

About the author

My name is Francois Lionet, programming computers has been my passion since the apparition of home computers in 1980.

My first computer was a Ohio Scientific Superboard II that I bought in 1980 when I was 17. It was the cheapest real computer available at the time (2500 Francs, a fortune for me then), a single board 6502 system, with 4K of RAM, 1K of video ram, a keyboard, video output and a Microsoft Basic interpreter.

It was a fantastic machine, very well designed by gamers, with a game-oriented character set that even included star-trek vessel characters. I was living in France at the time, and must have been the only person who bought this machine in my country. People were more interested in machines like the Sinclair ZX80, which was cheaper, but it was not a *real* computer.

Having no Internet, and a very poorly photocopied documentation, I had to learn everything by myself. And what I wanted was to make games. So I started by making a couple of games in Basic, to discover that Basic was really slow and that I had to learn to program in machine language.

So I bought a book about the 6502 processor, discovered that it was not that complicated and programmed my own assembler in Basic. Then I was free! I spent 2 years with this machine and programmed many games like Pacman, Space Invaders, Defender etc, all fast action arcade games. I discovered what was to be my life's passion, and programmed all the time, even during my course at the vet prep school. We had so much fun playing them in my room at the vet school. Ha! I forgot to say, that to please my mother, I studied to be a vet. I carried on my studies until the end (by cheating a lot), got the diploma, and never practiced. But don't call me 'doctor', I did not pass my thesis, I was too busy programming...

I had the incredible luck to be 18 when the very first home computer appeared, and to follow the progression of the technology. I programmed nearly all the machines that were available in France at the time:

- Oric 1 and Oric Atmos
- CBM 64
- Amstrad CPC 464
- Thomson TO7/MO5
- Atari ST
- Amiga
- Macs
- And of course, all kinds of PCs.

Before programming STOS which was the 'real' beginning of my career and brought me to write this text 32 years later, I was creating games with a French game-creation group called Jawx, and did some adaptations of games from machine to machine to make money.

Each time I discovered a new computer, the first work I had to do was to program sprite and sound routines. When the opportunity to make STOS Basic appeared, I decided to write the routines once and for all, include them in the language itself, so that the users of the product would not have to do it.

The first game-engine ever published on a computer was born, STOS The Game Creator, a complete environment to develop games.

Then I moved to the Amiga to develop AMOS Basic, taking advantage of the incredible possibilities of this wonderful machine which still amazes me today.

I only programmed in machine language until the end of AMOS.

After AMOS and the Amiga, I moved to PC, partnered with Yves Lamoureux and created 'Klik and Play' in C (thank you Yves for teaching me C!), another game engine but graphical this time. For the first time, people used their mouse to make games, and did not need to code, as all the game logic was entered in a unique interface, (still unique today) the event editor. The idea of the event editor came to me by watching accountants deal with complex Excel sheets. Some can be incredibly complex, and can even include endless loops... yet when you ask an accountant if he is a programmer, he will laugh at you and say no.

The complexity was in the way the code was displayed, not in the code itself. The event editor displays the code just like an Excel sheet, with rows and columns, and you enter the 'code' by choosing options in menus.

Klik and Play was a true revolution in programming games, with the first implementation of condition / action driven mechanics : IF 'this' happens (condition) THEN do 'that' (action) a concept used later in products like 'Scratch' from the MIT. And yet, being a programmer of games myself, and unlike Scratch, I implemented the necessary items needed to create real top-class complex action games.

Klik and Play was a world success, and was even published in the USA by Maxis, the creators of Sim City. In 1999, Yves and I created our company 'Clickteam SARL' and started to sell the product online. Its beginnings were difficult, but the company survived and is still alive today, it still sells the descendance of Klik and Play, with my original concept of event editor unchanged, 'Clickteam Fusion'.

Clickteam Fusion is a really powerful 2D game engine. Many professional quality games have been created with it, including the whole series of world hit horror games 'Five Nights at Freddy's'.

Today, the number of games bearing the logo 'Created with Fusion' increases week after week, on Steam or other platforms, with a strong and creative community of dedicated users that would not want to use any other tool.

www.clickteam.com

My work has been copied several times during my career. In a friendly way with Dark Basic, a PC enhancement of AMOS with 3D abilities made by one of the employees of my publisher while AMOS was on sale (explaining the name, a 'dark' project... incredible!). Dark Basic was the foundation of 'The Games Creators' a company founded by ex-Europress employees.

I was married for 25 years, had a kid, Christophe who is today 26 and works as a Game Designer. After my divorce, I found the real me, started a completely new life, left Clickteam and France, and joined a fantastic startup in Norway for two years, driven by a genius, who is also a fantastic programmer, Hogne Titlestad. Their product 'Friend' has the power to revolutionise computing and operating systems as we know them today.

<https://www.friendup.cloud>

I left Friend on a temporary relapse of reason and moved to Poland where I was an employee of a company that ports AAA games from consoles to PC and vice-versa. It was a fantastic job with fantastic programmers, and even if the salary was at the level of Polish salaries, I felt really comfortable there. And working only 8 hours per day left me time to work on AOZ 4 to 5 hours each morning before going to work, to advance the project.

Since then, I (to be completed)

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Programming is my passion, and I cannot see myself ever stopping. As long as I can move a finger, an eyebrow, I will be programming.

Programmers are writers, writers of 'alive text', text that moves and makes sounds. And the most funny thing is that they only have ONE real reader, and this reader is ... themselves. The only thing that people see of our 'text' is the cover of the book, the outside. Maybe this is for the best, but I really wish I would get returns on my code, comments, critiques, just to improve and continue to learn.

And remember: If you can make a game, you can make anything on a computer. Games are the most difficult thing to make as they exploit all the possible aspects of the machine, and defects cannot be hidden.

List of the things I made

- Space invaders (1981) - Superboard II
- Pacman (1981) - Superboard II
- Meteor (1982) - Superboard II
- Asteroids (1982) - Superboard II
- Defender (1983) - Superboard II
- Driver (1983) - Oric 1
- Bombyx (1983) - Oric 1
- Bering (1983) - Oric 1
- Katuvu (1984) - CBM 64
- Cock Inn / Chicken Chase (1985) - Oric 1 / CBM 64 / Amstrad CPC
- Serenade (1985) - CBM 64
- Ole (1985) - CBM 64
- Captain Blood (1986) - PC and CBM 64 versions adaptation of the Atari ST game
- STOS Basic (1987) - Atari ST
- STOS Basic Compiler (1988) - Atari ST
- AMOS Basic (1989) - Amiga
- AMOS Basic Compiler (1990) - Amiga
- Easy AMOS (1991) - Amiga
- AMOS Professional (1992) - Amiga
- AMOS Professional Compiler (1993) - Amiga
- Klik and Play (1994) - PC Windows
- The Games Factory (1996) - PC Windows
- Multimedia Fusion (1997) / IMSI Multimedia Fusion / Corel Fusion - PC Windows
- Multimedia Fusion 2 (2004) - PC Windows
- (Most of) The runtime of Multimedia Fusion (2006-2008) - PC Windows
- Clickteam Fusion (2009) - PC Windows

Links

- Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_Lionet
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/francois.lionet.33>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/francoislionet/>
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