**Fellippe:** 0:07

Welcome to another episode of QB64 Report, your podcast on QB64 and all things nerdy. In today's episode we're going to talk to Scott Williams, from California. You can find him on Twitter as @vwbusguy, but, well, that can be misleading. You'll know why. This is a series of short interviews with people from the QB64 community. Without further to do. Let's get to it. Hi, Scott. Your name is one that has started popping up on our discord server very shortly ago. Who are you?

**Scott:** 0:41

I'm Scott Williams. I'm a systems engineer for the University of California, representing myself here, of course. I work in software as part of my day job, so that QB64 has been a fun side project for me, outside of my day job. Haven't quite found an excuse to incorporate it in my day job yet.

**Fellippe:** 0:59

That's what you do for a living, but how did you start programming?

**Scott:** 1:02

I started programming because I grew up in rural Indiana and there wasn't much to do. We didn't have cable TV, and I didn't have a lot of neighbors, but I had some neighbors down the street that had a Commodore and had a DOS box. And that's how we learned. I learned to program because I'd have kind of boredom. Our neighbors had some computers about a mile down the road. And so we basically taught each other QBasic and we would pretend that we were rival game companies and we would swap diskettes back and forth once in a while. And all of us ended up being software developers eventually, which is, which is fascinating. But that's, that's a part of, for me when we first got our, our significant family PC, my father banned me from installing software on it. And so I wanted to play games on it. For him, it was a business tool. Well, I found an interesting loophole. If I programmed the code and compiled it well, that wasn't technically installing it. So that's the way I got games on the computer, was to figure out how to make games with QBasic. And doing that with the neighbors was a way that we could learn to code together. So when we would swap each other's floppies, our floppies were often not compatible with each other's systems. So we'd have to, you know, actually read each other's source code and stuff. That's, that's how we learned to program. Just playing games, and passing them back and forth.

**Fellippe:** 2:25

And how old were you when all that started?

**Scott:** 2:27

Oh, I was probably seven or eight years old at that point.

**Fellippe:** 2:31

I wasn't expecting so young.

**Scott:** 2:33

Yeah.

**Fellippe:** 2:33

Most people I've talked to started at around 12 and you are the youngest so far. If you don't mind my asking how old are you now?

**Scott:** 2:40

I have to do math because it's no longer fun to count my years, but I believe in 37,

**Fellippe:** 2:45

So you started with basic, that was what people had when they had a computer back then either it would boot to basic, or we would magically find it buried in the DOS files. How did you come across QB64 down the road?

**Scott:** 3:00

So my sister-in-law is getting rid of an old laptop and I had this realization that my son was six, almost turning seven. And I was thinking that I started learning to code around the same time and I wanted to teach him how to code, so I took this old laptop and I installed Linux on it and we tried doing like MIT Scratch and things like that. And I thought I really wanted him to experience the joy of QBasic, like I had as a kid. And I thought well, I don't know. Can you do QBasic on Linux? I had tried it once before, but that's when I first started actually trying out QB64 in a meaningful way. I I think I wrote for him a simple guess the number game, something really elementary. And then it just kind of stuck in the back of my mind that I wanted to do more with it just for my own interest at some point. That's how I initially came across the QB64 was just wanting to add just some nostalgia for my own learning, wanting to that on to the next generation and wanting a way to do that from Linux.

**Fellippe:** 3:59

Yeah, a few episodes ago, I mentioned that our target audience is usually a bunch of nerds who are nostalgic for the past, or a bunch of kids were forced into it by someone who misses it from when they were kids. So in your case, it's both you and your kid. How did he like it?

**Scott:** 4:16

Oh yeah, of course he thought it was magical. So he's obviously not like at the point of writing his own full programs yet. I think for him the idea of being able to, he wants to be a game developer and wants to do game-related stuff when he grows up. So I think for him just seeing the magic of being able to code something and interact with it was, it was pretty great.

**Fellippe:** 4:38

So beginning with BASIC at the ripe age of seven, and then carrying on with finding QBasic on your computer as a loophole to get games on it. How did it progress? How did it turn into a day job for you?

**Scott:** 4:53

So my degrees aren't actually in computer science. They're in psychology and theology. And so I never had a formal training in computer science. What I had was I learned QBasic as a kid and then eventually what it did for me was especially in that scenario of having the neighbors was it taught me how to learn in community. And so that's where being part of an open source community helped where I eventually picked up C and then Python. And that was enough to kind of springboard me into learning other languages that've been practical for my day job, but really that starting off learning how to develop learning basics, how types work and learning how to collaborate with neighbors as a kid, those were all things that helped springboard the career, and springboard the interest.

**Fellippe:** 5:41

Well, now I'm more curious. How did your psychology and theology degree lead you into that? Are you working at the same university you graduated from, I suppose?

**Scott:** 5:50

I am not. Now it's quite frankly, it was a hobby that became a career because it pays bills.

**Fellippe:** 5:55

And you mentioned Python, you mentioned C++. Are those the main languages you work with nowadays?

**Scott:** 6:01

I learned C and then I learned Python. Python is still one I use quite a bit, but I, I'm not a one language person at all. For my day job, I yesterday I worked in Python, bash and Java script all in one day. Sometimes I'll write code with Go or Ruby. I do a lot of support at PHP applications. PHP used to be the major part of my in my background, have done a little bit with, Rust. Most often than not bash or Python or of what I've done, I've maintained a bunch Java things as well. So it's quite a list of programming languages at work. Sadly QBasic is not part of my day job at this point. I do have a coworker that's very much into Fortran though. So he's, he's been trying to win me into Fortran.

**Fellippe:** 6:43

After finding QB64 and wanting to teach your kid how to use it, did you dabble in it a little bit more?

**Scott:** 6:50

Yeah. So I created the project, QB shell, which kind of started as like a Twitter challenge. It didn't start seriously, but it was like one of those, I, I was just kind of bitten by a nostalgic bug one day and I thought, well, our first computer that we had growing up, wasn't actually even a PC. It was an Osborne 1, which ran CP/M, which is one of those, you are booted to a basic shell. And it was just enough really that you could load a program from a floppy. It wasn't a serious dev machine by any means, but I was just kind of getting nostalgic. I remember that kind of aha moment after I learned QBasic, and going back to the Osborne and figuring out If I put line numbers at the beginning, my code mostly still works. And then just kind of having some nostalgia for what if I had a shell that was basic, but ran on Linux. And found out that it was pretty quick to just write a shell that was a wrapper on bash. But then thought, well, that's cheating. I could do, I can do better than that. And started adding more and more little things as it went along. And admittedly, it got a little more popular than I was expecting it to at first, but it's been a fun project. At the end of the day, if I've had a long day and I just want something as a break, I still want to code, but I want a break from my day job or things I've committed to, it's just a really fun project to be able to pick up and play with for an hour or two, and then come back to it a few days later or whatever. But it's, it's been fun to relive the nostalgia, but also to see what's new since my childhood, within the things have been added to QB64. Frankly, make the development process a lot more fun.

**Fellippe:** 8:27

If it's not fun, why do it.

**Scott:** 8:29

Yeah, So the QB64 has been has been a really fun outlet for me and it scratches that nostalgic itch and it's really fun to see what you can do with it in modern systems. I will say that the QB64 community on Discord, in the forums, has been incredibly helpful for me with my projects. Definitely would not have gotten as far as I had without the QB64 community. So I'm very grateful for that.

**Fellippe:** 8:55

And we're very happy to have you with us, and we hope to see more from you and see more of a fun projects coming our way. And before we go: @vwbusguy, do you really own one?

**Scott:** 9:06

I did when I created the handle. So long before discord and Slack I was on IRC and I'm still on IRC. But yeah, when I created that handle, I had a few other nicks, but was on Freenode and now Libera. And so at the time I had a 78 Volkswagen bus. I sold it right before I moved to California. And then a little while after that, I bought a 73 and I sadly no longer have it. I did have a Baja bug up until a year or two ago. So I, I, my daily driver is still a Volkswagen, so not entirely left the Volkswagen family, but the Nick is currently a lie.

**Fellippe:** 9:40

Scott. It's been a pleasure having with us tonight. Thank you so much.

**Scott:** 9:44

Yeah. Thank you for having me. I'm very appreciative to be able to talk about a great project.

**Fellippe:** 9:48

Thank you. This was QB64 Report. Find QB64 at qb64.org. And join the community at discord.qb64.org. Thank you so much to all our patrons at patreon.com/qb64. Catch you guys next time.