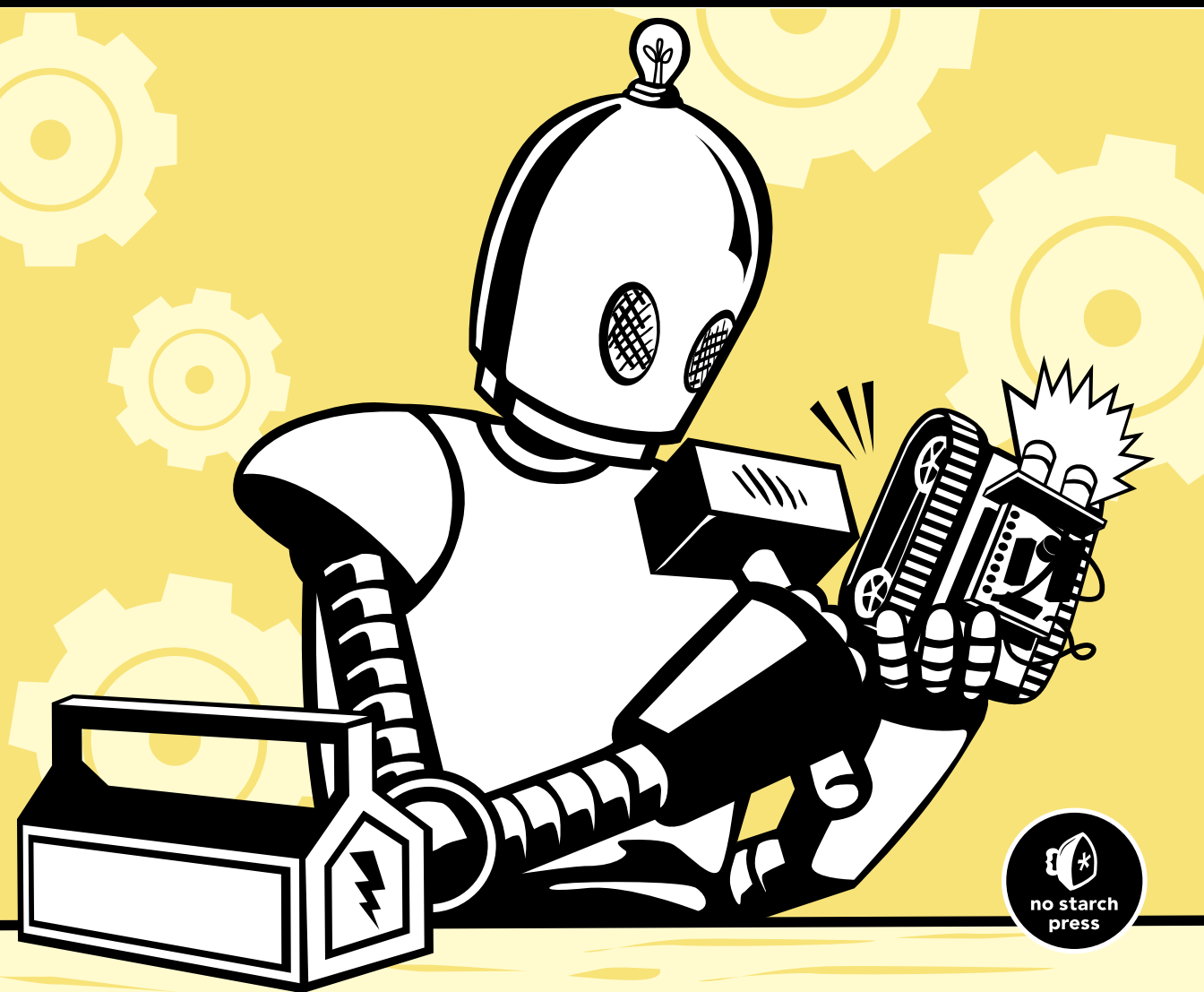


ARDUINO WORKSHOP

A HANDS-ON INTRODUCTION
WITH 65 PROJECTS

JOHN BOXALL



ARDUINO WORKSHOP

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**A Hands-On Introduction
with 65 Projects**

by John Boxall



**no starch
press**

San Francisco

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For the two people who have always believed in me:
my mother and my dearest Kathleen

BRIEF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	xix
Chapter 1: Getting Started	1
Chapter 2: Exploring the Arduino Board and the IDE	19
Chapter 3: First Steps	33
Chapter 4: Building Blocks	55
Chapter 5: Working with Functions	95
Chapter 6: Numbers, Variables, and Arithmetic.	111
Chapter 7: Liquid Crystal Displays	147
Chapter 8: Expanding Your Arduino	161
Chapter 9: Numeric Keypads	187
Chapter 10: Accepting User Input with Touchscreens	195
Chapter 11: Meet the Arduino Family.	207
Chapter 12: Motors and Movement	225
Chapter 13: Using GPS with Your Arduino	257
Chapter 14: Wireless Data	271
Chapter 15: Infrared Remote Control	285
Chapter 16: Reading RFID Tags.	295

Chapter 17: Data Buses	307
Chapter 18: Real-time Clocks	321
Chapter 19: The Internet.	337
Chapter 20: Cellular Communications	349
Index	365

CONTENTS IN DETAIL

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

xix

1	
GETTING STARTED	1
The Possibilities Are Endless	2
Strength in Numbers	6
Parts and Accessories	6
Required Software	7
Mac OS X	7
Windows XP and Later	11
Ubuntu Linux 9.04 and Later	15
Safety	18
Looking Ahead	18
2	
EXPLORING THE ARDUINO BOARD AND THE IDE	19
The Arduino Board	19
Taking a Look Around the IDE	25
The Command Area	25
The Text Area	26
The Message Window Area	26
Creating Your First Sketch in the IDE	27
Comments	27
The Setup Function	28
Controlling the Hardware	28
The Loop Function	28
Verifying Your Sketch	30
Uploading and Running Your Sketch	31
Modifying Your Sketch	31
Looking Ahead	31
3	
FIRST STEPS	33
Planning Your Projects	34
About Electricity	34
Current	34
Voltage	35
Power	35
Electronic Components	35
The Resistor	35
The Light-Emitting Diode	39
The Solderless Breadboard	41
Project #1: Creating a Blinking LED Wave	43
The Algorithm	43
The Hardware	43

The Sketch	43
The Schematic	44
Running the Sketch	45
Using Variables	45
Project #2: Repeating with for Loops	46
Varying LED Brightness with Pulse-Width Modulation	47
Project #3: Demonstrating PWM	49
More Electric Components.	49
The Transistor	50
The Rectifier Diode	50
The Relay	51
Higher-Voltage Circuits	52
Looking Ahead	53

4 BUILDING BLOCKS 55

Using Schematic Diagrams	56
Identifying Components	56
Wires in Schematics	58
Dissecting a Schematic	59
The Capacitor	60
Measuring the Capacity of a Capacitor	60
Reading Capacitor Values	61
Types of Capacitors.	61
Digital Inputs	63
Project #4: Demonstrating a Digital Input.	65
The Algorithm	65
The Hardware	65
The Schematic	65
The Sketch	69
Modifying Your Sketch.	70
Understanding the Sketch.	70
Creating Constants with #define	70
Reading Digital Input Pins	70
Making Decisions with if	71
Making More Decisions with if-then-else.	71
Boolean Variables	72
Comparison Operators	72
Making Two or More Comparisons	73
Project #5: Controlling Traffic	74
The Goal	74
The Algorithm.	74
The Hardware	75
The Schematic	75
The Sketch	76
Running the Sketch	79
Analog vs. Digital Signals.	79
Project #6: Creating a Single-Cell Battery Tester.	80
The Goal	81
The Algorithm.	81
The Hardware	81

The Schematic	81
The Sketch	82
Doing Arithmetic with an Arduino	83
Float Variables	84
Comparison Operators for Calculations	84
Improving Analog Measurement Precision with a Reference Voltage.	84
Using an External Reference Voltage	85
Using the Internal Reference Voltage	86
The Variable Resistor	86
Piezoelectric Buzzers	87
Piezo Schematic	88
Project #7: Trying Out a Piezo Buzzer	88
Project #8: Creating a Quick-Read Thermometer	90
The Goal	90
The Hardware	90
The Schematic	91
The Sketch	91
Hacking the Sketch	93
Looking Ahead	93

5 WORKING WITH FUNCTIONS 95

Project #9: Creating a Function to Repeat an Action	96
Project #10: Creating a Function to Set the Number of Blinks	97
Creating a Function to Return a Value.	98
Project #11: Creating a Quick-Read Thermometer That Blinks the Temperature	98
The Hardware	99
The Schematic	99
The Sketch	100
Displaying Data from the Arduino in the Serial Monitor	101
The Serial Monitor.	102
Project #12: Displaying the Temperature in the Serial Monitor	103
Debugging with the Serial Monitor	105
Making Decisions with while Statements	105
do-while.	105
Sending Data from the Serial Monitor to the Arduino	106
Project #13: Multiplying a Number by Two	106
long Variables.	107
Project #14: Using long Variables	107
Looking Ahead	109

6 NUMBERS, VARIABLES, AND ARITHMETIC 111

Generating Random Numbers	112
Using Ambient Current to Generate a Random Number.	112
Project #15: Creating an Electronic Die	113
The Hardware	114
The Schematic	114
The Sketch	115
Modifying the Sketch.	116

A Quick Course in Binary	116
Byte Variables	117
Increasing Digital Outputs with Shift Registers	118
Project #16: Creating an LED Binary Number Display.	119
The Hardware	119
Connecting the 74HC595	119
The Sketch	121
Project #17: Making a Binary Quiz Game	122
The Algorithm	122
The Sketch	122
Arrays	124
Defining an Array	124
Referring to Values in an Array	125
Writing to and Reading from Arrays	125
Seven-Segment LED Displays	126
Controlling the LED	127
Project #18: Creating a Single-Digit Display.	129
The Hardware	129
The Schematic	129
The Sketch	130
Displaying Double Digits	131
Project #19: Controlling Two Seven-Segment LED Display Modules	131
The Hardware	131
The Schematic	132
Modulo	133
Project #20: Creating a Digital Thermometer	134
The Hardware	134
The Sketch	134
LED Matrix Display Modules	135
The LED Matrix Schematic	136
Making the Connections	137
Bitwise Arithmetic.	139
The Bitwise AND Operator.	139
The Bitwise OR Operator	139
The Bitwise XOR Operator	140
The Bitwise NOT Operator.	140
Bitshift Left and Right	140
Project #21: Creating an LED Matrix	141
Project #22: Creating Images on an LED Matrix	142
Project #23: Displaying an Image on an LED Matrix.	144
Project #24: Animating an LED Matrix	145
The Sketch	145
Looking Ahead	146

7

LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAYS

147

Character LCD Modules	148
Using a Character LCD in a Sketch	149
Displaying Text	150
Displaying Variables or Numbers	151

Project #25: Defining Custom Characters	152
Graphic LCD Modules	153
Connecting the Graphic LCD	154
Using the LCD	155
Controlling the Display	155
Project #26: Seeing the Text Functions in Action	155
Creating More Complex Display Effects	156
Project #27: Creating a Temperature History Monitor	157
The Algorithm	158
The Hardware	158
The Sketch	158
The Result	160
Modifying the Sketch	160
Looking Ahead	160

8	
EXPANDING YOUR ARDUINO	161
Shields	162
ProtoShields	164
Project #28: Creating a Custom Shield with Eight LEDs	165
The Hardware	165
The Schematic	165
The Layout of the ProtoShield Board	166
The Design	166
Soldering the Components	167
Modifying the Custom Shield	169
Expanding Sketches with Libraries	169
Importing a Shield's Libraries	169
MicroSD Memory Cards	173
Testing Your MicroSD Card	174
Project #29: Writing Data to the Memory Card	175
Project #30: Creating a Temperature-Logging Device	177
The Hardware	177
The Sketch	177
Timing Applications with millis() and micros().	179
Project #31: Creating a Stopwatch	181
The Hardware	181
The Schematic	181
The Sketch	182
Interrupts	184
Interrupt Modes	184
Configuring Interrupts	185
Activating or Deactivating Interrupts	185
Project #32: Using Interrupts	185
The Sketch	185
Looking Ahead	186

9		
NUMERIC KEYPADS		187
Using a Numeric Keypad		187
Wiring a Keypad		188
Programming for the Keypad		189
Testing the Sketch		189
Making Decisions with switch-case		190
Project #33: Creating a Keypad-Controlled Lock		190
The Sketch		191
How It Works		192
Testing the Sketch		193
Looking Ahead		193
10		
ACCEPTING USER INPUT WITH TOUCHSCREENS		195
Touchscreens		195
Connecting the Touchscreen		196
Project #34: Addressing Areas on the Touchscreen.		197
The Hardware		197
The Sketch		197
Testing the Sketch		198
Mapping the Touchscreen		199
Project #35: Creating a Two-Zone On/Off Touch Switch.		200
The Sketch		200
How It Works		202
Testing the Sketch		202
Project #36: Creating a Three-Zone Touch Switch.		202
The Touchscreen Map		203
The Sketch		203
How It Works		205
Looking Ahead		205
11		
MEET THE ARDUINO FAMILY		207
Project #37: Creating Your Own Breadboard Arduino		208
The Hardware		208
The Schematic		211
Running a Test Sketch		214
The Many Arduino Boards		217
Arduino Uno.		219
Freetronics Eleven		219
The Freeduino.		220
The Boarduino		220
The Arduino Nano		221
The Arduino LilyPad.		221
The Arduino Mega 2560.		222
The Freetronics EtherMega		222
The Arduino Due.		223
Looking Ahead		224

12	
MOTORS AND MOVEMENT	225
Making Small Motions with Servos	225
Selecting a Servo	226
Connecting a Servo	227
Putting a Servo to Work	227
Project #38: Building an Analog Thermometer	228
The Hardware	228
The Schematic	229
The Sketch	229
Using Electric Motors	231
The TIP120 Darlington Transistor	231
Project #39: Controlling the Motor	232
The Hardware	232
The Schematic	233
The Sketch	234
Project #40: Building and Controlling a Tank Robot	235
The Hardware	235
The Schematic	238
The Sketch	240
Sensing Collisions	243
Project #41: Detecting Tank Bot Collisions with a Microswitch	243
The Schematic	243
The Sketch	244
Infrared Distance Sensors	246
Wiring It Up	247
Testing the IR Distance Sensor	247
Project #42: Detecting Tank Bot Collisions with IR Distance Sensor	249
Ultrasonic Distance Sensors	251
Connecting the Ultrasonic Sensor	252
Using the Ultrasonic Sensor	252
Testing the Ultrasonic Distance Sensor	252
Project #43: Detecting Tank Bot Collisions with an Ultrasonic Distance Sensor	254
The Sketch	254
Looking Ahead	256
 13	
USING GPS WITH YOUR ARDUINO	257
What Is GPS?	258
Testing the GPS Shield	259
Project #44: Creating a Simple GPS Receiver	261
The Hardware	261
The Sketch	261
Displaying the Position on the LCD	262
Project #45: Creating an Accurate GPS-based Clock	263
The Hardware	263
The Sketch	264

Project #46: Recording the Position of a Moving Object over Time	265
The Hardware	265
The Sketch	266
Displaying Locations on a Map	268
Looking Ahead	269

14

WIRELESS DATA 271

Using Low-cost Wireless Modules	271
Project #47: Creating a Wireless Remote Control	272
The Hardware for the Transmitter Circuit	273
The Transmitter Schematic	273
The Hardware for the Receiver Circuit	274
The Receiver Schematic	274
The Transmitter Sketch	275
The Receiver Sketch	276
Using XBee Wireless Data Modules for Greater Range and Faster Speed	277
Project #48: Transmitting Data with an XBee	279
The Sketch	279
Setting Up the Computer to Receive Data	279
Project #49: Building a Remote Control Thermometer	281
The Hardware	281
The Layout	281
The Sketch	282
Operation	283
Looking Ahead	284

15

INFRARED REMOTE CONTROL 285

What Is Infrared?	285
Setting Up for Infrared	286
The IR Receiver	286
The Remote Control	287
A Test Sketch	287
Testing the Setup	288
Project #50: Creating an IR Remote Control Arduino	289
The Hardware	289
The Sketch	289
Expanding the Sketch	290
Project #51: Creating an IR Remote Control Tank	291
The Hardware	291
The Sketch	291
Looking Ahead	293

16

READING RFID TAGS 295

Inside RFID Devices	296
Testing the Hardware	297
The Schematic	297
Testing the Schematic	297

Project #52: Creating a Simple RFID Control System	299
The Sketch	299
How It Works	300
Storing Data in the Arduino's Built-in EEPROM	301
Reading and Writing to the EEPROM	302
Project #53: Creating an RFID Control with "Last Action" Memory	303
The Sketch	303
How It Works	306
Looking Ahead	306

17

DATA BUSES	307
The I ² C Bus	308
Project #54: Using an External EEPROM	309
The Hardware	309
The Schematic	310
The Sketch	311
The Result.	312
Project #55: Using a Port Expander IC	313
The Hardware	313
The Schematic	313
The Sketch	314
The SPI Bus	315
Pin Connections	316
Implementing the SPI	316
Sending Data to an SPI Device	317
Project #56: Using a Digital Rheostat	318
The Hardware	318
The Schematic	318
The Sketch	319
Looking Ahead	320

18

REAL-TIME CLOCKS	321
Connecting the RTC Module	322
Project #57: Adding and Displaying Time and Date with an RTC	322
The Hardware	322
The Sketch	323
How It Works	325
Project #58: Creating a Simple Digital Clock	326
The Hardware	326
The Sketch	327
How It Works and Results	330
Project #59: Creating an RFID Time-Clock System	330
The Hardware	331
The Sketch	331
How It Works	335
Looking Ahead	336

19	
THE INTERNET	337
What You'll Need	337
Project #60: Building a Remote-Monitoring Station.	339
The Hardware	339
The Sketch	339
Troubleshooting	341
How It Works	342
Project #61: Creating an Arduino Tweeter	343
The Hardware	343
The Sketch	343
Controlling Your Arduino from the Web	344
Project #62: Setting Up a Remote Control for Your Arduino	345
The Hardware	345
The Sketch	346
Controlling Your Arduino Remotely	347
Looking Ahead	348
 20	
CELLULAR COMMUNICATIONS	349
The Hardware	350
Preparing the Power Shield	351
Hardware Configuration and Testing	352
Changing the Operating Frequency	354
Project #63: Building an Arduino Dialer.	356
The Hardware	356
The Schematic	356
The Sketch	357
How It Works	358
Project #64: Building an Arduino Texter	358
The Sketch	359
How It Works	359
Project #65: Setting Up an SMS Remote Control	360
The Hardware	360
The Schematic	361
The Sketch	361
How It Works	363
Looking Ahead	364
 INDEX	365

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1

GETTING STARTED

Have you ever looked at some gadget and wondered how it *really* worked? Maybe it was a remote control boat, the system that controls an elevator, a vending machine, or an electronic toy? Or have you wanted to create your own robot or electronic signals for a model railroad, or perhaps you'd like to capture and analyze weather data over time? Where and how do you start?

The Arduino board (shown in Figure 1-1) can help you find some of the answers to the mysteries of electronics in a hands-on way. The original creation of Massimo Banzi and David Cuartielles, the Arduino system offers an inexpensive way to build interactive projects, such as remote-controlled robots, GPS tracking systems, and electronic games.

The Arduino project has grown exponentially since its introduction in 2005. It's now a thriving industry, supported by a community of people united with the common bond of creating something new. You'll find both individuals and groups, ranging from interest groups and clubs to local hackerspaces and educational institutions, all interested in toying with the Arduino.



Figure 1-1: The Arduino board

To get a sense of the variety of Arduino projects in the wild, you can simply search the Internet. You'll find a list of groups offering introductory programs and courses with like-minded, creative people.

The Possibilities Are Endless

A quick scan through this book will show you that you can use the Arduino to do something as simple as blinking a small light, or even something more complicated, such as interacting with a cellular phone—and many different things in between.

For example, have a look at Philip Lindsay's device, shown in Figure 1-2. It can receive text messages from cellular phones and display them on a large sign for use in dance halls. This device uses an Arduino board and a cellular phone shield to receive text messages from other phones (similar to Project 65). The text message is sent to a pair of large, inexpensive dot-matrix displays for everyone to see.



Figure 1-2: SMS (short message service) text marquee

You can purchase large display boards that are easy to interface with an Arduino, so you don't have to make your own display from scratch. (For more information, visit <http://www.labradoc.com/i/follower/p/project-sms-text-scroller>.)

How about creating a unique marriage proposal? Tyler Cooper wanted an original way to propose to his girlfriend, so he built what he calls a “reverse geocache box”—a small box that contained an engagement ring, as shown in Figure 1-3. When the box was taken to a certain area (measured by the internal GPS), it unlocked to reveal a romantic message and the ring. You can easily reproduce this device using an Arduino board, a GPS receiver, and an LCD module (as used in Chapter 13), with a small servo motor that acts as a latch to keep the box closed until it's in the correct location. The code required to create this is quite simple—something you could create in a few hours. The most time-consuming part is choosing the appropriate box in which to enclose the system. (For more information, visit <http://learn.adafruit.com/reverse-geocache-engagement-box/>.)



Figure 1-3: Marriage proposal via Arduino

Here's another example. Kurt Schulz was interested in monitoring the battery charge level of his moped. However, after realizing how simple it is to work with Arduino, his project morphed into what he calls the “Scooterputer”: a complete moped management system. The Scooterputer can measure the battery voltage, plus it can display the speed, distance traveled, tilt angle, temperature, time, date, GPS position, and more. It also contains a cellular phone shield that can be controlled remotely, allowing remote tracking of the moped and engine shutdown in case it's stolen. The entire system can be controlled with a small touchscreen, shown in

Figure 1-4. Each feature can be considered a simple building block, and anyone could create a similar system in a couple of weekends. (See <http://www.janspace.com/b2evolution/arduino.php/2010/06/26/scooterputer/>.)



Figure 1-4: The Scooterputer display (courtesy of Kurt Schulz)

Then there's John Sarik, who enjoys the popular Sudoku math puzzles; he also likes working with Nixie numeric display tubes. With those two drivers in mind, John created a huge 81-digit Sudoku game computer! The user can play a full 9-by-9 game, with the Arduino in control of the digits and checking for valid entries. Although this project might be considered a more advanced type, it is certainly achievable and the electronics are not complex. The device is quite large and looks great mounted on a wall, as shown in Figure 1-5. (See <http://trashbearlabs.wordpress.com/2010/07/09/nixie-sudoku/>.)

The team at Oomlout even used the Arduino to create a TwypeWriter. They fitted an Arduino board with an Ethernet shield interface connected to the Internet, which searches Twitter for particular keywords. When a keyword is found, the tweet is sent to an electric typewriter for printing. The Arduino board is connected to the typewriter's keyboard circuit, which allows it to emulate a real person typing, as shown in Figure 1-6. (See <http://oomlout.co.uk/blog/twitter-monitoring-typewriter-twypewriter/>.)

These are only a few random examples of what is possible using an Arduino. You can create your own projects without much difficulty—and after you've worked through this book, they are certainly not out of your reach.



Figure 1-5: Nixie tube Sudoku



Figure 1-6: The Typewriter

Strength in Numbers

The Arduino platform increases in popularity every day. If you're more of a social learner and enjoy class-oriented situations, search the Web for "Cult of Arduino" to see what people are making and to find Arduino-related groups. Members of Arduino groups introduce the world of Arduino from an artist's perspective. Many group members work to create a small Arduino-compatible board at the same time. These groups can be a lot of fun, introduce you to interesting people, and let you share your Arduino knowledge with others.

Parts and Accessories

As with any other electronic device, the Arduino is available from many retailers that offer a range of products and accessories. When you're shopping, be sure to purchase the original Arduino, not a knock-off, or you run the risk of receiving faulty or poorly performing goods; why risk your project with an inferior board that could end up costing you more in the long run? For a list of Arduino suppliers, visit <http://arduino.cc/en/Main/Buy/>.

Here's a list of current suppliers (in alphabetical order) that I recommend for your purchases of Arduino-related parts and accessories:

- Adafruit Industries (<http://www.adafruit.com/>)
- DigiKey (<http://www.digikey.com/>)
- Jameco Electronics (<http://www.jameco.com/>)
- Little Bird Electronics (<http://www.littlebirdelectronics.com/>)
- Newark (<http://www.newark.com/>)
- nicegear (<http://www.nicegear.co.nz/>)
- Oomlout (<http://www.oomlout.co.uk/>)
- RadioShack (<http://www.radioshack.com/>)
- RS Components (<http://www.rs-components.com/>)
- SparkFun Electronics (<http://www.sparkfun.com/>)

As you'll see in this book, I use several Arduino-compatible products from Freetronics (<http://www.freetronics.com/>). However, you will find that all the required parts are quite common and easily available from various resellers.

But don't go shopping yet. Take the time to read the first few chapters to get an idea of what you'll need so that you won't waste money buying unnecessary things immediately.

Required Software

You should be able to program your Arduino with just about any computer using a piece of software called an *integrated development environment (IDE)*. To run this software, your computer should have one of the following operating systems installed:

- Mac OS X or higher
- Windows XP 32- or 64-bit, or higher
- Linux 32- or 64-bit (Ubuntu or similar)

Now is a good time to download and install the IDE, so jump to the heading that matches your operating system and follow the instructions. Make sure you have or buy the matching USB cable for your Arduino from the supplier as well. Even if you don't have your Arduino board yet, you can still download and explore the IDE. Because the IDE version number can change quite rapidly, the number in this book may not match the current version, but the instructions should still work.

NOTE *Unfortunately, as this book went to press, there were issues with Windows 8 installations. If you have Windows 8, visit the Arduino Forum at <http://arduino.cc/forum/index.php/topic,94651.15.html> for guidance and discussion.*

Mac OS X

In this section, you'll find instructions for downloading and configuring the Arduino IDE in Mac OS X.

Installing the IDE

To install the IDE on your Mac, follow these instructions:

1. Using a web browser such as Safari, visit the software download page located at <http://arduino.cc/en/Main/Software/>, as shown in Figure 1-7.

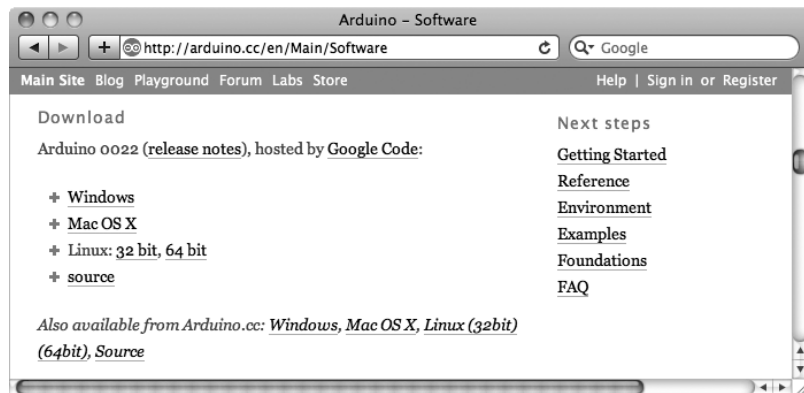


Figure 1-7: The IDE download page in Safari

2. Click the **Mac OS X** link. The file will start downloading, and it will appear in the Downloads window shown in Figure 1-8.



Figure 1-8: File download is complete.

3. Once it's finished downloading, double-click the file to start the installation process. You will then be presented with the window shown in Figure 1-9.

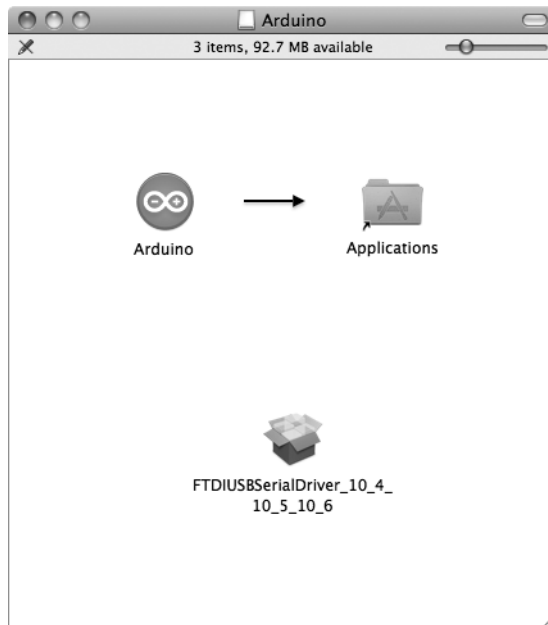


Figure 1-9: Your new Arduino IDE folder

NOTE *The third file icon shown in Figure 1-9 needs to be installed only if you have an Arduino board older than the current Uno.*

4. Drag the Arduino icon over the Applications folder and release the mouse button. A temporary status window will appear as the file is copied.
5. Now connect your Arduino to your Mac with the USB cable. After a moment, the dialog shown in Figure 1-10 will appear.



Figure 1-10: A new Arduino board is detected. Your dialog may read Uno instead of Eleven.

6. Click **Network Preferences...**, and then click **Apply** in the Network box. You can ignore the “not configured” status message.

Setting Up the IDE

Once you have downloaded the IDE, use the following instructions to open and configure the IDE:

1. Open the Applications folder in Finder (shown in Figure 1-11) and double-click the Arduino icon.



Figure 1-11: Your Applications folder

2. A window may appear warning you about opening a web app. If it does, click **Open** to continue. You will then be presented with the IDE, as shown in Figure 1-12.

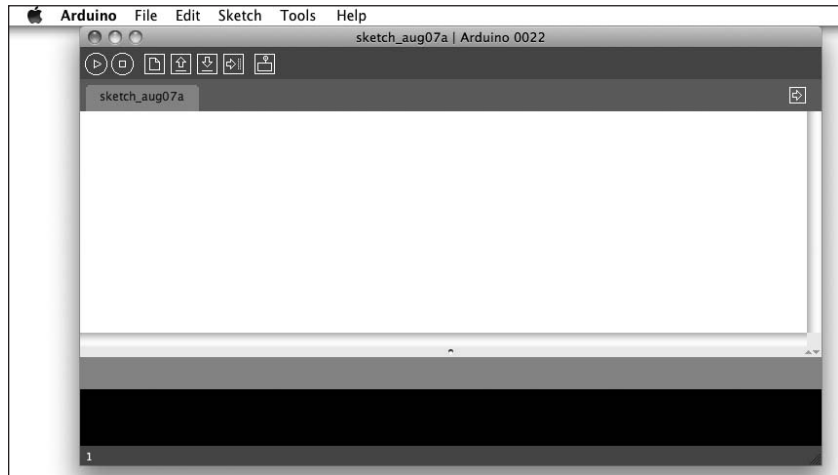


Figure 1-12: The IDE in Mac OS X

3. You're almost there—just two more things to do before your Arduino IDE is ready to use. First, you need to tell the IDE which type of socket the Arduino is connected to. Select **Tools ▶ Serial Port** and select the `/dev/tty.usbmodem1d11` option, as shown in Figure 1-13.

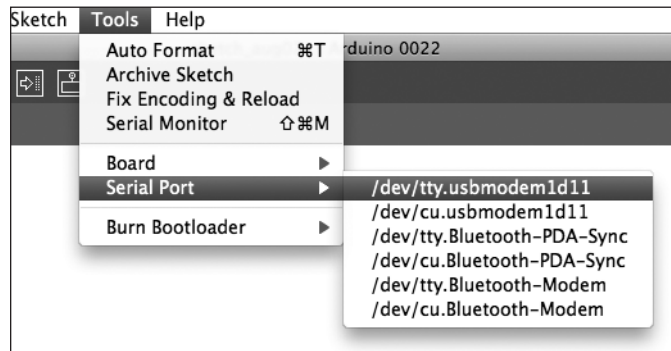


Figure 1-13: Selecting the USB port

4. The final step is to tell the IDE which Arduino board you have connected. This is crucial, since Arduino boards do differ. For example, if you have the most common board, the Uno, then select **Tools ▶ Board ▶ Arduino Uno**, as shown in Figure 1-14. The differences in Arduino boards are explained in more detail in Chapter 11.

Now your hardware and software are ready to work for you. Next, move on to “Safety” on page 18.

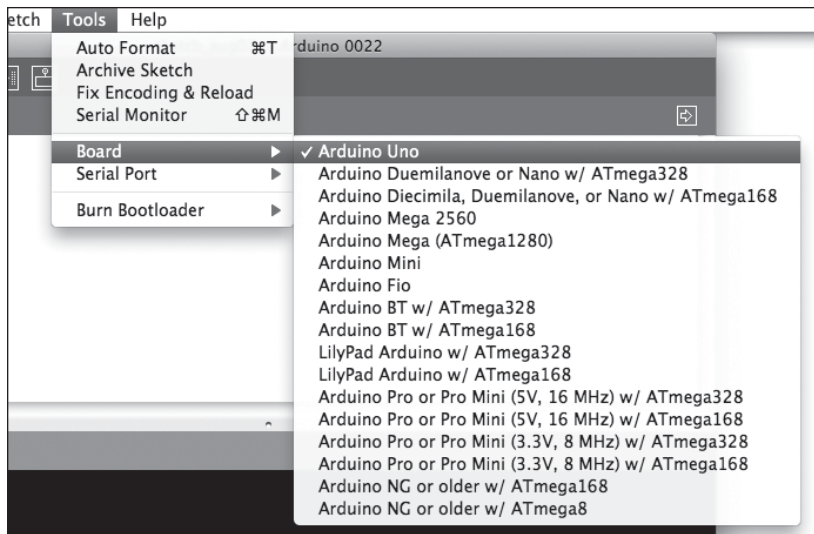


Figure 1-14: Selecting the correct Arduino board

Windows XP and Later

In this section, you'll find instructions for downloading the IDE, installing drivers, and configuring the IDE in Windows.

Installing the IDE

To install the Arduino IDE for Windows, follow these instructions:

1. Using a web browser such as Firefox, visit the software download page located at <http://arduino.cc/en/Main/Software/>, as shown in Figure 1-15.

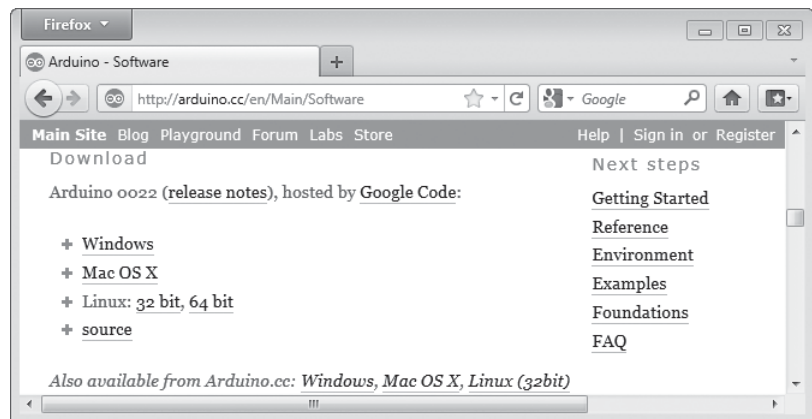


Figure 1-15: The IDE download page in Windows Firefox

2. Click the **Windows** link, and the dialog shown in Figure 1-16 will appear. Select **Open with Windows Explorer**, and then click **OK**. The file will start to download, as shown in Figure 1-17.

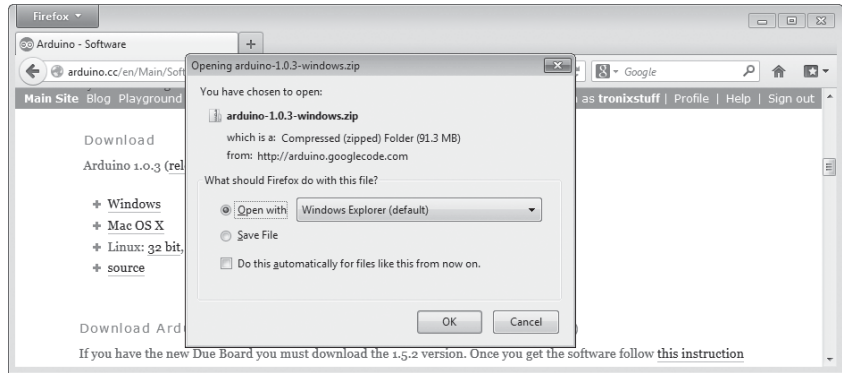


Figure 1-16: Downloading the file

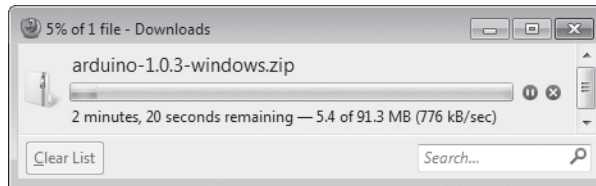


Figure 1-17: Firefox shows the progress of your download.

3. Once the download is complete, double-click the file, and the window shown in Figure 1-18 will appear.

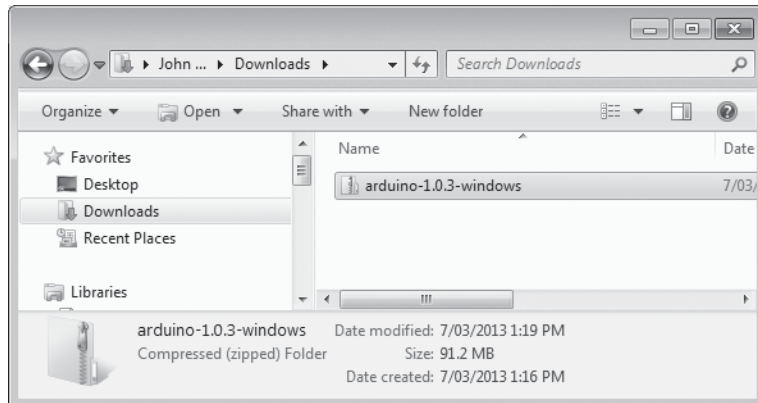


Figure 1-18: The IDE package

4. Copy the folder named *arduino-0022* (or something similar) to the location where you store your applications. Once the copying is finished, locate the folder and open it to reveal the Arduino application icon, as shown in Figure 1-19. You may wish to copy the icon and place a short-cut on the desktop for easier access in the future.

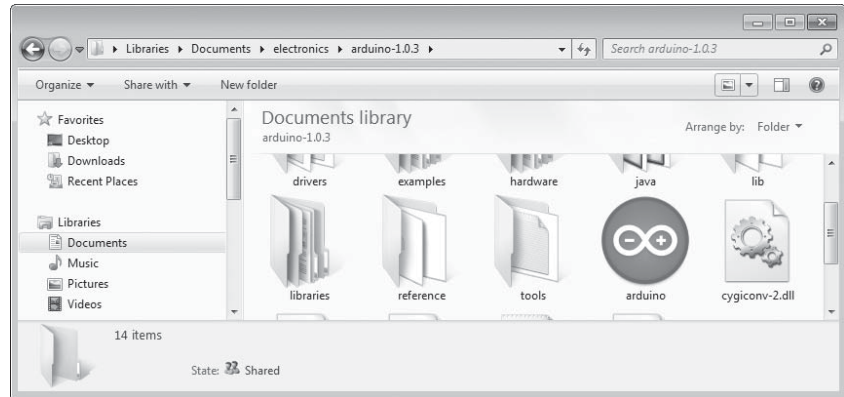


Figure 1-19: Your IDE folder with the Arduino application icon selected

Installing Drivers

The next task is to install the drivers for your Arduino board's USB interface.

1. Connect your Arduino to your PC with the USB cable. After a few moments an error message will be displayed, which will say something like "Device driver software not successfully installed." Just close that dialog or balloon.
2. Navigate to the Windows Control Panel. Open the Device Manager and scroll down until you see the Arduino, as shown in Figure 1-20.

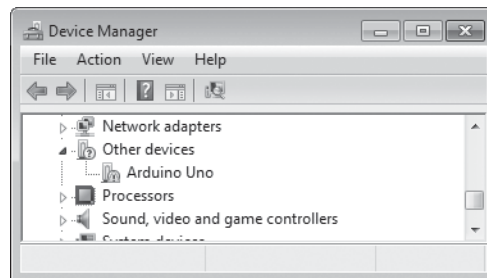


Figure 1-20: The Device Manager

3. Right-click **Arduino Uno** under Other Devices and select **Update Driver Software**. Then, select the **Browse my computer for driver software** option that appears in the next dialog. Another Browse For Folder dialog will appear; click **Browse**, and navigate to the *drivers* folder in the newly installed Arduino software folder (shown in Figure 1-21). Click **OK**.

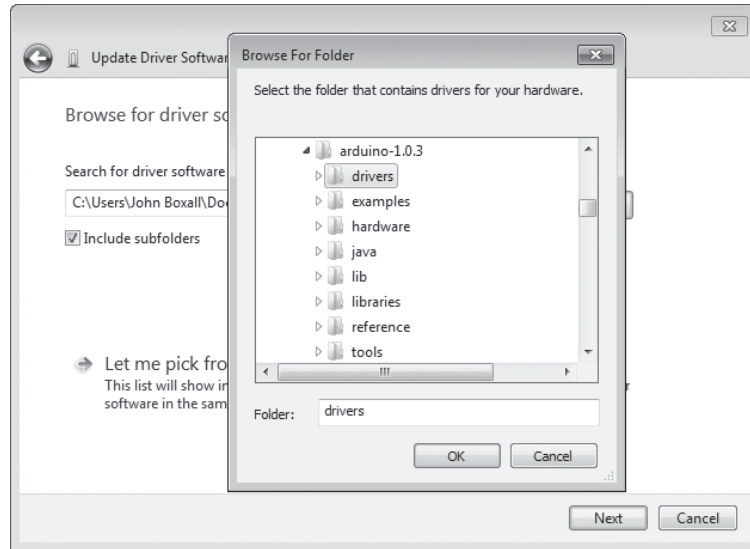


Figure 1-21: Locating the drivers folder

4. Click **Next** in the dialog that follows. Windows may present a message stating that it “cannot verify the publisher of the driver software.” Click **Install this software anyway**. After a short wait, Windows will tell you that the driver is installed and the COM port number the Arduino is connected to, as shown in Figure 1-22.

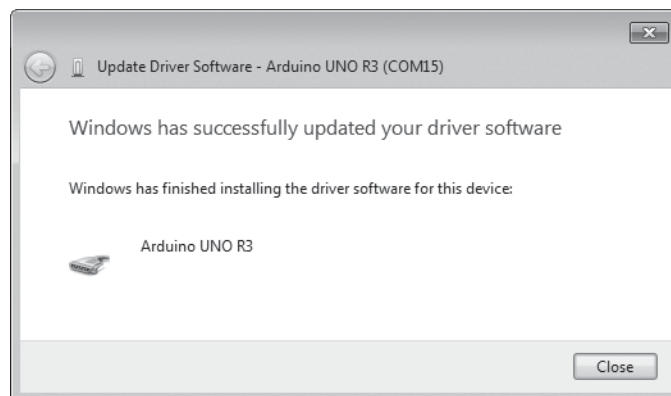


Figure 1-22: The drivers have been updated successfully.

Setting Up the IDE

Okay, we're almost there—just two more things to do to finish setting up the IDE.

1. Open the Arduino IDE. You need to tell the IDE which type of socket the Arduino is connected to by selecting **Tools ▶ Serial Port** and selecting the COM port number that appeared in the Update Driver Software window.
2. The final step is to tell the IDE which Arduino board we have connected. This is crucial, as the Arduino boards do differ. For example, if you have the Uno, select **Tools ▶ Board ▶ Arduino Uno**. The differences in Arduino boards are explained in more detail in Chapter 11.

Now that your Arduino IDE is set up, you can move on to “Safety” on page 18.

Ubuntu Linux 9.04 and Later

If you are running Ubuntu Linux, here are instructions for downloading and setting up the Arduino IDE.

Installing the IDE

Use the following instructions to install the IDE:

1. Using a web browser such as Firefox, visit the software download page located at <http://arduino.cc/en/Main/Software/>, as shown in Figure 1-23.

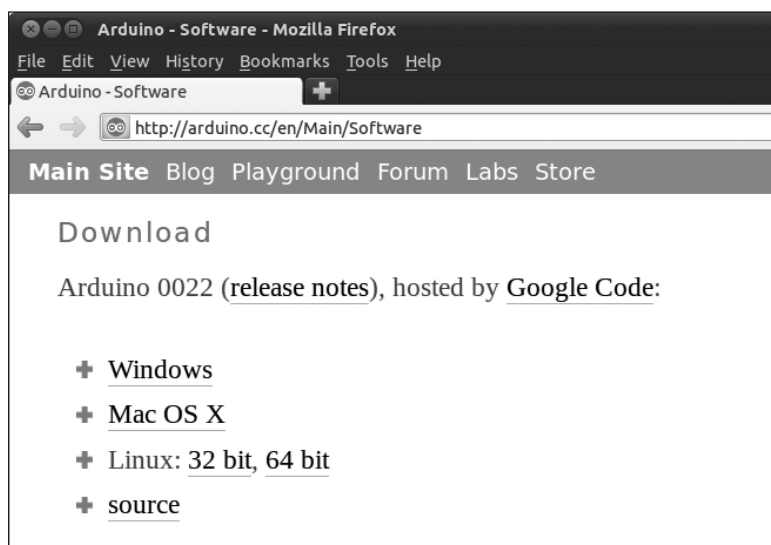


Figure 1-23: The IDE download page in Ubuntu Firefox

2. Click the Linux **32-bit** or **64-bit** link, depending on your system. When the dialog in Figure 1-24 appears, select **Open with Archive Manager** and click **OK**.

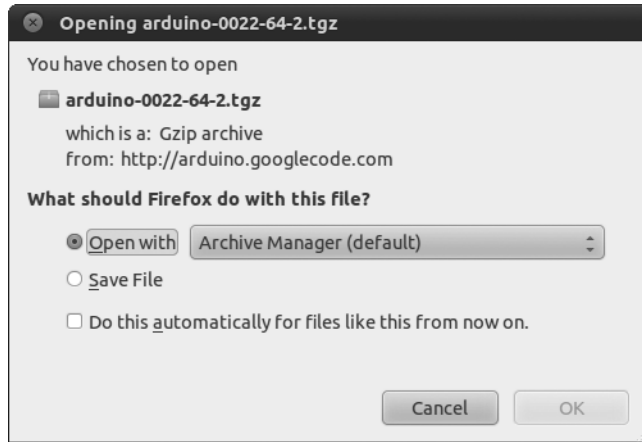


Figure 1-24: Downloading the file

3. After the file has downloaded, it will be displayed in the Archive Manager, as shown in Figure 1-25. Copy the *arduino-0022* folder (or something similar) to your usual application or Home folder.

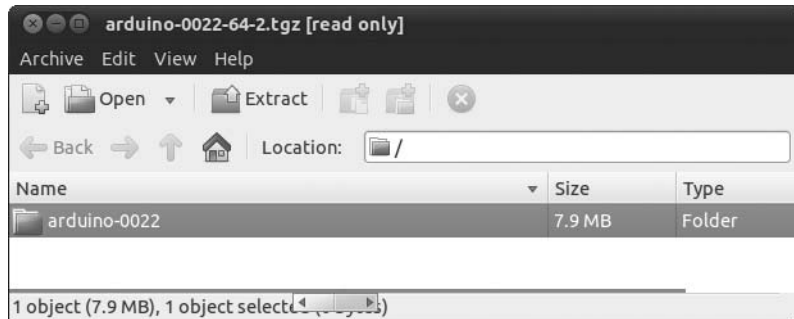


Figure 1-25: The IDE package

Setting Up the IDE

Next, you'll configure the IDE.

1. Connect your Arduino to your PC with the USB cable. At this point you want to run the Arduino IDE, so locate the *arduino-0022* folder you copied earlier and double-click the *arduino* file that's selected in Figure 1-26.

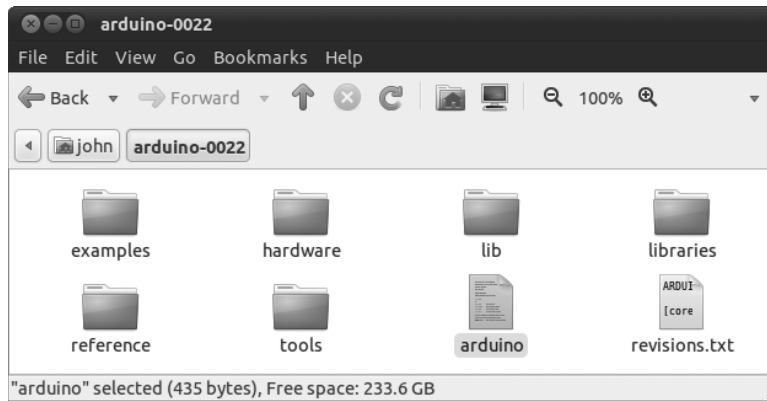


Figure 1-26: Your Arduino IDE folder with the arduino file selected

2. If the dialog shown in Figure 1-27 appears, click **Run**, and you will be presented with the IDE, as shown in Figure 1-28.

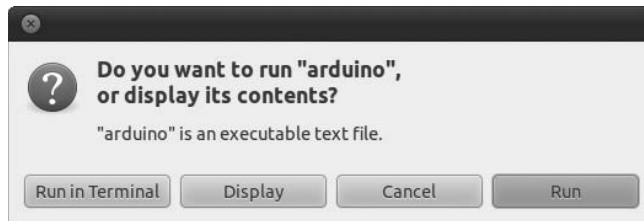


Figure 1-27: Granting permission to run the IDE

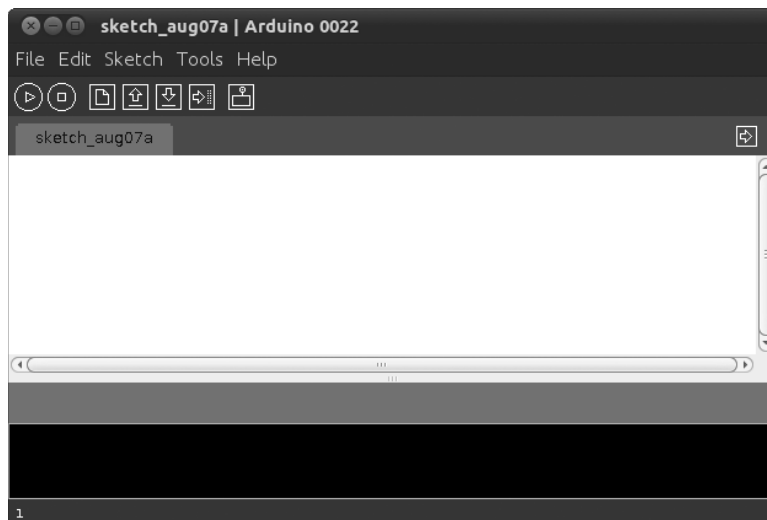


Figure 1-28: The IDE in Ubuntu

3. Now that the IDE is running, we need to tell it which type of socket the Arduino is connected to. Select **Tools ▶ Serial Port** and select the **/dev/ttyACM x** port, where x is a single digit (there should be only one port with a name like this).
4. Next, tell the IDE which Arduino you have connected. This is crucial, as Arduino boards do differ. For example, if you have the Uno, select **Tools ▶ Board ▶ Arduino Uno**. The differences in Arduino boards are explained in more detail in Chapter 11.

Now your hardware and software are ready to work for you.

Safety

As with any hobby or craft, it's up to you to take care of yourself and those around you. As you'll see in this book, I discuss working with basic hand tools, battery-powered electrical devices, sharp knives, and cutters—and sometimes soldering irons. At no point in your projects should you work with the mains current. Leave that to a licensed electrician who is trained for such work. Remember that contacting the mains current will kill you.

Looking Ahead

You're about to embark on a fun and interesting journey, and you'll be creating things you may never have thought possible. You'll find 65 Arduino projects in this book, ranging from the very simple to the relatively complex. All are designed to help you learn and make something useful. So let's go!

2

EXPLORING THE ARDUINO BOARD AND THE IDE

In this chapter you'll explore the Arduino board as well as the IDE software that you'll use to create and upload Arduino *sketches* (Arduino's name for its programs) to the Arduino board itself. You'll learn the basic framework of a sketch and some basic functions that you can implement in a sketch, and you'll create and upload your first sketch.

The Arduino Board

What exactly is Arduino? According to the Arduino website (<http://www.arduino.cc/>), it is

an open-source electronics prototyping platform based on flexible, easy-to-use hardware and software. It's intended for artists, designers, hobbyists, and anyone interested in creating interactive objects or environments.

In simple terms, the Arduino is a tiny computer system that can be programmed with your instructions to interact with various forms of input and output. The current Arduino board model, the Uno, is quite small in size compared to the average human hand, as you can see in Figure 2-1.

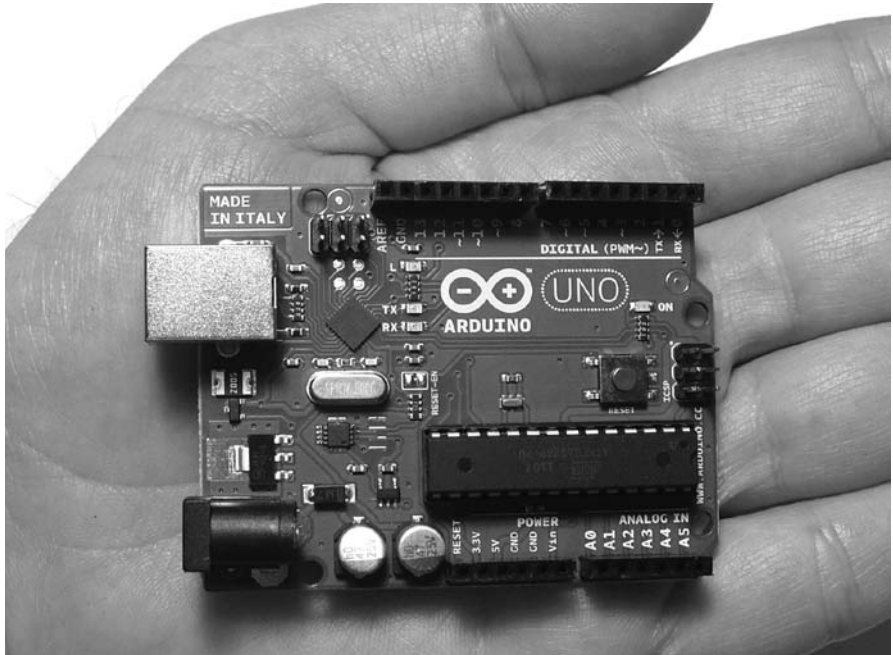


Figure 2-1: An Arduino Uno is quite small.

Although it might not look like much to the new observer, the Arduino system allows you to create devices that can interact with the world around you. By using an almost unlimited range of input and output devices, sensors, indicators, displays, motors, and more, you can program the exact interactions required to create a functional device. For example, artists have created installations with patterns of blinking lights that respond to the movements of passers-by, high school students have built autonomous robots that can detect an open flame and extinguish it, and geographers have designed systems that monitor temperature and humidity and transmit this data back to their offices via text message. In fact, you'll find an almost infinite number of examples with a quick search on the Internet.

Now let's move on and explore our Arduino Uno *hardware* (in other words, the “physical part”) in more detail and see what we have. Don't worry too much about understanding what you see here, because all these things will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters.

Let's take a quick tour of the Uno. Starting at the left side of the board, you'll see two connectors, as shown in Figure 2-2.

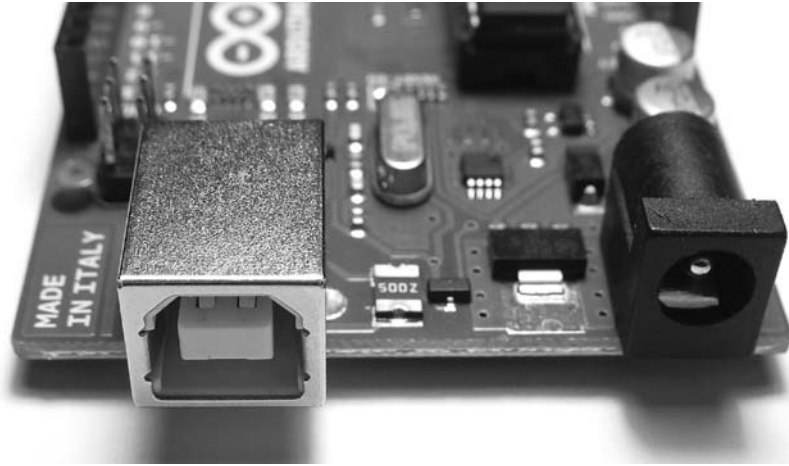


Figure 2-2: The USB and power connectors

On the far left is the Universal Serial Bus (USB) connector. This connects the board to your computer for three reasons: to supply power to the board, to upload your instructions to the Arduino, and to send data to and receive it from a computer. On the right is the power connector. Through this connector, you can power the Arduino with a standard mains power adapter.

At the lower middle is the heart of the board: the microcontroller, as shown in Figure 2-3.

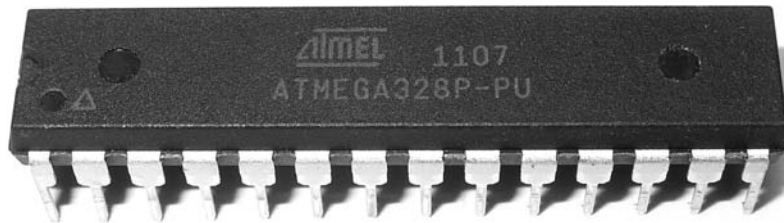


Figure 2-3: The microcontroller

The *microcontroller* is the “brains” of the Arduino. It is a tiny computer that contains a processor to execute instructions, includes various types of memory to hold data and instructions from our sketches, and provides various avenues of sending and receiving data. Just below the microcontroller are two rows of small sockets, as shown in Figure 2-4.

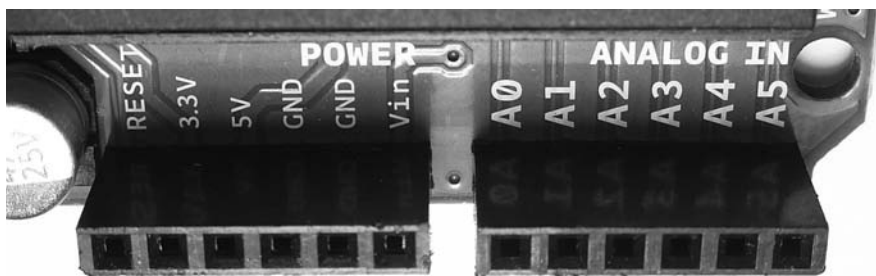


Figure 2-4: The power and analog sockets

The first row offers power connections and the ability to use an external RESET button. The second row offers six analog inputs that are used to measure electrical signals that vary in voltage. Furthermore, pins A4 and A5 can also be used for sending data to and receiving it from other devices. Along the top of the board are two more rows of sockets, as shown in Figure 2-5.



Figure 2-5: The digital input/output pins

Sockets (or pins) numbered 0 to 13 are digital input/output (I/O) pins. They can either detect whether or not an electrical signal is present or generate a signal on command. Pins 0 and 1 are also known as the *serial port*, which is used to send and receive data to other devices, such as a computer via the USB connector circuitry. The pins labeled with a tilde (~) can also generate a varying electrical signal, which can be useful for such things as creating lighting effects or controlling electric motors.

Next are some very useful devices called *light-emitting diodes (LEDs)*; these very tiny devices light up when a current passes through them. The Arduino board has four LEDs: one on the far right labeled ON, which indicates when the board has power, and three in another group, as shown in Figure 2-6.

The LEDs labeled *TX* and *RX* light up when data is being transmitted or received between the Arduino and attached devices via the serial port and USB. The *L* LED is for your own use (it is connected to the digital I/O pin number 13). The little black square part to the left of the LEDs is a tiny microcontroller that controls the USB interface that allows your Arduino to send data to and receive it from a computer, but you don't generally have to concern yourself with it.

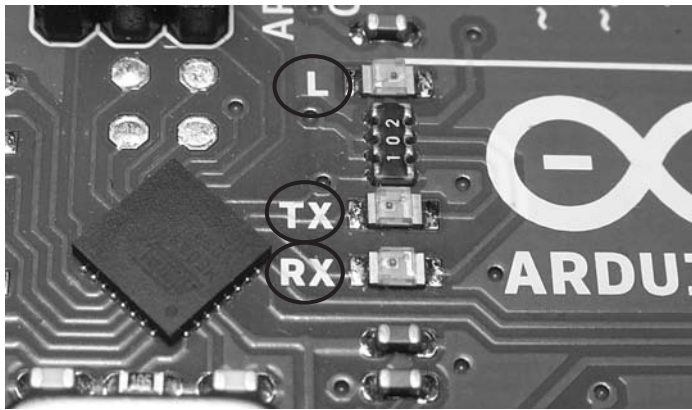


Figure 2-6: The onboard LEDs

And, finally, the RESET button is shown in Figure 2-7.

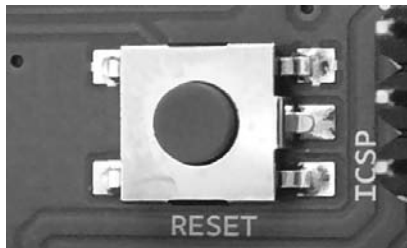


Figure 2-7: The RESET button

As with a normal computer, sometimes things can go wrong with the Arduino, and when all else fails, you might need to reset the system and restart your Arduino. This simple RESET button on the board (Figure 2-7) is used to restart the system to resolve these problems.

One of the great advantages of the Arduino system is its ease of expandability—that is, it's easy to add more hardware functions. The two rows of sockets along each side of the Arduino allow the connection of a *shield*, another circuit board with pins that allow it to plug into the Arduino. For example, the shield shown in Figure 2-8 contains an Ethernet interface that allows the Arduino to communicate over networks and the Internet, with plenty of space for custom circuitry.

Notice how the Ethernet shield also has rows of sockets. These enable you to insert one or more shields on top. For example, Figure 2-9 shows that another shield with a large numeric display, temperature sensor, extra data storage space, and a large LED has been inserted.

Note that you do need to remember which shield uses which individual inputs and outputs to ensure that “clashes” do not occur. You can also purchase completely blank shields that allow you to add your own circuitry. This will be explained further in Chapter 8.

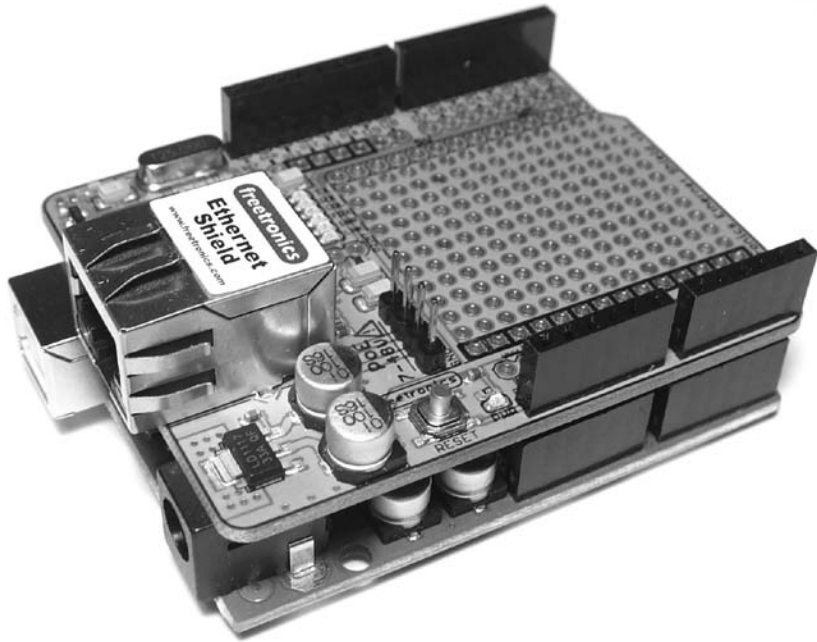


Figure 2-8: Arduino Ethernet interface shield

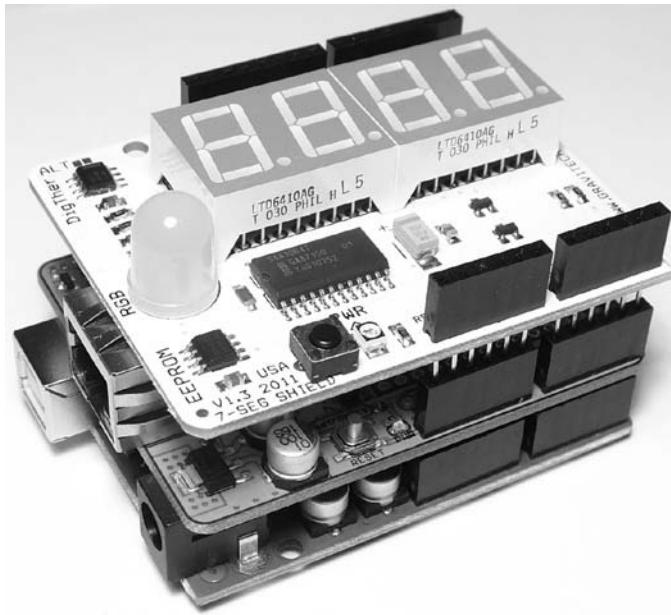


Figure 2-9: Numeric display and temperature shield

The companion to the Arduino hardware is the *software*, a collection of instructions that tell the hardware what to do and how to do it. Two types of software can be used: The first is the integrated development environment (IDE), which is discussed in this chapter, and the second is the Arduino sketch you create yourself.

The IDE software is installed on your personal computer and is used to compose and send sketches to the Arduino board.

Taking a Look Around the IDE

As shown in Figure 2-10, the Arduino IDE resembles a simple word processor. The IDE is divided into three main areas: the command area, the text area, and the message window area.

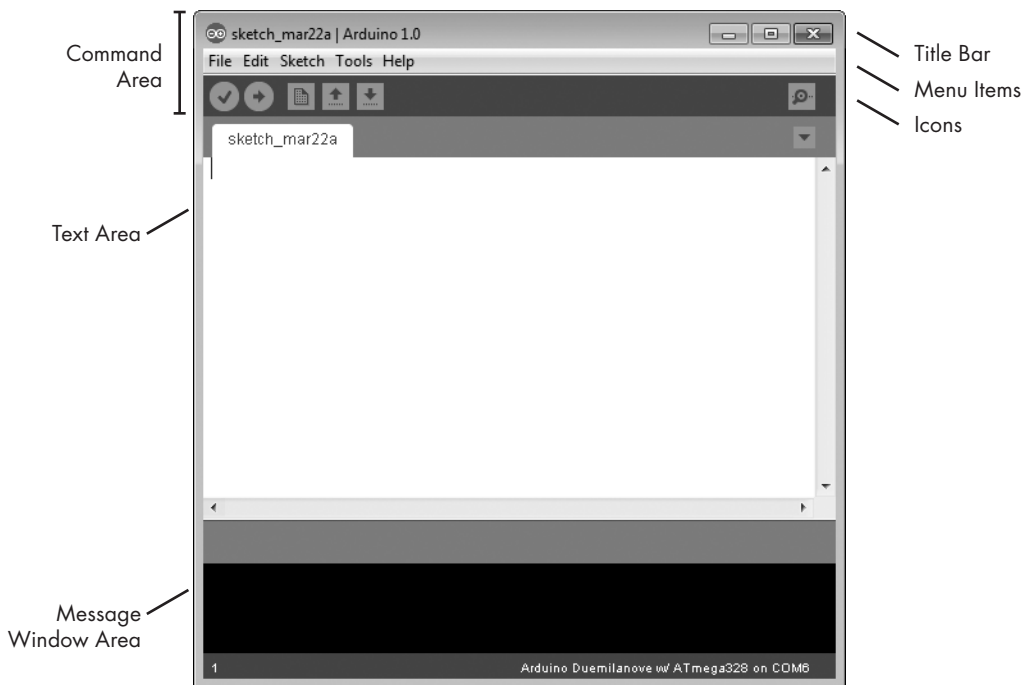


Figure 2-10: The Arduino IDE

The Command Area

The command area is shown at the top of Figure 2-10 and includes the title bar, menu items, and icons. The title bar displays the sketch's filename (*sketch_mar22a*), as well as the version of the IDE (*Arduino 1.0*). Below this is a series of menu items (File, Edit, Sketch, Tools, and Help) and icons, as described next.

Menu Items

As with any word processor or text editor, you can click one of the menu items to display its various options.

File Contains options to save, load, and print sketches; a thorough set of example sketches to open; as well as the **Preferences** submenu

Edit Contains the usual copy, paste, and search functions common to any word processor

Sketch Contains the function to verify your sketch before uploading to a board, and some sketch folder and import options

Tools Contains a variety of functions as well as the commands to select the Arduino board type and USB port

Help Contains links to various topics of interest and the version of the IDE

The Icons

Below the menu toolbar are six icons. Mouse over each icon to display its name. The icons, from left to right, are as follows:

Verify Click this to check that the Arduino sketch is valid and doesn't contain any programming mistakes.

Upload Click this to verify and then upload your sketch to the Arduino board.

New Click this to open a new blank sketch in a new window.

Open Click this to open a saved sketch.

Save Click this to save the open sketch. If the sketch doesn't have a name, you will be prompted to create one.

Serial Monitor Click this to open a new window for use in sending and receiving data between your Arduino and the IDE.

The Text Area

The text area is shown in the middle of Figure 2-10; this is where you'll create your sketches. The name of the current sketch is displayed in the tab at the upper left of the text area. (The default name is the current date.) You'll enter the contents of your sketch here as you would in any text editor.

The Message Window Area

The message window area is shown at the bottom of Figure 2-10. Messages from the IDE appear in the black area. The messages you see will vary and will include messages about verifying sketches, status updates, and so on.

At the bottom right of the message area, you should see the name of your Arduino board type as well as its connected USB port—*Arduino Duemilanove w/ATmega328 on COM6* in this case.

Creating Your First Sketch in the IDE

An Arduino sketch is a set of instructions that you create to accomplish a particular task; in other words, a sketch is a *program*. In this section you'll create and upload a simple sketch that will cause the Arduino's LED (shown in Figure 2-11) to blink repeatedly, by turning it on and then off for 1 second intervals.



Figure 2-11: The LED on the Arduino board, next to the capital L

NOTE *Don't worry too much about the specific commands in the sketch we're creating here. The goal is to show you how easy it is to get the Arduino to do something so that you'll keep reading when you get to the harder stuff.*

To begin, connect your Arduino to the computer with the USB cable. Then open the IDE, choose **Tools ▸ Serial Port**, and make sure the USB port is selected. This ensures that the Arduino board is properly connected.

Comments

First, enter a comment as a reminder of what your sketch will be used for. A *comment* is a note of any length in a sketch, written for the user's benefit. Comments in sketches are useful for adding notes to yourself or others, for entering instructions, or for noting miscellaneous details. When programming your Arduino (creating sketches), it's a good idea to add comments regarding your intentions; these comments can prove useful later when you're revisiting a sketch.

To add a comment on a single line, enter two forward slashes and then the comment, like this:

```
// Blink LED sketch by Mary Smith, created 09/09/12
```

The two forward slashes tell the IDE to ignore the text that follows when verifying a sketch. (As mentioned earlier, when you verify a sketch, you're asking the IDE to check that everything is written properly with no errors.)

To enter a comment that spans two or more lines, enter the characters `/*` on a line before the comment, and then end the comment with the characters `*/` on the following line, like this:

```
/*  
Arduino Blink LED Sketch  
by Mary Smith, created 09/09/12  
*/
```

As with the two forward slashes that precede a single line comment, the `/*` and `*/` tell the IDE to ignore the text that they bracket.

Enter a comment describing your Arduino sketch using one of these methods, and then save your sketch by choosing **File ▶ Save As**. Enter a short name for your sketch (such as *blinky*), and then click **OK**.

The default filename extension for Arduino sketches is *.ino*, and the IDE should add this automatically. The name for your sketch should be, in this case, *blinky.ino*, and you should be able to see it in your Sketchbook.

The Setup Function

The next stage in creating any sketch is to add the `void setup()` function. This function contains a set of instructions for the Arduino to execute once only, each time it is reset or turned on. To create the setup function, add the following lines to your sketch, after the comments:

```
void setup()
{
}

```

Controlling the Hardware

Our program will blink the user LED on the Arduino. The user LED is connected to the Arduino's digital pin 13. A digital pin can either detect an electrical signal or generate one on command. In this project, we'll generate an electrical signal that will light the LED. This may seem a little complicated, but you'll learn more about digital pins in future chapters. For now, just continue with creating the sketch.

Enter the following into your sketch between the braces (`{` and `}`):

```
pinMode(13, OUTPUT); // set digital pin 13 to output
```

The number 13 in the listing represents the digital pin you're addressing. You're setting this pin to `OUTPUT`, which means it will generate (output) an electrical signal. If you wanted it to detect an incoming electrical signal, then you would use `INPUT` instead. Notice that the function `pinMode()` ends with a semicolon (`;`). Every function in your Arduino sketches will end with a semicolon.

Save your sketch again to make sure that you don't lose any of your work.

The Loop Function

Remember that our goal is to make the LED blink repeatedly. To do this, we'll create a loop function to tell the Arduino to execute an instruction over and over until the power is shut off or someone presses the RESET button.

Enter the code shown in boldface after the `void setup()` section in the following listing to create an empty loop function. Be sure to end this new section with another brace (`}`), and then save your sketch again.

```
/*
Arduino Blink LED Sketch
by Mary Smith, created 09/09/12
*/

void setup()
{
  pinMode(13, OUTPUT); // set digital pin 13 to output
}
void loop()
{
  // place your main loop code here:
}
```

WARNING *The Arduino IDE does not automatically save sketches, so save your work frequently!*

Next, enter the actual functions into `void loop()` for the Arduino to execute.

Enter the following between the loop function’s braces, and then click **Verify** to make sure that you’ve entered everything correctly:

```
digitalWrite(13, HIGH); // turn on digital pin 13
delay(1000); // pause for one second
digitalWrite(13, LOW); // turn off digital pin 13
delay(1000); // pause for one second
```

Let’s take this all apart. The `digitalWrite()` function controls the voltage that is output from a digital pin: in this case, pin 13 to the LED. By setting the second parameter of this function to `HIGH`, a “high” digital voltage is output; then current will flow from the pin and the LED will turn on. (If you were to set this parameter to `LOW`, then the current flowing through the LED would stop.)

With the LED turned on, the light pauses for 1 second with `delay(1000)`. The `delay()` function causes the sketch to do nothing for a period of time—in this case, 1,000 milliseconds, or 1 second.

Next, we turn off the voltage to the LED with `digitalWrite(13, LOW);`. Finally, we pause again for 1 second while the LED is off, with `delay(1000);`.

The completed sketch should look like this:

```
/*
Arduino Blink LED Sketch
by Mary Smith, created 09/09/12
*/

void setup()
{
  pinMode(13, OUTPUT); // set digital pin 13 to output
}
```

```
void loop()
{
  digitalWrite(13, HIGH); // turn on digital pin 13
  delay(1000); // pause for one second
  digitalWrite(13, LOW); // turn off digital pin 13
  delay(1000); // pause for one second
}
```

Before you do anything further, save your sketch!

Verifying Your Sketch

When you verify your sketch, you ensure that it has been written correctly in a way that the Arduino can understand. To verify your complete sketch, click **Verify** in the IDE and wait a moment. Once the sketch has been verified, a note should appear in the message window, as shown in Figure 2-12.

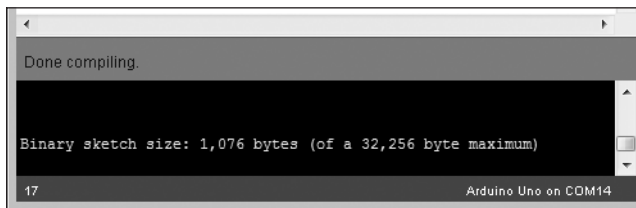


Figure 2-12: The sketch has been verified.

This “Done compiling” message tells you that the sketch is okay to upload to your Arduino. It also shows how much memory it will use (1,076 bytes in this case) of the total available on the Arduino (32,256 bytes).

But what if your sketch isn’t okay? Say, for example, you forgot to add a semicolon at the end of the second `delay(1000)` function. If something is broken in your sketch, then when you click **Verify**, the message window should display a verification error message similar to the one shown in Figure 2-13.



Figure 2-13: The message window with a verification error

The message tells you that the error occurs in the `void loop` function, lists the line number of the sketch where the IDE thinks the error is located (blinky:16, or line 16 of your *blinky* sketch), and displays the error itself (the missing semicolon, error: expected ';' before '}' token). Furthermore, the IDE should also highlight in yellow the location of the error or a spot just after it. This helps you easily locate and rectify the mistake.

Uploading and Running Your Sketch

Once you're satisfied that your sketch has been entered correctly, save it, ensure that your Arduino board is connected, and click **Upload** in the IDE. The IDE may verify your sketch again and then upload it to your Arduino board. During this process, the TX/RX LEDs on your board (shown in Figure 2-6) should blink, indicating that information is traveling between the Arduino and your computer.

Now for the moment of truth: Your Arduino should start running the sketch. If you've done everything correctly, then the LED should blink on and off once every second!

Congratulations. You now know the basics of how to enter, verify, and upload an Arduino sketch.

Modifying Your Sketch

After running your sketch, you may want to change how it operates, by, for example, adjusting the on or off delay time for the LED. Because the IDE is a lot like a word processor, you can open your saved sketch, adjust the values, and then save your sketch again and upload it to the Arduino. For example, to increase the rate of blinking, change both `delay` functions to make the LEDs blink for one-quarter of a second by adjusting the delay to 250 like this:

```
delay(250); // pause for one-quarter of one second
```

Then upload the sketch again. The LED should now blink faster, for one-quarter of a second each time.

Looking Ahead

Armed with your newfound knowledge of how to enter, edit, save, and upload Arduino sketches, you're ready for the next chapter, where you'll learn how to use more functions, implement good project design, construct basic electronic circuits, and do much more.