

[I'm excited about Raspberry Pi](#) [1]

Written by [Sam Bowman](#) [2] | Wednesday 29 February 2012

Today sees the launch of the [Raspberry Pi](#) [3], a fully-functional computer the size of a credit card [selling for about £22](#) [4]. It's a brilliantly stripped-down device, with a mobile phone charger power socket, a modest (but functional) amount of memory, a few USB ports and a video output that works with most televisions. It comes bundled with Linux and some software that teaches you the basics of computer programming.

It's an exciting product. Funded entirely by the project's developers on a non-profit basis, it's being aimed at schoolchildren, and the first 10,000 built will be shipping to schools. It'll be great to see how that goes. I don't know if learning computer programming in school is going to make many students love it? it's hard to find good IT teachers and, in my experience, having something forced on you at school is a recipe for hating it. But even still, lots of kids will be able to teach themselves on these, either at home or outside normal class time, and that's great.

I wouldn't be surprised if the real benefit of the Raspberry Pi device, though, is the rest of the world. Once production of the Raspberry Pi ramps up to meet demand for it, millions of people will suddenly be within reach of owning a computer, instead of having to rely on internet cafes. That means they can spend much more time on them, learning exactly the sort of computer skills that are easily sold across the internet. Adding wifi to the device through a standard wifi dongle would mean that businesses could sell wifi access in poor neighbourhoods.

The tragedy of the modern age is how much talent is being wasted in subsistence farming work, with little access to the benefits of the ongoing technological revolution. People across Africa have used cheap mobile phones to develop [sophisticated banking and credit systems](#) [5] that have helped to spur investment and remittance transfers from relatives in rich countries. The Raspberry Pi may just be a way of unlocking some of that human capital and unleashing a second, human revolution.

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