

Microsoft and HCL launch world's cheapest laptop

Software leaders Microsoft Corp India and HCL Infosystems Ltd have announced a set of joint initiatives, including the launch of world's cheapest 'Windows' enabled laptop computer and setting up of a centre of excellence (CoE) to create a customised solution framework for India.

Announcing this here Friday, Ajai Chowdhry, chairman and CEO of HCL, said: 'The Windows OS (operating system) will be launched under the MiLeap brand of HCL and will cost Rs.16,990.'

Talking about the MiLeap brand, Chowdhry said the series were launched earlier this year and the launch of the cheapest laptop computer will be Microsoft Windows XP powered and that the 'MiLeap H series will have a GB HDD with broadband'.

Microsoft Corp chief operating officer Kevin Turner said for over 22 years, both Microsoft and HCL have partnered to promote the use of IT in India, 'and the establishment of the CoE which will have over 500 software professionals will create and deploy Microsoft technologies in various sectors, like banking, telecom, defence, railways and similar highly organised sectors'.

Microsoft India chairman Ravi Venkatesan said the agreement between the two software groups entails the training and subsequent certifying of 50,000 students on Microsoft technologies in three years time.

'The batches will be trained in 100 training centres - the HCL Career Development Centres - set up by HCL. The curriculum used will be the Microsoft Official Curriculum,' he said.

Venkatesan added that this training will help the Indian IT industry retain its competitive edge as well as also supply the projected need of 2.3 million skilled computer workers that may arise due to the country's emergence as a preferred outsourcing destination.

Citing NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Services Companies) Strategic Review 2008 projection, Venkatesan said domestic IT services' spending is estimated to grow at about 43 percent in 2008-09 with all signs of an increase in sophistication.

'Thus the data points that CoE will become a big business enabler in the coming years,' he said.

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