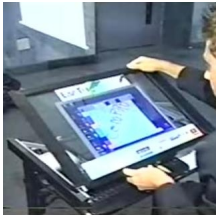


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By: Bogdan Botezatu, Hardware Editor



The tablet PC can elevate its screen, then snap it back horizontally
YouTube

Serrana Digital Desk: the Brazil-Baked OLPC Alternative

The surface computers will be directly integrated into the school desks

The OLPC initiative has had plenty of bumps in the road lately, such as the Nigerian LANCOR lawsuit, the departure of Mary-Lou Jepsen, and the constant delays in shipments. Funds have been scarce and the charity organization could not drop the price per unit around \$100, so it's easy to understand why Negroponte's initiative could not cover all the available markets.

The Brazilian inhabitants of Serrana did not await OLPC's chariot and took their own shot at delivering affordable computing alternatives. The Serrana Digital Desk project is comprised of 200 surface computers that can easily morph into fully-fledged PCs. The 200 computers are part of a trial run in a local program of implementing computers in schools with the help of the community.

The Serrana project is managed by Victor Mammana, chief of the display branch at the Brazilian government's Ministry of Science and Technology. Mammana is the co-inventor of the low-cost tablet display in the Serrana surface computers, but at the same time he evaluates the utility of low-cost PC programs for education for Brazil.

As revealed by [CNet](#), Victor Mammana has been working with Nicholas Negroponte's OLPC and Intel, two institutions that both deliver low-cost computing gears (the XO and the Classmate, respectively). The Serrana project is a local initiative that plans to introduce low-cost computers into the local schools.

According to Mammana, the PCs will be integrated directly into the school desks already in classroom.

"The idea is not to make a business out of that, but more like a social franchise," said Mammana. "It's interesting, this idea of providing a local solution for a local problem."

The tablet PCs will come with a 15-inch LDC display using multi-point technology, that would allow multiple styluses to interact with the computer at the same time. It seems that the PCs alone cost less than \$30 per unit, but integration inside the desk will up the price to about \$550. There are no additional details about the tablets' hardware configuration, but the video below shows them (probably) running Windows XP.