Tablet PC for developing nations

The tablet version of the XO computer should be ready by 2012

The One Laptop Per Child organisation has been given a $5.6m (£3.5m) grant to develop a tablet version of its educational computer.

The cash comes from chip maker Marvell which became a supporter and sponsor of OLPC in early 2009.

The OLPC organisation said the grant meant it had all the development cash it needed to produce its next machine.

OLPC said it would show off the first development work on the new machine at the CES show in January 2011.

The cash handed over by Marvell will fund development of a tablet version of the XO - the rugged computer designed to boost education in developing nations.

The device is code-named XO-3 as it will be the third device the OLPC organisation has produced. It previously scrapped plans for the XO-2 which was to resemble an electronic book.

Early prototypes of the XO-3 will likely be based on the Moby machine that Marvell already makes. The finished XO-3 should be ready in 2012.

The OLPC organisation was created with the intention of making a laptop costing only $100 that would be bought in huge quantities by poorer nations keen to get children using computers.

The final machine produced by OLPC in 2007 ended up costing about $199 and did not sell in the huge quantities the group wanted. To date about 1.4 million XO laptops have been distributed.