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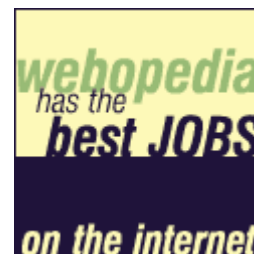
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FreeOS examines the Simputer: a Linux-based handheld device developed in India, meant for use in economically disadvantaged rural areas. The novelty of Linux-based devices is wearing off, but there's more to the Simputer than its OS: the hardware specification for the device is released under the "Simputer General Public License," which ensures that work done to improve the specification is either kept public, or, for commercial interests who want to keep their modifications closed, paid for with a one-time payment.

"The bugbear of any new OS or device is availability of application software and this can come about only through availability of a platform for developers. The IML is a XML (Extensible Markup Language) application for describing the content and applications handled, by a Simputer. The open source nature of the IML allows rapid development of solutions on any platform including Windows, Linux and Solaris.

Currently the following applications are available for the Simputer: an IML browser with the cute name of imli , Text to speech software, Internet access software like browser, E-mail and even a MP3 player.

The system software of the Simputer is under GPL as it uses Linux. However for the hardware, the Trust has come up with its



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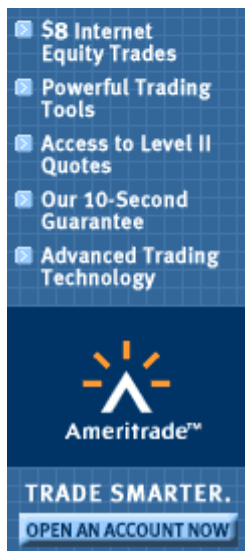
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own definition of an open source like license called Simputer General Public License (SGPL). Anybody can download the hardware specifications of the Simputer and build his own machine or further develop on it. However, the producer must then obtain any one of two possible licenses from the Simputer Trust. These bind him to sharing any derivatives with the Trust for further dissemination. Those who wish to go commercial with their product have to make a one-time payment to the Trust. Here again the Trust has kept it at a lower cost (\$25,000) for developing countries and \$250,000 for developed countries. No list of "developed" countries is provided though."

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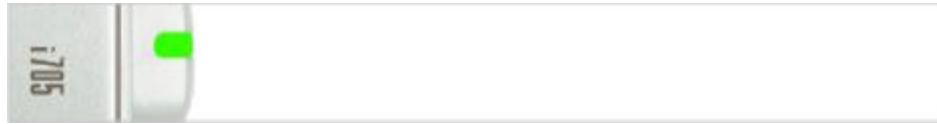
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