

overwhelming six hundred and seventy, do the guilty nearly always go six hundred and eighty? The problem is not with the six hundred and ninety laws they are stringent enough, says seven hundred R. Madhava Menon, one of India's foremost legal seven hundred and ten and vice-chancellor of the West Bengal seven hundred and twenty University of Juridical Studies in Kolkata (seven hundred and thirty Calcutta). "The villain of the piece seven hundred and forty the investigation," says Menon.

And the seven hundred and fifty starts with the woman's dying declaration. "seven hundred and sixty is a belief that the dying seven hundred and seventy not lie. It's a legal presumption," seven hundred and eighty L. Thirunavukkarasu of St John's Medical seven hundred and ninety in Bangalore, who performed many post-mortems eight hundred burns victims when he was head of forensics eight hundred and ten Victoria Hospital.

Invariably, the victim is eight hundred and twenty to hospital by her husband and eight hundred and thirty in-laws, the very people who may eight hundred and forty tried to kill her or forced eight hundred and fifty to attempt suicide (the law treats eight hundred and sixty responsible as guilty in both cases). Eight hundred and seventy woman is told that her own eight hundred and eighty will be hurt if she doesn't eight hundred and ninety it was an accident, or is nine hundred to consider the fate of her children if nine hundred and ten dies and her husband goes to nine hundred and twenty, or warned that she will have nine hundred and thirty come back home if she survives. "nine hundred and forty if I send the in-laws outside, nine hundred and fifty invariably lie. As a doctor, I nine hundred and sixty for the statement, and I record nine hundred and seventy," says. n

One minute with...

Nicholas Negroponte

Can tablet computers 'parachuted' into remote areas transform childhood learning, asks the man behind One Laptop per Child

Computers will be dropped by helicopter in isolated areas and children left to get on with teaching themselves to read and write. Why?

One Laptop per Child (OLPC), even after nearly 3 million laptops, is still criticised along the following lines: "Negroponte believes that you can give a child a laptop and walk away." Whether I ever believed that or not is now secondary. It became such a refrain that I finally asked myself about a year ago: "What if you could?"

When will this happen?

A pre-pilot will start on January 1, 2012. Pre-pilot means that it will be small and there will be modest human intervention to just see children's reaction in order to better design the real, hands-off, dropping-out-of-the-sky format.

How will you pick the sites?

English has to be an official language. So, learning to read and write in English has immediate local and social value, as well as long-term economic value - in short, it will be a passport to 21st century skills. Villages in Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Liberia are candidates. A pre-pilot will also happen in India. Right now, as researchers, we know how kids learn English and do not yet want to deal with the complexity of other languages.

How will you know if this works?

The experiment has no human intervention. But that limitation does not exist when verifying and testing results. At the end of the 2-year-long experiment, researchers trained in educational testing will go to the villages. While the kids are not connected to the internet, we are connected to them. So, some data collection and assessment will also happen remotely during the experiment.

What about power and upkeep of the tablets?

Power is solar and hand crank. With the OLPC laptops the kids could repair about 85 per cent of malfunctions. We designed it to be taken apart easily. In fact, I had wanted to put a label on that said: "Warranty not valid until laptop is tampered with." The tablets will be, yet again, more robust.



PROFILE

Nicholas Negroponte is founder of the One Laptop per Child non-profit organisation and co-founded and directed the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Laboratory

What is your target audience?

Five to 8-year-olds. Since the software is really centered on early childhood and immersive of that stage of life, they may be too babyish for old kids.

What makes you optimistic that children can learn on their own, with digital tools?

There is provocative evidence from research. Sugata Mitra, who is on our team, is famous for his Hole-in-the-Wall experiments. Over the past decade, he introduced the very first computer in a public space in remote villages across India. Children, who had never seen a computer before, congregated around this single machine and self-organised into learning communities to become computer-literate, with no adult intervention. In fact, their proficiency in computer literacy rivalled that of children who receive explicit instruction in schools. My general optimism is that children can do anything and, if you ask Sugata, collectively they seem to be able to. But I am really going into this with an open mind. It is an experiment, and one outcome could be "no, they cannot".

Interview by Vijaysree Venkatraman