



Giving kids laptops is a good investment

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On Thursday, Computers 4 Kids, an innovative project administered through Connected Tennessee, will present 185 new Dell laptops to deserving foster children throughout West Tennessee. This is a small, but important, step toward guaranteeing that today's children have an opportunity to learn important technology they will need to survive in the future.

The situation in Tennessee is dire. Almost half of low-income families in our state cite lack of a computer as the reason they don't access the Internet. That's where Computers 4 Kids comes in. The project is designed to bridge the gap between those who can afford computers and those who can't.

Of course, some will argue that spending more than \$100,000 on laptops for disadvantaged kids is a waste of money. They will argue that these children can learn all they need to about computers in school. These people are missing the point.

Having access to a computer and the Internet at school is a good thing. It is an essential part of the learning process, but it's not enough. To really learn new technology and become comfortable with it, children need to have access more than a few hours a day. Access needs to be easy, and it needs to be constant.

Why is this so important? Because the world is becoming more and more technology driven. More and more, people are moving toward the Internet. Those who know how to use this powerful medium will thrive in tomorrow's world. Those who don't will, sadly, find themselves falling further and further behind, unable to keep pace.

In truth, \$100,000 is a small price to pay in exchange for the many benefits that this program offers. It's an investment in the future of our state, one that wouldn't be possible without programs like Computers for Kids.