

June 21, 2011

OLPC Canada Update

In celebration of National Aboriginal Day, we are excited to share an update on our One Laptop per Child (OLPC) Canada program.

Since our official launch last September, we have been working behind the scenes to maximize the OLPC experience for Aboriginal children in Canada.

At the time of the launch we had chosen 12 sites. As a result of additional funding from the Government of Ontario, we were able to add a 13th site; Kawenni:io Elementary School at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. The school is rich in culture and features a Mohawk immersion program. The staff is eager to apply the Mohawk language to the open source applications on the XO. The students at Kawenni:io will receive their laptops next fall.

All schools have undergone a technical assessment, carried out by IBM. The IBM IT Infrastructure Readiness Assessment report has been completed and outlines technical infrastructure gaps and a series of recommendations. We will work closely with the communities and partners to generate solutions to close the identified gaps. Despite the gaps, all of the schools are operational and able to utilize the laptops. Closing the gaps will mean better utility.



Teachers and students learn how to utilize the interactive tools on the XO laptops at Kakisiwew School in Whitewood, SK.

Air Canada, First Air and Air Creebec played vital roles by transporting 2,500 laptops to the chosen pilot sites. Some of these laptops have already been distributed, while others will be distributed in the next few weeks before school is dismissed for the summer or at the beginning of the school year in September. The decision will be made based on the advice of the principal and OLPC Champion and will be done with the best interests of the children in mind.



A student enjoys her new laptop at John C. Yesno Education Centre in Eabammet Lake, ON.

One of the unique features of our Canadian OLPC program is our commitment to ensure that the kids and their teachers have access to a trained resource. We also wanted to ensure that wherever possible, we create opportunities for local community members, who will be the point person for technical support, monitoring computer infrastructure, troubleshooting, repairs and other OLPC related duties. The full time Champions are:

Dolphus Ferdinand - Yellowknife, NT
Justin Bear - Ochapowace First Nation, SK
Sandy Jacko - Whitefish River First Nation, ON
Courtenay Louie - Ahousaht First Nation, BC
Tyler Anderson - Gift Lake Metis Settlement, AB
Roddy Stewart - Kangiqsualujuaq, QC
Mark Barrowcliffe - Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, ON

In the summer, we will recruit and hire full time Champions for the remaining six communities. In the interim, school staff members have taken on this role.

On April 17 to April 21, 2011, OLPC Canada hosted training for the Champions and project staff. With



expert facilitators from One Laptop per Child and Ekomini, participants received pedagogical, technical and content training to ensure local capacity in preparation for deployment of the laptops. The pedagogical component of the training focused on learning theory and curriculum development. Participants designed creative lesson plans in core subject areas utilizing the XO applications and its unique features. In addition, participants learned to repair hardware, troubleshoot and upgrade software. The Tim Horton Children's Foundation generously provided the meeting space, accommodations and meals for this training session and we are grateful to them for their support.

OLPC Champions receive pedagogical, technical and content training.

We are committed to carrying out a fulsome evaluation of this pilot program and as such, we are working with KTA Inc. We have developed an evaluation framework that will

evaluate the impacts of the pilot project, including: student learning, social impacts, and skills development. The evaluation will also assess the success of the implementation.

We would also like to take the opportunity to thank Vale, BMO Financial Group and the many content partners who have been with us from the beginning:

CAMH
Buffy Sainte-Marie
Ekomini
ParticipACTION
Safe Kids Canada.

Thank you for your support and interest in OLPC Canada!

Yours sincerely,

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