**Fellippe:** 0:08

Welcome to QB64 report. I'm your host Fellippe Heitor, and in today's episode let's hear from Robert Ryan Carter. Ryan for short. He's a long time user/patron of the project, and also the new member of the QB64 Team, helping us with the business and management side of it all. Without further ado, let's get to it. Ryan, welcome aboard.

**Ryan:** 0:31

It's nice to see you. It was nice hearing other people in the community too that are part of it uh, getting involved and speaking on that and hearing their points of views and seeing some people that have been longer than I have, which I thought I would be one of the longest in the community, literally using it for many, many more years than I have, which was kind of shocking and also very nice to see.

**Fellippe:** 0:48

So that leads me also into my first formal question. When did you start programming?

**Ryan:** 0:53

I started with HTML, which is a scripting language effectively or markup language, but still programming. A lot of stuff I did at that time also was in DOS scripting, aka system configuration files, things of that nature. The thing that got me into computing was when I was about four and a half on Christmas, my parents got me a brand new computer. It was my first computer at home. I had already used, some of the, I forgot what their model number was, but it was the old Mac that was one solid box, black and white and had a floppy drive on it, if you remember, that's what I was using in kindergarten and first grade at the school I went to, but they got me my first computer. It was a Packard Bell, whereas everyone calls them Packard Hell I actually loved it. But was Windows 3.1, one of the first Windows 3.1 machines. And we got it, pulled it out of the box. Didn't work. And back then those machines, they got it from RadioShack, but that was like a $10,000 computer. So in US money at that time, I think that's like, you know, $15,000. But I took the thing back into my room and I did the number one thing we weren't allowed to do in the house growing up, I shut my door, I always thought was funny, but we weren't allowed to do that. So I get in there, and about 45 minutes later, my mom comes over there and she's like, I haven't heard him something's wrong because I was the mouthy child. It was hard to not know if I was in the house.

**Fellippe:** 2:10

Just to make this clear again, you were four, five?

**Ryan:** 2:13

Yeah.

**Fellippe:** 2:14

Oh God.

**Ryan:** 2:15

Cause my birthday's in April, so it was the December before my fifth birthday. So but I locked the door, which was the biggest no-no. She's banging on the door. She's like, what are you doing in there? And it's kind of funny because I'm like, I'm like almost five. What does she think I'm doing? But I go, you can't get mad if I open the door and she's like, just open the door. To be clear, my mother is a hundred percent old school German. So you want to talk about an interesting household and my dad's completely Irish. So it was very interesting. I opened the door, she looks and this $10,000 computer is in pieces on the floor. I took the, every, everything apart took it all apart and she just looks and... She pauses before she freaks. And she's like, you better figure out how to put that back together. That was her answer. She walked away and about an hour later, she comes back and what it ended up happening is I figured out what was wrong, got it working and had the computer set back up on the table in my bedroom was, playing on it.

**Fellippe:** 3:12

That's awesome.

**Ryan:** 3:13

That was kind of the clue that I needed to be in technology. It's like the kind of my focus. But funny enough, it ended up being some of the old jumper pin set incorrectly for the processor and bus speed. I figured it out. Amazing enough, I didn't fry anything either.

**Fellippe:** 3:26

That's too young to figure out a jumper pin was in the wrong position. That's too young.

**Ryan:** 3:31

Oh, I'd already electrocuted myself by that point about 10 times. So, I mean, I think I was ready. I had the, I had the unfortunate habit of trying to pull out plugs. So I would go to pull it out and my fingers, you know, I'd have a hard time grabbing at that age and my fingers would slide down and get the two prongs, get a little zap. And you rip your hand back, but I'm kind of going back to your question: really got into programming much more in depth a couple of years after that. So about six or seven, with QB4.5, and continued on from there. Just going on further and further in high school. My computer professor, we had at my high school w as this old army guy. And at that point I had already been exposed to Assembly, Fortran, Cobol, and he was teaching in the class for everyone else that hadn't done programming QB and he was using QB 4.5. Well, at that point I had gotten a copy of 7.1 PDS, which is far more capable than 4.5. You can, you could do full compilations without having to use interpreted, executables that were runnable on any version of windows and even Dos. It was just, it was fantastic. So I installed on two of the machines and he was like, I didn't know, you could do that. And I started help teaching the class with him and switched all the machines to 7.1. Now no one owned a license for that, but at that time, no one cared. But that was kind of where it went. And then professionally in my job you know, I, I use it on a daily basis almost. I've seen large companies using QBasic and, or a variants of QBasic that I never thought I'd ever see in production, which is slightly scary.

**Fellippe:** 5:04

Yeah, you know, I was talking to Luke the other day one of the things that made his nice bug out, some people are using this in production. I have to get you to know this guy. And I was talking about you because you had mentioned that to me in private before, but not only you, but you have also seen other people use it in production then that's Yeah, that's surprising too, to say the least. So basic was already your first programming language you started with QB 4.5, just like most of us have, and that's probably one of the most addictive products because our stories, they collide with so many other people's stories. So what kind of things were you writing at seven with QB 4.5?

**Ryan:** 5:43

Initially I did what everyone did initially I'd make the computer make sounds and I would put random crap on the screen. I mean, that's, that's what pretty much everyone did their first QB program. If they got it to run. After that phase, which I still do that some today, cause there's some fun stuff you can do in QB64 that you couldn't do before. The stuff I did after that is honestly, some of the same stuff I do today, which is writing utilities. So I want to copy, you know, a bunch of files from a bunch of sub folders. Well, in Dos, and even in Windows today, it's a pain. If you want to do, if you want to just copy the files and not the sub folders. So either you can write in PowerShell, which you might as well slit your wrists. Cause PowerShell is horrible. I can't stand it. I hate it, but you're right in PowerShell. There's some utilities you can use, or you can just write it quickly in QBasic and have an iterate, the folder structure, put in an array, let a dump it out and then just have it run the shell command and move or copy the file. It's so much faster. Yes. You get some overhead because it's QB constantly calling a command prompt, but you just do it, don't wait and shell hide and you don't have to see the command prompt, it's great.

**Fellippe:** 6:47

I totally got the feeling of automating tasks when you could do it item by item, that's, there's a feeling in that, isn't there?

**Ryan:** 6:55

So to give you example what you're talking about, I was working for this tech company we got into this situation. I don't want to give out too many details because that company still exists and it's very big, well, the problem was I changed one of the applications they wanted, the nurses and the staff to use. The issue is as with 99% of people using computers in a company, they have no clue how to deal with change. If you change something, they will say it doesn't work. It's not there. And they won't think so. The sys admin for that site wanted us the outside management company to go through to over 15,000 Citrix instances, load each one, delete and add a new shortcut manually for each one. And I could tell by what he was doing, he was trying to keep us busy to make himself look good. And I said to him, well, I can write something in a couple of minutes. That'll take care of this. I don't want you running scripts on our network, dah, dah, you know, that whole, that whole thing. And we start working on we're about an hour in, and I just say to other people there. I said, screw it. I I'm, I'm writing something. And they're like, what are you going to do? I said, well, come here, I'll show you pull up QB64. This was back in God. It would have been 2008, I think. And pretty much all it did was because you could access the Citrix folder structure for the desktop. It's kind of like seeing the Windows folder structure, but you could see it for all the indices. I just had to iterate through and delete the icon, a copy of the new icon. And the program took about five minutes to write and test, and then we deployed it. It took a total of 15 minutes to do a task that they intended it to take us a couple of days. Sys admin found out, lost his mind, started screaming in front of me, screaming at me in front of the other the other employees. And he said, I said, not to run scripts. And I said, well, it wasn't a script. It was a program.

**Fellippe:** 8:38

You up the game

**Ryan:** 8:39

And he kinda, he kind of shut up and walked away suffice to say, I was asked to not return to that site after that. But I say everyone on the tech team was happy. Cause I saved them like four days worth of work. But where I, one of the big places I use this for automation is I like to archive YouTube channels that I like. So I wrote a program using your extension or whatever, or plugin or whatever you want to call it to the side library for INI manager, which is the, I have to give this a plug here, the best extension ever made or library ever made for QB fricking amazing. I've been, I've been using it since you had it, your first release pretty much. But I use that so that I can put in there exactly where I want to say the videos, the exact YouTube DL code that I want it to run and how to process it. And because, unfortunately, YouTube DL has a thing. If you had the videos downloaded already, it'll go an instant retry and eventually YouTube right limit you. So I have to have it go one by one on the video IDs. So it does all that with that program, and I just the program set to run once a day a task scheduler. So once a day it updates all of them, sometimes it takes longer than if it's already running. It doesn't run again. But it's one of the most fantastic things. And that's been running now for probably seven to 10 years. I've been running that. The one thing I'll say to a lot of people that some, some people in QB will, will understand and, and take this to heart. A lot of hardcore programmers will look at us like we're a bunch of noobs, but if you write an application that function does everything you need to and it's not being deployed in the wild. It's not being used by other people. You're just using it. You may not need to touch that source code for years. So the thing I've learned is one you want to keep that source code as readable and as noted as you, you know, as many comments as you can to make it clear. But also if you're doing data configuration files and otherwise you wanted a format that no matter if it's 15 years later, you haven't looked at the program, you know exactly what's going on. And if you have to rewrite the whole program, because you can't understand the program anymore, you still got the important data controls the program, and you can just figure out how to reuse it again.

**Fellippe:** 10:46

Moving forward with different languages, have you ever ventured into other kinds of styles of programming and other languages?

**Ryan:** 10:53

So I have programmed in assembly x86 assembly to be specific. Cobol, Fortran and then a lot of the markup languages. I've dabbled in was it called a PHP? Cause run a lot of WordPress. So you kind of have to deal with that a lot of times, but it's very basic PHP. I can join strings. Most important thing to me in that. But honestly it almost always comes back. If I got to do something serious, I look at the overhead of me having to get the depth of knowledge that I have on QB and another programming language, and then realize even if I get that depth of knowledge, a lot of those programming languages don't have t he functions built in that I need. So I'm going to have to pull 15 different libraries to try to get that same functionality when I'm working on something that may never be released to the public. And even if it was, I'm going to release a source code for it so they can do whatever they want with it. And you know, it's not being used for banking. It's not being used to secure things. It's just used for data projects or other things you want to do yourself. So it all, it almost always comes back to QB almost every single time it comes back to there.

**Fellippe:** 11:51

You've been using QB64 for the longest time as mentioned. But do you remember how you found it, how you came across it?

**Ryan:** 11:59

I think the way I actually found it, it's pretty funny. I was trying to find how to do something in QB 4.5 or 7.1 and the QB64 forum came up, because 99% of the stuff's translatable. And I was like, oh, this is interesting. And this was back in God, the old days. So it was like version one. I was like, well, that's interesting. I know I was running Windows XP, so that's how long ago this was that that gives you a good timeframe. And I was like, I should check this out. And I got it. I was just like, oh, this is fantastic. I don't run a MS-DOS 6 anymore or 6.2. And because even in Windows XP running 7.1, PDS had some weird problems. I just did not like to run it. Didn't like to compile properly. And in Windows 10, it's not even an option. So that's about when I switched over and it was because of the forum, which honestly the biggest asset of QB64, even if we didn't have QB64 itself is the Wiki and the forum because so much of it is functional in QB. So if QB64 went away, but we still had the forum, it still would be a massive contribution to the community.

**Fellippe:** 13:00

So Ryan, I've seen people in Nigeria, for example, on Twitter complaining really bitterly that they're still teaching them Basic in university. I also agree that in university people should be using types of things and modern languages, et cetera. But I personally still see the value of teaching Basic to kids and to people in general. What do you think about that?

**Ryan:** 13:23

I would say we disagree a little bit. I used to be an educator, so I taught high school kids with disabilities and I taught science, math, and technology. And I've obviously been in college for a long time, doing many different things with college. But what I would say is that if they're teaching the original basic, that's a problem because that is not even, you can't even run it. You can't run original basic with line numbers. It's just not possible. Basic one just does not run, but college is not about school in general should not be about learning facts. It's not about road facts. It's about learning how to think. And the, one of the fantastic things that QBasic in general does this is it teaches you a way of thinking. And that way of thinking works in pretty much every programming language. Yeah. The syntax may be different. The keywords would be different. If you're going to object orientated, I don't know what you're thinking, but that's completely different. But if you're in any kind of other functional language, the thought process is still the same.

**Fellippe:** 14:17

Ryan. It's been a real pleasure. Thank you so much for being with us.

**Ryan:** 14:20

Thank you again, Fellippe.

**Fellippe:** 14:22

That was QB64 Report for you. This is a series of short interviews we're carrying out with members of the QB64 community. In the next episode, we're going to be listening from George McG. Wait for it. See you guys next time.