Litl Webbook Re-Defines Computing

Laptop-like device provides entertainment and education for the whole family.

By **ERIC M. STRAUSS**
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Dec. 14, 2009— -- The litl webbook packs as much power as many of the laptops available today, but the tiny Boston-based company that designed the litl is offering a whole new way to use a computer.

It is not a laptop -- it's an Internet device. In a refreshing approach, the manufacturer has concentrated on simplicity over features.

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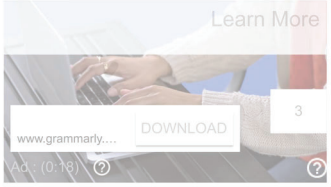

Litl webbook is an ideal first computer for the kids, a fun digital appliance for the kitchen or a simple to use device for the elderly.

The operating system is completely unique to litl. It's been written from the ground up (2 ½ years in the making) instead of being tweaked for the past 30 years like the Windows and Mac OS.

When users turn on the webbook, they are presented with an easy-to-navigate main page. Instead of menus or a desktop littered with folders, the

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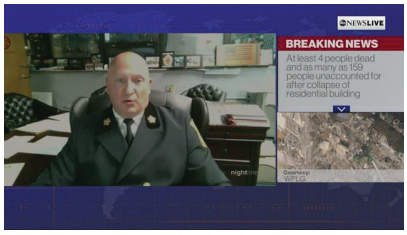

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screen immediately displays the most popular applications. For example, a Web browser and search box are built right in to the user interface.

It is truly an Internet computer and it uses online services most people are already familiar with, such as Gmail, Youtube, Flickr, Facebook and Twitter, and common Internet standards like RSS.

Litl Offers Simplicity But Not Without Sacrifice

Users are presented with a option to add a "card" or a widget to services they enjoy and all the data is kept on the Internet and pulled down to the computer whenever it is turned on. Techies refer to this as "cloud computing," because all the data is stored remotely.

"As everything from music and photos to e-mail and social networking moves online, it's clear that the Web is transforming personal computing. And yet, most homes are still using computers and software based on thinking from more than 30 years ago," explained Litl's founder and CEO John Chuang. "We knew that to really meet the needs of home users – from kids to parents and grandparents – we needed to design an entirely new system that would make the web engaging, entertaining and fun."

Software updates (they call them "treatments") are done remotely while you sleep, and your settings and data are constantly being backed up. If your Litl is lost or broken you won't lose any of your data.

However, you will give up a lot of control for all this simplicity. The litl won't run intense DVD-based video games or any additional software that other computers can. No watching movies from a DVD either. But, then again, that is not what this computer is designed for.

Flip the Litl Into Easel Mode to Display Weather, Photos and More

In addition to the hassle-free, scaled-back custom operating system the litl also has two interesting display options that set it apart from traditional laptops. The screen flips around into easel mode allowing the full 12-inch screen to display the local weather, a multimedia slideshow, or anything else while hiding the keyboard.

The integrated HDMI port allows you to connect the litl to any HDTV to watch anything from YouTube videos to stunning photos on your big screen TV.

A cute little key on the lower left of the keyboard, with the litl logo in script, is the way you bring the computer all the way home. It takes you back to the main screen where you can choose which widget you want to access next.

Using a litl is a lot of fun if you can get past the concept of what it's not.

This will really only be good as a second computer for a busy household. You will not be able to run intense computational scientific software , but you will have fun surfing the Web, sharing photos and enjoying other widgets, such as the built-in egg timer. The company also offers an unprecedented 2-year money back guarantee.

The litl is available for $699 on the company's Web site.

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