XO.

Last week, Sugar Labs announced the debut of Blueberry, the second major release of Sugar on a Stick. I caught up with Bender just after he'd returned from the Netbook World Summit in Paris, where he says many netbook manufacturers expressed interest in putting Sugar on their devices.

[Rest Here](#) [2]

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