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## After OLPC, Asus Comes

### *Cheap laptops all around*

It looks as if the OLPC, One Laptop Per Child, did change the world but not in the way Nicholas Negroponte might have hoped as more and more computer manufacturing companies that are active on the laptop market are now focusing on low cost computing solutions that are becoming increasingly popular with users that do not to invest too heavily into a laptop or notebook. Asustek Computer, a Taiwanese computer hardware manufacturer, became interested in the low cost and low end mobile computing market when it announced plans to develop, manufacture and ship a lower cost laptop that is targeted at casual users and which is priced below the \$300 mark. The Asus Eee PC is the first ultra mobile and low cost computing system after the ones coming from Intel, the Classmate PC and OLPC, the XO. The new Asus machine was developed as a joint effort with Intel and it comes with a 7 inch screen, while a more high end version will be available soon according to the news site [cba.ca](http://cba.ca) which cites Asus chairman Jonney Shih. The most simple and basic Asus Eee PC will come with a price tag of \$199, while higher end models will go as far as \$245 and \$299, which are pretty affordable prices considering that a truly high end notebook may sport a price tag of more than \$5,000. In order to cut costs as much as possible, the laptop will come with the free and open source operating system Linux and as Jonney Shih says "it will be a laptop that's easy to learn, easy to play and easy to work with... one targeting both the emerging and mature markets". Asus hopes to produce and ship more than half a million of these low price laptops in 2007, but as the mobile computing industry goes through a supply crisis, the number might be drastically reduced as key hardware components might not be available in quantity. Even as a late comer to the laptop party, Asus, a company more dedicated to motherboards and graphics cards, climbed to the first 10 mobile computing manufacturers in the world and it is not the first company to target the developing and emerging markets as Intel is seriously posed to take full advantage of those areas too.