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2nd Edition



Raspberry Pi Cookbook

SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Simon Monk

Raspberry Pi Cookbook

With millions of new users and several new models, the Raspberry Pi ecosystem continues to expand—along with a lot of new questions about the Pi's capabilities. The second edition of this popular cookbook provides more than 240 hands-on recipes for running this tiny low-cost computer with Linux, programming it with Python, and hooking up sensors, motors, and other hardware—including Arduino and the Internet of Things.

Prolific hacker and author Simon Monk also teaches basic principles to help you use new technologies with Raspberry Pi as its ecosystem continues to develop. This cookbook is ideal for programmers and hobbyists familiar with the Pi through various resources, including *Getting Started with Raspberry Pi* (O'Reilly). Python and other code examples from the book are available on GitHub.

- Set up your Raspberry Pi and connect to a network
- Work with its Linux-based operating system
- Program Raspberry Pi with Python
- Give your Pi "eyes" with computer vision
- Control hardware through the GPIO connector
- Use Raspberry Pi to run different types of motors
- Work with switches, keypads, and other digital inputs
- Use sensors to measure temperature, light, and distance
- Connect to IoT devices in various ways
- Create dynamic projects with Arduino

Dr. Simon Monk has a degree in Cybernetics and Computer Science and a PhD in Software Engineering. Co-founder of the mobile software company Momote Ltd., he is now a full-time author of several books about electronics and open source hardware, including *Making Android Accessories with IOIO* (O'Reilly) and *30 Arduino Projects for the Evil Genius* (McGraw-Hill).

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Raspberry Pi Cookbook

Dr. Simon Monk

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O'REILLY®

Raspberry Pi Cookbook

by Simon Monk

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Editors: Susan Conant and Jeff Bleiel

Production Editor: Kristen Brown

Copyeditor: Nan Reinhardt

Proofreader: Gillian McGarvey

Indexer: Judy McConville

Interior Designer: David Futato

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Preface to the Second Edition

Launched in 2011, the Raspberry Pi has found a role both as a very low-cost Linux-based computer and as a platform for embedded computing. It has proven popular with educators and hobbyists alike.

Since the first edition of this book, several million more Raspberry Pis have been sold and a number of new models of Raspberry Pi have been produced. Some models—like the models B+, A+, and Pi 2 model B+—improve the specification of this device, culminating in the Raspberry Pi 2 with quad-core processor and the Raspberry Pi Compute model, which provide the Raspberry Pi as a plugin board that can become part of a larger system.

This edition has been thoroughly updated to encompass the new models of Raspberry Pi, as well as the many changes and improvements to its Raspbian operating system.

This edition contains a new chapter on computer vision and a chapter of recipes on making Internet of Things projects with your Raspberry Pi.

This book is designed in such a way that you can read it linearly as you would a regular book, or access recipes at random. You can search the table of contents or index for the recipe that you want and then jump right to it. If the recipe requires you to know about other things, it will refer you to other recipes, rather like a cookbook might refer you to base sauces before showing you how to cook something fancier.

The world of Raspberry Pi moves quickly. With a large, active community, new interface boards and software libraries are being developed all the time. In addition to examples that use specific interface boards or software, the book also covers basic principles so that you can have a better understanding of how to use new technologies that come along as the Raspberry Pi ecosystem develops.

As you would expect, a large body of code (mostly Python programs) accompanies the book. These programs are all open source and available on GitHub. You'll find a link to them at the [*Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website](#).

For most of the software-based recipes, all you need is a Raspberry Pi. I recommend a Raspberry Pi 2 or 3. When it comes to recipes that involve making your own hardware to interface with the Raspberry Pi, I have tried to make good use of ready-made modules, as well as solderless breadboard and jumper wires to avoid the need for soldering.

For those wishing to make breadboard-based projects more durable, I suggest using prototyping boards with the same layout as a half-sized breadboard, such as those sold by Adafruit, so that the design can easily be transferred to a soldered solution.

Conventions Used in This Book

The following typographical conventions are used in this book:

Italic

Indicates new terms, URLs, email addresses, filenames, and file extensions.

Constant width

Used for program listings, as well as within paragraphs to refer to program elements such as variable or function names, databases, data types, environment variables, statements, and keywords.

Constant width bold

Shows commands or other text that should be typed literally by the user.

Constant width italic

Shows text that should be replaced with user-supplied values or by values determined by context.



This icon signifies a tip, suggestion, or general note.



This icon indicates a warning or caution.



This icon points you to the related video for that section.

Using Code Examples

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Setup and Management

1.0 Introduction

When you buy a Raspberry Pi, you are essentially buying an assembled printed circuit board. It does not even include a power supply or operating system.

The recipes in this chapter are concerned with getting your Raspberry Pi set up and ready for use.

Because the Raspberry Pi just uses standard USB keyboards and mice, most of the setup is pretty straightforward, so you will concentrate only on those tasks that are specific to the Raspberry Pi.

1.1 Selecting a Model of Raspberry Pi

Problem

There are many models of Raspberry Pi and you are not sure which to use.

Solution

If you want a Raspberry Pi for general use, then you should buy a Raspberry Pi 3 or 2 model B. With four times as much memory and a quad-core processor, it will cope with most tasks much better than the Pi Zero or model A+ with their single processors. The Raspberry Pi 3 model B has the great advantage of having WiFi built in, so there's no need for an extra USB WiFi adapter.

If, on the other hand, you are embedding a Raspberry Pi in a project for a single purpose, then using a model A+ or Pi Zero and saving a few dollars may well be an option.

Discussion

Figure 1-1 shows the Pi Zero, model A+, and Raspberry Pi 2 B.

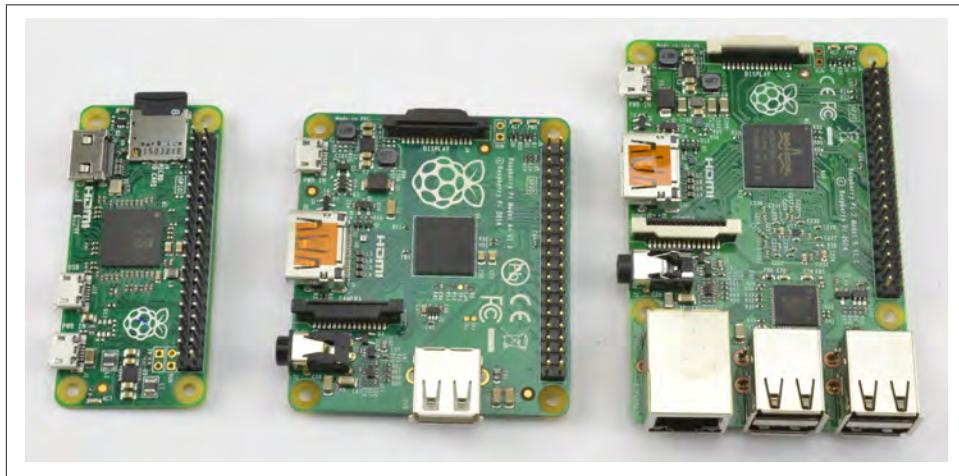


Figure 1-1. Raspberry Pi Zero (left), model A+ (center), and Raspberry Pi 2 model B (right)

As you can see from Figure 1-1, the model A+ is smaller than the Pi 2 and has a single USB socket and no RJ45 Ethernet socket. The Pi Zero is even smaller, saving space by using a mini HDMI socket and micro USB on-the-go socket. If you want to connect a keyboard monitor and mouse to a Pi Zero, you will need adapters for both the USB and HDMI ports before you can connect standard peripherals.

The differences between all the Raspberry Pi models to date are summarized in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1. Raspberry Pi models

Model	RAM	USB sockets	Ethernet port	Notes
3 B	1 GB	4	yes	Includes WiFi
Zero	512 MB	1 (micro)	no	Low cost
2 B	1 GB	4	yes	Quad-core
A+	256 MB	1	no	
B+	512 MB	4	yes	Discontinued
A	256 MB	1	no	Discontinued
B rev2	512 MB	2	yes	Discontinued
B rev1	256 MB	2	yes	Discontinued

If you have one of the older discontinued Raspberry Pi models, it is still useful. They do not have quite the performance of the latest Raspberry Pi 3 model B, but for many situations, that does not matter.

In [Recipe 9.21](#), the Raspberry Pi Compute module will be introduced. This is designed specifically to allow a Raspberry Pi to be built into a product.

See Also

For more information on the Raspberry Pi models, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raspberry_Pi.

The low cost of the Pi Zero makes it ideal for embedding in electronics projects without worrying about the cost. See [Recipe 9.22](#).

1.2 Enclosing a Raspberry Pi

Problem

You need an enclosure for your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

The Raspberry Pi does not come with an enclosure unless you buy one as part of a kit. This makes it a little vulnerable, as there are bare connections on the underside of the circuit board that could easily be short-circuited if the Raspberry Pi is placed on something metal.

It is a good idea to buy some protection for your Raspberry Pi in the form of a case. If you intend to use the Raspberry Pi's GPIO pins, then the PiBow Coupé shown in [Figure 1-2](#) is a beautiful and practical design.

Discussion

There is a vast array of case styles to choose from, including:

- Simple, two-part, click-together plastic boxes
- VESA mountable boxes (for attaching to the back of a monitor or TV)
- Lego-style boxes
- 3D-printed box designs
- Laser-cut, snap-together acrylic designs



Figure 1-2. A Raspberry Pi 2 in a PiBow Coupé

The case you buy is very much a matter of personal taste. However, some of the things you need to consider are:

- Do you need to have access to the GPIO connector? This is important if you plan to attach external electronics to your Raspberry Pi.
- Is the case well-ventilated? This is important if you plan to overclock your Raspberry Pi ([Recipe 1.10](#)) or run it hard playing videos or games, as these will all generate more heat.

You will also find heatsink kits that have tiny self-adhesive heatsinks to attach to the chips on the Raspberry Pi. These may be of some use if you are demanding a lot of your Raspberry Pi, say by playing a lot of videos, but generally they are the equivalent of “go-faster” stripes on a car.

See Also

Adafruit has a nice range of [Raspberry Pi enclosures](#).

You will also find many styles of cases at other Raspberry Pi suppliers and on eBay.

1.3 Selecting a Power Supply

Problem

You need to select a power supply for your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

The basic electrical specification for a power supply suitable for a Raspberry Pi is that it supplies a regulated 5V DC (direct current).

The amount of current that the power supply must be capable of providing depends both on the model of Raspberry Pi and the peripherals attached to it. It is worth getting a power supply that can easily cope with the Raspberry Pi and you should consider 700mA to be a minimum.

If you buy your power supply from the same place that you buy the Raspberry Pi, then the seller should be able to tell you if it will work with the Raspberry Pi.

If you are going to be using a WiFi dongle or other USB peripherals that use significant amounts of power, then I would get a power supply capable of 1.5A or even 2A. Also beware of very low-cost power supplies that may not provide an accurate or reliable 5V.

Discussion

The power supply and connector are actually the same as those found in many smartphone chargers. If they are terminated in a micro USB plug, then they are almost certainly 5V (but check). The only question, then, is if they can supply enough current.

If they can't, then a few bad things can happen:

- They may get hot and be a potential fire risk.
- They may just fail.
- At times of high load (say, when the Pi is using a WiFi dongle), the voltage may dip and the Raspberry Pi may reset itself.

In general, look for a power supply that says it can supply 700mA or more. If it specifies a number of watts (W) rather than mA, divide the number of watts by 5 to get the mA figure. So, a 5V 10W power supply can supply 2A (2000mA).

Using a power supply with, say, a maximum current of 2A will not use any more electricity than a 700mA power supply. The Raspberry Pi will just take as much current as it needs.

In [Figure 1-3](#), I measure the current taken by a Raspberry Pi model B and compare it with a Raspberry Pi 2 model B.

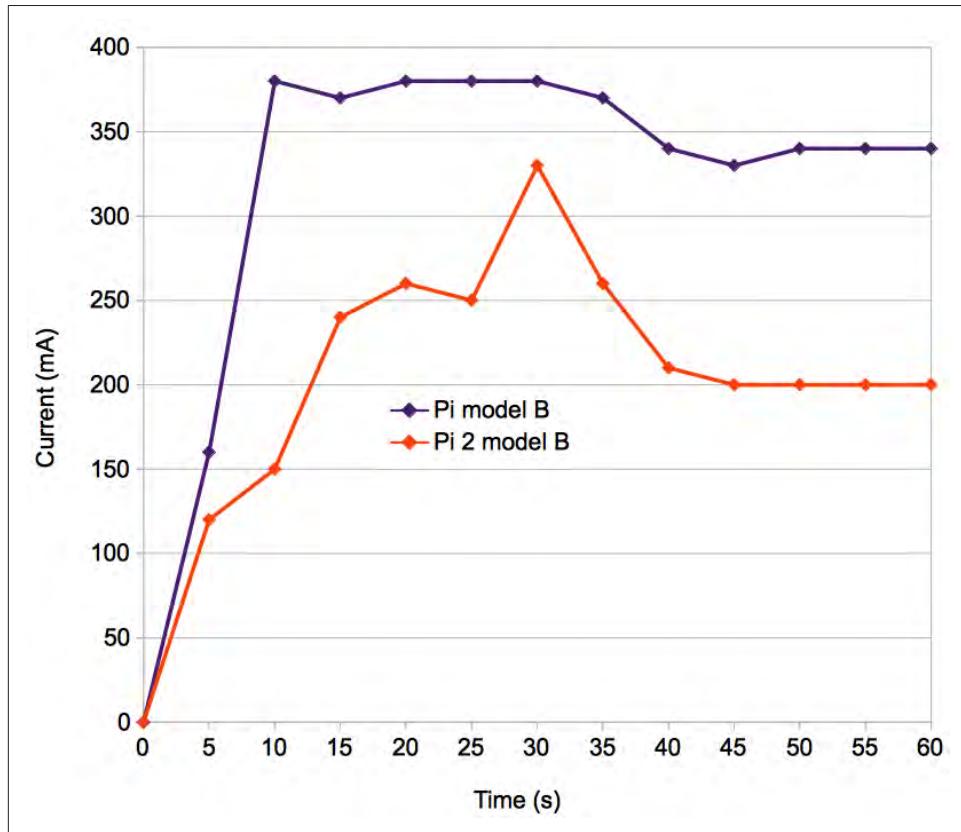


Figure 1-3. Raspberry Pi current consumption during booting

The newer Raspberry Pis (the A+, B+, or Raspberry Pi 2) are far more power-efficient than the older models, but when the processor is fully occupied and has a lot of peripherals attached, they can still reach similar current requirements.

In [Figure 1-3](#), you can see that the current rarely gets above 500mA. However, the processor isn't really doing very much here. Were you to start playing HD video, the current would increase considerably. When it comes to power supplies, it's usually better to have something in reserve.

See Also

You can buy a module that will turn off the power when the Raspberry Pi shuts down at <http://www.pi-supply.com/>.

1.4 Selecting an Operating System Distribution

Problem

There are a number of different Raspberry Pi distributions. You are not sure which one to use.

Solution

The answer to this question depends on what you intend to do with your Raspberry Pi.

For general use as a computer or for using in electronic projects, you should use Raspbian, the standard and official distribution for the Raspberry Pi.

If you plan to use your Raspberry Pi as a media center, there are a number of distributions specifically for that purpose (see [Recipe 4.1](#)).

In this book, we use the Raspbian distribution almost exclusively, although most of the recipes will work with any Debian-based distribution.

Discussion

MicroSD cards are not expensive, so get a few and try out a few distributions. If you do this, it is a good idea to keep your own files on a USB flash drive so that you don't have to keep copying them onto each microSD card.

Note that if you are using one of the upcoming recipes to write your own SD card, then you need to have a computer that has an SD card slot (many laptops do), or you can buy an inexpensive USB SD card reader.

See Also

[The official list of Raspberry Pi distributions](#)

1.5 Writing a MicroSD Card with NOOBS

Problem

You want to write a microSD card using NOOBS (New Out of the Box Software).

Solution

NOOBS is by far the easiest way to get an operating system onto your Raspberry Pi.

Download the NOOBS archive file from <http://www.raspberrypi.org/downloads>, extract it, and place it on a microSD card. To do this, you will need a computer with an SD card slot or a USB adapter and a SD-to-microSD adapter.

Once you have downloaded the NOOBS archive file, extract it and copy the folder contents onto the SD card. Note that if the archive extracts to a folder called `NOOBS_v1_3_12` or similar, it is the contents of the folder that should be copied to the root of the microSD card, not the folder itself.

Put the microSD card containing the extracted NOOBS files into your Raspberry Pi and then power up your Raspberry Pi. When it boots, the window shown in **Figure 1-4** will appear. From this screen, select Raspbian and then click the Install button.

If you are using NOOBS on an A+, you will see a shorter list of options because only the distributions for that simplified platform will be shown.

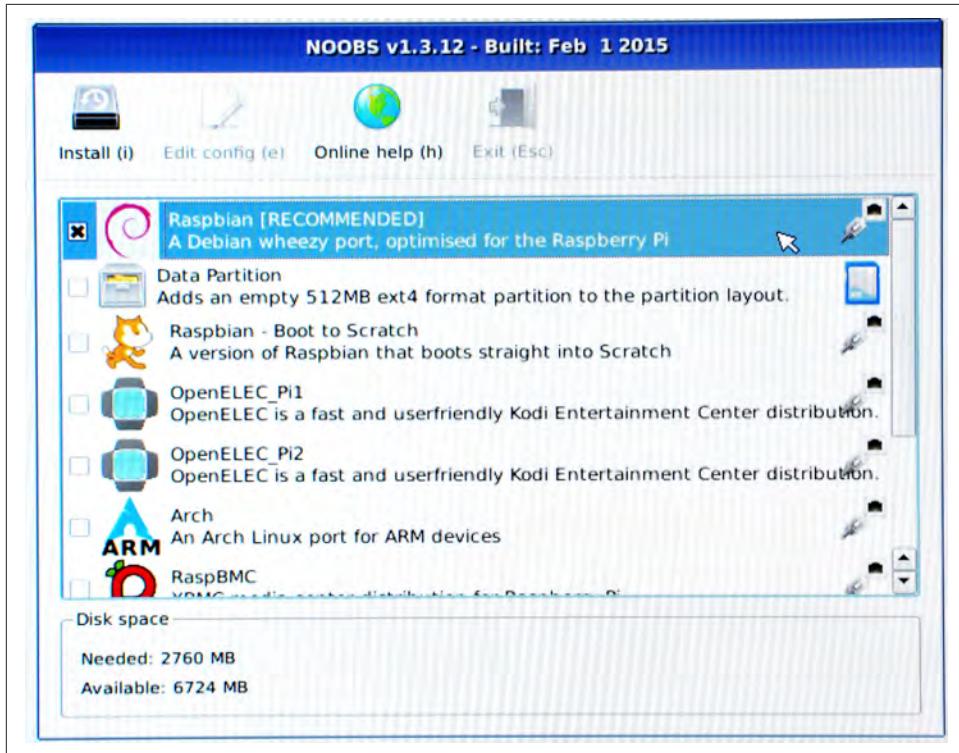


Figure 1-4. NOOBS first screen

You will get a warning message that the SD card will be overwritten (which is fine) and then as the distribution is installed onto the SD card, you will see a progress screen accompanied by helpful information about the distribution (Figure 1-5).



Figure 1-5. NOOBS overwriting the SD card

Once the file copying is complete, you will get the message *Image applied successfully*. When you hit return, the Raspberry Pi will reboot and then *raspi_config* will automatically run so that you can configure the new installation.

Once you are up and running, the first thing you should do is connect your Raspberry Pi to the Internet (Recipes 2.1 and 2.5), open a command line by using LXTerminal (Recipe 3.2), and enter the following command to update your system to the latest version.

```
$ sudo apt-get update  
$ sudo apt-get upgrade
```

This will take some time.

Discussion

For NOOBS to install correctly onto a microSD card, the card must be formatted as FAT32. Most SD and microSD cards are supplied already formatted in FAT32. If you are reusing an old card and need to format it as FAT32, then use your operating system's tool for formatting removable media.

The type of microSD card that you get will also affect how fast your Raspberry Pi runs once the operating system is installed. Look for a microSD card described as “class 10.”

See Also

You can find further information on installing an operating system with NOOBS, including information about the different distributions available at <https://www.raspberrypi.org/help/noobs-setup/>.

1.6 Connecting the System

Problem

You have everything that you need for your Raspberry Pi, and you want to connect it all together.

Solution

Unless you are embedding your Raspberry Pi in a project or using it as a media center, you need to attach a keyboard, mouse, monitor, and probably a WiFi dongle, unless you have a Raspberry Pi 3.

Figure 1-6 shows a typical Raspberry Pi system.

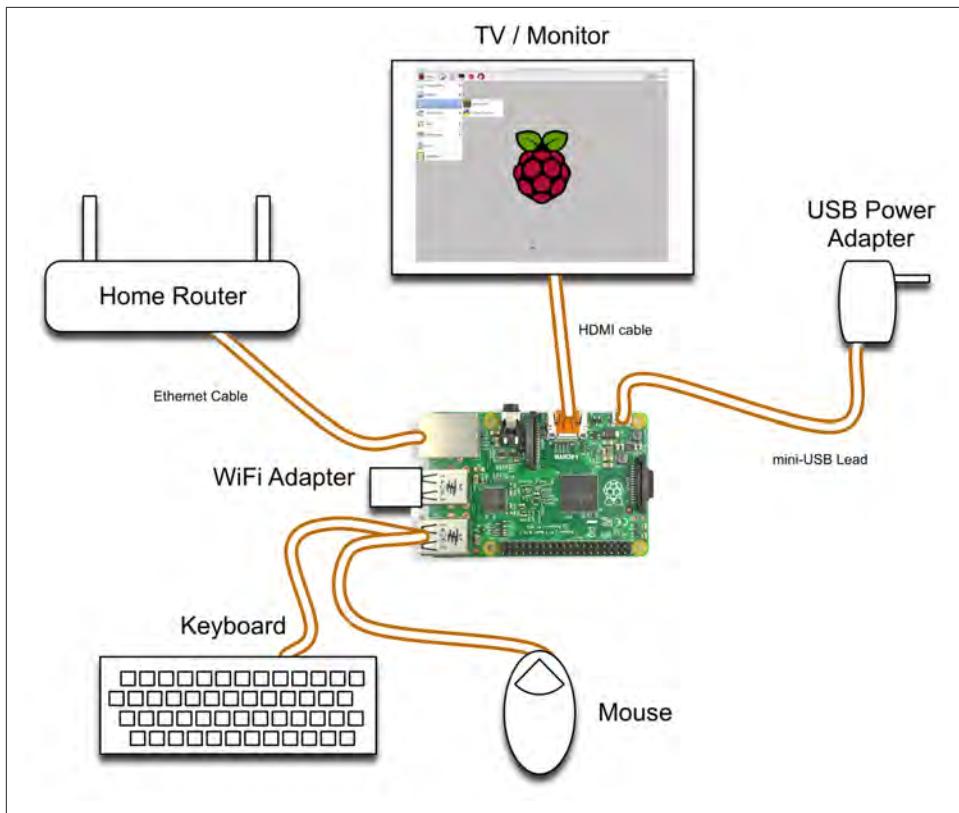


Figure 1-6. A typical Raspberry Pi system

Discussion

The Raspberry Pi is perfectly happy with pretty much any keyboard or mouse, wired or wireless. The exception to this is Bluetooth wireless keyboards and mice, which will not work with the Raspberry Pi.

If you have an older Raspberry Pi or a model A or A+ and run out of USB sockets, then you will also need a USB hub.

See Also

[The official Raspberry Pi Quick Start Guide](#)

1.7 Connecting a DVI or VGA Monitor

Problem

Your monitor does not have an HDMI connector but you want to use it with your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Many people have been caught out by this problem. Fortunately, it is possible to buy adapters for monitors with a DVI or VGA input but no HDMI connectors.

DVI adapters are the simplest and cheapest. They can be found for less than \$5 if you search for “HDMI male to DVI female converter.”

Discussion

Using VGA adapters is more complex because they require some electronics to convert the signal from digital to analog, so beware of leads that do not contain these. The official converter is called *Pi-View* and is available wherever the Raspberry Pi is sold. *Pi-View* has the advantage of having been tested and found to work with Raspberry Pi. You may find cheaper alternatives on the Internet, but often these won’t work.

See Also

eLinux has [tips on what to look for in an converter](#).

1.8 Using a Composite Video Monitor/TV

Problem

The text on your low-resolution composite monitor is illegible. You need to adjust the resolution of the Raspberry Pi for a small screen.

Solution

The Raspberry Pi has two types of video output: HDMI and composite video from the audio jack, for which you need a special cord. Of these, the HDMI is much better quality. If you’re intending to use a composite video as your main screen, you may want to think again.

If you are using such a screen—say, because you need a really small screen—then you need to make a few adjustments to fit the video output to the screen. You need to

make some changes to the file `/boot/config.txt`. You can edit it on the Raspberry Pi by issuing the following command in a Terminal session:

```
$ sudo nano /boot/config.txt
```

If the text is too small to read and you do not have an HDMI monitor, then you can also edit the file by removing the SD card from the Raspberry Pi and inserting it into your computer. The file will then be in the top-level directory on the SD card, so you can use a text editor on your PC to modify it.

You need to know the resolution of your screen. For a lot of small screens, this will be 320 by 240 pixels. Find the two lines in the file that read:

```
#framebuffer_width=1280  
#framebuffer_height=720
```

Remove the # from the front of each line and change the two numbers to the width and height of your screen. In the following example, these lines have been modified to be 320 by 240:

```
framebuffer_width=320  
framebuffer_height=240
```

Save the file and restart your Raspberry Pi. You should find that everything has become a lot easier to read. You will probably also find that there is a big, thick border around the screen. To adjust this, see [Recipe 1.9](#).

Discussion

There are many low-cost CCTV monitors that can make a great companion for the Raspberry Pi when you're making something like a retro games console ([Recipe 4.6](#)). However, these monitors are often very low resolution.

See Also

For another tutorial on using composite monitors, see [this Adafruit tutorial](#).

Also, see [Recipes 1.7](#) and [1.9](#) to adjust your picture when you're using the HDMI video output.

1.9 Adjusting the Picture Size on Your Monitor

Problem

When you first connect a Raspberry Pi to a monitor, you may find that some of the text cannot be read because it extends off the screen, or the picture isn't using all the space available on the screen.

Solution

If your text extends off the screen, use the `raspi-config` tool to turn overscan off.

To do this, run `raspi-config` by opening a Terminal session and issuing the command:

```
$ sudo raspi-config
```

Then use the cursor keys to scroll down to Advanced Options and then Overscan, and turn overscan off ([Figure 1-7](#)).

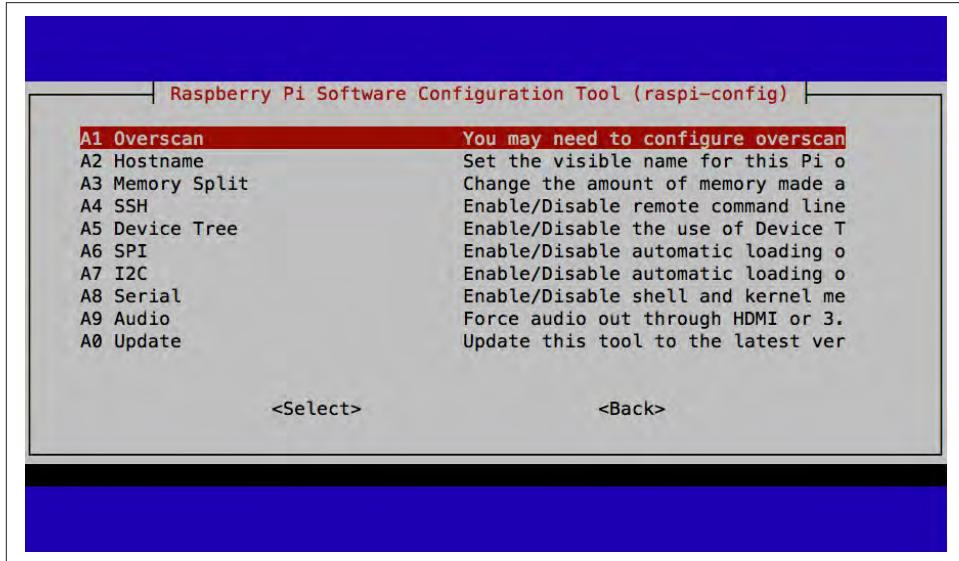


Figure 1-7. Selecting the Overscan option

If your problem is that there is a large black border around the picture, then you can reduce this (and possibly eliminate it entirely) by editing the file `/boot/config.txt` using the command:

```
$ sudo nano /boot/config.txt
```

Look for the section dealing with overscan. The four lines you need to change are shown in the middle of [Figure 1-8](#).

```
GNU nano 2.2.6          File: /boot/config.txt

# uncomment if you get no picture on HDMI for a default "safe" mode
#hdmi_safe=1

# uncomment this if your display has a black border of unused pixels visible
# and your display can output without overscan
#disable_overscan=1

# uncomment the following to adjust overscan. Use positive numbers if console
# goes off screen, and negative if there is too much border
#overscan_left=16
#overscan_right=16
#overscan_top=16
#overscan_bottom=16

# uncomment to force a console size. By default it will be display's size minus
# overscan.
#framebuffer_width=1280
#framebuffer_height=720

AC Get Help  A0 WriteOut  AR Read File  AY Prev Page  AC Cut Text  AC Cur Pos
AX Exit      AJ Justify   AW Where Is   AN Next Page  AU Uncut Text  AT To Spell
```

Figure 1-8. Adjusting overscan

For the lines to take effect, you first need to uncomment them by removing the # character from the start of each line.

Then, using trial and error, change the settings until the screen fills as much of the monitor as possible. Note that the four numbers should be negative. Try setting them all to -20 to start with. This will increase the area of the screen that is used.

Discussion

Having to repeatedly restart the Raspberry Pi to see the effects of the changes in resolution is a little tedious. Fortunately, you will only have to do this procedure once. Many monitors and TVs work just fine without any adjustments.

See Also

You can find much more information about the raspi-config tool at http://elinux.org/RPi_raspi-config.

1.10 Maximizing Performance

Problem

Your Raspberry Pi seems to be very slow, so you want to overclock it to make it run faster.

Solution

If you have a Raspberry Pi 2 with its quad-core processor, you are unlikely to find it to be too slow. However, the older single-core Raspberry Pis can be pretty sluggish.

You can increase the clock frequency of a Raspberry Pi to make it run a little faster. This will make it use a bit more power and run a little hotter (see the Discussion next).

The method of overclocking described here is called *dynamic overclocking* because it automatically monitors the temperature of the Raspberry Pi and drops the clock speed back down if things start to get too hot.

To make your Pi overclock, run the `raspi_config` utility by issuing the following command in a Terminal:

```
$ sudo raspi-config
```

Select the Overclock option in the menu, and you are presented with the options in Figure 1-9.

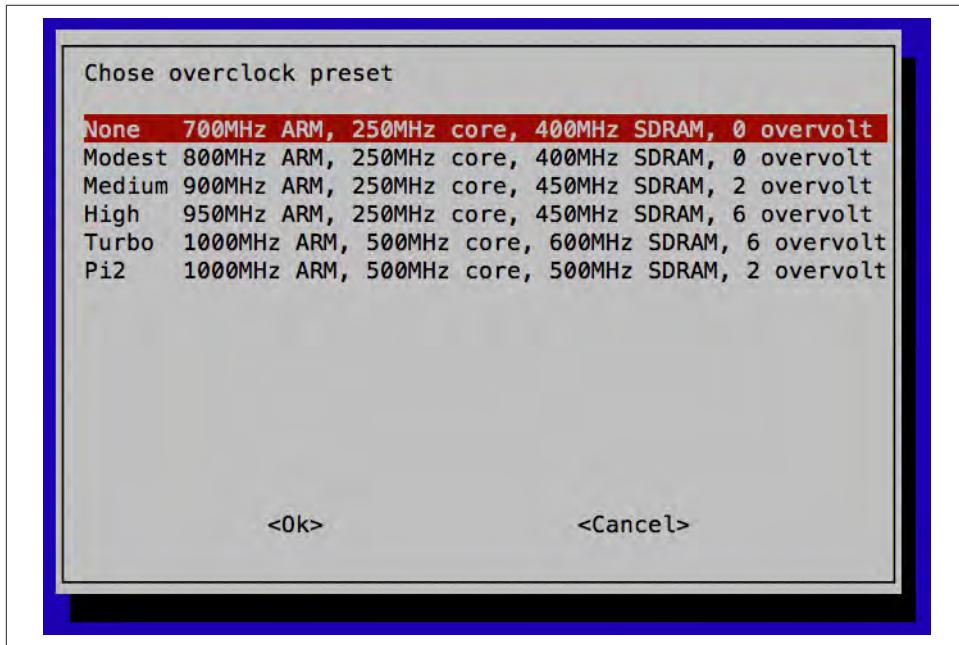


Figure 1-9. Overclocking options

Select an option. If you find that your Raspberry Pi starts to become unstable and hangs unexpectedly, then you may need to choose a more conservative option or turn overclocking off by setting it back to None.

Discussion

The performance improvements from overclocking can be quite dramatic. To measure these, I used a Raspberry Pi model B, revision 2, without a case at an ambient room temperature of 15 degrees C.

The test program was the following Python script. This just hammers the processor and is not really representative of the other things that go on in a computer, such as writing to the SD card, graphics, and so on. But it does give a good indication of raw CPU performance if you want to test the effect of overclocking on your Raspberry Pi.

```
import time

def factorial(n):
    if n == 0:
        return 1
    else:
        return n * factorial(n-1)

before_time = time.clock()
for i in range(1, 10000):
    factorial(200)
after_time = time.clock()

print(after_time - before_time)
```

Check out the results of the test in [Table 1-2](#).

Table 1-2. Overclocking

	Speed test	Current	Temperature (degrees C)
700 MHz	15.8 seconds	360mA	27
1 GHz	10.5 seconds	420mA	30

As you can see, the performance has increased by 33% but at a cost of drawing more current and a slightly higher temperature.

A well-ventilated enclosure will help to keep your Raspberry Pi running at full speed. There have also been some efforts to add water-cooling to the Raspberry Pi. Frankly, this is just silly.

See Also

You can find much more information about the `raspi-config` tool at http://elinux.org/RPi_raspi-config.

1.11 Changing Your Password

Problem

By default, the password for a Raspberry Pi will be *raspberry*. You want to change this.

Solution

You can use the `raspi-config` tool to change your password. Run the `raspi_config` utility by issuing the following command in a Terminal (see [Recipe 3.2](#)):

```
$ sudo raspi-config
```

Then select the `change_pass` option in the menu and follow the prompts shown in [Figure 1-10](#).

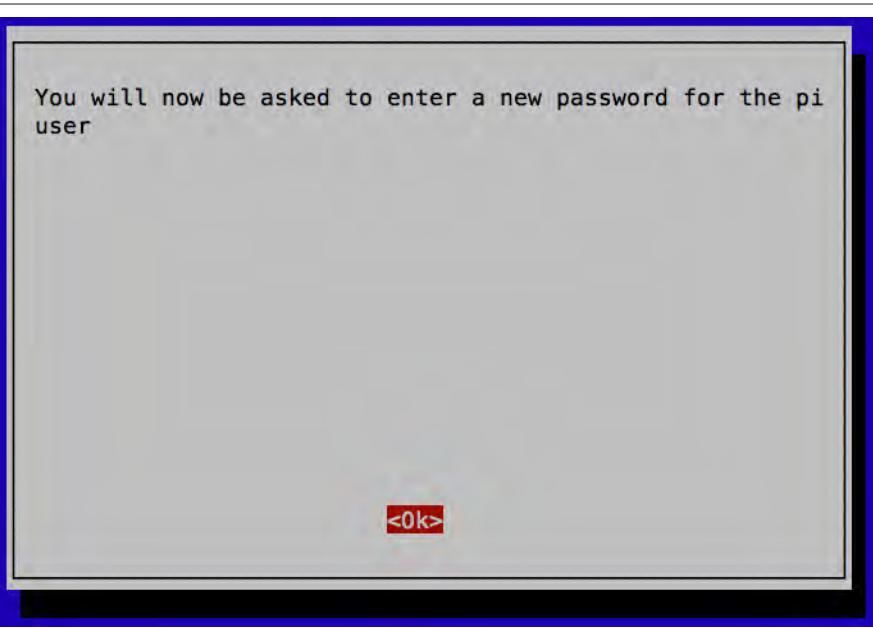


Figure 1-10. Changing the password

Changing your password is one occasion where you do not have to restart your Raspberry Pi for the changes to take effect.

Discussion

You can also change the password from a Terminal session simply by using the `passwd` command as follows:

```
$ passwd  
Changing password for pi.  
(current) UNIX password:  
Enter new UNIX password:  
Retype new UNIX password:  
passwd: password updated successfully
```

See Also

You can find much more information about the `raspi-config` tool at http://elinux.org/RPi_raspi-config.

1.12 Setting the Pi to Boot Straight into a Windowing System

Problem

Every time you reboot your Raspberry Pi, you have to log in and then start the desktop manually. You want to make this automatic.

Solution

You can use the `raspi-config` tool to change the boot behavior so that the Raspberry Pi automatically logs you in and starts the desktop. Run the `raspi_config` utility by issuing the following command in a Terminal:

```
$ sudo raspi-config
```

Then select the Enable Boot to Desktop/Scratch option and then “Desktop Log in as user *pi*”(Figure 1-11).

After you change the boot option, you are prompted to restart your Raspberry Pi for the changes to take effect.

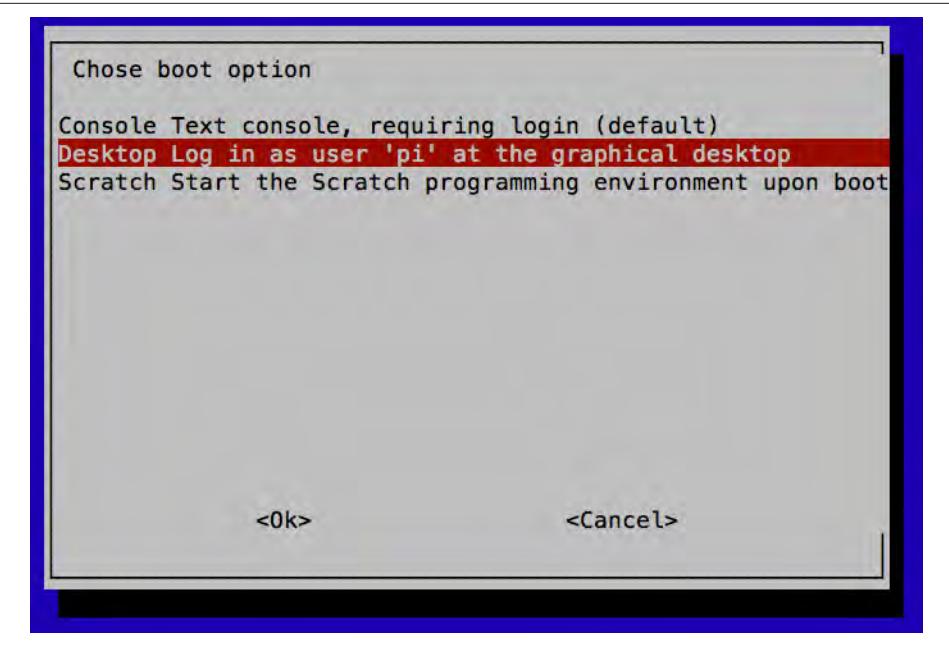


Figure 1-11. Automatic boot into a desktop

Discussion

Clearly there are security implications in allowing the Raspberry Pi to log you in to the windowing environment automatically. But because the Raspberry Pi will generally be used as a personal computer, rather than being shared, the convenience usually outweighs any such disadvantages.

See Also

You can find much more information about the `raspi-config` tool at http://elinux.org/RPi_raspi-config.

1.13 Shutting Down Your Raspberry Pi

Problem

You want to shut down your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Click on the Raspberry menu in the top-left corner of the desktop. This will display a number of options (Figure 1-12).

Shutdown

Shuts down the Raspberry Pi. You will need to unplug the power and plug it in again to get the Raspberry Pi to boot up again.

Reboot

Reboots the Raspberry Pi.

Logout

Logs you out and displays a prompt to enter your login credentials so that you can log back in.



Figure 1-12. Shutting down your Raspberry Pi

You can also reboot from the command line by issuing the command:

```
sudo reboot
```

You may have to do this after installing some software. When you do reboot, you see the message shown in **Figure 1-13**, which illustrates the multiuser nature of Linux and warns all users connected to the Pi.

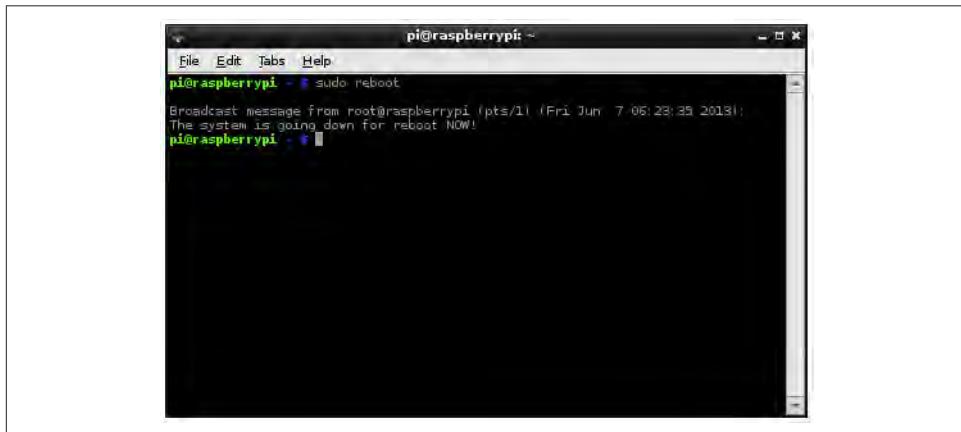


Figure 1-13. Shutting down your Raspberry Pi from the Terminal

Discussion

It is better to shut your Raspberry Pi down as described above than to simply pull out the power plug, because the Raspberry Pi may be in the middle of writing to the microSD card as you power it down. This could lead to file corruption.

Unlike shutting down most computers, shutting down a Raspberry Pi does not actually turn off the power. It goes into a low-power mode—and it is a pretty low-power device anyway (but the Raspberry Pi hardware has no control over its power supply).

See Also

You can buy a module that will turn off the power when the Raspberry Pi shuts down at <http://www.pi-supply.com/>.

1.14 Installing the Raspberry Pi Camera Module

Problem

You want to use the Raspberry Pi camera module (see Figure 1-14).

Solution

The Raspberry Pi camera module ([Figure 1-14](#)) is attached to a Raspberry Pi by a ribbon cable.

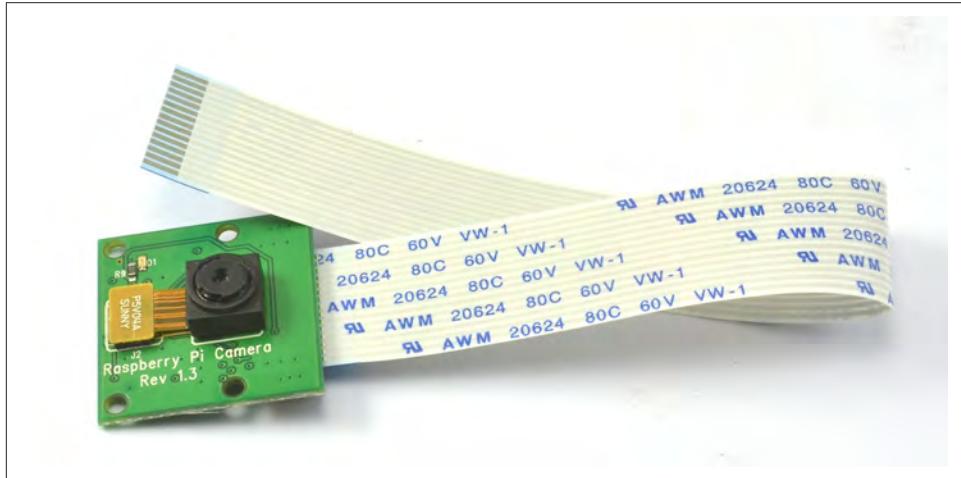


Figure 1-14. The Raspberry Pi camera module

This cable attaches to a special connector between the audio and HDMI sockets on a Raspberry Pi 2. On an original Raspberry Pi model B, the connector is just behind the Ethernet socket. To fit it, pull up the levers on either side of the connector so that they unlock, and then press the cable into the slot with the connector pads of the cable facing away from the Ethernet socket. Press the two levers of the connector back down to lock the cable in place ([Figure 1-15](#)).

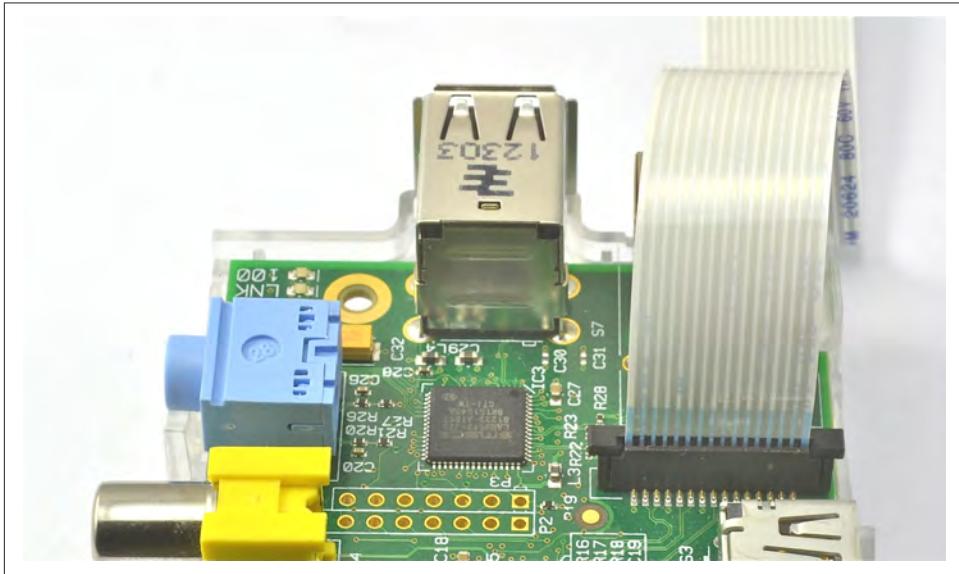


Figure 1-15. Fitting a Raspberry Pi camera module attached to a Raspberry Pi model B



The camera module packaging states that it is sensitive to static. Before handling it, ground yourself by touching something grounded like the metal case of a PC.

The camera module requires some software configuration. The easiest way to configure it is to use `raspi_config`. To run `raspi-config`, enter the following command into a Terminal session:

```
$ sudo raspi-config
```

You will see the Enable Camera option ([Figure 1-16](#)).

Two commands are available for capturing still images and videos: `raspistill` and `raspivid`.

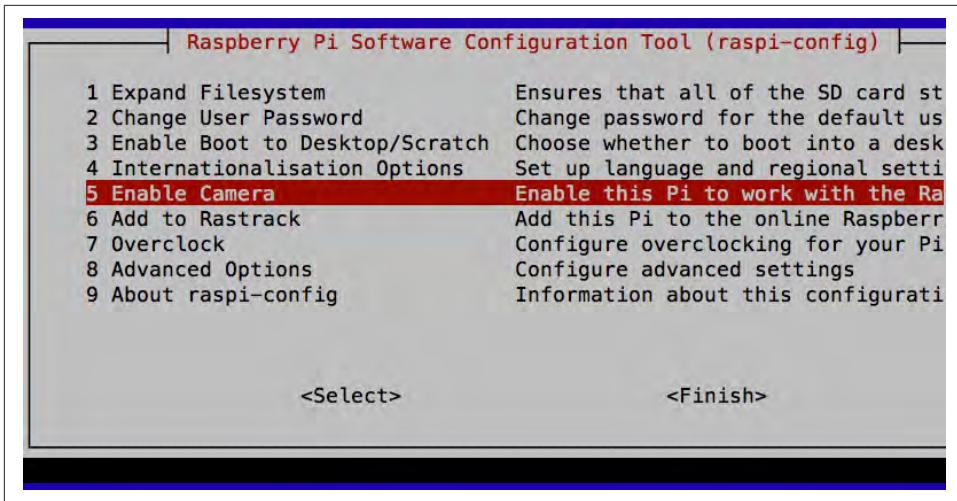


Figure 1-16. The updated raspi-config configuration tool

To capture a single still image, use the `raspistill` command as shown here:

```
$ raspistill -o image1.jpg
```

A preview screen displays for about five seconds and then takes a photograph and stores it in the file *image1.jpg* in the current directory.

To capture video, use the command `raspivid`:

```
$ raspivid -o video.h264 -t 10000
```

The number on the end is the recording duration in milliseconds—in this case, 10 seconds.

Discussion

Both `raspistill` and `raspivid` have a large number of options. If you type either command without any parameters, help text displays options that are available.

The camera module is capable of high-resolution stills and video recording.

Here are some of the key features of the camera:

- 5-megapixel sensor
- Fixed focus f/2 lens
- Still resolution 1920×1080
- Video 1080p, 30fps

An alternative to the camera module is to use a USB webcam (see [Recipe 8.2](#)).

See Also

The [RaspiCam documentation](#) includes `raspistill` and `raspivid`.

1.15 Using Bluetooth

Problem

I want to use Bluetooth with my Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Attach a USB Bluetooth adapter to the Raspberry Pi and install the supporting Bluetooth software.

Not all Bluetooth adapters are compatible with the Raspberry Pi. Most are, but to be sure, buy one that is advertised as working with the Raspberry Pi. [Figure 1-17](#) shows a Raspberry Pi 2 equipped with both a USB Bluetooth adapter (nearest to the camera) and a USB WiFi adapter.



Figure 1-17. Raspberry Pi 2 with USB Bluetooth and WiFi adapters

To install the software needed to support Bluetooth, enter the following commands:

```
$ sudo apt-get update  
$ sudo apt-get install bluetooth bluez-utils blueman bluez  
$ sudo usermod -G bluetooth -a pi
```

These commands should work for all Bluetooth adapters supported by the Raspberry Pi.

Plug your Bluetooth adapter in and then reboot your Raspberry Pi ([Recipe 1.13](#)).

You will now find a new entry on the Raspbian Start menu under the Preferences section called Bluetooth Manager. Open this utility and click Search to look for nearby Bluetooth devices ([Figure 1-18](#)). Make sure that there are some Bluetooth devices set to be discoverable.

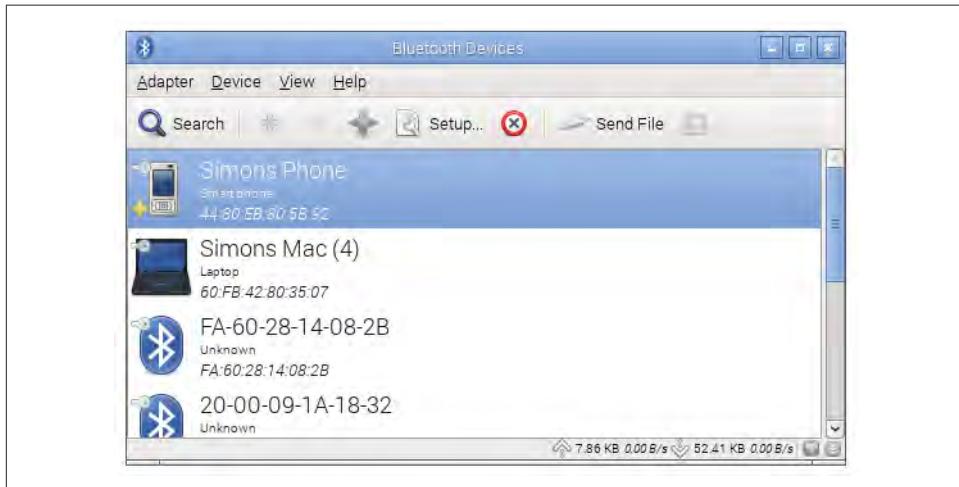


Figure 1-18. The Bluetooth Manager

Discussion

From the Bluetooth Manager, you can pair with other Bluetooth devices, send them files, and configure the visibility of your Raspberry Pi to other Bluetooth devices.

See Also

For a list of Bluetooth adapters that are compatible with the Raspberry Pi, see http://elinux.org/RPi_USB_Bluetooth_adapters.

2.0 Introduction

The Raspberry Pi is designed to be connected to the Internet. Its ability to communicate on the Internet is one of its key features and opens up all sorts of possible uses, including home automation, web serving, network monitoring, and so on.

The connection can be wired through an Ethernet cable (at least in the case of the model B), or the Pi can use a USB WiFi module to provide a network connection.

Having a connected Raspberry Pi also means that you can connect to it remotely from another computer. This is very useful in situations where the Raspberry Pi itself is inaccessible and does not have a keyboard, mouse, and monitor attached to it.

This chapter gives you recipes for connecting your Raspberry Pi to the Internet and controlling it remotely over a network.

2.1 Connecting to a Wired Network

Problem

You want to connect your Raspberry Pi to the Internet using a wired network connection.

Solution

First, if you have a Raspberry Pi model A, A+, or Zero, there is no RJ45 connector for Ethernet. In this case, your best option for Internet access is to use a wireless USB adaptor (see [Recipe 2.5](#)).

If you have a Raspberry Pi model B, plug an Ethernet patch cable into its RJ45 socket and then connect the other end to a spare socket on the back of your home router. [Figure 2-1](#) shows an original Raspberry Pi 1 where the Network LEDs are next to the audio socket. On a Raspberry Pi 2, the LEDs are built into the Ethernet socket itself.

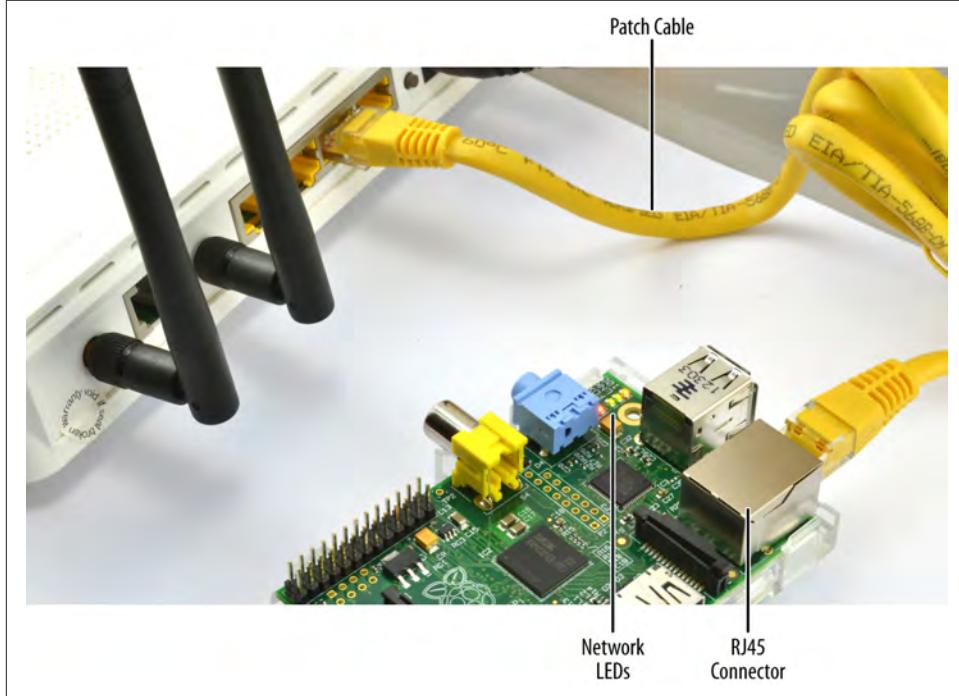


Figure 2-1. Connecting Raspberry Pi to a home hub

The network LEDs on your Raspberry Pi should immediately start to flicker as the Raspberry Pi connects to your network.

Discussion

Raspbian is preconfigured to connect to any network using Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP). It will automatically be assigned an IP address as long as DHCP is enabled on your network.

If the network LEDs on your Raspberry Pi do not light up when you plug it into the home router, check that you have not used the *Uplink* RJ45 socket on the hub or try a different cable.

If the LEDs blink but you cannot connect to the Internet on your Raspberry Pi using a browser, check that DHCP is enabled on your network management console. Look for an option like that shown in [Figure 2-2](#).

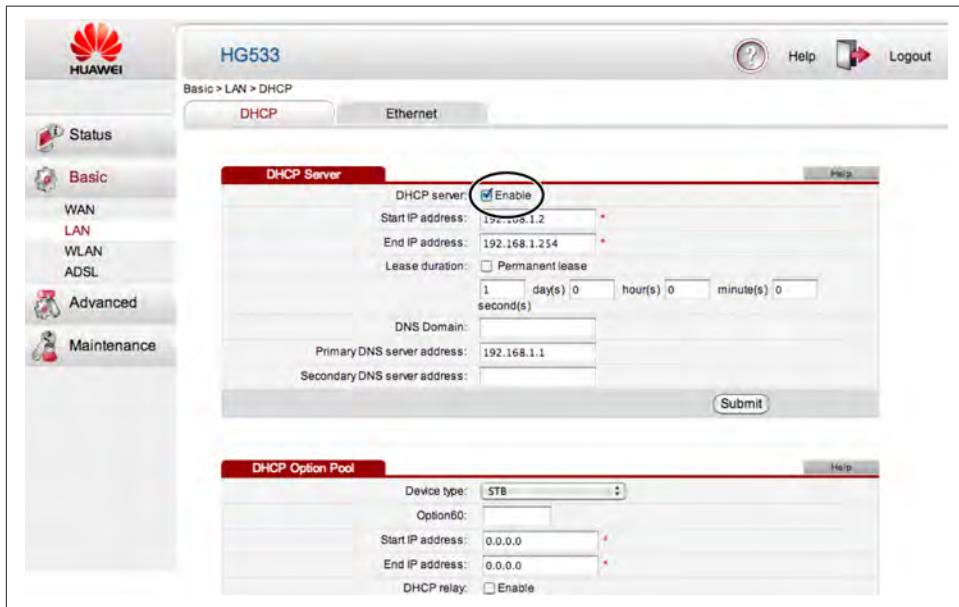


Figure 2-2. Enabling DHCP on your home hub

See Also

To connect to a wireless network, see [Recipe 2.5](#).

2.2 Finding Your IP Address

Problem

You want to know the IP address of your Raspberry Pi so that you can communicate with it, whether connecting to it as a web server, exchanging files, or controlling it remotely with SSH ([Recipe 2.7](#)) or VNC ([Recipe 2.8](#)).

An IP address is a four-part number uniquely identifying a computer's network interface within a network. Each part is separated by a dot.

Solution

To find the IP address of your Raspberry Pi, you need to issue this command in a Terminal window:

```
$ hostname -I  
192.168.1.16
```

This is the local IP address of your Raspberry Pi on your home network.

Discussion

A Raspberry Pi can have more than one IP address (i.e., one for each network connection). So if you have both a wired connection and a wireless connection to your Pi, it would have two IP addresses. Normally, however, you would only connect it by one method or the other, not both. To see all the network connections, use the `ifconfig` command:

```
$ sudo ifconfig
```

eth0	Link encap:Ethernet HWaddr b8:27:eb:d5:f4:8f inet addr:192.168.1.16 Bcast:192.168.255.255 Mask:255.255.0.0 UP BROADCAST RUNNING MULTICAST MTU:1500 Metric:1 RX packets:1114 errors:0 dropped:1 overruns:0 frame:0 TX packets:1173 errors:0 dropped:0 overruns:0 carrier:0 collisions:0 txqueuelen:1000 RX bytes:76957 (75.1 KiB) TX bytes:479753 (468.5 KiB)
lo	Link encap:Local Loopback inet addr:127.0.0.1 Mask:255.0.0.0 UP LOOPBACK RUNNING MTU:16436 Metric:1 RX packets:0 errors:0 dropped:0 overruns:0 frame:0 TX packets:0 errors:0 dropped:0 overruns:0 carrier:0 collisions:0 txqueuelen:0 RX bytes:0 (0.0 B) TX bytes:0 (0.0 B)
wlan0	Link encap:Ethernet HWaddr 00:0f:53:a0:04:57 inet addr:192.168.1.13 Bcast:192.168.255.255 Mask:255.255.0.0 UP BROADCAST RUNNING MULTICAST MTU:1500 Metric:1 RX packets:38 errors:0 dropped:0 overruns:0 frame:0 TX packets:28 errors:0 dropped:0 overruns:0 carrier:0 collisions:0 txqueuelen:1000 RX bytes:6661 (6.5 KiB) TX bytes:6377 (6.2 KiB)

Looking at the results of running this `ifconfig`, you can see that the Pi in question is connected by both a wired connection (`eth0`) with an IP address of 192.168.1.16, and a wireless one (`wlan0`) with an IP address of 192.168.1.13. The `lo` network interface is a virtual interface that allows the computer to communicate with itself.

Another way to find your IP address is to connect to the management console of your home hub and find the LAN page and then the IP table. There should be a device listed called *raspberrypi* with its IP address next to it.

See Also

[Wikipedia](#) has everything you want to know about IP addresses.

2.3 Setting a Static IP Address

Problem

You want to set the IP address of your Raspberry Pi so that it does not change.

Solution

To set the IP address of your Raspberry Pi, whether using a wired or wireless network, you need to edit the configuration file `/etc/network/interfaces`.

If you view your `/etc/network/interfaces` file using the following command:

```
$ more /etc/network/interfaces
```

it should look something like this:

```
auto lo

iface lo inet loopback
iface eth0 inet dhcp

allow-hotplug wlan0
iface wlan0 inet manual
wpa-roam /etc/wpa_supplicant/wpa_supplicant.conf
iface default inet dhcp
```

This is telling you that Raspbian is aware of three network interfaces on your Raspberry Pi, each starting with the word `iface`.

`lo`

Loopback. You can ignore this.

`eth0`

A network connection using the Ethernet socket.

`wlan0`

A network interface using a USB WiFi adapter or the built-in WiFi hardware of the Raspberry Pi 3.

Your Raspberry Pi will have a different IP address for each network connection. In this example, you will just make the IP address for the Ethernet interface static. If you want to do the same for the WiFi interface, just edit that entry in the `interfaces` file instead.

To edit this file, type the following command:

```
$ sudo nano /etc/network/interfaces
```

First, decide on an IP address to use. You need to pick one that is both unused by any other machine on the network and within the allowed range of IP addresses for your home hub. In this case, I will use 192.168.1.116.

Modify the contents of the file, changing the word `dhcp` to `static` and adding the following lines:

```
address 192.168.1.116
netmask 255.255.255.0
gateway 192.168.1.1
```

With the file changed as shown here, the static IP address of 192.168.1.116 has been assigned to the `eth0` interface.

```
auto lo

iface lo inet loopback
iface eth0 inet static
    address 192.168.1.116
    netmask 255.255.255.0
    gateway 192.168.1.1

allow-hotplug wlan0
iface wlan0 inet manual
wpa-roam /etc/wpa_supplicant/wpa_supplicant.conf
iface default inet dhcp
```

For most networks, the netmask setting should be set to `255.255.255.0` and the gateway should be the IP address of your home router itself. This will be the same as the IP address you use to connect to the admin console of your router.

After you edit and save the file, run the following commands to clear out all the existing DHCP leases, and restart your Pi so that the changes will take effect.

```
$ sudo rm /var/lib/dhcp/*
$ sudo reboot
```

Discussion

Internal IP addresses are typically something like 192.168.1.116, where just the last number is changed for each of the different computers. Another common format for internal IP addresses is 10.0.0.16.

See Also

[Wikipedia](#) has everything you want to know about IP addresses.

2.4 Setting the Network Name of a Raspberry Pi

Problem

You want to change the network name of your Raspberry Pi so that it's not just called "raspberrypi."

Solution

Changing the name of your Pi is pretty straightforward. There are just two files that need to be changed.

First, edit the file */etc/hostname*. You can do this by opening a Terminal window and typing the command:

```
$ sudo nano /etc/hostname
```

Replace "raspberrypi" with a name of your choice. This should remain one word, without any punctuation or unusual characters (including the _ character.)

Second, open the file */etc/hosts* in an editor using the command:

```
$ sudo nano /etc/hosts
```

The file will look something like this:

```
127.0.0.1      localhost
::1            localhost ip6-localhost ip6-loopback
fe00::0        ip6-localnet
ff00::0        ip6-mcastprefix
ff02::1        ip6-allnodes
ff02::2        ip6-allrouters

127.0.1.1      raspberrypi
```

Change the text at the end that uses the old name ("raspberrypi") to the new name.

Restart the Pi, and you should find that the name has changed when you view it on the network from another computer.

Discussion

Changing the name of your Pi can be very useful, especially if you have more than one Pi connected to your network.

See Also

See also [Recipe 2.3](#) to change the IP address of your Raspberry Pi.

2.5 Setting Up a Wireless Connection

Problem

You want to connect your Raspberry Pi to the Internet using a USB wireless adapter.

Solution

If you have the latest version of Raspbian, then setting up WiFi is really easy. Just plug in a USB WiFi adapter and then click on the Network icon at the top right of your screen ([Figure 2-3](#)). You will then be presented with a list of WiFi networks. Select your network and you will be prompted to enter your Pre Shared Key (password). Enter your password, and after a while, the Network Icon will switch to show the standard WiFi symbol and you will be connected.



Figure 2-3. Connecting to a WiFi network

If you have an older distribution of Raspbian, you will have to use the `WiFi Config` utility with a shortcut on the desktop. If you are not using a recent distribution, then you should update to one anyway (see [Recipe 1.4](#)).

If you have a Raspberry Pi 3, then the board already has WiFi hardware built-in. If you have an older Raspberry Pi, plug a compatible USB wireless adapter (most are compatible) into one of the USB sockets on your Raspberry Pi, and launch the `WiFi Config` utility ([Figure 2-4](#)). You will find the WiFi Configuration tool under the Preferences section of the Raspberry start menu. Then click the Scan button to search for access points. Double-click on the access point (for your home hub) that you want to join and then enter the password in the PSK field.

Finally, click Connect to join the network.

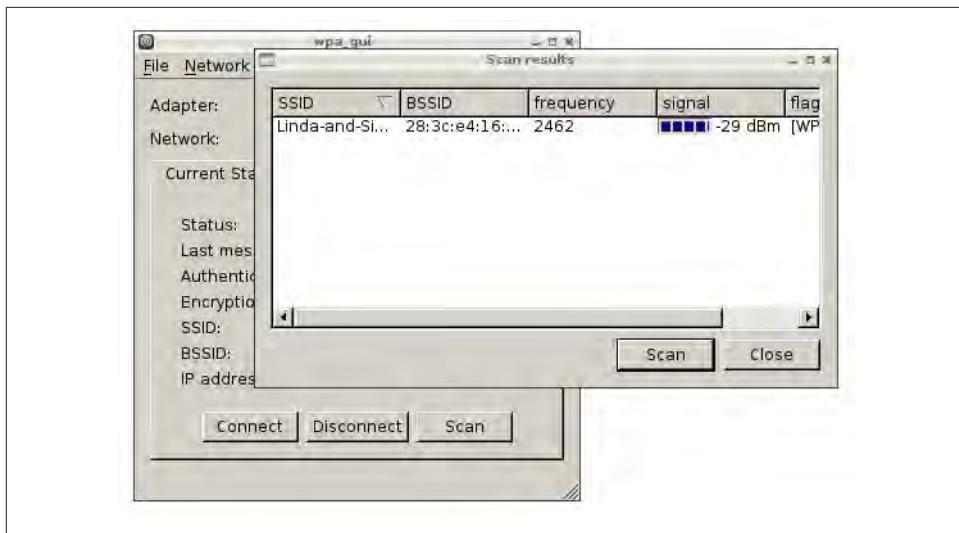


Figure 2-4. WiFi Config—scanning for networks

Discussion

USB WiFi adapters can use quite a lot of power, so if you find your Pi rebooting unexpectedly or not booting properly, then you may need to use a larger power supply for it. Look for a supply that is 1.5A or more.

If you're using a keyboard and mouse as well, you may find you've run out of USB sockets. In that case, a USB hub is the answer. Choosing a hub with its own power supply will also help with the power problem.

If you are using your Raspberry Pi as a media center (see [Recipe 4.1](#)), then there will be a settings page to allow you to connect the media center to your network using WiFi.

You can also set up a wireless connection by using just the command line. To do so, first edit the file `/etc/network/interfaces` by using the command:

```
$ sudo nano /etc/network/interfaces
```

Then find the section of the file relating to the `wlan0` interface and change it to be:

```
allow-hotplug wlan0
iface wlan0 inet dhcp
wpa-roam /etc/wpa_supplicant/wpa_supplicant.conf
```

The first line specifies that the WiFi connection should automatically start when a USB WiFi dongle is inserted. The second specifies that the Raspberry Pi should allocate the IP address using DHCP. If you want to use a static IP address, replace the

word *dhcp* with *static* and add in the extra lines described in [Recipe 2.3](#) to allocate a static IP address.

The final line specifies the location of a supplicant file. This is the file that actually contains the SSID (network name) and PSK (password) for your wireless network. So, next you will edit this file using the command:

```
$ sudo nano /etc/wpa_supplicant/wpa_supplicant.conf
```

Modify the file, setting the values of `ssid` and `pskfoobar` for your wireless network.

```
ctrl_interface=DIR=/var/run/wpa_supplicant GROUP=netdev
update_config=1
network={
    ssid="My-Network-Name"
    psk="My-password"
    proto=RSN
    key_mgmt=WPA-PSK
    pairwise=TKIP
    auth_alg=OPEN
}
```

For the changes to the file to take effect, reboot your Raspberry Pi.

See Also

For wired connections, see also [Recipe 2.1](#). For a list of WiFi adapters that are compatible with the Raspberry Pi, go to http://elinux.org/RPi_VerifiedPeripherals.

For more information on setting up a wired network, see [Recipe 2.1](#).

2.6 Connecting with a Console Lead

Problem

No network connection is available, but you still want to be able to remotely control your Raspberry Pi from another computer.

Solution

Use a *console cable* to connect to a Raspberry Pi.

Console cables are great for a Pi that is going to be used *headless*—that is, without keyboard, mouse, or monitor. The console cable shown in [Figure 2-5](#) is available from [Adafruit](#).

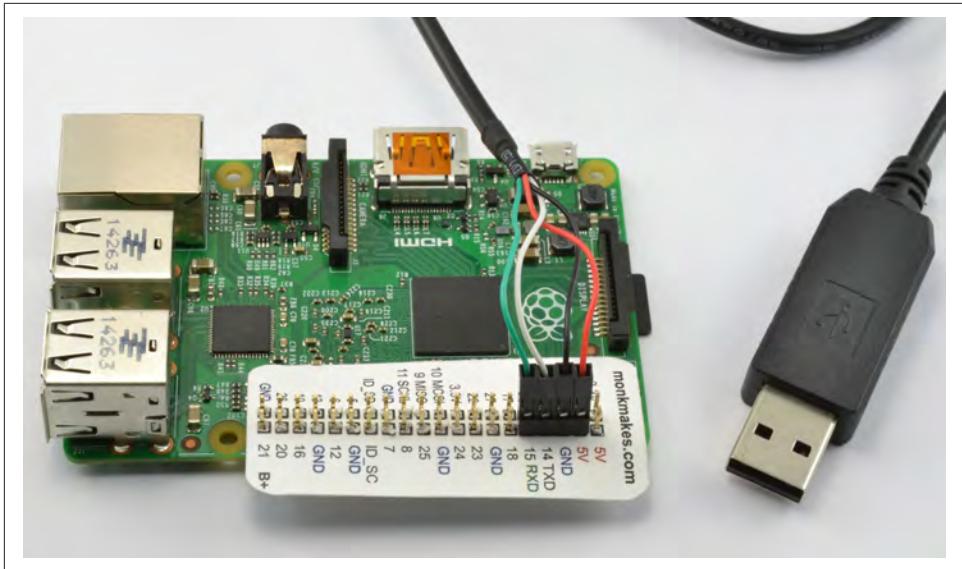


Figure 2-5. A console cable

Connect the lead as follows:

1. Connect the red (5V) lead to the 5V pin one pin to the left of the edge of the GPIO header.
2. Connect the black (GND) lead to GND on the next pin to the left on the Raspberry Pi.
3. Connect the white lead (RX) to Raspberry Pi GPIO 14 (TXD) to the left of the black lead.
4. Connect the green lead (RX) to 15 (RXD) to the left of the white lead on the Raspberry Pi.

If you use a different lead, the wire colors may well be different, so always check the documentation for the lead else or you may damage your Raspberry Pi.

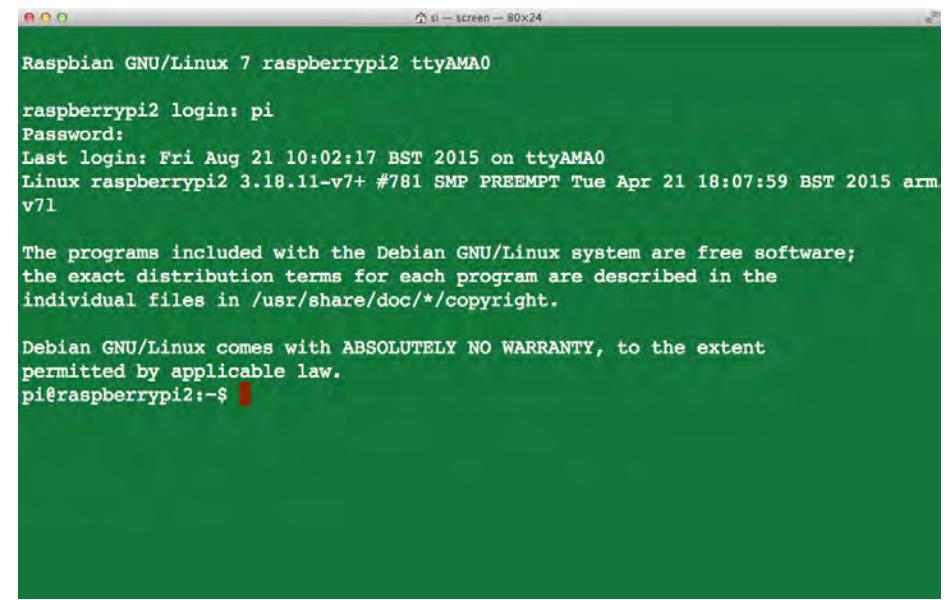
Note that the USB lead also provides 5V on the red wire, with enough power for the Pi on its own but not with a lot of devices attached.

If you are a Windows or Mac OS X user, you will need to install drivers for the USB lead, which are available for [Windows](#) and for [Mac OS X](#). Linux users usually don't need to install any drivers for these leads.

To connect to the Pi from Mac OS X, you will need to run the Terminal and enter the command:

```
$ sudo cu -l /dev/cu.NoZAP-PL2303-00001004 -s 115200
```

The exact device name will be different, but if you press Tab after cu.P, it will auto-complete. After connecting, press Enter, and the Raspberry Pi login prompt should appear ([Figure 2-6](#)). The default username and password are *pi* and *raspberry*, respectively.

A screenshot of a terminal window titled "si — screen — 80x24". The window displays a green background with white text. It shows the following sequence of events:

```
Raspbian GNU/Linux 7 raspberrypi2 ttyAMA0
raspberrypi2 login: pi
Password:
Last login: Fri Aug 21 10:02:17 BST 2015 on ttyAMA0
Linux raspberrypi2 3.18.11-v7+ #781 SMP PREEMPT Tue Apr 21 18:07:59 BST 2015 arm
v7l

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the exact distribution terms for each program are described in the
individual files in /usr/share/doc/*/*copyright.

Debian GNU/Linux comes with ABSOLUTELY NO WARRANTY, to the extent
permitted by applicable law.
pi@raspberrypi2:~$
```

Figure 2-6. Logging in with the console cable

If you are trying to connect to your Raspberry Pi from a Windows computer, you need to download the terminal software called [Putty](#).

When you run Putty, change the “Connection type” to Serial and set the speed to 115200. You also need to set the “Serial line” to be the COM port in use by the cable. This may be COM7, but if that does not work, check into using the Windows Device manager.

When you click Open and press Enter, the Terminal session should start with a login prompt.

Discussion

The console cable can be a very convenient way of using your Pi if you are traveling light, as it provides both power and a way to control the Pi remotely.

The console lead has a chip in the USB end that provides a USB-to-serial interface. This sometimes (depending on your operating system) requires the installation of drivers on your PC. The lead used here is one supplied by Adafruit (product code

954). You should be able to use any USB-to-serial converter as long as it has the necessary drivers for your PC.

Plugging the sockets of the lead into the right places is made easier if you carefully glue the four sockets together in the right order so that they fit over the GPIO header in a block.

Finding the right position on the GPIO header is made easier if you use a GPIO template like the Raspberry Leaf (see [Recipe 9.1](#)).

See Also

You can find out more about using the serial console at this [Adafruit tutorial](#). Adafruit also sells console cables.

2.7 Controlling the Pi Remotely with SSH

Problem

You want to connect to a remote Pi from another computer by using Secure Shell (SSH).

Solution

Before you can connect to your Raspberry Pi using SSH, you must enable SSH. On newer versions of Raspbian, you can use the Raspberry Pi Configuration tool ([Figure 2-7](#)) that you will find on the main menu under Preferences. Just check the box for SSH and click OK. You will be prompted to restart.

If you have an older version of Raspbian, use the `raspi_config` application. Start this at any time by entering the following command in Terminal:

```
$ sudo raspi-config
```

Scroll down to the SSH option and enable it.



On newer versions of Raspbian, SSH is automatically enabled and there is no setting to change.

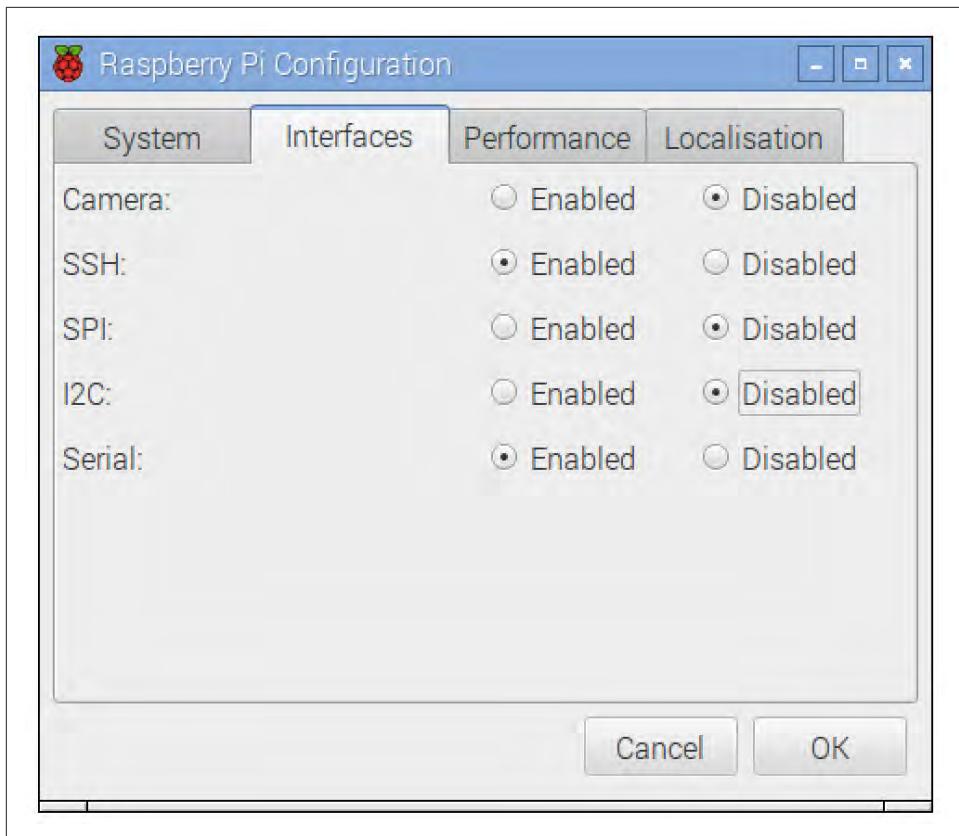
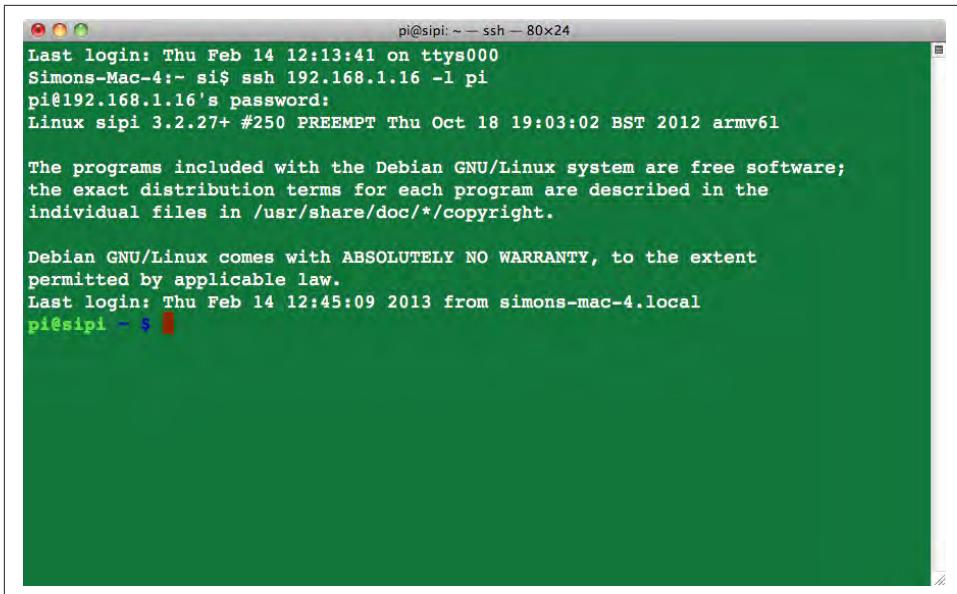


Figure 2-7. Enabling SSH using the Pi Configuration tool

If you are using Mac OS X or have Linux installed on the computer from which you want to connect your Pi, then all you need to do to connect is open a Terminal window and enter the command:

```
$ ssh 192.168.1.16 -l pi
```

where the IP address (192.168.1.16) is the IP address of your Pi (see [Recipe 2.2](#)). You will be prompted for your password and then logged in to the Pi ([Figure 2-8](#)).

A screenshot of a terminal window titled "pi@raspberrypi: ~ — ssh — 80x24". The window shows the following text:

```
Last login: Thu Feb 14 12:13:41 on ttys000
Simons-Mac-4:~ si$ ssh 192.168.1.16 -l pi
pi@192.168.1.16's password:
Linux raspberrypi 3.2.27+ #250 PREEMPT Thu Oct 18 19:03:02 BST 2012 armv6l

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the exact distribution terms for each program are described in the
individual files in /usr/share/doc/*/*copyright.

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permitted by applicable law.
Last login: Thu Feb 14 12:45:09 2013 from simons-mac-4.local
pi@raspberrypi ~ $
```

Figure 2-8. Logging in with SSH

To connect from a Windows computer, you will need to use Putty ([Recipe 2.6](#)) to start an SSH session.

Discussion

SSH is a very common way of connecting to remote computers; any commands that you could issue on the Pi itself, you can use from the secure shell. It is also, as the name suggests, secure because the communication is encrypted.

Perhaps the only drawback is that it is a command-line rather than graphical environment. If you need access to the full Raspberry Pi desktop environment remotely, then you need to use VNC ([Recipe 2.8](#)) or RDP ([Recipe 2.9](#)).

See Also

See also this [Adafruit tutorial](#).

2.8 Controlling the Pi Remotely with VNC

Problem

You want access to the full Raspbian graphical desktop of your Pi from a PC (Windows or Linux) or from Mac OS X, using VNC.

Solution

Install a Virtual Network Connection (VNC) server.

Open a Terminal session (or SSH session) on the Pi and run the following commands:

```
$ sudo apt-get update  
$ sudo apt-get install tightvncserver
```

Having installed the VNC server, run it using the command:

```
$ vncserver :1
```

The first time you run this, you will be prompted to create a new password so that anyone connecting remotely has to enter the password before being granted access to the Pi.

To connect to the Pi from a remote computer, you need to install a VNC client. [RealVNC](#) is a popular choice and connects well with *tightvnc* and is available for Windows, Linux, and Mac OS X.

When you run the client program on Mac OS X or a PC, you will be asked to enter the IP address of the VNC server you want to connect to (the IP address of your Pi). Enter “:1” after the IP address to indicate that you wish to connect to display number 1.

You will then be prompted for the password. Remember, this is the password you set previously after installing *tightvncserver* and is not necessarily the same as your normal Raspberry Pi password.

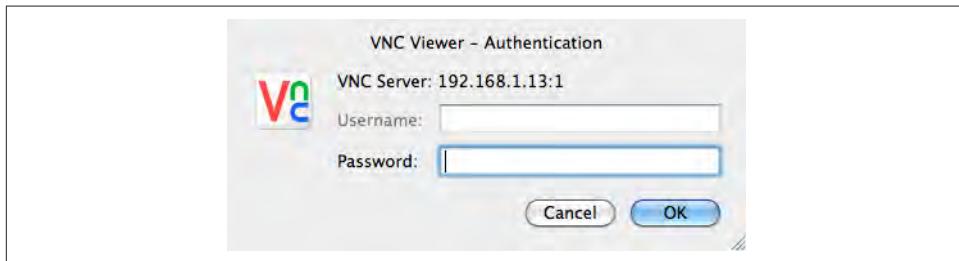


Figure 2-9. Logging in with VNC

Discussion

Although you can do most things with SSH, sometimes it is useful to have access to the graphical environment of the Pi.

If you want the VNC server to automatically start whenever you restart your Raspberry Pi, follow these steps:

```
$ cd /home/pi  
$ cd .config  
$ mkdir autostart  
$ cd autostart  
$ nano tightvnc.desktop
```

Paste the following into the editor window:

```
[Desktop Entry]  
Type=Application  
Name=TightVNC  
Exec=vncserver :1  
StartupNotify=false
```

As long as your Raspberry Pi is set to automatically log in and boot into the windowing environment, the VNC server will automatically start when you reboot.

See Also

See also this [Adafruit tutorial](#).

See also [Recipe 2.9](#).

2.9 Controlling the Pi Remotely with RDP

Problem

You want access to the full Raspbian graphical desktop of your Pi from a PC or Mac OS X using RDP.

Solution

Install the XRDP software on your Raspberry Pi by entering the following commands:

```
$ sudo apt-get update  
$ sudo apt-get install xrdp
```

Once the software is installed, it will automatically start the xrdp service, which means the service will automatically start when the Raspberry Pi is rebooted.

If you have Windows 7 or later, then it already includes an RPD client for connecting to your Raspberry Pi. You will find it on your Start menu under *All Programs/Accessories/Remote Desktop Connection*. For older versions of Windows, you can download the client from: [ModMyPi](#).

Mac OS X users can download the Microsoft RDP client for OS X from [Microsoft's website](#).

A client for Linux machines is available from <http://www.rdesktop.org/>.

When you start your RDP client, you will be prompted for the computer you want to connect to. Enter the IP address of your Raspberry Pi. You will then be prompted for the *username* and *password* (Figure 2-10), which are the same as your usual Raspberry Pi login—that is, a username of *pi* and a password of *raspberry* unless you have changed it.

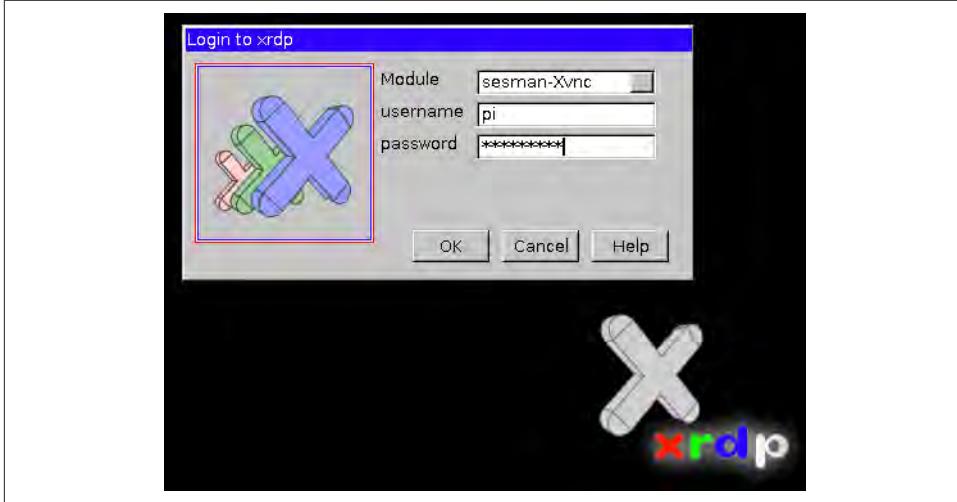


Figure 2-10. Logging in with RDP

Discussion

RDP does the same job as VNC but works more efficiently and therefore refreshes the contents of the screen more smoothly. The only downside is that for Mac OS X users, it does not integrate with the Share Screen feature of OS X.

See Also

See also [Recipe 2.8](#).

2.10 File Sharing on a Mac Network

Problem

You want your Raspberry Pi to appear on the list of computers in the Mac OS X Finder so that you can connect to it and browse the filesystem using Finder.

Solution

The Mac OS X operating system includes built-in support for file viewing in Finder over the network (Figure 2-11). However, you must make some configuration changes on your Raspberry Pi for OS X to pick these up.

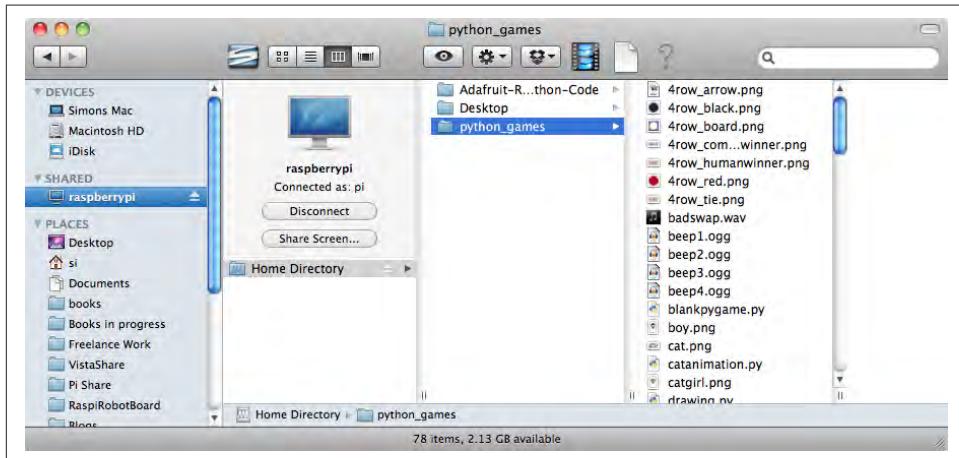


Figure 2-11. Raspberry Pi in the Mac OS X Finder

You will need to know the IP address of your Raspberry Pi ([Recipe 2.2](#)).

Now, on the Raspberry Pi, install `netatalk` by using the command:

```
$ sudo apt-get install netatalk
```

Then, back on your Mac, in the Finder menu, select Go→Connect to Server and enter `afp://192.168.1.16` as the server address (but use the IP address for your Raspberry Pi instead of the one shown here). Then click Connect. You will be prompted to log in. I had to reboot my Raspberry Pi before I got the login prompt.

Log in using the name *pi* and your password, which will be *raspberry* by default. The Finder should then show you the contents of your home directory on the Raspberry Pi.

There are a few more configuration changes to make on the Raspberry Pi.

```
$ sudo apt-get install avahi-daemon  
$ sudo update-rc.d avahi-daemon defaults
```

Next, type the command:

```
$ sudo nano /etc/avahi/services/afpd.service
```

Paste the following code into the file:

```
<?xml version="1.0" standalone='no'?><!--*-nxml-*-->
<!DOCTYPE service-group SYSTEM "avahi-service.dtd">
<service-group>
  <name replace-wildcards="yes">%h</name>
  <service>
    <type>_afpovertcp._tcp</type>
    <port>548</port>
  </service>
</service-group>
```

To set the daemon running, type the command:

```
$ sudo /etc/init.d/avahi-daemon restart
```

Switch back to your Mac, and you should now see your Raspberry Pi in the Finder.

Discussion

Being able to move files easily between your Mac and your Raspberry Pi is very useful. It means that you can use files on your Pi without having to hook up a separate keyboard, mouse, and monitor.

You can also open files on the Raspberry Pi as if they were on your Mac. This has the advantage that you can edit them with TextMate or your favorite OS X text editor.

If you're using Windows or Linux, you can also share files by configuring your Raspberry Pi to work as Network Attached Storage (NAS); see [Recipe 2.12](#).

See Also

The instructions here were adapted from [this tutorial](#), which credits Matt Richardson and Shawn Wallace's book *Getting Started with Raspberry Pi* (O'Reilly) as the original source.

2.11 Sharing the Pi Screen on a Mac

Problem

You set up VNC, but would like to share the screen on your Raspberry Pi as if it were another Mac OS X device on your network.

Solution

First, follow [Recipe 2.8](#) to install VNC. You will also need to complete [Recipe 2.10](#).

Then enter the command:

```
$ sudo nano /etc/avahi/services/rfb.service
```

and paste the following into the editor:

```
<?xml version="1.0" standalone='no'?>
<!DOCTYPE service-group SYSTEM "avahi-service.dtd">
<service-group>
  <name replace-wildcards="yes">%h</name>
  <service>
    <type>_rfb._tcp</type>
    <port>5901</port>
  </service>
</service-group>
```

Now enter the command:

```
$ sudo /etc/init.d/avahi-daemon restart
```

You should now be able to see the Share Screen option shown in [Figure 2-12](#). When prompted for a password, use the password you set up for VNC, not your general Raspberry Pi password.



Figure 2-12. Raspberry Pi screen sharing with the Mac OS X Finder

Discussion

This recipe just adds a little convenience to the process of sharing the screen of your Raspberry Pi.

If you have more than one Raspberry Pi on your network, you need to give them different names so that you can identify them on the network ([Recipe 2.4](#)).

If you are a Windows or Linux user, you can still connect to a Raspberry Pi using VNC ([Recipe 2.8](#)).

See Also

The instructions here were adapted from [this tutorial](#), which credits Matt Richardson and Shawn Wallace's book *Getting Started with Raspberry Pi* (O'Reilly) as the original source.

2.12 Using a Raspberry Pi for Network Attached Storage

Problem

You want to use your Raspberry Pi as Network Attached Storage (NAS) by accessing a large USB drive attached to your Raspberry Pi from computers on your network.

Solution

The solution to this problem is to install and configure Samba. To do this, issue the commands:

```
$ sudo apt-get install samba  
$ sudo apt-get install samba-common-bin
```

Now, attach the USB hard drive to the Raspberry Pi. It will automatically mount in your `/media` folder. To check that it's there, use the command:

```
$ cd /media  
$ ls
```

The drive should be listed with whatever name you gave it when you formatted it. It will automatically mount itself whenever the Raspberry Pi reboots.

You now need to configure Samba so the drive can be shared on the network. To do this, you first need to add a Samba user (*pi*). Enter the following command and type in a password:

```
$ sudo smbpasswd -a pi  
New SMB password:  
Retype new SMB password:  
Added user pi.
```

You now need to make some changes to the file `/etc/samba/smb.conf`, so enter the command:

```
$ sudo nano /etc/samba/smb.conf
```

The first line you're looking for is near the top of the file:

```
workgroup = WORKGROUP
```

You only need to change this if you plan to connect from a Windows machine. This should be the name of your Windows workgroup. For Windows XP, the default is

MSHOME; for newer versions of Windows, it is HOME. (But check on your Windows network.)

The next change to be made is further down the file in the Authentication section. Find the line:

```
# security = user
```

Remove the # from the front to turn security on.

Finally, scroll right to the end of the file and add the following lines:

```
[USB]
path = /media/NAS
comment = NAS Drive
valid users = pi
writeable = yes
browseable = yes
create mask = 0777
public = yes
```

Save the file and then restart Samba by entering the command:

```
$ sudo /etc/init.d/samba restart
```

If all is well, your USB drive should now be shared on your network.

Discussion

To connect to the drive on a Mac OS X, just select Go→Connect to Server from the Finder menu. Then enter **smb://raspberrypi/USB** in the Server Address field. You will see a login dialog box, where you need to change the username to *pi* ([Figure 2-13](#)).



Figure 2-13. Connecting to NAS with the Mac OS X Finder

If you are connecting to the NAS from a Windows machine, the exact procedure will vary depending on your version of Windows. However, the basic principle is that at some point you will need to enter the network address, which should be `\raspberrypi\USB` ([Figure 2-14](#)).



Figure 2-14. Connecting to NAS from Windows

You will then be prompted for the username and password before you can use the NAS disk ([Figure 2-15](#)).

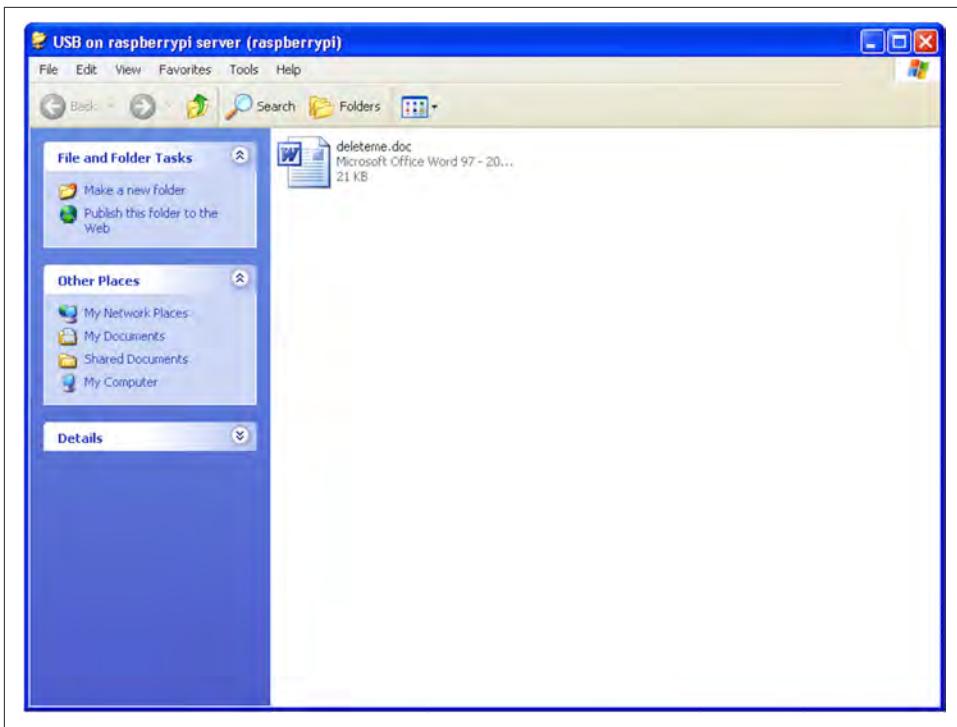


Figure 2-15. Browsing NAS on Windows

If you are a Linux user, this command should mount the NAS drive for you:

```
$ sudo mkdir /pishare  
$ sudo smbmount -o username=pi,password=raspberry //192.168.1.16/USB /pishare
```

See Also

You may wish to change your Raspberry Pi's network name to something inappropriate like *piNAS* (see [Recipe 2.4](#)).

2.13 Network Printing

Problem

You want to print to a network printer using your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use Common Unix Printing System (CUPS).

Start by entering the following command into a Terminal to install CUPS. This may take some time.

```
$ sudo apt-get install cups
```

Give yourself admin privileges for CUPS by entering the following command:

```
$ sudo usermod -a -G lpadmin pi
```

CUPS is configured via a web interface. Neither the Midori or Dillo web browsers work very well with the CUPS administration pages, but Iceweasel works just fine. You can install the Iceweasel browser by entering the following command:

```
$ sudo apt-get install iceweasel
```

Start Iceweasel from the Internet group of your Start menu and navigate to the address <http://localhost:631>.

Go to the Administration tab and choose the Add Printer option. This will display a list of printers that are on the network or connected directly to the Raspberry Pi's USB port ([Figure 2-16](#)).

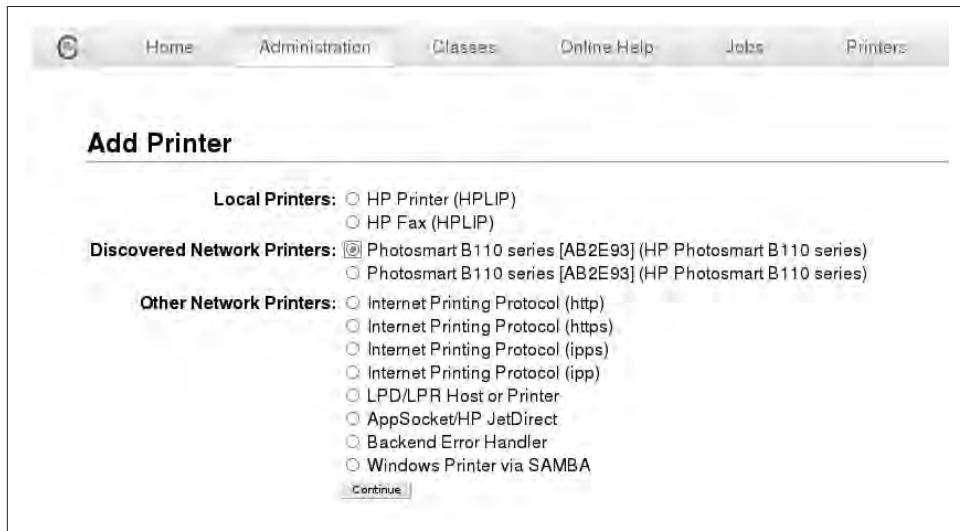


Figure 2-16. Discovering printers with CUPS

Follow the series of dialog boxes to set up the printer.

Discussion

When you're finished, you can test out the printer by firing up AbiWord (see [Recipe 4.2](#)). Type some text, and when you're ready to print it, you should see your newly added printer available for printing ([Figure 2-17](#)).

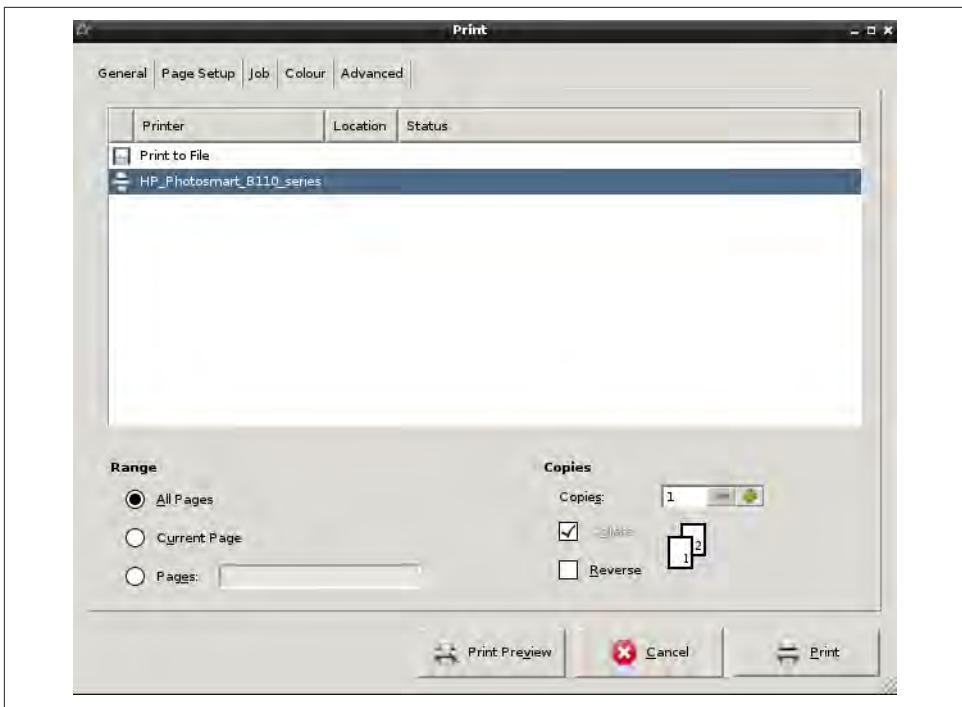


Figure 2-17. Printing from AbiWord

See Also

See also the official [CUPS website](#).

Operating System

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explores many aspects of the Linux operating system used by the Raspberry Pi. A lot of this involves the use of the command line.

3.1 Moving Files Around Graphically

Problem

You want to move files around using a graphical interface like you can on a Mac OS X or PC.

Solution

Use the File Manager.

You can find this program on your Start menu in the Accessories group ([Figure 3-1](#)).

Using the File Manager, you can drag a file or directory from one directory to another or use the Edit menu to copy a file from one location and paste it to a second. This operates in much the same way as the Windows File Manager or Mac OS X Finder.

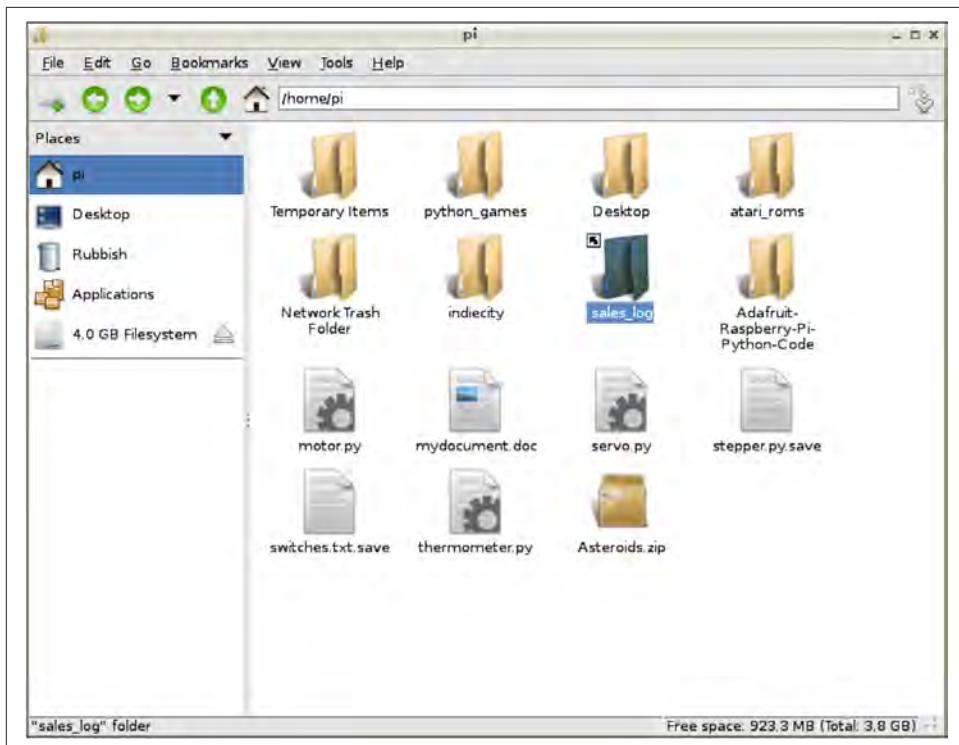


Figure 3-1. The File Manager

Discussion

The lefthand side of the File Manager shows the volumes that are mounted, so if you connect a USB flash drive or external USB drive, it will appear here.

The central area displays the files in the current folder, which you can navigate using the buttons in the toolbar or by typing a location in the file path area at the top.

Right-click a file to reveal options that can be used on that file (Figure 3-2).

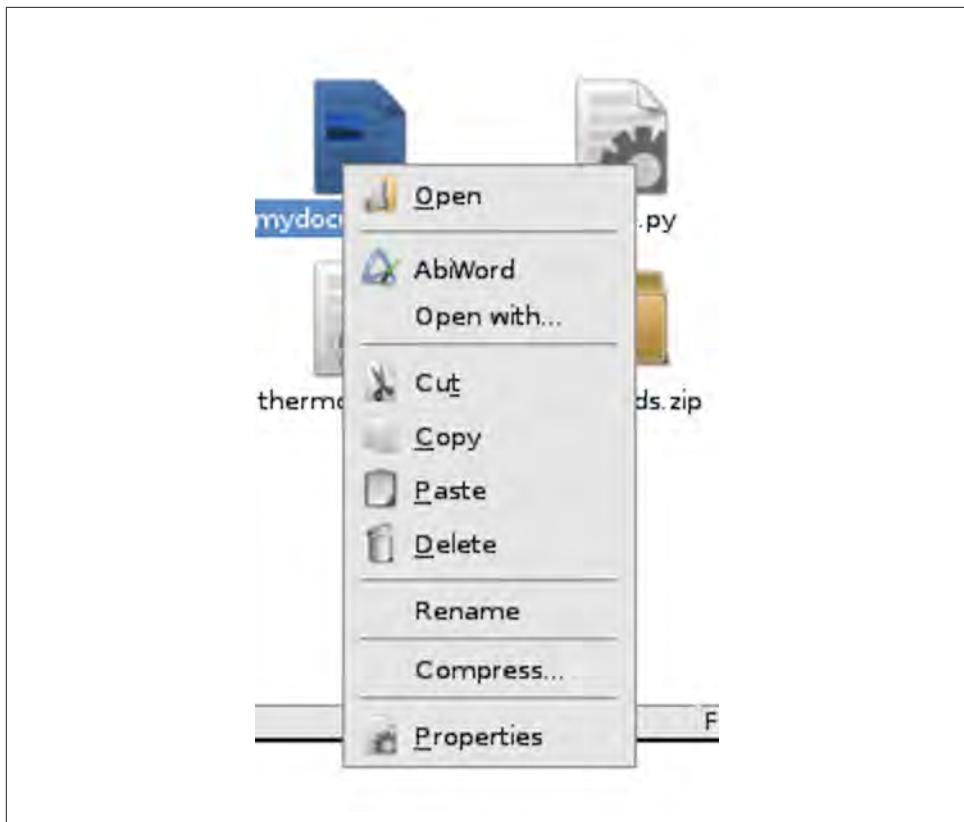


Figure 3-2. The File Manager options

See Also

See also [Recipe 3.4](#).

3.2 Starting a Terminal Session

Problem

When using a Raspberry Pi, you need to issue text commands in a Terminal.

Solution

Select the LX Terminal icon (looks like a black computer monitor) at the top of the Raspberry Pi Desktop, or select the Terminal menu option on the Start menu in the Accessories group ([Figure 3-3](#)).



Figure 3-3. Opening LX Terminal

Discussion

When the LX Terminal starts, it is set to your home directory (`/home/pi`).

You can open as many Terminal sessions as you want. It is often useful to have a couple of sessions open in different directories so that you don't have to constantly switch directories using `cd` ([Recipe 3.3](#)).

See Also

In the next section ([Recipe 3.3](#)), you will look at navigating the directory structure using the Terminal.

3.3 Navigating the Filesystem Using a Terminal

Problem

You need to know how to change directory and move about the filesystem using the Terminal.

Solution

The main command used for navigating the filesystem is `cd` (change directory). After `cd`, you have to specify the directory that you want to change to. This can either be a *relative* path to a directory inside your current directory, or an *absolute* path to somewhere else on the filesystem.

To see what the current directory is, you can use the command `pwd` (print working directory).

Discussion

Try out a few examples. Open a Terminal session, and you should see a prompt like this:

```
pi@raspberrypi ~ $
```

The prompt that you will see after each command (`pi@raspberrypi ~ $`) is a reminder of your username (`pi`) and your computer name (`raspberrypi`). The `~` character is shorthand for your home directory (`/home/pi`). So, at any point, you can change your current directory to your home directory as follows:

```
$ cd ~
```



Throughout the book, I use a `$` at the start of each line where you are expected to type a command. The response from the command line will not be prefixed by anything; it will appear just as it does on the Raspberry Pi's screen.

You can confirm that the command did indeed set the directory to the home directory by using the `pwd` command:

```
$ pwd  
/home/pi
```

If you want to move up one level in the directory structure, you can use the special value `..` (two dots) after the `cd` command, as shown here:

```
$ cd ..  
$ pwd  
/home
```

As you may have deduced by now, the path to a particular file or directory is made up of words separated by a `/`. So the very root of the whole filesystem is `/`, and to access the home directory within `/` you would refer to `/home/`. Then, to find the `pi` directory within that, you would use `/home/pi/`. The final `/` can be omitted from a path.

Paths can also be absolute (starting with a / and specifying the full path from the root), or they can be relative to the current working directory, in which case they must not start with a /.

You will have full read and write access to the files in your home directory, but once you move into the places where system files and applications are kept, your access to some files will be restricted to read only. You can override this ([Recipe 3.11](#)), but some care is required.

Check out the *root* of the directory structure by entering the following commands:

```
$ cd /
$ ls
bin  dev  home  lost+found  mnt  proc  run  selinux  sys  usr
boot  etc  lib   media      opt  root  sbin  srv      tmp  var
```

The `ls` command (list) shows us all the files and directories underneath / the root directory. You will see that there is a *home* directory listed, which is the directory you have just come from.

Now change into one of those directories by using the command:

```
$ cd etc
$ ls
adduser.conf          hosts.deny      polkit-1
alternatives          hp              profile
apm                  iceweasel       profile.d
apparmor.d           idmapd.conf    protocols
apt                  ifplugd        pulse
asound.conf           init           python
```

You will notice a couple of things. First, there are a lot of files and folders listed, more than can fit on the screen at once. Use the scroll bar on the side of the Terminal window to move up and down.

Second, you will see that the files and folders have some color-coding. Files are displayed in white, whereas directories are blue.

Unless you particularly like typing, the Tab key offers a convenient shortcut. If you start typing the name of a file, pressing the Tab key allows the autocomplete feature to attempt to complete the filename. For example, if you're going to change directory to *network*, type the command `cd netw` and then press the Tab key. Because *netw* is enough to uniquely identify the file or directory, pressing the Tab key will autocomplete it.

If what you have typed is not enough to uniquely identify the file or directory name, then pressing the Tab key another time will display a list of possible options that match what you have typed so far. So, if you had stopped at *net* and pressed the Tab key, you would see the following:

```
$ cd net  
netatalk/ network/
```

You can provide an extra argument after `ls` to narrow down the things you want to list. Change directory to `/etc` and then run the following:

```
$ ls f*  
fake-hwclock.data  fb.modes  fstab  fuse.conf  
  
fonts:  
conf.avail  conf.d  fonts.conf  fonts.dtd  
  
foomatic:  
defaultspooler  direct  filter.conf  
  
fstab.d:  
pi@raspberrypi /etc $
```

The `*` character is called a wildcard. In specifying `f*` after `ls`, we are saying that we want to list everything that starts with an `f`.

Helpfully, the results first list all the files within `/etc` that start with `f`, and then the contents of all the directories in that folder starting with `f`.

A common use of wildcards is to list all files with a certain extension (e.g., `ls *.docx`).

A convention in Linux (and many other operating systems) is to prefix files that should be hidden from the user by starting their name with a period. Any so-named files or folders will not appear when you type `ls` unless you also supply `ls` with the option `-a`. For example:

```
$ cd ~  
$ ls -a  
.          Desktop          .pulse  
..          .dillo           .pulse-cookie  
Adafruit-Raspberry-Pi-Python-Code .dmrc           python_games  
.advance     .emulationstation sales_log  
.AppleDB      .fltk            servo.py  
.AppleDesktop .fontconfig       .stella  
.AppleDouble   .gstreamer-0.10 stepper.py.save  
Asteroids.zip .gvfs           switches.txt.save  
atari_roms    indiecity        Temporary Items  
.bash_history .local           thermometer.py  
.bash_logout   motor.py         .thumbnails  
.bashrc        .mozilla         .vnc  
.cache         mydocument.doc  .Xauthority  
.config        Network Trash Folder .xsessions-errors  
.dbus          .profile          .xsessions-errors.old
```

As you can see, most of the files and folders in your home directory are hidden.

See Also

See also [Recipe 3.13](#).

3.4 Copying a File or Folder

Problem

You want to copy a file using a Terminal session.

Solution

Use the `cp` command to copy files and directories.

Discussion

You can, of course, copy files by using the File Manager and its copy and paste menu options ([Recipe 3.1](#)).

The simplest example of copying in a Terminal session is to make a copy of a file within your working directory. The `cp` command is followed first by the file to copy, and then by the name to be given to the new file.

For example, the following example creates a file called `myfile.txt` and then makes a copy of it with the name `myfile2.txt`. You can find out more about the trick of creating a file using the `>` command in [Recipe 3.8](#).

```
$ echo "hello" > myfile.txt  
$ ls  
myfile.txt  
$ cp myfile.txt myfile2.txt  
$ ls  
myfile.txt    myfile2.txt
```

Although in this example, both file paths are local to the current working directory, the file paths can be to anywhere in the filesystem where you have write access. The following example copies the original file to an area `/tmp`, which is a location for temporary files. Do not put anything important in that folder.

```
$ cp myfile.txt /tmp
```

Note that in this case, the name to be given to the new file is not specified, just the directory where it is to go. This will create a copy of `myfile.txt` in `/tmp` with the same name of `myfile.tmp`.

Sometimes, rather than copying just one file, you may want to copy a whole directory full of files and possibly other directories. To copy such a directory, you need to use the `-r` option (for *recursive*). This will copy the directory and all its contents.

```
$ cp -r mydirectory mydirectory2
```

Whenever you are copying files or folders, if you do not have permission, the result of the command will tell you that. You will need to either change the permissions of the folder into which you are copying ([Recipe 3.13](#)) or copy the files with superuser privileges ([Recipe 3.11](#)).

See Also

See also Recipes [3.5](#) and [3.10](#).

3.5 Renaming a File or Folder

Problem

You need to rename a file by using a Terminal session.

Solution

Use the `mv` command to rename files and directories.

Discussion

The `mv` (*move*) command is used in a similar way to the `cp` command, except that the file or folder being moved is simply renamed rather than a duplicate being made.

For example, to simply rename a file from `my_file.txt` to `my_file.rtf`, you use the command:

```
$ mv my_file.txt my_file.rtf
```

Changing a directory name is just as straightforward, and you don't need the recursive `-r` option you used when copying because changing a directory's name implicitly means that everything within it is contained in a renamed directory.

See Also

See also Recipes [3.4](#) and [3.10](#).

3.6 Editing a File

Problem

You want to run an editor from the command line to change a config file.

Solution

Use the editor *nano* included with most Raspberry Pi distributions.

Discussion

To use nano, simply type the command `nano` followed by the name or path to the file that you want to edit. If the file does not exist, it will be created when you save it from the editor. However, this will only happen if you have write permissions in the directory where you are trying to write the file.

From your home directory, type the command `nano my_file.txt` to edit or create the file `nano my_file.txt`. **Figure 3-4** shows *nano* in action.



Figure 3-4. Editing a file with *nano*

You cannot use the mouse to position the cursor; use the arrow keys instead.

The area at the bottom of the screen lists a number of commands that you access by holding down the Ctrl key and pressing the letter indicated. Most of these are not that useful. The ones that you are likely to use most of the time are:

Ctrl-X

Exit. You will be prompted to save the file before nano exits.

Ctrl-V

Next page. Think of it as an arrow pointing downward. This allows you to move through a large file one screen at a time.

Ctrl-Y

Previous page.

Ctrl-W

Where is. This allows you to search for a piece of text.

There are also some fairly crude cut-and-paste type options there, but in practice, it's easier to use the normal clipboard from the menu that you access with a right-click.

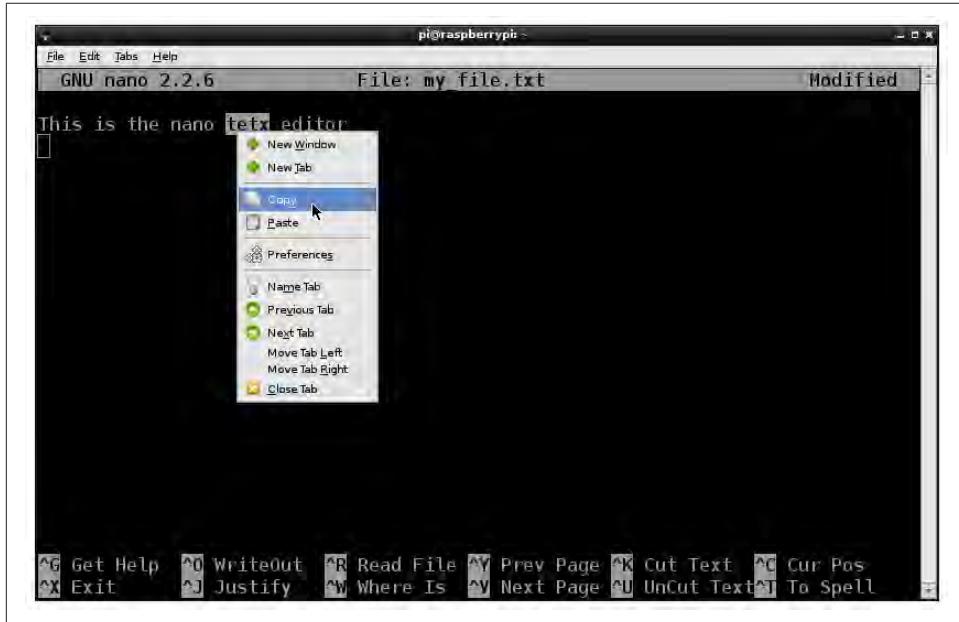


Figure 3-5. Using the clipboard in nano

Using this clipboard also allows you to copy and paste text between other windows such as your browser.

When you're ready to save your changes to the file and exit nano, use the command **Ctrl-X**. Type **Y** to confirm that you want to save the file. nano then displays the file-name as the default name to save the file under. Press **Enter** to save and exit.

If you want to abandon changes you have made, enter **N** in place of **Y**.

See Also

Editors are very much a matter of personal taste. Many other editors that are available for Linux will work just fine on Raspberry Pi. The *vim* (vi improved) editor has many fans in the Linux world. This is also included in the popular Raspberry Pi distributions. It is not, however, an easy editor for the beginner. You can run it in the same way as nano, but using the command `vi` instead of `nano`. There are more details on using vim at http://newbiedoc.sourceforge.net/text_editing/vim.html.en.

3.7 Viewing the Contents of a File

Problem

You want to view the contents of a small file without editing it.

Solution

Use the `cat` or `more` commands to view the file.

For example:

```
$ more myfile.txt
This file contains
some text
```

Discussion

The `cat` command displays the whole contents of the file, even if it is longer than will fit on the screen.

The `more` command just displays one screen of text at a time. Press the space bar to display the next screen.

See Also

You can also use `cat` to concatenate (join together) a number of files ([Recipe 3.30](#)).

Another popular command related to `more` is `less`. `less` is like `more` except it allows you to move backward in the file as well as forward.

3.8 Creating a File Without Using an Editor

Problem

You want to create a one-line file without having to use an editor.

Solution

Use the `>` and `echo` commands to redirect what you type on the command line to a file.

For example:

```
$ echo "file contents here" > test.txt  
$ more test.txt  
file contents here
```



The `>` command overwrites any existing file, so use it with caution.

Discussion

This can be useful for quickly creating a file.

See Also

To use the `more` command to view files without using an editor, see [Recipe 3.7](#).

To use `>` to capture other kinds of system output, see [Recipe 3.29](#).

3.9 Creating a Directory

Problem

You want to create a new directory by using the Terminal.

Solution

The `mkdir` command will create a new directory.

Discussion

To create a directory, use the `mkdir` command. Try out the following example:

```
$ cd ~  
$ mkdir my_directory  
$ cd my_directory  
$ ls
```

You need to have write permission in the directory within which you are trying to create the new directory.

See Also

For general information on using the Terminal to navigate the filesystem, see [Recipe 3.3](#).

3.10 Deleting a File or Directory

Problem

You want to delete a file or directory using the Terminal.

Solution

The `rm` (remove) command will delete a file or directory and its contents. It should be used with extreme caution.

Discussion

Deleting a single file is simple and safe. The following example will delete the file `my_file.txt` from the home directory:

```
$ cd ~  
$ rm my_file.txt  
$ ls
```

You need to have write permission in the directory within which you are trying to carry out the deletion.

You can also use the `*` wildcard when deleting files. This example will delete all the files starting with `my_file`. in the current directory:

```
$ rm my_file.*
```

You could also delete all the files in the directory by typing:

```
$ rm *
```

If you want to recursively delete a directory and all its contents, including any directories that it contains, you can use the `-r` option:

```
$ rm -r mydir
```



When deleting files from a Terminal window, remember that you do not have the safety net of a recycle bin from which files can be undeleted. Also, generally speaking, you won't be given the option to confirm; the files will just be immediately deleted. This can be totally devastating if you combine it with the command `sudo` ([Recipe 3.11](#)).

See Also

See also [Recipe 3.3](#).

If you are concerned about accidentally deleting files or folders, you can force the `rm` command to confirm by setting up a command alias ([Recipe 3.34](#)).

3.11 Performing Tasks with Superuser Privileges

Problem

Some commands don't work because you have *insufficient privileges*. You need to issue commands with superuser privileges.

Solution

The `sudo` (substitute user do) command allows you to perform actions with superuser privileges. Just prefix the command with `sudo`.

Discussion

Most tasks that you want to perform on the command line can usually be performed without superuser privileges. The most common exceptions to this are when you're installing new software and editing configuration files.

For example, if you try to use the command `apt-get update`, you will receive a number of permission denied messages:

```
$ apt-get update
E: Could not open lock file /var/lib/apt/lists/lock - open (13: Permission denied)
E: Unable to lock directory /var/lib/apt/lists/
E: Could not open lock file /var/lib/dpkg/lock - open (13: Permission denied)
E: Unable to lock the administration directory (/var/lib/dpkg/), are you root?
```

The message at the end—`are you root?`—gives the game away. If you issue the same command prefixed with `sudo`, the command will work just fine:

```
$ sudo apt-get update
Get:1 http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy InRelease [12.5 kB]
Hit http://archive.raspberrypi.org wheezy InRelease
Get:2 http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy/main Sources [6,241 kB]
Hit http://archive.raspberrypi.org wheezy/main armhf Packages
Ign http://archive.raspberrypi.org wheezy/main Translation-en_GB
Ign http://archive.raspberrypi.org wheezy/main Translation-en
40% [2 Sources 2,504 kB/6,241 kB 40%]
```

If you have a whole load of commands to run as superuser and don't want to have to prefix each command with `sudo`, you can use the following command:

```
$ sudo sh  
#
```

Note how the prompt changes from \$ to #. All subsequent commands will be run as superuser. When you want to revert to being a regular user, enter the command:

```
# exit  
$
```

See Also

To understand more about file permissions, see [Recipe 3.12](#).

To install software using apt-get, see [Recipe 3.16](#).

3.12 Understanding File Permissions

Problem

You have seen the strange characters that accompany a filename when it is listed. You would like to know what they all mean.

Solution

To see the permissions and ownership information relating to files and directories, use the ls command with the option -l.

Discussion

Run the command ls -l, and you will see a result like this:

```
$ ls -l  
total 16  
-rw-r--r-- 1 pi pi 5 Apr 23 15:23 file1.txt  
-rw-r--r-- 1 pi pi 5 Apr 23 15:23 file2.txt  
-rw-r--r-- 1 pi pi 5 Apr 23 15:23 file3.txt  
drwxr-xr-x 2 pi pi 4096 Apr 23 15:23 mydir
```

Figure 3-6 shows the different sections of the listing information. The first section contains the permissions. In the second column, the number 1 (labeled “Files”) indicates how many files are involved. This field only makes sense if the listing entry is for a directory; if it is a file, it will mostly be just 1. The next two entries (both pi) are the owner and group of the file. The size entry (the fifth column) indicates the size of the file in bytes. The modified date will change every time the file is edited or changed and the final entry is the actual name of the file or directory.

Permissions	Files	Owner	Size	Modified	Filename
-rw-r-r--	1	pi	pi	5	Apr 23 15:23
Type	Owner	Group	Other		
-	r	w	-	r	-

Figure 3-6. File permissions

The permissions string is split into four sections (Type, Owner, Group, and Other). The first section is the type of the file. If this is a directory, it will be the character *d*; if it is just a file, the entry will be just a *-*.

The next section of three characters specifies the owner permissions for that file. Each character is a flag that is either on or off. So if the owner has read permissions, there will be a *r* in the first character position. If he has write permissions, there will be a *w* in the second slot. The third position, which is *-* in this example, can be *x* if the file is executable (a program or script) for the owner.

The third section has the same three flags but for any users in the group. Users can be organized into groups. So, in this case, the file has a user *pi* and a group ownership of *pi*. If there were any other users in the group *pi*, they would have the permissions specified here.

The final section specifies the permissions for any other users who are neither *pi* nor in the group *pi*.

Since most people will only ever use the Raspberry Pi as the user *pi*, the permissions of most interest are in the first section.

See Also

To change file permissions, see [Recipe 3.13](#).

3.13 Changing File Permissions

Problem

You need to change the permissions on a file.

Solution

The command `chmod` is used to modify file permissions.

Discussion

Common reasons why you might want to change file permissions include needing to edit a file that is marked as read-only and giving a file *execute* permissions so that it can run as a program or script.

The `chmod` command allows you to add or remove permissions for a file. There are two syntaxes for doing this; one requires the use of octal (base 8) and the other is text-based. You will use the easier-to-understand text method.

The first parameter to `chmod` is the change to make, and the second is the file or folder to which it should apply. This change parameter takes the form of the permission scope (+, -, = for add, remove, and set, respectively) and then the permission type.

For example, the following code will add execute (*x*) rights to the file for the owner of the file *file2.txt*.

```
$ chmod u+x file2.txt
```

If we now list the directory, we can see that the *x* permission has been added.

```
$ ls -l
total 16
-rw-r--r-- 1 pi pi    5 Apr 23 15:23 file1.txt
-rwxr--r-- 1 pi pi    5 Apr 24 08:08 file2.txt
-rw-r--r-- 1 pi pi    5 Apr 23 15:23 file3.txt
drwxr-xr-x 2 pi pi 4096 Apr 23 15:23 mydir
```

If we wanted to add execute permission for the group or other users, then we could use *g* and *o*, respectively. The letter *a* will add the permission to everyone.

See Also

For background on file permissions, see [Recipe 3.12](#).

See [Recipe 3.14](#) for changing file ownership.

3.14 Changing File Ownership

Problem

You need to change the ownership of a file.

Solution

The command `chown` (change owner) is used to modify the ownership of a file or directory.

Discussion

As we discovered in [Recipe 3.12](#), any file or directory has both an owner and a group associated with it. Since most users of the Raspberry Pi will just have the single user of *pi*, we don't really need to worry about groups.

Occasionally, you will find files on your system that have been installed with a different user than *pi*. If this is the case, you can change the ownership of the file by using the `chown` command.

To just change the owner of a file, use `chown` followed by the new owner and group, separated by a colon, and then the name of the file.

You will probably find that you need superuser privileges to change ownership, in which case, prefix the command with `sudo` ([Recipe 3.11](#)).

```
$ sudo chown root:root file2.txt
$ ls -l
total 16
-rw-r--r-- 1 pi    pi      5 Apr 23 15:23 file1.txt
-rwxr--r-- 1 root  root    5 Apr 24 08:08 file2.txt
-rw-r--r-- 1 pi    pi      5 Apr 23 15:23 file3.txt
drwxr-xr-x 2 pi    pi     4096 Apr 23 15:23 mydir
```

See Also

For background on file permissions, see [Recipe 3.12](#).

Also see [Recipe 3.13](#) for changing file permissions.

3.15 Making a Screen Capture

Problem

You want to capture an image of the Raspberry Pi's screen and save it to a file.

Solution

Install and use the delightfully named `scrot` screen capture software.

Discussion

To install `scrot`, run the following command from Terminal:

```
$ sudo apt-get install scrot
```

The simplest way to trigger a screen capture is to just enter the command `scrot`. This will immediately take an image of the primary display and save it in a file named something like `2013-04-25-080116_1024x768_scrot.png` within the current directory.

Sometimes you want a screenshot to show a menu being opened or something that generally disappears when the window in which you are interested loses focus. For such situations, you can specify a delay before the capture takes place using the `-d` option.

```
$ scrot -d 5
```

The delay is specified in seconds.

If you capture the whole screen, you can crop it later with image editing software, such as Gimp ([Recipe 4.11](#)). However, it is more convenient to just capture an area of the screen in the first place, which you can do using the `-s` option.

To use this option, type this command and then drag out the area of screen that you want to capture with the mouse.

```
$ scrot -s
```

The filename will include the dimensions in pixels of the image captured.

See Also

The `scrot` command has a number of other options to control things like using multiple screens and changing the format of the saved file. You can find out more about `scrot` from its manpage by entering the following command.

```
$ man scrot
```

For more information on installing with `apt-get`, see [Recipe 3.16](#).

3.16 Installing Software with apt-get

Problem

You want to install software using the command line.

Solution

The most frequently used tool for installing software from a Terminal session is `apt-get`.

The basic format of the command, which you must run as a superuser, is:

```
$ sudo apt-get install <name of software>
```

For example, to install the AbiWord word processing software, you would enter the command:

```
$ sudo apt-get install abiword
```

Discussion

The `apt-get` package manager uses a list of available software. This list is included with the Raspberry Pi operating system distribution that you use but is likely to be out-of-date. So if the software that you try to install is reported by `apt-get` as *not found*, run the following command to update the list:

```
$ sudo apt-get update
```

The list and the software packages for installation are all on the Internet, so none of this will work unless your Raspberry Pi has an Internet connection.



If you find that when you update, you get an error like `E: Problem with MergeList /var/lib/dpkg/status`, try running these commands:

```
sudo rm /var/lib/dpkg/status  
sudo touch /var/lib/dpkg/status
```

The installation process can often take a while because the files have to be downloaded and installed. Some installations will also add shortcuts to your desktop, or the program groups on your Start menu.

You can search for software to install using the command `apt-get search` followed by a search string such as `abiword`. This will then display a list of matching packages that you could install.

See Also

See [Recipe 3.17](#) for removing programs that you no longer need so that you can free up space.

See also [Recipe 3.20](#) for downloading source code from GitHub.

3.17 Removing Software Installed with `apt-get`

Problem

Having installed a whole load of programs using `apt-get`, you now find that you want to remove some of them.

Solution

The `apt-get` utility has an option (`remove`) that will remove a package, but it will only remove packages that have been installed with `apt-get install`.

For example, if you wanted to remove AbiWord, you would use the command:

```
$ sudo apt-get remove abiword
```

Discussion

Removing a package like this does not always delete everything, as packages often also have prerequisite packages that are installed as well. To remove these, you can use the `autoremove` option, as shown here:

```
$ sudo apt-get autoremove abiword  
$ sudo apt-get clean
```

The `apt-get clean` option will do some further tidying up of unused package installation files.

See Also

See [Recipe 3.16](#) for installing packages using `apt-get`.

3.18 Installing Python Packages with Pip

Problem

You want to use the pip package manager to install Python libraries.

Solution

If you have the latest version of Raspbian, then pip will already be installed and you can run pip from the command line as shown in the example here, which is taken from [Recipe 8.1](#) where it is used to install the Python library `svgwrite`.

```
$ sudo pip install svgwrite
```

If pip is not installed on your system, then you can install it by using the commands:

```
$ sudo apt-get install python-pip
```

Discussion

Although many Python libraries can be installed using `apt-get` (see [Recipe 3.16](#)), some cannot and you must use pip.

See Also

To install software using `apt-get`, see [Recipe 3.16](#).

3.19 Fetching Files from the Command Line

Problem

You want to download a file from the Internet without using a web browser.

Solution

Use the `wget` command to fetch a file from the Internet.

For example:

```
$ wget http://www.icrobotics.co.uk/wiki/images/c/c3/Pifm.tar.gz
--2013-06-07 07:35:01--  http://www.icrobotics.co.uk/wiki/images/c/c3/Pifm.tar.gz
Resolving www.icrobotics.co.uk (www.icrobotics.co.uk)... 155.198.3.147
Connecting to www.icrobotics.co.uk (www.icrobotics.co.uk)|155.198.3.147|:80... connected.
HTTP request sent, awaiting response... 200 OK
Length: 5521400 (5.3M) [application/x-gzip]
Saving to: `Pifm.tar.gz'

100%[=====] 5,521,400      601K/s

2013-06-07 07:35:11 (601 KB/s) - `Pifm.tar.gz' saved [5521400/5521400]
```

If your URL contains any special characters, it is a good idea to enclose it in double quotes. This example URL is from [Recipe 4.10](#).

Discussion

You will find instructions for installing software that rely on using `wget` to fetch files. It is often more convenient to do this from the command line rather than use a browser, find the file, download it, and then copy it to the place you need it.

The `wget` command takes the URL to download as its argument and downloads it into the current directory. It's typically used to download an archive file of some type but will also download any web page.

See Also

For more information on installing with `apt-get`, see [Recipe 3.16](#).

For information on selecting and using a browser, see [Recipe 4.3](#).

3.20 Fetching Source Code with Git

Problem

Sometimes Python libraries and other software are supplied via a Git repository URL. You need to be able to fetch them onto your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

To use code in Git repositories, you need to use the `git clone` command to fetch the files.

Discussion

For example, the following command will fetch all the source code examples from this book:

```
$ git clone https://github.com/simonmonk/raspberrypi_cookbook_ed2.git
```

See Also

Learn more about [Git](#) and the Git hosting service [GitHub](#).

See also [Recipe 3.16](#).

3.21 Running a Program or Script Automatically on Startup

Problem

You want a program or script to start automatically as your Raspberry Pi boots.

Solution

Modify your `rc.local` file to run the program you want.

Edit the file `/etc/rc.local` by using the command:

```
$ sudo nano /etc/rc.local
```

Add the following line after the first block of comment lines that begin with #:

```
$ /usr/bin/python /home/pi/my_program.py &
```

It is important to include the & on the end of the command line so that it is run in the background; otherwise, your Raspberry Pi will not boot.

Discussion

This way of autorunning a program needs a very careful edit of *rc.local*, or you may stop your Raspberry Pi from booting.

See Also

A safer way of autorunning a program is detailed in [Recipe 3.22](#).

3.22 Running a Program or Script Automatically as a Service

Problem

You want to arrange for a script or program to start automatically every time the Raspberry Pi reboots.

Solution

Debian Linux, upon which most Raspberry Pi distributions are based, uses a dependency-based mechanism for automating the running of commands at startup. This is a little tricky to use and involves creating a configuration file for the script or program that you want to run in a folder called *init.d*.

Discussion

The following example shows you how to run a Python script in your home directory. The script could do anything, but in this case, the script runs a simple Python web server, which is described further in [Recipe 7.17](#).

The steps involved in this are:

1. Create an *init* script.
2. Make the *init* script executable.
3. Tell the system about the new *init* script.

First, create the *init* script. This needs to be created in the folder */etc/init.d/*. The script can be called anything, but in this example, you will call it *my_server*.

Create the new file by using nano with the following command:

```
$ sudo nano /etc/init.d/my_server
```

Paste the following code into the editor window and save the file:

```

### BEGIN INIT INFO
# Provides: my_server
# Required-Start: $remote_fs $syslog $network
# Required-Stop: $remote_fs $syslog $network
# Default-Start: 2 3 4 5
# Default-Stop: 0 1 6
# Short-Description: Simple Web Server
# Description: Simple Web Server
### END INIT INFO

#!/bin/sh
# /etc/init.d/my_server

export HOME
case "$1" in
    start)
        echo "Starting My Server"
        sudo /usr/bin/python /home/pi/myserver.py 2>&1 &
        ;;
    stop)
        echo "Stopping My Server"
        PID=`ps auxwww | grep myserver.py | head -1 | awk '{print $2}'`
        kill -9 $PID
        ;;
    *)
        echo "Usage: /etc/init.d/my_server {start|stop}"
        exit 1
        ;;
    esac
exit 0

```

This is quite a lot of work to automate the running of a script, but most of it is boilerplate code. To run a different script, just work your way through the script, changing the descriptions and the name of the Python file you want to run.

The next step is to make this file executable for the owner, which you do using this command:

```
$ sudo chmod +x /etc/init.d/my_server
```

Now that the program is set up as a service, you can test that everything is OK before you set it to autostart as part of the boot sequence, using the following command:

```
$ /etc/init.d/my_server start
Starting My Server
Bottle v0.11.4 server starting up (using WSGIRefServer())...
Listening on http://192.168.1.16:80/
Hit Ctrl-C to quit.
```

Finally, if that runs OK, use the following command to make the system aware of the new service that you have defined:

```
$ sudo update-rc.d my_server defaults
```

See Also

For a simpler approach to making a program run automatically, see [Recipe 3.21](#).

For more information on changing file and folder permissions, see [Recipe 3.12](#).

3.23 Running a Program or Script Automatically at Regular Intervals

Problem

You want to run a script once a day or at regular intervals.

Solution

Use the Linux `crontab` command.

To do this, the Raspberry Pi needs to know the time and date, and therefore needs a network connection or a real-time clock. See [Recipe 12.13](#).

Discussion

The command `crontab` allows you to schedule events to take place at regular intervals. This can be daily or hourly, and you can even define complicated patterns so different things happen on different days of the week. This is useful for backup tasks that you might want to run in the middle of the night.

You can edit the scheduled events by using the following command:

```
$ crontab -e
```

If the script or program that you want to run needs to be run by a superuser, then prefix all the `crontab` commands with `sudo` ([Recipe 3.11](#)).

The comment line indicates the format of a `crontab` line. The digits are, in order, minute, hour, day of month, month, day of week, and then the command that you want to run.

The first line that starts with a `#` is just a comment line to remind you of the format for a `crontab` line.

If there is a `*` in the digit position, that means *every*; if there is a number there instead, the script will only be run at that minute/hour/day of the month.

So, to run the script every day at 1 a.m., you would add the line shown in [Figure 3-7](#).

```
# m h  dom mon dow   command
0 1 * * * /home/pi/myscript.sh
```

^G Get Help ^O WriteOut ^R Read File ^Y Prev Page ^K Cut Text ^C Cur Pos
^X Exit ^J Justify ^W Where Is ^V Next Page ^U Uncut Text ^T To Spell

Figure 3-7. Editing crontab

Using only a single digit, you can specify ranges to run the script just on weekdays; for example:

```
0 1 * * 1-5 /home/pi/myscript.sh
```

If your script needs to be run from a particular directory, you can use a semicolon (;) to separate multiple commands as shown here:

```
0 1 * * * cd /home/pi; python mypythoncode.py
```

See Also

You can see the full documentation for `crontab` by entering this command:

```
$ man crontab
```

3.24 Finding Things

Problem

You want to find a file that you know is on the system somewhere.

Solution

Use the Linux `find` command.

Discussion

Starting with a directory specified in the command, the `find` command will search, and if it finds the file, display its location. For example:

```
$ find /home/pi -name gemgem.py
/home/pi/python_games/gemgem.py
```

You can start the search higher up the tree, even at the root of the whole filesystem (/). This will make the search take a lot longer, and will also produce error messages. You can redirect these error messages by adding `2>/dev/null` to the end of the line.

To search for the file throughout the entire filesystem, use the following command:

```
$ find / -name gemgem.py 2>/dev/null  
/home/pi/python_games/gemgem.py
```

You can also use wildcards with `find` as follows:

```
$ find /home/pi -name match*  
/home/pi/python_games/match4.wav  
/home/pi/python_games/match2.wav  
/home/pi/python_games/match1.wav  
/home/pi/python_games/match3.wav  
/home/pi/python_games/match0.wav  
/home/pi/python_games/match5.wav
```

See Also

The `find` command has a number of other advanced features for searching. To see the full manpage documentation for `find`, use this command:

```
$ man find
```

3.25 Using the Command-Line History

Problem

You want to be able to repeat commands on the command line without having to type them again.

Solution

Use the up and down arrow keys to select previous commands from the command history, and the `history` command with `grep` to find older commands.

Discussion

You can access the previous command you ran by pressing the up arrow key. Pressing it again will take you to the command before that, and so on. If you overshoot the command you wanted, the down arrow key will take you back in the other direction.

If you want to cancel without running the selected command, use `Ctrl-C`.

Over time, your command history will grow too large to find a command that you used ages ago. To find a command from way back, you can use the `history` command.

```
$ history
1 sudo nano /etc/init.d/my_server
2 sudo chmod +x /etc/init.d/my_server
3 /etc/init.d/my_server start
4 cp /media/4954-5EF7/sales_log/server.py myserver.py
5 /etc/init.d/my_server start
6 sudo apt-get update
7 sudo apt-get install bottle
8 sudo apt-get install python-bottle
```

This lists all your command history and is likely to have far too many entries for you to find the one you want. To remedy this, you can *pipe* the `history` command into the `grep` command, which will just display results matching a search string. So, for example, to find all the `apt-get` ([Recipe 3.16](#)) commands that you've issued, you can use the line:

```
$ history | grep apt-get
6 sudo apt-get update
7 sudo apt-get install bottle
8 sudo apt-get install python-bottle
55 history | grep apt-get
```

Each history item has a number next to it, so if you find the line you were looking for, you can run it using `!` followed by the history number, as shown here:

```
$ !6
sudo apt-get update
Hit http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy InRelease
Hit http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy/main armhf Packages
Hit http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy/contrib armhf Packages
....
```

See Also

To find files rather than commands, see [Recipe 3.24](#).

3.26 Monitoring Processor Activity

Problem

The Raspberry Pi can run a bit slow sometimes, so you want to see what's hogging the processor.

Solution

Use the Task Manager utility, which you'll find on the Start menu in the System Tools program group ([Figure 3-8](#)).

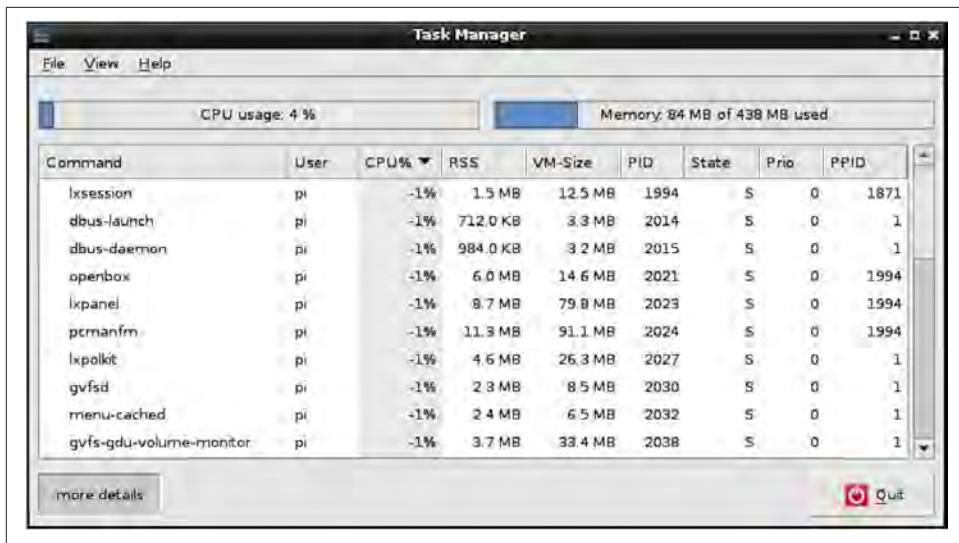


Figure 3-8. The Task Manager

The Task Manager allows you to see at a glance how much CPU and memory are being used. You can also right-click on a process and select the option to kill it from the pop-up menu.

The graphs at the top of the window display the total CPU usage and memory. The processes are listed below that, and you can see the CPU share each is taking.

Discussion

If you prefer to do this type of thing from the command line, use the Linux `top` command to display very similar data about processor and memory and which processes are using the most resources (Figure 3-9). You can then use the `kill` command to kill a process. You will need to do this as superuser.

In this case, you can see that the `top` process is a Python program that uses 97% of CPU. The first column shows its process ID (2447). To kill this process, enter this command:

```
$ kill 2447
```

It is quite possible to kill some vital operating system process this way, but if you do, powering off your Pi and turning it back on again will restore things to normal.

PID	USER	PR	NI	VIRT	RES	SHR	S	%CPU	%MEM	TIME+	COMMAND
2447	pi	20	0	9748	5216	2052	R	97.0	1.2	0:11.07	python
2206	lightdm	20	0	92132	11m	9248	S	1.3	2.6	0:54.98	lightdm-gtk-gre
2192	root	20	0	44972	11m	3172	S	0.7	2.7	0:25.25	Korg
2448	pi	20	0	4656	1352	1028	R	0.7	0.3	0:00.09	top
2396	pi	20	0	9800	1640	1008	S	0.3	0.4	0:00.32	sshd
1	root	20	0	2144	728	620	S	0.0	0.2	0:01.89	init
2	root	20	0	0	0	0	S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	kthreadd
3	root	20	0	0	0	0	S	0.0	0.0	0:00.02	ksoftirqd/0
5	root	0	-20	0	0	0	S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	kworker/u:0H
6	root	20	0	0	0	0	S	0.0	0.0	0:00.33	kworker/u:0
7	root	0	-20	0	0	0	S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	kworker/u:0H
8	root	0	-20	0	0	0	S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	khelper
9	root	20	0	0	0	0	S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	kdevtmpfs
10	root	0	-20	0	0	0	S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	netns
12	root	20	0	0	0	0	S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	bdi-default
13	root	0	-20	0	0	0	S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	kblockd
14	root	20	0	0	0	0	S	0.0	0.0	0:00.35	khubd
15	root	0	-20	0	0	0	S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	rpciod
16	root	20	0	0	0	0	S	0.0	0.0	0:00.00	khungtaskd

Figure 3-9. Using the top command to see resource usage

Sometimes, you may have a process running that is not immediately visible when you use top. If this is the case, you can search all the processes running by using the ps command and piping ([Recipe 3.31](#)) the results to the grep command, which will search the results and highlight items of interest.

For example, to find the process ID for our CPU-hogging Python process, we could run the following command:

```
$ ps -ef | grep "python"
pi      2447  2397 99 07:01 pts/0    00:00:02 python speed.py
pi      2456  2397  0 07:01 pts/0    00:00:00 grep --color=auto python
```

In this case, the process ID for the Python program speed.py is 2447. The second entry in the list is the process for the ps command itself.

A variation on the kill command is the killall command. Use this with caution, as it kills all processes that match its argument. So, for example, the following command will kill all Python programs running on the Raspberry Pi:

```
$ sudo killall python
```

See Also

See also the manpages for top, ps, grep, kill, and killall. You can view these by typing `man` followed by the name of the command, as shown here:

```
$ man top
```

3.27 Working with File Archives

Problem

You have downloaded a compressed file and want to uncompress it.

Solution

Depending on the file type, you will need to use the `tar` or `gunzip` commands.

Discussion

If the file that you want to uncompress just has the extension `.gz`, you can unzip it using the command:

```
$ gunzip myfile.gz
```

You also often find files (called *tarballs*) that contain a directory that has been archived with the Linux `tar` utility and then compressed with `gzip` into a file with a name like `myfile.tar.gz`.

You can extract the original files and folders out of a tarball by using the `tar` command:

```
$ tar -xzf myfile.tar.gz
```

See Also

You can find out more about `tar` from the manpages, which you can access by using the command `man tar`.

3.28 Listing Connected USB Devices

Problem

You've plugged in a USB device and want to make sure Linux recognizes it.

Solution

Use the `lsusb` command. This will list all the devices attached to the USB ports on your Raspberry Pi:

```
$ lsusb
Bus 001 Device 002: ID 0424:9512 Standard Microsystems Corp.
Bus 001 Device 001: ID 1d6b:0002 Linux Foundation 2.0 root hub
Bus 001 Device 003: ID 0424:ec00 Standard Microsystems Corp.
Bus 001 Device 004: ID 15d9:0a41 Trust International B.V. MI-2540D [Optical mouse]
```

Discussion

This command will tell you whether a device is connected or not, but it will not guarantee that it is working correctly. There may be drivers to install or configuration changes to make for the hardware.

See Also

For an example of using `lsusb` when attaching an external webcam, see [Recipe 4.5](#).

3.29 Redirecting Output from the Command Line to a File Problem

You want to quickly create a file with some text, or record a directory listing into a file.

Solution

Use the `>` command to redirect output that would otherwise appear on the command line.

For example, to copy a directory listing into a file called `myfiles.txt`, do the following:

```
$ ls > myfiles.txt
$ more myfiles.txt
Desktop
indiecity
master.zip
mcpi
```

Discussion

You can use the `>` command on any Linux command that produces output, even if you are running, say, a Python program.

You can also use the opposite (`<`) command to redirect user input, although this is not nearly as useful as `>`.

See Also

To use `cat` to join together a number of files, see [Recipe 3.30](#).

3.30 Concatenating Files

Problem

You have a number of text files and you want to join them into one big file.

Solution

Use the `cat` command to *concatenate* a number of files into one output file.

For example:

```
$ cat file1.txt file2.txt file3.txt > full_file.txt
```

Discussion

Joining files is the real purpose of the `cat` command. You can supply as many filenames as you like, and they will all be written to the file you direct to. If you do not redirect the output, then it will just appear in your Terminal window. If they are big files, this might take some time!

See Also

See also [Recipe 3.7](#), where `cat` is used to display the contents of a file.

3.31 Using Pipes

Problem

You want to use the output of one Linux command as the input to another command.

Solution

Use the `pipe` command, which is the *bar* symbol (`|`) on your keyboard, to pipe the output of one command to another. For example:

```
$ ls -l *.py | grep Jun  
-rwxr--r-- 1 pi pi 226 Jun 7 06:49 speed.py
```

This example will find all the files with the extension `py` that also have *Jun* in their directory listing, indicating that they were last modified in June.

Discussion

At first sight, this looks rather like output redirection using `>` ([Recipe 3.29](#)). The difference is that `+>` will not work where the target is another program. It will only work for redirecting to a file.

You can chain together as many programs as you like, as shown here, although this isn't something you will do often:

```
$ command1 | command2 | command3
```

See Also

See [Recipe 3.26](#) for an example of using `grep` to find a process, and [Recipe 3.25](#) to search your command history, using a pipe and `grep`.

3.32 Hiding Output to the Terminal

Problem

You want to run a command, but you don't want the output filling up your screen.

Solution

Redirect the output to `/dev/null` using `>`.

For example:

```
$ ls > /dev/null
```

Discussion

This example illustrates the syntax but is otherwise pretty useless. A more common use is where you're running a program and the developer has left a lot of trace messages in her code, which you don't really want to see. The following example hides superfluous output from the `find` command (see [Recipe 3.34](#)).

```
$ find / -name gemgem.py 2>/dev/null  
/home/pi/python_games/gemgem.py
```

See Also

For more information about redirecting standard output, see [Recipe 3.29](#).

3.33 Running Programs in the Background

Problem

You want to run a program but also work on some other task.

Solution

Run the program or command in the background using the `&` command.

For example:

```
$ python speed.py &
[1] 2528
$ ls
```

Rather than wait until the program has finished running, the command line displays the process ID (the second number) and immediately allows you to continue with whatever other commands you want to run. You can then use this process ID to kill the background process ([Recipe 3.26](#)).

To bring the background process back to the foreground, use the `fg` command:

```
$ fg
python speed.py
```

This will report the command or program that is running and then wait for it to finish.

Discussion

Output from the background process will still appear in the Terminal.

An alternative to putting processes in the background is to just open more than one Terminal window.

See Also

For information on managing processes, see [Recipe 3.26](#).

3.34 Creating Command Aliases

Problem

You want to create aliases to commands that you use frequently.

Solution

Edit the file `~/.bashrc` using `nano` ([Recipe 3.6](#)), and then move to the end of the file and add as many lines as you want, like this:

```
alias l='ls -a'
```

This creates an alias called `l` that, when entered, will be interpreted as the command `ls -a`.

Save and exit the file using Ctrl-X and Ctrl-Y, and then to update the Terminal with the new alias, type the following command:

```
$ source .bashrc
```

Discussion

Many Linux users set up an alias for `rm` like the following, so that it confirms deletions.

```
$ alias rm='rm -i'
```

This is not a bad idea, as long as you do not forget when you use someone else's system that doesn't have this alias set up!

See Also

For more information about `rm`, see [Recipe 3.10](#).

3.35 Setting the Date and Time

Problem

You want to manually set the date and time on your Raspberry Pi, because it does not have an Internet connection.

Solution

Use the Linux `date` command.

The date and time format is MMDDHHMMYYYY, where MM is the month number, DD is the day of the month, HH and MM are the hours and minutes, respectively, and YYYY is the year.

For example:

```
$ sudo date 010203042013
Wed Jan  2 03:04:00 UTC 2013
```

Discussion

If the Raspberry Pi is connected to the Internet, then as it boots up it will automatically set its own time using an Internet time server.

You can also use `date` to display the UTC time by just entering `date` on its own:

```
$ date
Wed Jan  2 03:08:14 UTC 2013
```

See Also

If you want your Raspberry Pi to maintain the correct time even when there is no network, then you can use a real-time clock (RTC) module ([Recipe 12.13](#)).

3.36 Finding Out How Much Room You Have on the SD Card

Problem

You want to know how much free space there is on the SD card.

Solution

Use the Linux df command:

```
$ df -h
Filesystem      Size  Used Avail Use% Mounted on
rootfs          3.6G  1.7G  1.9G  48% /
/dev/root        3.6G  1.7G  1.9G  48% /
devtmpfs         180M     0  180M   0% /dev
tmpfs            38M  236K   38M   1% /run
tmpfs            5.0M     0   5.0M   0% /run/lock
tmpfs            75M     0   75M   0% /run/shm
/dev/mmcblk0p1    56M   19M   38M  34% /boot
```

Discussion

Looking at the first line of the results, you can see that there is 3.6 GB of storage on the SD card, of which 1.7 GB is used.

When you run out of disk space, you are likely to get unexpected bad behavior, such as error messages saying that a file could not be written.

See Also

You can find the manpage for df using `man df`.

CHAPTER 4

Software

4.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a number of recipes for using ready-made software on the Raspberry Pi.

Some of the recipes in this chapter are concerned with converting the Raspberry Pi into a single-use appliance, while others use specific pieces of software on a Raspberry Pi.

4.1 Making a Media Center

Problem

You want to convert your Raspberry Pi into a super-duper media center.

Solution

To use your Raspberry Pi as a media center, you should definitely go for the superior performance of the Raspberry Pi 3 or 2 Model B, as video playing is very processor-intensive.

You can set up your Raspberry Pi as a media center during the NOOBS installation process ([Recipe 1.5](#)). Instead of selecting Raspbian as the distribution to install, select either OpenELEC_Pi1 if you have a Raspberry Pi 1 or OpenELEC_Pi2 if you have a Raspberry Pi 2.

OpenELEC is a distribution that optimizes your Raspberry Pi as a media center. It includes the Kodi media center software, which is based on the XBMC open source project that was originally developed to convert Xbox game consoles into media cen-

ters. The code has since been ported to many platforms including the Raspberry Pi (Figure 4-1).



Figure 4-1. Raspberry Pi as a media center

Raspberry Pi is perfectly capable of playing full HD video as well as streamed music, MP3 files, and Internet radio.

Discussion

Kodi is a powerful piece of software with many features. Perhaps the simplest way to check that it is working is to put some music and/or video files onto a USB flash drive or external USB hard disk and connect it to the Raspberry Pi. You should be able to play them from Kodi.

Since the Raspberry Pi is likely to be sitting near your TV, you may find that your TV has a USB port that can provide enough current to run the Raspberry Pi. If this is the case, you won't need a separate power supply.

A wireless keyboard and mouse are a good idea because if you buy them as a pair, they will use a single USB port for the dongle, which avoids the need for wires trailing all over the place. You can also buy mini-keyboards with built-in trackpads that are useful in this situation.

A wired network connection is generally higher performance and better than a WiFi connection, but it is not always convenient to have the Pi near an Ethernet socket. If this is the case, then you can set up XBMC to use a WiFi dongle for a network connection.

Setting up Kodi is very intuitive, and you can find full instructions on using the software at <http://kodi.wiki/>.

See Also

You can add an IR remote to Raspberry Pi to control XBMC.

4.2 Installing Office Software

Problem

You need to open word processor and spreadsheet documents on a Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Raspberry Pi is, after all, a Linux computer, so there are several office applications that you can install to use spreadsheets and word processor documents.

Programs for the Raspberry Pi are downloaded from the Internet, so you'll need an Internet connection.

Before you install any new software, it is a good idea to open a Terminal and run the following command:

```
$ sudo apt-get update
```

To install the AbiWord word processor, run this command:

```
$ sudo apt-get install abiword
```

You will be asked to confirm the installation by typing Y; after a minute or so, installation will be complete. If you look on your Start menu, you will see a new section called Office, where you will find AbiWord ([Figure 4-2](#)).

AbiWord will open .doc, .docx, and other common word processing document formats.

If you need to use a spreadsheet, Gnumeric is a good choice. Install it by using the command:

```
$ sudo apt-get install gnumeric
```

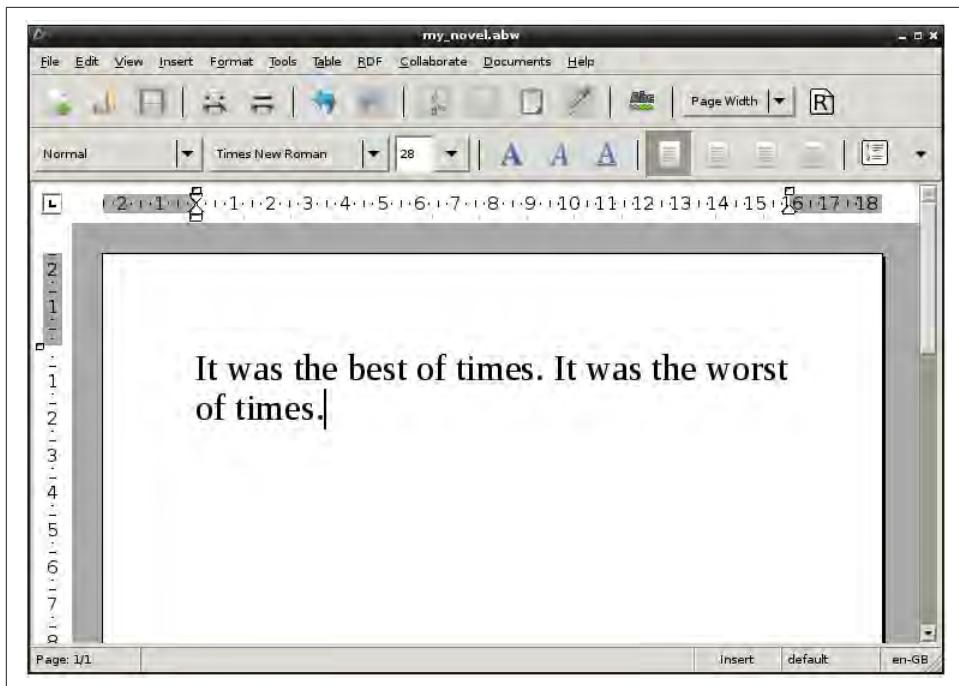


Figure 4-2. *AbiWord* on Raspberry Pi

Discussion

If you find that the office applications run a bit too slowly, try overclocking your Raspberry Pi ([Recipe 1.10](#)) to speed things up. A Raspberry Pi 3 or 2 will also run office applications much better than an older Raspberry Pi.

See Also

There are efforts in progress to port other office software to the Raspberry Pi, such as Libre Office (a fork of Open Office). Check the Internet for the latest news on office software ports.

See [Recipe 3.16](#) for information on using apt-get.

4.3 Installing other Browsers

Problem

You want to use a browser other than Midori.

Solution

You can use a number of browsers on the Raspberry Pi. The Pi is not a powerful computer, and modern browsers and web pages can put quite a load on it. This means that when you use a browser on a Raspberry Pi, there is always a trade-off between features and performance.

Chromium ([Figure 4-3](#)), as the name suggests, will be familiar to users of Google Chrome. It is full-featured but noticeably slow when you try to scroll up and down a busy web page. You can install Chromium by using the following command, which will put a new link in the Internet section of your Start menu:

```
$ sudo apt-get install chromium-browser
```



Figure 4-3. The Chromium browser

Another popular alternative to Midori is Iceweasel ([Figure 4-4](#)). This browser is based on Firefox and will perform faster than Chromium because it uses the mobile version of websites (when available), which will normally be much simpler HTML. You can download and install Iceweasel by using this command:

```
$ sudo apt-get install iceweasel
```

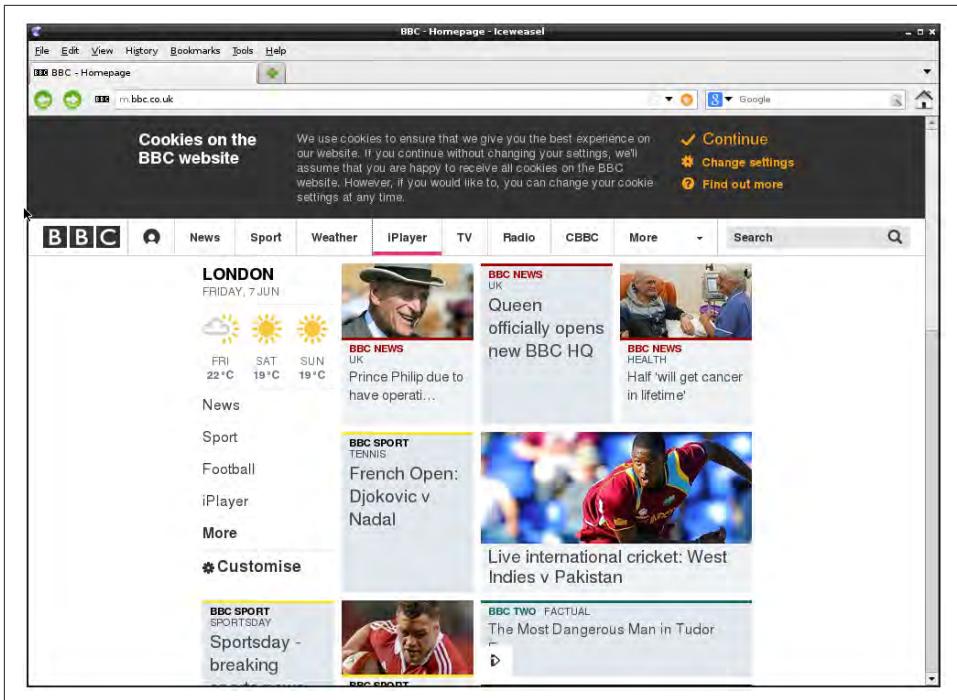


Figure 4-4. The Iceweasel browser

Discussion

Since browsers require a certain amount of power for many websites, you really need a Raspberry Pi 3 or 2 to avoid a frustratingly slow experience.

See Also

For more information on installing with `apt-get`, see [Recipe 3.16](#).

4.4 Using the Pi Store

Problem

You want to install software and games using the Pi Store.

Solution

The Pi Store ([Figure 4-5](#)) is the Raspberry Pi equivalent of Apple's App Store or Google's Play Store; it is a place from which you can download, install, and run all sorts of applications, both free and for sale.

You will find a shortcut on your Start menu for the Pi Store application in the Internet section.

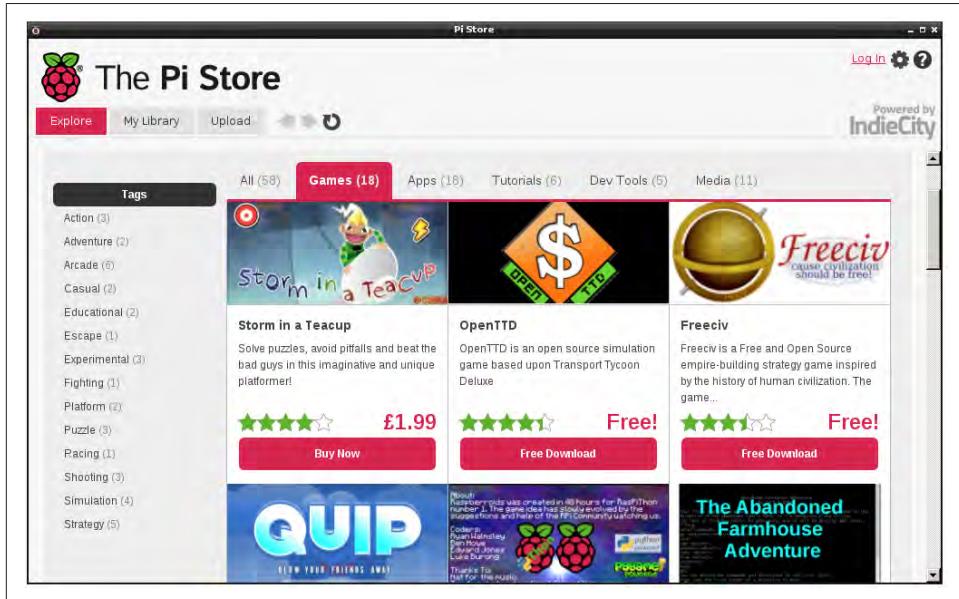


Figure 4-5. The Pi Store

The first time you try to download an app, you will be asked to register. After you register, the app will download and appear in the My Library tab. To run the app, just double-click it.

Discussion

This is a convenient way to browse for interesting programs to use on your Raspberry Pi. More and more apps are finding their way into the store.

See Also

See the [official Pi Store website](#).

4.5 Making a Webcam Server

Problem

You want to set up a Raspberry Pi as a webcam server.

Solution

Download the motion software. This will allow you to set up a Raspberry Pi with a USB webcam connected to it so you can connect to a web page and view the webcam.

To install the software, enter the following command in a Terminal window:

```
$ sudo apt-get install motion
```

Plug in your USB webcam and type **lsusb** to see if the webcam is connected:

```
$ lsusb
Bus 001 Device 001: ID 1d6b:0002 Linux Foundation 2.0 root hub
Bus 001 Device 002: ID 0424:9512 Standard Microsystems Corp.
Bus 001 Device 003: ID 0424:ec00 Standard Microsystems Corp.
Bus 001 Device 004: ID 3538:0059 Power Quotient International Co., Ltd
Bus 001 Device 006: ID eb1a:299f eMPIA Technology, Inc.
```

If you can't see an entry that obviously looks like a webcam, try disconnecting it, run the command again, and see if one of the entries vanishes from the list. In this case, the final entry in the list is for the webcam.

There are now a few configuration changes that you need to make. First, edit the file */etc/motion/motion.conf* using the command:

```
$ sudo nano /etc/motion/motion.conf
```

This is quite a big configuration file. Right near the top of the file, you will find the line `daemon off`; change this to `daemon on`.

The other change is much further down the file. You need to change `webcam_local host = on` to `webcam_localhost = off`.

There is one other file that you need to change. Enter the command:

```
$ sudo nano /etc/default/motion
```

Change `start_motion_daemon=no` to `start_motion_daemon=yes`.

To get the web service running, issue the command:

```
$ sudo service motion start
```

You should now be able to open your web browser and view the webcam. To do this, you will need to know the IP address of your Raspberry Pi ([Recipe 2.2](#)).

From another computer on the same network, open a browser and go to the URL <http://192.168.1.16:8081/>. You will need to change the URL to match the IP address of your Raspberry Pi, but keep the :8081 port number on the end of the URL.

If all goes well, you should see something like [Figure 4-6](#).

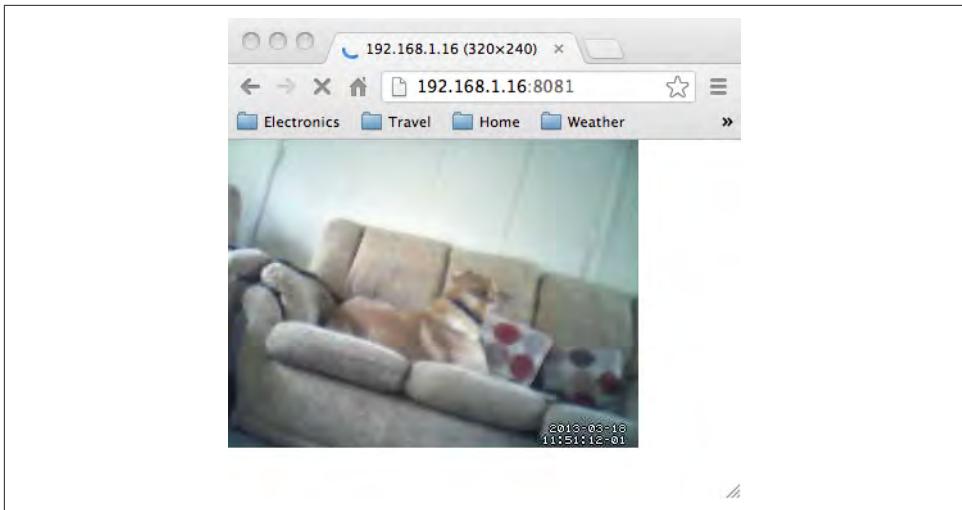


Figure 4-6. A Raspberry Pi webcam

Discussion

The motion software is actually really powerful; there are many other settings you can tweak to change how your webcam works.

By default, the webcam will be viewable only from within your network. If you want your webcam to be visible to the whole Internet, you need to set up *port forwarding* on your home hub. This will require you to log in to the admin console for the hub, look for the port forwarding option, and enable it for port 8081 for the IP address of the Raspberry Pi.

You will then be able to view the webcam by using the external IP address allocated by your ISP. This is usually shown on the front page of your admin console. But beware: unless you pay your ISP for a static IP address, this IP address is likely to change every time you restart your home hub modem.

Services such as [No-ip](#) can also be used to provide dynamic DNS, so that you can register a domain name that automatically follows changes to your IP address.

See Also

There is thorough documentation on the [motion website](#).

You can find a list of webcams compatible with the Raspberry Pi at http://elinux.org/RPi_USB_Webcams.

The Raspberry Pi has a plug-in camera module ([Recipe 1.14](#)). At the time of writing, this is not compatible with motion, but it may be by the time you read this.

To use a webcam for computer vision projects, see [Chapter 8](#).

See [Recipe 3.16](#) for information on using apt-get.

4.6 Running a Vintage Game Console Emulator

Problem

You want to use a games emulator on a Raspberry Pi to make a vintage game console.

Solution

There are a number of emulators around for game consoles from the 1980s. One of the most popular is [Stella](#), an emulator for the Atari 2600 ([Figure 4-7](#)).

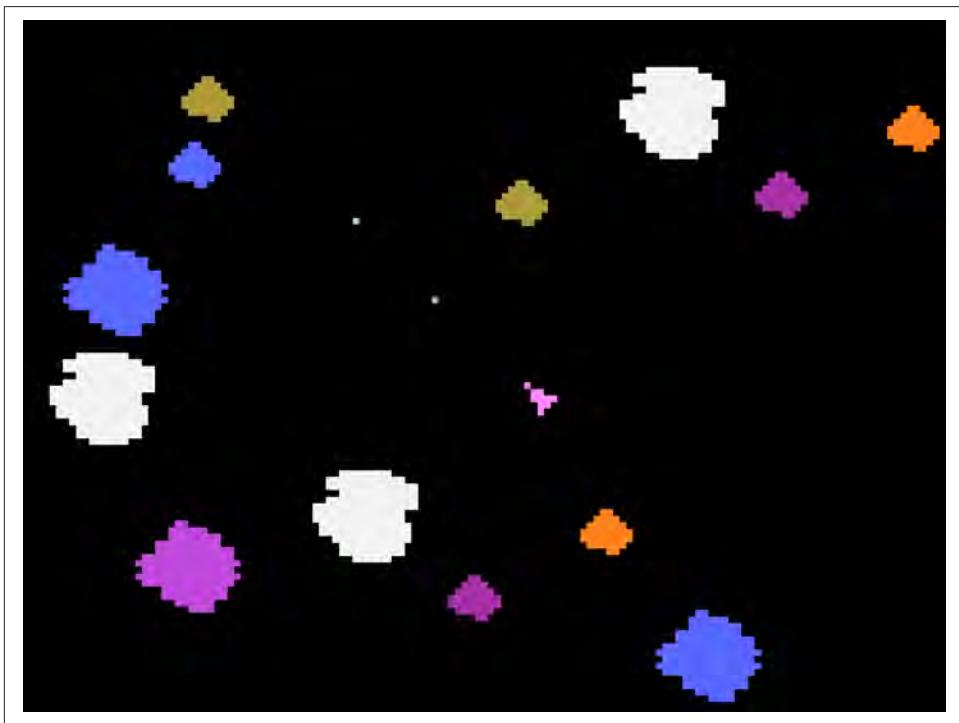


Figure 4-7. Asteroids on the Stella Atari 2600 emulator



It is worth noting that even though these games are ancient, they are still owned by someone. The ROM image files that you need to play the games on an emulator like Stella—although easy to find on the Internet—are not necessarily yours to take. So, please stick to the law.

To install Stella, simply enter the following command in a Terminal window:

```
$ sudo apt-get install stella
```

Once it's installed, you will find a new program in Games on your Start menu. Do not run it yet—you need to obtain the ROM image for a game.

If you are outside of the US and own the actual game, you are entitled to take a copy of the ROM image for backup purposes in many, but not all, countries. You can also find ROM images for some games that have been released without any license restrictions.

Now that you have the ROM image for the game you wish to play, create a folder called *roms* and place the ROM image in that folder. Then start Stella.

Click the image file to start a game. By default, the cursor keys are mapped to the joystick controls and the space bar is fire. You can change a number of settings for the emulator—for example, you almost certainly want to go to Video Settings and set it to fullscreen mode.

You can also use Input Settings and the Emul Events tab to map controller buttons to your keyboard.

Discussion

The emulator uses a surprisingly large amount of the Raspberry Pi's meager resources, so you may find that you need to use a Raspberry Pi 3 or 2.

If you search the Internet, you will find that many people have taken this basic setup and added a retro USB controller, like the widely available and quite low-cost Nintendo Retrolink USB Super SNES Classic Controller, and built the Pi and a monitor into a big arcade-style housing.

See Also

There are a number of other console emulators available—at various stages of maturity, and thus reliability—on the Raspberry Pi. One to consider is [Mame](#), which emulates a number of different game platforms.

For more information on installing with `apt-get`, see [Recipe 3.16](#).

4.7 Running Minecraft Pi Edition

Problem

You want to run the popular game Minecraft on your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Mojang, the original developers of Minecraft, have ported it to the Raspberry Pi and Minecraft Pi is pre-installed on the latest Raspbian distribution.



Figure 4-8. Minecraft on Raspberry Pi

Discussion

To get Minecraft to fit on the Raspberry Pi, the developers made some shortcuts in the graphics code. This means that you can only play the game directly on the Raspberry Pi with the keyboard, mouse, and monitor connected directly to it. It will not work over a remote VNC connection.

The Pi edition of Minecraft is based on the mobile version of Minecraft and lacks some features, most notably Redstone.

See Also

Find out more about the [Raspberry Pi port of Minecraft](#).

You can also run a full version of the Minecraft Server on a Raspberry Pi ([Recipe 4.8](#)), although a Raspberry Pi 3 or 2 will perform a lot better (see [Recipe 1.1](#)).

Minecraft Pi also includes a Python programming interface, and in [Recipe 7.20](#), you will learn how to send commands to Python over an SSH connection to do automated building.

4.8 Running a Minecraft Server

Problem

You want to host a low-cost low-energy Minecraft server for you and your friends to play on.

Solution

The first step is to install the Java runtime environment by using these commands:

```
$ sudo apt-get update  
$ sudo apt-get install openjdk-7-jdk
```

Then create a directory to contain the server code and fetch the spigot Minecraft server using the commands:

```
$ mkdir mcserver  
$ cd mcserver  
$ wget http://getspigot.org/spigot18/spigot_server.jar
```

Start the server using the command:

```
$ java -Xms512M -Xmx800M -jar spigot_server.jar nogui
```

The server will soon give you the following error message:

```
[15:51:26 WARN]: Failed to load eula.txt  
[15:51:26 INFO]: You need to agree to the EULA in order to run  
the server. Go to eula.txt for more info.  
[15:51:26 INFO]: Stopping server
```

This is telling you that you need to accept the terms of the license agreement by editing the file called *eula.txt* that the server has just created for you. So, open *eula.txt* using nano using the command:

```
$ nano eula.txt
```

Change the line that says *eula=false* to *eula=true* and save the file, then run, and then start the server again. This time it will take several minutes to create a world and start up the server. Don't worry, the next time you run it, it will be a lot quicker.

Eventually, the server will start and you can test it by connecting to it from another computer running Minecraft on your network.

Start Minecraft and click on Multiplayer and then Direct Connect. Enter the IP address of your Raspberry Pi ([Figure 4-9](#)) and then click Connect.

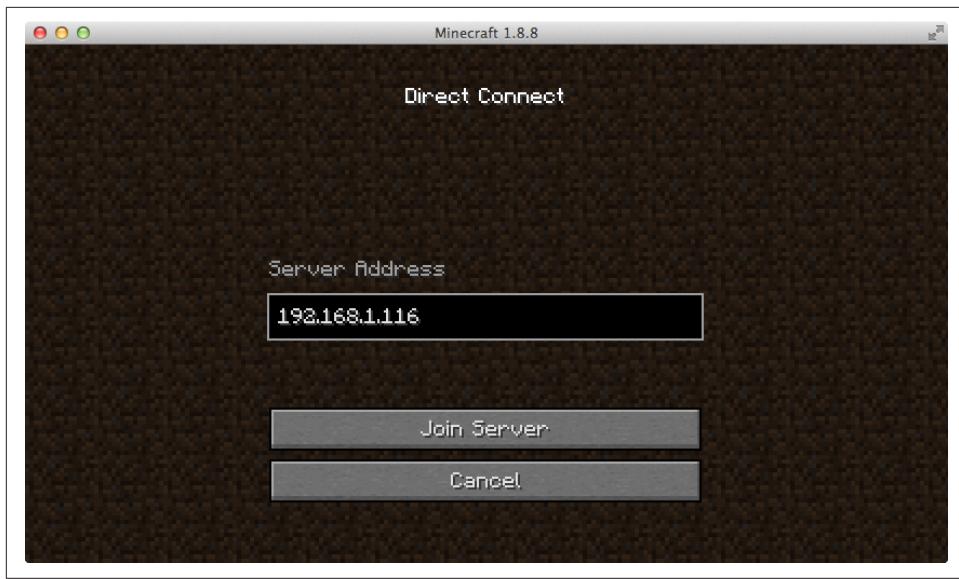


Figure 4-9. Connecting to the Minecraft server

Once you are connected, you and anyone else on your network can join the server and start playing ([Figure 4-10](#)).

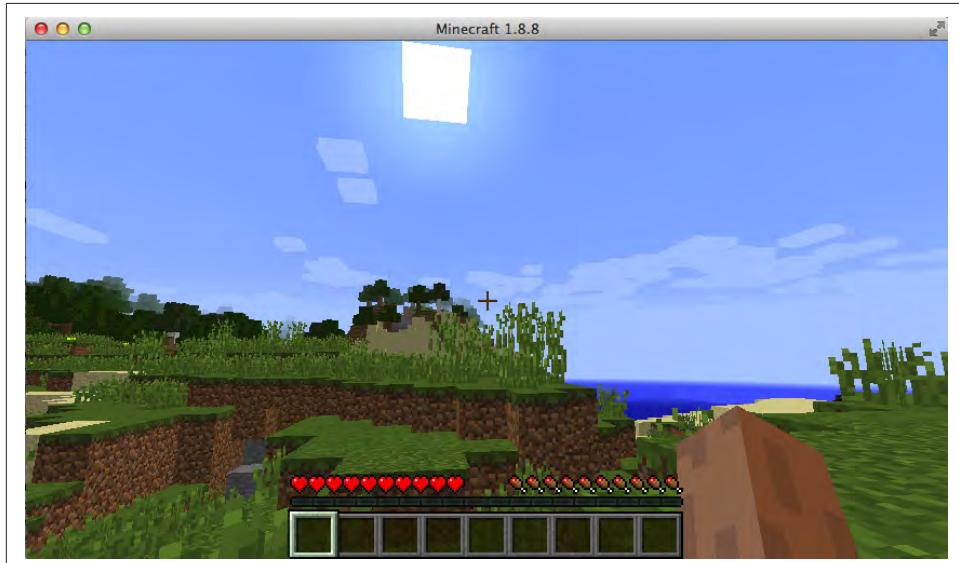


Figure 4-10. Playing on a Raspberry Pi Minecraft server

You will probably want to give yourself *operator* status in the game by typing the command:

```
> op YourName
```

where *YourName* is your nickname in the game.

Discussion

A Raspberry Pi 2 with its four processor cores and 1 GB of memory will run a pretty decent Minecraft server. The parameters `-Xms512M` and `-Xmx800M` set the minimum and maximum amounts of memory that Java should use for the server.

The LXTerminal or SSH window will let you know when anyone connects to the server, and you can also issue various server admin commands from here. Type **help** for a list of commands.

When you want to stop the server, enter the command **stop**.

```
[17:41:10 INFO]: UUID of player SimonMonk is 4e3e1a27-4e7e-4bfb-b331-a30af5bd49ec
[17:41:11 INFO]: SimonMonk[/192.168.1.5:58831] logged in with entity id
382 at ([world]257.23244892748414, 67.0, 185.3728463324922)
>stop
[17:41:20 INFO]: Stopping the server
[17:41:20 INFO]: Stopping server
[17:41:20 INFO]: Saving players
[17:41:20 INFO]: SimonMonk lost connection: Server closed
[17:41:20 INFO]: SimonMonk left the game.
[17:41:21 INFO]: Saving worlds
[17:41:21 INFO]: Saving chunks for level 'world'/Overworld
[17:41:24 INFO]: Saving chunks for level 'world_nether'/Nether
[17:41:24 INFO]: Saving chunks for level 'world_the_end'/The End
>pi@Pi2headless ~/$
```

To allow your friends from the wider Internet to play on your server, you will need to use your router's admin console to set up port forwarding.

See Also

You do not need to be directly connected to the Raspberry Pi to start a Minecraft server; it will work just fine if started from SSH ([Recipe 2.7](#)).

For information on running your own Minecraft server, check out http://uk.ign.com/wikis/minecraft/Admin_and_Server_Commands.

See also the Minecraft Pi edition ([Recipe 4.7](#)).

4.9 Running Open Arena

Problem

You want to run the Quake derivative Open Arena on your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Download and run Open Arena (Figure 4-11) from the Pi Store.

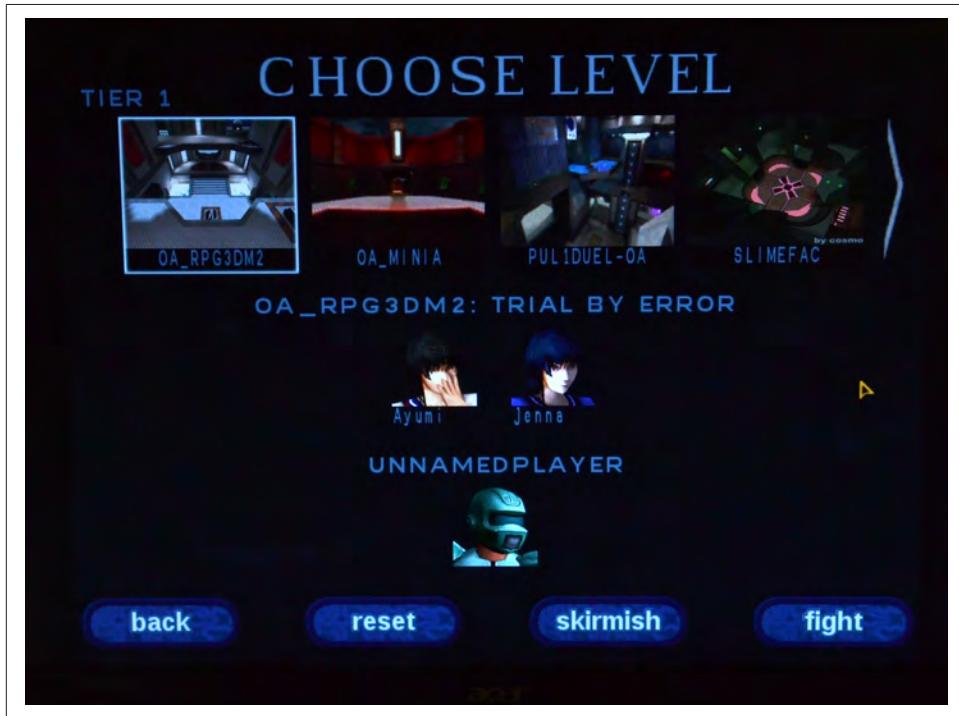


Figure 4-11. Open Arena on Raspberry Pi

Discussion

Not surprisingly, you will find Open Arena in the Games section of the Pi Store. Since the game is quite violent and bloody, it comes under a plain wrapper.

See Also

Find out more about [Open Arena](#).

For more information on using the Pi Store, see [Recipe 4.4](#).

4.10 Raspberry Pi Radio Transmitter



Be sure to check out the accompanying video for this recipe at <http://razzpisampler.oreilly.com>.

Problem

You want to convert your Raspberry Pi into a high-powered FM transmitter that will send a radio signal to a normal FM radio receiver (Figure 4-12).

Solution

The clever folks at Imperial College, London, have created some C code and a Python wrapper that allow you to do just this. The download even includes the theme from *Star Wars* to play as a sample.

All you need is a short length of wire attached to GPIO pin 4. A female-to-male header lead will work just fine for this. In fact, it should work with the radio right next to your Pi without any kind of antenna—such is the strength of the transmission.

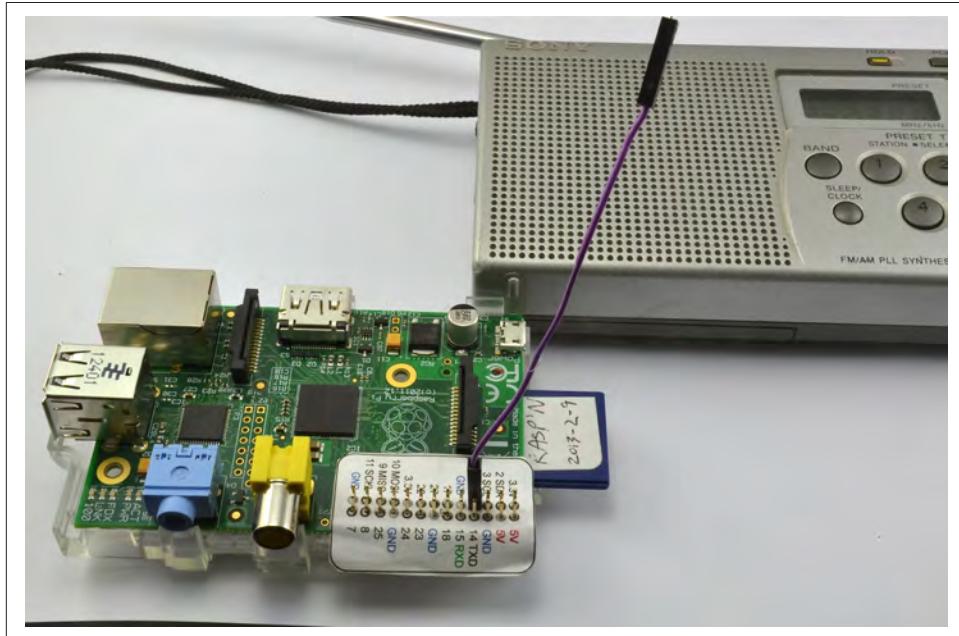


Figure 4-12. Raspberry Pi as an FM transmitter

The first step is to install the *pifm* library using the following commands:

```
$ mkdir pifm  
$ cd pifm  
$ wget http://www.icrobotics.co.uk/wiki/images/c/c3/Pifm.tar.gz  
$ tar -xzf Pifm.tar.gz
```

Next, find yourself an FM radio receiver and tune it to 103.0 MHz. If this frequency is already occupied by some other transmission, pick another frequency and make note of it.

Now run the following command (changing the final parameter from 103.0 if you had to change frequency):

```
sudo ./pifm sound.wav 103.0
```

If all is well, you should hear the stirring tones of the *Star Wars* theme.

Discussion

You need to know that this project may not be legal in your country. The power output is higher than that of FM transmitters used with MP3 players.

You can play other *.wav* files, but they must be 16-bit 44.1kHz.

The code also includes a Python library that you can use within your own Python programs. So, you could write a user interface to allow the selection and playing of tunes.

The following fragment of code illustrates the use of the Python interface:

```
pi@raspberrypi:~/pifm$ sudo python  
Python 2.7.3 (default, Jan 13 2013, 11:20:46)  
[GCC 4.6.3] on linux2  
Type "help", "copyright", "credits" or "license" for more information.  
>>> import PiFm  
>>> PiFm.play_sound("sound.wav")
```

Were you to put a Raspberry Pi in your vehicle, this would be a great way of outputting sound through the vehicle's audio system—especially if you use the features of the latest version of *pifm*, which allow you to stream music to the FM transmitter from various sources.

See Also

This description is based on the [original post from Imperial College London](#). This also includes clever tricks for piping music from various sources to pifm including from a USN microphone, which opens up all sorts of opportunities.

4.11 Running GIMP

Problem

You want to edit an image.

Solution

Download and run the GNU image manipulation program (GIMP; see [Figure 4-13](#)).

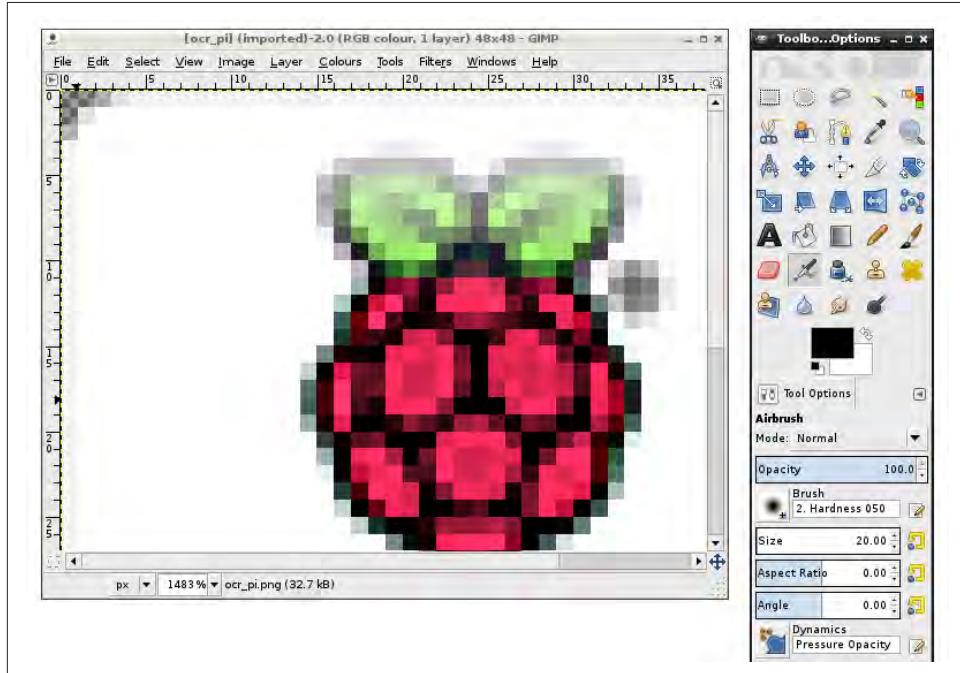


Figure 4-13. GIMP on the Raspberry Pi

To install GIMP, open a Terminal session and type the following command:

```
$ sudo apt-get install gimp
```

Once GIMP is installed, you'll find a new entry in your Start menu under the Graphics heading called GNU Image Manipulation Program.

Discussion

Despite being very hungry for memory and processor power, GIMP is quite usable on a Raspberry Pi model B.

See Also

Find out more from the [GIMP website](#).

GIMP has a lot of features and is a very sophisticated image editing program, so it does take a little learning. You'll find an online manual for the software at the GIMP website, under the Documentation tab.

For more information on installing with `apt-get`, see [Recipe 3.16](#).

4.12 Internet Radio

Problem

You want to be able to play Internet radio on your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Install the VLC media player by running the following command:

```
sudo apt-get install vlc
```

Once it's installed, you can find VLC in the Sound & Video section of your Start menu.

Run the program and select the Open Network Stream option on the Media menu. This will open a dialog box (see [Figure 4-14](#)) where you can enter the URL of the Internet radio station that you wish to play.

You will need to plug headphones or amplified speakers into the audio socket on the Raspberry Pi.

Discussion

VLC can also be run from the command line:

```
$ vlc http://www.a-1radio.com/listen.pls -I dummy
```

VLC will probably produce a series of error messages, but then play the audio just fine.

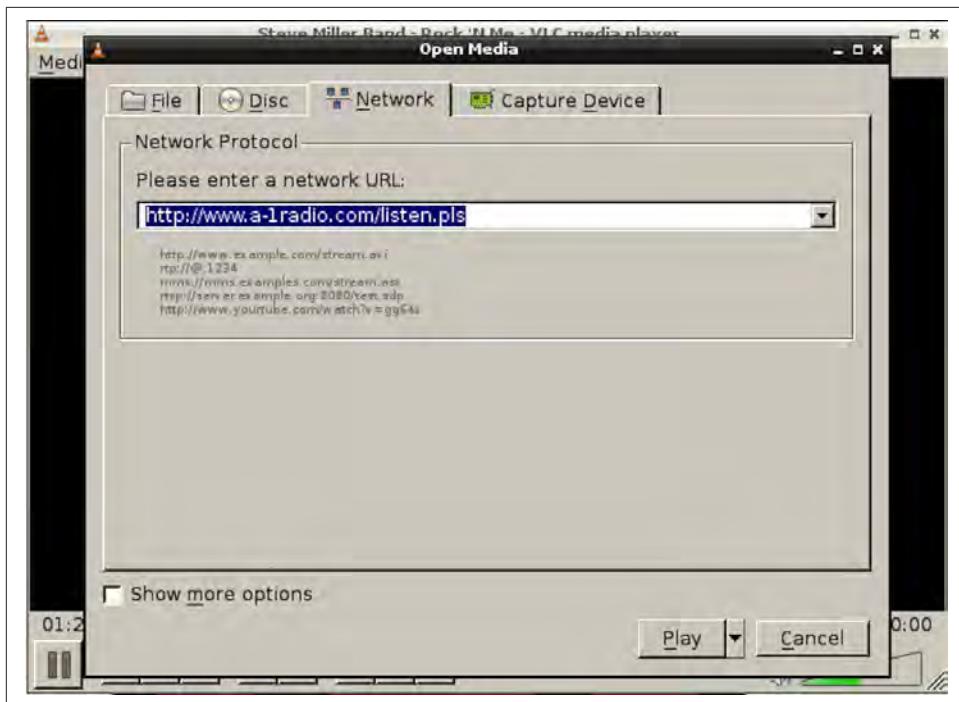


Figure 4-14. VLC on Raspberry Pi

See Also

This recipe borrows heavily from this [tutorial](#), where Jan Holst takes things a step further and adds radio-style controls to the project.

For UK readers, you can find a list of the [BBC radio stream URLs online](#).

Python Basics

5.0 Introduction

Although there are many languages that can be used to program the Raspberry Pi, Python is the most popular. In fact, the *Pi* in *Raspberry Pi* is inspired by the word Python.

In this chapter, you will find a host of recipes to help you get programming with Raspberry Pi.

5.1 Deciding Between Python 2 and Python 3

Problem

You need to use Python but are unsure about which version to use.

Solution

Use both. Use Python 3 until you face a problem that is best solved by reverting to version 2.

Discussion

Although the latest version of Python is Python 3 and has been for years, you will find that a lot of people stick to Python 2. In fact, in the Raspbian distribution, both versions are supplied and version 2 is just called Python, whereas version 3 is called Python 3. You even run Python 3 by using the command `python3`. The examples in this book are written for Python 3 unless otherwise stated. Most will run on both Python 2 and Python 3 without modification.

This reluctance on the part of the Python community to ditch the old Python 2 is largely because Python 3 introduced some changes that broke compatibility with version 2. This means that some of the huge body of third-party libraries that have been developed for Python 2 won't work under Python 3.

My strategy is to write in Python 3 wherever possible, and revert to Python 2 when I have to because of compatibility problems.

See Also

For a good summary of the Python 2 versus Python 3 debate, see the [Python wiki](#).

5.2 Editing Python Programs with IDLE

Problem

You are not sure what to use to write your Python programs.

Solution

The common Raspberry Pi distributions come with the IDLE Python development tool in both the Python 2 and Python 3 versions. If you are using Raspbian, you will find shortcuts to both versions of IDLE labeled Python 2 and Python 3 in the Programming section of your Start menu ([Figure 5-1](#)).



Figure 5-1. Starting Python with IDLE

Discussion

IDLE and IDLE 3 appear to be identical; the only difference is the version of Python that they use, so open IDLE 3 (Figure 5-2).

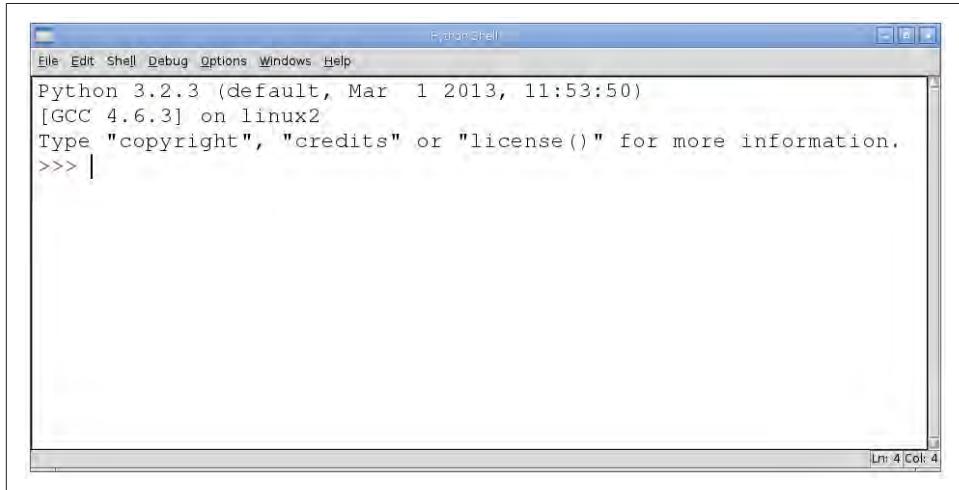


Figure 5-2. IDLE Python console

The window that opens is labeled Python Shell. This is an interactive area where you can type **Python** and see the results immediately. So try typing the following into the shell next to the >>> prompt:

```
>>> 2 + 2
4
>>>
```

Python has evaluated the expression $2 + 2$ and given us the answer of 4.

The Python Shell is fine for trying things out, but if you want to write programs, then you need to use an editor. To open a new file to edit using IDLE, select New Window from the File menu (Figure 5-3).

You can now enter your program into the editor window. Just to try things, paste the following text into the editor, save the file as *count.py*, and then select Run Module from the Run menu. You can see the results of the program running in the Python console:

```
for i in range(1, 10):
    print(i)
```

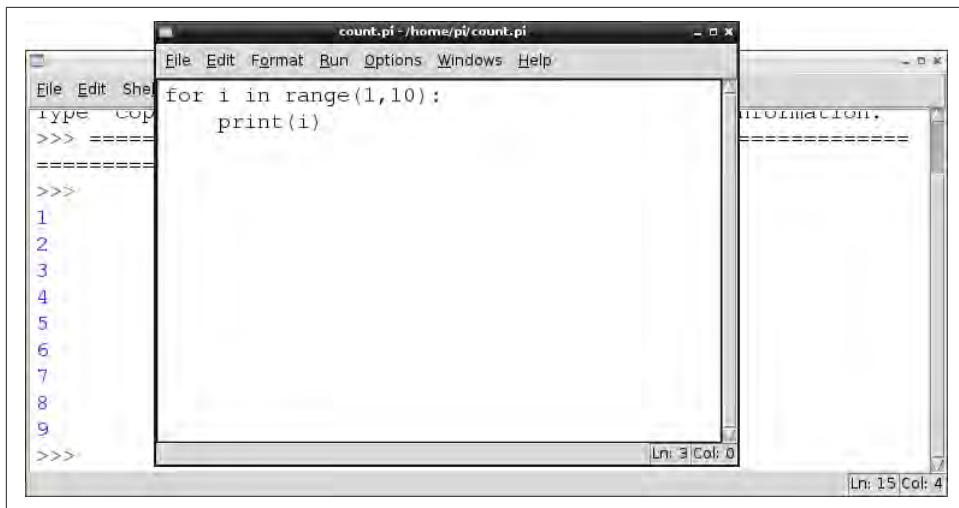


Figure 5-3. IDLE editor

Python is unusual for a programming language in that indentation is a fundamental part of the language. Whereas many C-based languages use { and } to delimit a block of code, Python uses the indentation level. So in the preceding example, Python knows that `print` is to be invoked repeatedly as part of the `for` loop because it is indented out four spaces.

The convention used in this book is to use four spaces for a level of indentation.



When you're starting out in Python, it's not uncommon to see an error such as `IndentationError: unexpected indent`, which means that somewhere things are not indented correctly. If everything appears to line up, double-check that none of the indents contain Tab characters. Python treats tabs differently.

Notice how IDLE uses color-coding to highlight the structure of the program.

See Also

Many of the recipes in this chapter use IDLE to edit Python examples.

As well as using IDLE to edit and run Python files, you can also edit files in nano ([Recipe 3.6](#)) and then run them from a Terminal session ([Recipe 5.4](#)).

5.3 Using the Python Console

Problem

You want to enter Python commands without writing a whole program.

Solution

Use the Python console, either within IDLE ([Recipe 5.2](#)) or in a Terminal session.

Discussion

To start a Python 2 console in a Terminal window, just type the command **python**; for a Python 3 console, enter the command **python3**.

The `>>>` prompt indicates that you can type Python commands. If you need to type multiline commands, then the console will automatically provide a continuation line indicated by three dots. You still need to indent any such lines, by four spaces, as shown in the following session:

```
>>> for i in range(1, 10):
...     print(i)
...
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
>>>
```

You will need to press Enter twice after your last command for the console to recognize the end of the indented block and run the code.

The Python console also provides a command history so that you can move back and forth through your previous commands using the up and down keys.

See Also

If you have more than a couple of lines that you want to type in, then chances are you would be better off using IDLE ([Recipe 5.2](#)) to edit and run a file.

5.4 Running Python Programs from the Terminal

Problem

Running programs from within IDLE is fine, but sometimes you want to run a Python program from a Terminal window.

Solution

Use the `python` or `python3` command in a Terminal, followed by the filename containing the program you want to run.

Discussion

To run a Python 2 program from the command line, use a command like this:

```
$ python myprogram.py
```

If you want to run the program using Python 3, then change the command `python` to `python3`. The Python program that you wish to run should be in a file with the extension `.py`.

You can run most Python programs as a normal user; however, there are some, especially those that use the GPIO port, that you need to run as superuser. If this is the case for your program, prefix the command with `sudo`:

```
$ sudo python myprogram.py
```

In the earlier examples, you have to include `python` in the command to run the program, but you can also add a line to the start of a Python program so that Linux knows it is a Python program. This special line is called a *shebang* (a contraction of *hash-bang*) and the following single-line example program has it as its first line.

```
#!/usr/bin/python
print("I'm a program, I can run all by myself")
```

Before you can run this directly from the command line, you have to give the file write permissions by using the command below (see [Recipe 3.13](#)).

```
$ chmod +x test.py
```

The parameter `+x` means add execute permission.

Now you will be able to run the Python program `test.py` by using the single command:

```
$ ./test.py
I'm a program, I can run all by myself
$
```

The `./` at the start of the line is needed for the command line to find the file.

See Also

[Recipe 3.23](#) allows you to run a Python program as a timed event.

To automatically run a program at startup, see [Recipe 3.22](#).

5.5 Variables

Problem

You want to give a value a name.

Solution

Assign a value to a name using `=`.

Discussion

In Python, you don't have to declare the type of a variable, you can just assign it a value, as shown in the following examples:

```
a = 123
b = 12.34
c = "Hello"
d = 'Hello'
e = True
```

You can define character-string constants using either single or double quotes. The logical constants in Python are `True` and `False`, and are case-sensitive.

By convention, variable names begin with a lowercase letter and if the variable name consists of more than one word, the words are joined together with an underscore character. It is always a good idea to give your variables descriptive names.

Some examples of valid variable names are `x`, `total`, and `number_of_chars`.

See Also

Variables can also be assigned a value that is a list ([Recipe 6.1](#)) or dictionary ([Recipe 6.12](#)).

For more information on arithmetic with variables, see [Recipe 5.8](#).

5.6 Displaying Output

Problem

You want to see the value of a variable.

Solution

Use the `print` command. You can try the following example in the Python console ([Recipe 5.3](#)):

```
>>> x = 10
>>> print(x)
10
>>>
```

Discussion

In Python 2, you can use the `print` command without brackets. However, this is not true in Python 3, so for compatibility with both versions of Python, use brackets around the value you are printing.

See Also

To read user input, see [Recipe 5.7](#).

5.7 Reading User Input

Problem

You want to prompt the user to enter a value.

Solution

Use the `input` (Python 3) or `raw_input` (Python 2) command. You can try the following example in the Python 3 console ([Recipe 5.3](#)):

```
>>> x = input("Enter Value:")
Enter Value:23
>>> print(x)
23
>>>
```

Discussion

In Python 2, `raw_input` must be substituted for `input` in the preceding example.

Python 2 also has an `input` function, but this validates the input and attempts to convert it into a Python value of the appropriate type, whereas `raw_input` does the same thing as `input` in Python 3 and just returns a string.

See Also

Find more information on [Python 2 `input`](#).

5.8 Arithmetic

Problem

You want to do arithmetic in Python.

Solution

Use the `+`, `-`, `*`, and `/` operators.

Discussion

The most common operators for arithmetic are `+`, `-`, `*`, and `/`, which are, respectively, add, subtract, multiply, and divide.

You can also group parts of the expression together with parentheses, as shown in the following example, which, given a temperature in degrees Celsius, converts it to degrees Fahrenheit:

```
>>> tempC = input("Enter temp in C: ")
Enter temp in C: 20
>>> tempF = (int(tempC) * 9) / 5 + 32
>>> print(tempF)
68.0
>>>
```

Other arithmetic operators include `%` (modulo remainder) and `**` (raise to the power of). For example, to raise 2 to the power of 8, you would write the following:

```
>>> 2 ** 8
256
```

See Also

See [Recipe 5.7](#) on using the `input` command, and [Recipe 5.12](#) on converting the string value from `input` to a number.

The `Math` library has many useful [math functions](#) that you can use.

5.9 Creating Strings

Problem

You want to create a string variable.

Solution

Use the assignment operator and a string constant to create a new string. You can use either double or single quotation marks around the string, but they must match.

For example:

```
>>> s = "abc def"
>>> print(s)
abc def
>>>
```

Discussion

If you need to include double or single quotes inside a string, then pick the type of quotes that you don't want to use inside the string as the beginning and end markers of the string. For example:

```
>>> s = "Isn't it warm?"
>>> print(s)
Isn't it warm?
>>>
```

Sometimes you'll need to include special characters such as tab or newline inside your string. This requires the use of what are called *escape characters*. To include a tab, use \t, and for a newline, use \n. For example:

```
>>> s = "name\tage\nMatt\t14"
>>> print(s)
name      age
Matt      14
>>>
```

See Also

For a full list of escape characters, see the [Python Reference Manual](#).

5.10 Concatenating (Joining) Strings

Problem

You want to join a number of strings together.

Solution

Use the + (concatenate) operator.

For example:

```
>>> s1 = "abc"
>>> s2 = "def"
>>> s = s1 + s2
>>> print(s)
abcdef
>>>
```

Discussion

In many languages, you can have a chain of values to concatenate, some of which are strings and some of which are other types such as numbers; numbers will automatically be converted into strings during the concatenation. This is not the case in Python, and if you try the following command, you will get an error:

```
>>> "abc" + 23
Traceback (most recent call last):
  File "<stdin>", line 1, in <module>
TypeError: Can't convert 'int' object to str implicitly
```

You need to convert each component that you want to concatenate to a string before concatenating, as shown in this example:

```
>>> "abc" + str(23)
'abc23'
>>>
```

See Also

See [Recipe 5.11](#) for more information about converting numbers to strings using the `str` function.

5.11 Converting Numbers to Strings

Problem

You want to convert a number into a string.

Solution

Use the `str` Python function. For example:

```
>>> str(123)
'123'
>>>
```

Discussion

A common reason for wanting to convert a number into a string is so you can then concatenate it with another string ([Recipe 5.10](#)).

See Also

For the reverse operation of turning a string into a number, see [Recipe 5.12](#).

5.12 Converting Strings to Numbers

Problem

You want to convert a string into a number.

Solution

Use the `int` or `float` Python function.

For example, to convert `-123` into a number, you could use:

```
>>> int("-123")
-123
>>>
```

This will work on both positive and negative whole numbers.

To convert a floating-point number, use `float` instead of `int`:

```
>>> float("00123.45")
123.45
>>>
```

Discussion

Both `int` and `float` will handle leading zeros correctly and are tolerant of any spaces or other whitespace characters around the number.

You can also use `int` to convert a string representing a number in a number base other than the default of 10 by supplying the number base as the second argument. The following example converts the string representation of binary 1001 into a number:

```
>>> int("1001", 2)
9
>>>
```

This second example converts the hexadecimal number `AFF0` to an integer:

```
>>> int("AFF0", 16)
45040
>>>
```

See Also

For the reverse operation of turning a number into a string, see [Recipe 5.11](#).

5.13 Finding the Length of a String

Problem

You need to know how many characters there are in a string.

Solution

Use the `len` Python function.

Discussion

For example, to find the length of the string `abcdef`, you would use:

```
>>> len("abcdef")
6
>>>
```

See Also

The `len` command also works on lists ([Recipe 6.3](#)).

5.14 Finding the Position of One String Inside Another

Problem

You need to find the position of one string within another.

Solution

Use the `find` Python function.

For example, to find the starting position of the string `def` within the string `abcdefghi`, you would use:

```
>>> s = "abcdefghijkl"
>>> s.find("def")
3
>>>
```

Note that the character positions start at 0, so a position of 3 means the fourth character in the string.

Discussion

If the string you're looking for doesn't exist in the string being searched, then `find` returns the value `-1`.

See Also

The `replace` function is used to find and then replace all occurrences of a string ([Recipe 5.16](#)).

5.15 Extracting Part of a String

Problem

You want to cut out a section of a string between certain character positions.

Solution

Use the Python `[:]` notation.

For example, to cut out a section from the second character to the fifth character of the string `abcdefghijklm`, you would use:

```
>>> s = "abcdefghijklm"  
>>> s[1:5]  
'bcde'  
>>>
```

Note that the character positions start at 0, so a position of 1 means the second character in the string, and 5 means the sixth, but the character range is exclusive at the high end so the letter *f* is not included in this example.

Discussion

The `[:]` notation is actually quite powerful. You can omit either argument, in which case, the start or end of the string is assumed as appropriate. For example:

```
>>> s[:5]  
'abcde'  
>>>
```

and

```
>>> s = "abcdefghijklm"  
>>> s[3:]  
'defghilm'  
>>>
```

You can also use negative indices to count back from the end of the string. This can be useful in situations such as when you want to find the three-letter extension of a file, as in the following example:

```
>>> "myfile.txt"[-3:]  
'txt'
```

See Also

[Recipe 5.10](#) describes joining strings together rather than splitting them.

[Recipe 6.10](#) uses the same syntax but with lists rather than strings.

5.16 Replacing One String of Characters with Another Inside a String

Problem

You want to replace all occurrences of a string within another string.

Solution

Use the `replace` function.

For example, to replace all occurrences of `X` with `times`, you would use:

```
>>> s = "It was the best of X. It was the worst of X"  
>>> s.replace("X", "times")  
'It was the best of times. It was the worst of times'  
>>>
```

Discussion

The string being searched for must match exactly; that is, the search is case-sensitive and will include spaces.

See Also

See [Recipe 5.14](#) for searching a string without performing a replacement.

5.17 Converting a String to Upper- or Lowercase

Problem

You want to convert all the characters in a string to upper- or lowercase letters.

Solution

Use the `upper` or `lower` function as appropriate.

For example, to convert `aBcDe` to uppercase, you would use:

```
>>> "aBcDe".upper()  
'ABCDE'  
>>>
```

To convert it to lowercase, you would use:

```
>>> "aBcDe".lower()  
'abcde'  
>>>
```

Discussion

Like most functions that manipulate a string in some way, `upper` and `lower` do not actually modify the string but rather return a modified copy of the string.

For example, the following code returns a copy of the string `s`, but note how the original string is unchanged.

```
>>> s = "aBcDe"  
>>> s.upper()  
'ABCDE'  
>>> s  
'aBcDe'  
>>>
```

If you want to change the value of `s` to be all uppercase, then you need to do the following:

```
>>> s = "aBcDe"  
>>> s = s.upper()  
>>> s  
'ABCDE'  
>>>
```

See Also

See [Recipe 5.16](#) for replacing text within strings.

5.18 Running Commands Conditionally

Problem

You want to run some Python commands only when some condition is true.

Solution

Use the Python `if` command.

The following example will print the message `x is big` only if `x` has a value greater than 100:

```
>>> x = 101
>>> if x > 100:
...     print("x is big")
...
x is big
```

Discussion

After the `if` keyword, there is a *condition*. This condition often, but not always, compares two values and gives an answer that is either `True` or `False`. If it is `True`, then the subsequent indented lines will all be executed.

It is quite common to want to do one thing if a condition is `True` and something different if the answer is `False`. In this case, the `else` command is used with `if`, as shown in this example:

```
x = 101
if x > 100:
    print("x is big")
else:
    print("x is small")

print("This will always print")
```

You can also chain together a long series of `elif` conditions. If any one of the conditions succeeds, then that block of code is executed and none of the other conditions are tried. For example:

```
x = 90
if x > 100:
    print("x is big")
elif x < 10:
    print("x is small")
else:
    print("x is medium")
```

This example will print `x is medium`.

See Also

See [Recipe 5.19](#) for more information on different types of comparisons you can make.

5.19 Comparing Values

Problem

You want to compare values.

Solution

Use one of the comparison operators: `<`, `>`, `<=`, `>=`, `==`, or `!=`.

Discussion

You used the `<` (less than) and `>` (greater than) operators in [Recipe 5.18](#). Here's the full set of comparison operators:

<code><</code>	Less than
<code>></code>	Greater than
<code><=</code>	Less than or equal to
<code>>=</code>	Greater than or equal to
<code>==</code>	Exactly equal to
<code>!=</code>	Not equal to

Some people prefer to use the `<>` operator in place of `!=`. Both work the same.

You can test these commands using the Python console ([Recipe 5.3](#)), as shown in the following exchange:

```
>>> 1 != 2
True
>>> 1 != 1
False
>>> 10 >= 10
True
>>> 10 >= 11
False
>>> 10 == 10
True
>>>
```

A common mistake is to use `=` (set a value) instead of `==` (double equals) in comparisons. This can be difficult to spot because if one half of the comparison is a variable, it is perfectly legal syntax and will run, but it will not produce the result you were expecting.

As well as comparing numbers, you can also compare strings by using these comparison operators, as shown here:

```
>>> 'aa' < 'ab'
True
>>> 'aaa' < 'aa'
False
```

The strings are compared lexicographically—that is, in the order that you would find them in a dictionary.

This is not quite correct because, for each letter, the uppercase version of the letter is considered less than the lowercase equivalent. Each letter has a value that is its [ASCII](#) code.

See Also

See also Recipes [5.18](#) and [5.20](#).

5.20 Logical Operators

Problem

You need to specify a complex condition in an `if` statement.

Solution

Use one of the logical operators: `and`, `or`, and `not`.

Discussion

As an example, you may want to check whether a variable `x` has a value between 10 and 20. For that, you would use the `and` operator:

```
>>> x = 17
>>> if x >= 10 and x <= 20:
...     print('x is in the middle')
...
x is in the middle
```

You can combine as many `and` and `or` statements as you need and also use brackets to group them if the expressions become complicated.

See Also

See Recipes [5.18](#) and [5.19](#).

5.21 Repeating Instructions an Exact Number of Times

Problem

You need to repeat some program code an exact number of times.

Solution

Use the Python `for` command and iterate over a range.

For example, to repeat a command 10 times, use the following example:

```
>>> for i in range(1, 11):
...     print(i)
...
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
>>>
```

Discussion

The second parameter in the `range` command is exclusive; that is, to count up to 10, you must specify a value of 11.

See Also

If the condition for stopping the loop is more complicated than simply repeating a number of times, see [Recipe 5.22](#).

If you are trying to repeat commands for each element of a list or dictionary, see Recipes [6.7](#) or [6.15](#), respectively.

5.22 Repeating Instructions Until Some Condition Changes

Problem

You need to repeat some program code until something changes.

Solution

Use the Python `while` statement. The `while` statement repeats its nested commands until its condition becomes false. The following example will stay in the loop until the user enters `X` for exit:

```
>>> answer = ''
>>> while answer != 'X':
...     answer = input('Enter command:')
...
Enter command:A
```

```
Enter command:B  
Enter command:X  
>>>
```

Discussion

Note that the preceding example uses the `input` command as it works in Python 3. To run the example in Python 2, substitute the command `raw_input` for `input`.

See Also

If you just want to repeat some commands a number of times, see [Recipe 5.21](#).

If you are trying to repeat commands for each element of a list or dictionary, then see [Recipes 6.7](#) or [6.15](#), respectively.

5.23 Breaking Out of a Loop

Problem

You are in a loop and need to exit the loop if some condition occurs.

Solution

Use the Python `break` statement to exit either a `while` or `for` loop.

The following example behaves in exactly the same way as the example code in [Recipe 5.22](#):

```
>>> while True:  
...     answer = input('Enter command: ')  
...     if answer == 'X':  
...         break  
...  
Enter command:A  
Enter command:B  
Enter command:X  
>>>
```

Discussion

Note that this example uses the `input` command as it works in Python 3. To run the example in Python 2, substitute the command `raw_input` for `input`.

This example behaves in exactly the same way as the example of [Recipe 5.22](#). However, in this case, the condition for the `while` loop is just `True`, so the loop will never end unless we use `break` to exit the loop when the user enters `X`.

See Also

You can also leave a while loop by using its condition; see [Recipe 5.18](#).

5.24 Defining a Function in Python

Problem

You want to avoid repeating the same code over and over in a program.

Solution

Create a function that groups together lines of code, allowing it to be called from multiple places.

Creating and then calling a function in Python is illustrated in the following example:

```
def count_to_10():
    for i in range(1, 11):
        print(i)

count_to_10()
```

In this example, we have defined a function using the `def` command that will print out the numbers between 1 and 10 whenever it is called:

```
count_to_10()
```

Discussion

The conventions for naming functions are the same as for variables in [Recipe 5.5](#); that is, they should start with a lowercase letter, and if the name consists of more than one word, the words should be separated by underscores.

The example function is a little inflexible because it can only count to 10. If we wanted to make it more flexible—so it could count up to any number—then we can include the maximum number as a *parameter* to the function, as this example illustrates:

```
def count_to_n(n):
    for i in range(1, n + 1):
        print(i)

count_to_n(5)
```

The parameter name `n` is included inside the parentheses and then used inside the `range` command, but not before 1 is added to it.

Using a parameter for the number you want to count up to means that if you usually count to 10 but sometimes count to a different number, you will always have to specify the number. You can, however, specify a default value for a parameter, and hence have the best of both worlds, as shown in this example:

```
def count_to_n(n=10):
    for i in range(1, n + 1):
        print(i)

count_to_n()
```

This will now count to 10 unless a different number is specified when you call the function.

If your function needs more than one parameter, perhaps to count between two numbers, then the parameters are separated by commas:

```
def count(from_num=1, to_num=10):
    for i in range(from_num, to_num + 1):
        print(i)

count()
count(5)
count(5, 10)
```

All these examples are functions that do not return any value; they just do something. If you need a function to return a value, you need to use the `return` command.

The following function takes a string as an argument and adds the word *please* to the end of the string.

```
def make_polite(sentence):
    return sentence + " please"

print(make_polite("Pass the cheese"))
```

When a function returns a value, you can assign the result to a variable, or as in this example, print out the result.

See Also

To return more than one value from a function, see [Recipe 7.3](#).

Python Lists and Dictionaries

6.0 Introduction

In [Chapter 5](#), you looked at the basics of the Python language. In this chapter, you look at two key Python data structures: lists and dictionaries.

6.1 Creating a List

Problem

You want to use a variable to hold a series of values rather than just one value.

Solution

Use a list. In Python, a list is a collection of values stored in order so that you can access them by position.

You create a list using [and] to contain its initial contents:

```
>>> a = [34, 'Fred', 12, False, 72.3]
>>>
```

Unlike the more rigid arrays in languages like C, you don't need to specify the size of a list in Python when you declare it. You can also change the number of elements in the list any time you like.

Discussion

As this example illustrates, the items in a list do not have to be all of the same type, although they often are.

If you want to create an empty list that you can add items to later, you can write:

```
>>> a = []
>>>
```

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.1 and 6.11 involve the use of lists.

6.2 Accessing Elements of a List

Problem

You want to find individual elements of a list or change them.

Solution

Use the [] notation to access elements of a list by their position in the list. For example:

```
>>> a = [34, 'Fred', 12, False, 72.3]
>>> a[1]
'Fred'
```

Discussion

The list positions (indices) start at 0 for the first element.

As well as using the [] notation to read values out of a list, you can also use it to change values at a certain position. For example:

```
>>> a = [34, 'Fred', 12, False, 72.3]
>>> a[1] = 777
>>> a
[34, 777, 12, False, 72.3]
```

If you try to change (or, for that matter, read) an element of a list using an index that is too large, you will get an “Index out of range” error:

```
>>> a[50] = 777
Traceback (most recent call last):
  File "<stdin>", line 1, in <module>
IndexError: list assignment index out of range
>>>
```

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.1 and 6.11 involve the use of lists.

6.3 Finding the Length of a List

Problem

You need to know how many elements there are in a list.

Solution

Use the `len` Python function. For example:

```
>>> a = [34, 'Fred', 12, False, 72.3]
>>> len(a)
5
```

Discussion

The `len` command also works on strings ([Recipe 5.13](#)).

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes [6.1](#) and [6.11](#) involve the use of lists.

6.4 Adding Elements to a List

Problem

You need to add an item to a list.

Solution

Use the `append`, `insert`, or `extend` Python functions.

To add a single item to the end of a list, use `append`:

```
>>> a = [34, 'Fred', 12, False, 72.3]
>>> a.append("new")
>>> a
[34, 'Fred', 12, False, 72.3, 'new']
```

Discussion

Sometimes you don't want to add the new elements to the end of a list, but rather you want to insert them at a certain position in the list. For this, use the `insert` command. The first argument is the index where the item should be inserted, and the second argument is the item to be inserted:

```
>>> a.insert(2, "new2")
>>> a
[34, 'Fred', 'new2', 12, False, 72.3]
```

Note how all the elements after the newly inserted element are shuffled up one position.

Both `append` and `insert` add only one element to a list. The `extend` function adds all the elements of one list to the end of another:

```
>>> a = [34, 'Fred', 12, False, 72.3]
>>> b = [74, 75]
>>> a.extend(b)
>>> a
[34, 'Fred', 12, False, 72.3, 74, 75]
```

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.1 and 6.11 involve the use of lists.

6.5 Removing Elements from a List

Problem

You need to remove an item from a list.

Solution

Use the `pop` Python function.

The command `pop` with no parameters removes the last element of a list:

```
>>> a = [34, 'Fred', 12, False, 72.3]
>>> a.pop()
72.3
>>> a
[34, 'Fred', 12, False]
```

Discussion

Notice that `pop` returns the value removed from the list.

To remove an item in a position rather than the last element, use `pop` with a parameter of the position from which the item will be removed:

```
>>> a = [34, 'Fred', 12, False, 72.3]
>>> a.pop(0)
34
```

If you use an index position that is beyond the end of the list, you will get an “Index out of range” exception.

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.1 and 6.11 involve the use of lists.

6.6 Creating a List by Parsing a String

Problem

You need to convert a string of words separated by some character into an array of strings, with each string in the array being one of the words.

Solution

Use the `split` Python string function.

The command `split` with no parameters separates the words out of a string into individual elements of an array:

```
>>> "abc def ghi".split()  
['abc', 'def', 'ghi']
```

If you supply `split` with a parameter, then it will split the string, using the parameter as a separator. For example:

```
>>> "abc--de--ghi".split('--')  
['abc', 'de', 'ghi']
```

Discussion

This command can be very useful when you are, say, importing data from a file. The `split` command can optionally take an argument that is the string to use as a delimiter when you are splitting the string. So, if you were to use commas as a separator, you could split the string as follows:

```
>>> "abc,def,ghi".split(',')  
['abc', 'def', 'ghi']
```

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.1 and 6.11 involve the use of lists.

6.7 Iterating Over a List

Problem

You need to apply some lines of code to each item in a list in turn.

Solution

Use the `for` Python language command:

```
>>> a = [34, 'Fred', 12, False, 72.3]
>>> for x in a:
...     print(x)
...
34
Fred
12
False
72.3
>>>
```

Discussion

The `for` keyword is immediately followed by a variable name (in this case, `x`). This is called the loop variable and will be set to each of the elements of the list specified after `in`.

The indented lines that follow will be executed one time for each element in the list. Each time around the loop, `x` will be given the value of the element in the list at that position. You can then use `x` to print out the value, as shown in the previous example.

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.1 and 6.11 involve the use of lists.

6.8 Enumerating a List

Problem

You need to run some lines of code for each item in a list in turn, but you also need to know the index position of each item.

Solution

Use the `for` Python language command along with the `enumerate` command.

```
>>> a = [34, 'Fred', 12, False, 72.3]
>>> for i, x in enumerate(a):
...     print(i, x)
...
(0, 34)
(1, 'Fred')
(2, 12)
(3, False)
(4, 72.3)
>>>
```

Discussion

It's quite common to need to know the position of something in the list while enumerating each of the values. An alternative method is to simply count with an index variable and then access the value by using the [] syntax:

```
>>> a = [34, 'Fred', 12, False, 72.3]
>>> for i in range(len(a)):
...     print(i, a[i])
...
(0, 34)
(1, 'Fred')
(2, 12)
(3, False)
(4, 72.3)
>>>
```

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.1 and 6.11 involve the use of lists.

See [Recipe 6.7](#) to iterate over a list without needing to know each item's index position.

6.9 Sorting a List

Problem

You need to sort the elements of a list.

Solution

Use the `sort` Python language command:

```
>>> a = ["it", "was", "the", "best", "of", "times"]
>>> a.sort()
>>> a
['best', 'it', 'of', 'the', 'times', 'was']
```

Discussion

When you sort a list, you'll actually be modifying it rather than returning a sorted copy of the original list. This means that if you also need the original list, you need to use the `copy` command in the standard library to make a copy of the original list before sorting it:

```
>>> import copy
>>> a = ["it", "was", "the", "best", "of", "times"]
>>> b = copy.copy(a)
>>> b.sort()
>>> a
['it', 'was', 'the', 'best', 'of', 'times']
>>> b
['best', 'it', 'of', 'the', 'times', 'was']
>>>
```

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.1 and 6.11 involve the use of lists.

6.10 Cutting Up a List

Problem

You need to make a sublist of a list, using a range of the original list's elements.

Solution

Use the `[:]` Python language construction. The following example returns a list containing the elements of the original list from index position 1 to index position 2 (the number after the `:` is exclusive):

```
>>> l = ["a", "b", "c", "d"]
>>> l[1:3]
['b', 'c']
```

Note that the character positions start at 0, so a position of 1 means the second character in the string, and 5 means the sixth, but the character range is exclusive at the high end, so the letter *d* is not included in this example.

Discussion

The `[:]` notation is actually quite powerful. You can omit either argument, in which case the start or end of the list is assumed as appropriate. For example:

```
>>> l = ["a", "b", "c", "d"]
>>> l[:3]
['a', 'b', 'c']
```

```
>>> l[3:]
['d']
>>>
```

You can also use negative indices to count back from the end of the list. The following example returns the last two elements in the list:

```
>>> l[-2:]
['c', 'd']
```

Incidentally, `l[:-2]` returns `['a', 'b']` in the preceding example.

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.1 and 6.11 involve the use of lists.

See [Recipe 5.15](#) where the same syntax is used for strings.

6.11 Applying a Function to a List

Problem

You need to apply a function to each element of a list and collect the results.

Solution

Use the Python language feature called *comprehensions*.

The following example converts each string element of the list to uppercase and returns a new list that is the same length as the old one, but with all the strings in uppercase:

```
>>> l = ["abc", "def", "ghi", "ijk"]
>>> [x.upper() for x in l]
['ABC', 'DEF', 'GHI', 'IJK']
```

Although it can get confusing, there is no reason why you can't combine these kinds of statements, nesting one comprehension inside another.

Discussion

This is a very concise way of doing comprehensions. The whole expression has to be enclosed in brackets ([]). The first element of the comprehension is the code to be evaluated for each element of the list. The rest of the comprehension looks rather like a normal list iteration command ([Recipe 6.7](#)). The loop variable follows the `for` keyword, and the list to be used follows the `in` keyword.

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.1 and 6.11 involve the use of lists.

6.12 Creating a Dictionary

Problem

You need to create a lookup table where you associate values with keys.

Solution

Use a Python dictionary.

Arrays are great when you need to access a list of items in order or you always know the index of the element that you want to use. Dictionaries are an alternative to lists for storing collections of data, but they are organized very differently.

Figure 6-1 shows how a dictionary is organized.

phone_numbers	
Key: Simon	Value: 01234 567899
Key: Jane	Value: 01234 666666
Key: Pete	Value: 01234 777555
Key: Linda	Value: 01234 887788

Figure 6-1. A Python dictionary

A dictionary stores key/value pairs in such a way that you can use the key to retrieve that value very efficiently and without having to search the whole dictionary.

To create a dictionary, you use the {} notation:

```
>>> phone_numbers = {'Simon': '01234 567899', 'Jane': '01234 666666'}
```

Discussion

In this example, the keys of the dictionary are strings, but they do not have to be; they could be numbers or in fact any data type, although strings are most commonly used.

The values can also be of any data type, including other dictionaries or lists. The following example creates one dictionary (a) and then uses it as a value in a second dictionary (b):

```
>>> a = {'key1': 'value1', 'key2': 2}
>>> a
{'key2': 2, 'key1': 'value1'}
>>> b = {'b_key1': a}
```

```
>>> b
{'b_key1': {'key2': 2, 'key1': 'value1'}}
```

When you display the contents of a dictionary, you will notice that the order of the items in the dictionary may not match the order in which they were specified when the dictionary was created and initialized with some contents:

```
>>> phone_numbers = {'Simon':'01234 567899', 'Jane':'01234 666666'}
>>> phone_numbers
{'Jane': '01234 666666', 'Simon': '01234 567899'}
```

Unlike lists, dictionaries have no concept of keeping items in order. Because of the way they are represented internally, the order of a dictionary's contents will be—for all intents and purposes—random.

The reason the order appears to be random is that the underlying data structure is a *hash table*. Hash tables use a *hashing function* to decide where to store the value; the hashing function calculates a numeric equivalent to any object.

You can find out more about hash tables at [Wikipedia](#).

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.12 and 6.15 involve the use of dictionaries.

6.13 Accessing a Dictionary

Problem

You need to find and change entries in a dictionary.

Solution

Use the Python [] notation. Use the key of the entry to which you need access inside the brackets:

```
>>> phone_numbers = {'Simon':'01234 567899', 'Jane':'01234 666666'}
>>> phone_numbers['Simon']
'01234 567899'
>>> phone_numbers['Jane']
'01234 666666'
```

Discussion

The lookup process is in one direction only, from key to value.

If you use a key that is not present in the dictionary, you will get a *key error*. For example:

```
{'b_key1': {'key2': 2, 'key1': 'value1'}}  
>>> phone_numbers = {'Simon':'01234 567899', 'Jane':'01234 666666'}  
>>> phone_numbers['Phil']  
Traceback (most recent call last):  
  File "<stdin>", line 1, in <module>  
KeyError: 'Phil'  
>>>
```

As well as using the [] notation to read values from a dictionary, you can also use it to add new values or overwrite existing ones.

The following example adds a new entry to the dictionary with a key of Pete and a value of 01234 777555:

```
>>> phone_numbers['Pete'] = '01234 777555'  
>>> phone_numbers['Pete']  
'01234 777555'
```

If the key is not in use in the dictionary, a new entry is automatically added. If the key is already present, then whatever value was there before will be overwritten by the new value.

This is in contrast to trying to read a value from the dictionary, where an unknown key will cause an error.

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.12 and 6.15 involve the use of dictionaries.

For information on handling errors, see [Recipe 7.10](#).

6.14 Removing Things from a Dictionary

Problem

You need to remove an item from a dictionary.

Solution

Use the pop command, specifying the key for the item that you want to remove:

```
>>> phone_numbers = {'Simon':'01234 567899', 'Jane':'01234 666666'}  
>>> phone_numbers.pop('Jane')  
'01234 666666'  
>>> phone_numbers  
{'Simon': '01234 567899'}
```

Discussion

The `pop` command returns the value of the item removed from the dictionary.

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.12 and 6.15 involve the use of dictionaries.

6.15 Iterating Over Dictionaries

Problem

You need to do something to each of the items in the dictionary in turn.

Solution

Use the `for` command to iterate over the keys of the dictionary:

```
>>> phone_numbers = {'Simon':'01234 567899', 'Jane':'01234 666666'}  
>>> for name in phone_numbers:  
...     print(name)  
...  
Jane  
Simon
```

Discussion

There are a couple of other techniques that you can use to iterate over a dictionary. The following form can be useful if you need access to the values as well as the keys:

```
>>> phone_numbers = {'Simon':'01234 567899', 'Jane':'01234 666666'}  
>>> for name, num in phone_numbers.items():  
...     print(name + " " + num)  
...  
Jane 01234 666666  
Simon 01234 567899
```

See Also

All the recipes between Recipes 6.12 and 6.15 involve the use of dictionaries.

See the `for` command used elsewhere in Recipes 5.21, 6.7, and 6.11.

Advanced Python

7.0 Introduction

In this chapter, you will explore some of the more advanced concepts in the Python language—in particular, object-oriented Python, reading and writing files, handling exceptions, using modules, and Internet programming.

7.1 Formatting Numbers

Problem

You want to format numbers to a certain number of decimal places.

Solution

Apply a `format` string to the number. For example:

```
>>> x = 1.2345678
>>> "x={:.2f}".format(x)
'x=1.23'
>>>
```

Discussion

The formatting string can contain a mixture of regular text and markers delimited by { and }. The parameters to the `format` function (there can be as many as you like) will be substituted in place of the marker, according to the format specifier.

In the preceding example, the format specifier is `:.2f`, which means that the number will be specified with two digits after the decimal place and is a float `f`.

If you wanted the number to be formatted so that the total length of the number is always seven digits (or padding spaces), then you would add another number before the decimal place like this:

```
>>> "x={:7.2f}".format(x)
'x=    1.23'
>>>
```

In this case, since the number is only three digits long, there are four spaces of padding before the 1. If you wanted the padding to take the form of leading zeros, you would use:

```
>>> "x={:07.2f}".format(x)
'x=0001.23'
>>>
```

A more complicated example might be to display the temperature in both degrees Celsius and degrees Fahrenheit, as shown here:

```
>>> c = 20.5
>>> "Temperature {:5.2f} deg C, {:5.2f} deg F.".format(c, c * 9 / 5 + 32)
'Temperature 20.50 deg C, 68.90 deg F.'
>>>
```

See Also

Formatting in Python involves a whole formatting language.

7.2 Formatting Dates and Times

Problem

You want to convert a date into a string and format it in a certain way.

Solution

Apply `format` string to the date object.

For example:

```
>>> from datetime import datetime
>>> d = datetime.now()
>>> "{:Y-%m-%d %H:%M:%S}".format(d)
'2015-12-09 16:00:45'
>>>
```

Discussion

The Python formatting language includes some special symbols for formatting date. `%Y`, `%m`, and `%d` correspond to year, month, and day numbers, respectively.

Other symbols useful for formatting the date are %B, which supplies the full name of the month and %Y, which gives the year in four digit format, as shown here:

```
>>> "{:%d %B %Y}",format(d)
'09 December 2015'
```

See Also

See [Recipe 7.1](#) for formatting of numbers.

Formatting in Python actually involves a whole formatting language. You will find full details of this at <http://strftime.org/>.

7.3 Returning More Than One Value

Problem

You need to write a function that returns more than one value.

Solution

Return a Python *tuple* and use the multiple variable assignment syntax. A tuple is a Python data structure that's a little like a list, except that tuples are enclosed in parentheses rather than brackets. They are also of fixed size.

For example, you could have a function that converts a temperature in Kelvin into both Fahrenheit and Celsius. You can arrange for this function to return the temperature in both these units by separating the multiple return values by commas:

```
>>> def calculate_temperatures(kelvin):
...     celsius = kelvin - 273
...     fahrenheit = celsius * 9 / 5 + 32
...     return celsius, fahrenheit
...
>>> c, f = calculate_temperatures(340)
>>>
>>> print(c)
67
>>> print(f)
152.6
```

When you call the function, you just provide the same number of variables before the = and each of the return values will be assigned to the variables in the same position.

Discussion

Sometimes when you just have one or two values to return, this is the right way to return multiple values. However, if the data is complex, you might find that the solu-

tion is neater if you use Python's object-oriented features and define a class that contains the data. That way, you can return an instance of the class rather than a tuple.

See Also

See [Recipe 7.4](#) for information on defining classes.

7.4 Defining a Class

Problem

You need to group together related data and functionality into a class.

Solution

Define a class and provide it with the member variables you need.

The following example defines a class to represent an address book entry:

```
class Person:  
    '''This class represents a person object'''  
  
    def __init__(self, name, tel):  
        self.name = name  
        self.tel = tel
```

The first line inside the class definition uses the triple quotes to denote a documentation string. This should explain the purpose of the class. Although entirely optional, adding a documentation string to a class allows others to see what the class does. This is particularly useful if the class is made available for others to use.

Doc strings are not like normal comments because, although they are not active lines of code, they do get associated with the class, so, at any time, you can read the doc string for a class by using the following command:

```
Person.__doc__
```

Inside the class definition is the constructor method, which will be called automatically whenever you create a new instance of the class. A class is like a template, so in defining a class called `Person`, we do not create any actual `Person` objects until later:

```
def __init__(self, name, tel):  
    self.name = name  
    self.tel = tel
```

The constructor method must be named as shown with double underscores on either side of the word `init`.

Discussion

One way in which Python differs from most object-oriented languages is that you have to include the special variable `self` as a parameter to all the methods that you define within the class. This is a reference to, in this case, the newly created instance. The variable `self` is the same concept as the special variable `this` that you find in Java and some other languages.

The code in this method transfers parameters that were supplied to it into member variables. The member variables do not need to be declared in advance, but do need to be prefixed by `self`..

So the following line:

```
self.name = name
```

creates a variable called `name` that's accessible to every member of the class `Person` and initializes it with the value passed into the call to create an instance, which looks like this:

```
p = Person("Simon", "1234567")
```

We can then check that our new `Person` object, `p`, has a name of "Simon" by typing the following:

```
>>> p.name  
Simon
```

In a complex program, it is good practice to put each class in its own file with a file-name that matches the class name. This also makes it easy to convert the class into a module (see [Recipe 7.11](#)).

See Also

See [Recipe 7.5](#) for information on defining methods.

7.5 Defining a Method

Problem

You need to add a method to a class.

Solution

The following example shows how you can include a method within a class definition:

```
class Person:  
    '''This class represents a person object'''
```

```
def __init__(self, first_name, surname, tel):
    self.first_name = first_name
    self.surname = surname
    self.tel = tel

def full_name(self):
    return self.first_name + " " + self.surname
```

The `full_name` method concatenates the first name and surname attributes of the person, with a space in between.

Discussion

You can think of methods as just functions that are tied to a specific class and may or may not use member variables of that class in their processing. So, as with a function, you can write whatever code you like in a method and also have one method call another.

If one method calls another within the same class, the call to the method has to be prefixed with `self`.

See Also

See [Recipe 7.4](#) for information on defining a class.

7.6 Inheritance

Problem

You need a specialized version of an existing class.

Solution

Use *inheritance* to create a subclass of an existing class and add new member variables and methods.

By default, all new classes that you create are subclasses of `object`. You can change this by specifying the class you want to use as a superclass in parentheses after the class name in a class definition. The following example defines a class (`Employee`) as a subclass of `Person` and adds a new member variable (`salary`) and an extra method (`give_raise`):

```
class Employee(Person):

    def __init__(self, first_name, surname, tel, salary):
        super().__init__(first_name, surname, tel)
        self.salary = salary
```

```
def give_raise(self, amount):
    self.salary = self.salary + amount
```

Note that the preceding example is for Python 3. For Python 2, you can't use `super` the same way. Instead, you must write:

```
class Employee(Person):

    def __init__(self, first_name, surname, tel, salary):
        Person.__init__(self, first_name, surname, tel)
        self.salary = salary

    def give_raise(self, amount):
        self.salary = self.salary + amount
```

Discussion

In both of these examples, the initializer method for the subclass first uses the initializer method of the parent class (superclass) and then adds the member variable. This has the advantage that you do not need to repeat the initialization code in the new subclass.

See Also

See [Recipe 7.4](#) for information on defining a class.

The Python inheritance mechanism is actually very powerful and supports *multiple inheritance*, where a subclass inherits from more than one superclass. For more on multiple inheritance, see the [official documentation for Python](#).

7.7 Writing to a File

Problem

You need to write something to a file.

Solution

Use the `open`, `write`, and `close` functions to open a file, write some data, and then close the file, respectively:

```
>>> f = open('test.txt', 'w')
>>> f.write('This file is not empty')
>>> f.close()
```

Discussion

Once you have opened the file, you can make as many writes to it as you like before you close the file. Note that it is important to use `close` because although each write should update the file immediately, it may be buffered in memory and data could be lost. It could also leave the file locked so that other programs can't open it.

The `open` method takes two parameters. The first is the path to the file to be written. This can be relative to the current working directory, or if it starts with a `/`, an absolute path.

The second parameter is the mode in which the file should be opened. To overwrite an existing file or create the file with the name specified if it doesn't exist, just use `w`. [Table 7-1](#) shows the full list of file mode characters. You can combine these using `+`. So to open a file in read and binary mode, you would use:

```
>>> f = open('test.txt', 'r+b')
```

Table 7-1. File modes

Mode	Description
r	Read
w	Write
a	Append - to the end of an existing file rather than overwriting
b	Binary mode
t	Text mode (default)
+	A shortcut for r+w

Binary mode allows you to read or write binary streams of data, such as images, rather than text.

See Also

To read the contents of a file, see [Recipe 7.8](#). For more information on handling exceptions, see [Recipe 7.10](#).

7.8 Reading from a File

Problem

You need to read the contents of a file into a string variable.

Solution

To read a file's contents, you need to use the file methods `open`, `read`, and `close`. The following example reads the entire contents of the file into the variable `s`:

```
f = open('test.txt')
s = f.read()
f.close()
```

Discussion

You can also read text files one line at a time using the method `readline`.

The preceding example will throw an exception if the file does not exist or is not readable for some other reason. You can handle this by enclosing the code in a `try/except` construction like this:

```
try:
    f = open('test.txt')
    s = f.read()
    f.close()
except IOError:
    print("Cannot open the file")
```

See Also

To write things to a file and for a list of file open modes, see [Recipe 7.7](#).

For more information on handling exceptions, see [Recipe 7.10](#).

7.9 Pickling

Problem

You want to save the entire contents of a data structure to a file so that it can be read the next time the program is run.

Solution

Use the Python *pickling* feature to dump the data structure to file in a format that can be automatically read back into memory as an equivalent data structure later on.

The following example saves a complex list structure to file:

```
>>> import pickle
>>> mylist = ['some text', 123, [4, 5, True]]
>>> f = open('mylist.pickle', 'w')
>>> pickle.dump(mylist, f)
>>> f.close()
```

To *unpickle* the contents of the file into a new list, use the following:

```
>>> f = open('mylist.pickle')
>>> other_array = pickle.load(f)
>>> f.close()
>>> other_array
['some text', 123, [4, 5, True]]
```

Discussion

Pickling will work on pretty much any data structure you can throw at it. It does not need to be a list.

The file is saved in a text format that is sort of human-readable, but you will not normally need to look at or edit the text file.

See Also

To write things to a file and for a list of file open modes, see [Recipe 7.7](#).

7.10 Handling Exceptions

Problem

If something goes wrong while a program is running, you want to catch the error or exception and display a more user-friendly error message.

Solution

Use Python's `try/except` construct.

The following example, taken from [Recipe 7.8](#), catches any problems in opening a file:

```
try:
    f = open('test.txt')
    s = f.read()
    f.close()
except IOError:
    print("Cannot open the file")
```

Because you wrapped the potentially error-prone commands to open the file in a `try/except` construction, any error that occurs will be captured before it displays any error message allowing you to handle it in your own way. In this case, that means displaying the friendly message "Cannot open the file".

Discussion

A common situation where runtime exceptions can occur, in addition to during file access, is when you are accessing a list and the index you are using is outside the bounds of the list. For example, this happens if you try to access the fifth (index 4) element of a three-element list:

```
>>> list = [1, 2, 3]
>>> list[4]
Traceback (most recent call last):
  File "<stdin>", line 1, in <module>
IndexError: list index out of range
```

Errors and exceptions are arranged in a hierarchy, and you can be as specific or general as you like when catching the exceptions.

`Exception` is pretty near the top of that tree and will catch almost any exception. You can also have separate `except` sections for catching different types of exception and handling, each in a different way. If you do not specify any exception class, all exceptions will be caught.

Python also allows you to have `else` and `finally` clauses in your error handling:

```
list = [1, 2, 3]
try:
    list[8]
except:
    print("out of range")
else:
    print("in range")
finally:
    print("always do this")
```

The `else` clause will be run if there is no exception, and the `finally` clause will be run whether there is an exception or not.

Whenever an exception occurs, you can get more information about it by using the `exception` object, which is available only if you use the `as` keyword, as shown in the following example:

```
>>> list = [1, 2, 3]
>>> try:
...     list[8]
... except Exception as e:
...     print("out of range")
...     print(e)
...
out of range
list index out of range
>>>
```

This allows you to handle the error in your own way, but also keep hold of the original error message.

See Also

[Python documentation for Python exception class hierarchy](#).

7.11 Using Modules

Problem

You want to use a Python module in your program.

Solution

Use the `import` command:

```
import random
```

Discussion

There is a very large number of modules (sometimes called *libraries*) available for Python. Many are included with Python as part of the standard library and others can be downloaded and installed into Python.

Standard Python libraries include modules for random numbers, database access, various Internet protocols, object serialization, and many more.

One consequence of having so many modules is that there is the potential for conflict—for example, if two modules have a function of the same name. To avoid such conflicts, when importing a module, you can specify how much of the module is accessible.

For example, if you just use a command like this:

```
import random
```

there is no possibility of any conflicts because you will only be able to access any functions or variables in the module by prefixing them with `random.`.. (Incidentally, you'll be meeting the `random` package in the next recipe.)

If, on the other hand, you use the following command, everything in the module will be accessible without your having to put anything in front of it. Unless you know what all the functions are in all the modules you are using, there is a much greater chance of conflict.

```
from random import *
```

In between these two extremes, you can explicitly specify the components of a module that you need within a program so that they can be conveniently used without any prefix.

For example:

```
>>> from random import randint  
>>> print(randint(1,6))  
2  
>>>
```

A third option is to use the `as` keyword to provide a more convenient or meaningful name for the module when referencing it.

```
>>> import random as R  
>>> R.randint(1, 6)
```

See Also

For a definitive list of the modules included with Python, see <http://docs.python.org/2/library/>.

7.12 Random Numbers

Problem

You need to generate a random number between a range of numbers.

Solution

Use the `random` library:

```
>>> import random  
>>> random.randint(1, 6)  
2  
>>> random.randint(1, 6)  
6  
>>> random.randint(1, 6)  
5
```

The number generated will be between the two arguments (inclusive)—in this case, simulating a gaming dice.

Discussion

The numbers generated are not truly random, but are what is known as a *pseudorandom number sequence*; that is, they are a long sequence of numbers that, when taken in a large enough quantity, show what statisticians call a *random distribution*. For games, this is perfectly good enough, but if you were generating lottery numbers, you

would need to look at special randomizing hardware. Computers are just plain bad at being random; it's not really in their nature.

A common use of random numbers is to select something at random from a list. You can do this by generating an index position and using that, but there is also a command in the `random` module specifically for this. Try the following example:

```
>>> import random
>>> random.choice(['a', 'b', 'c'])
'a'
>>> random.choice(['a', 'b', 'c'])
'b'
>>> random.choice(['a', 'b', 'c'])
'a'
```

See Also

See the [official reference for the random package](#) for more information on this.

7.13 Making Web Requests from Python

Problem

You need to read the contents of a web page into a string using Python.

Solution

Python has an extensive library for making HTTP requests.

The following Python 2 example reads the contents of the Google home page into the string `contents`:

```
import urllib2
contents = urllib2.urlopen("https://www.google.com/").read()
print(contents)
```

Discussion

If you are using Python 3 rather than Python 2, then you will need to change your example to:

```
import urllib.request
response = urllib.request.urlopen('http://python.org/')
contents = response.read()
print(contents)
```

Having read the HTML, you are then likely to want to search it and extract the parts of the text that you really want. For this, you will need to use the string manipulation functions (see Recipes 5.14 and 5.15).

See Also

For more Internet-related examples using Python, see [Chapter 15](#).

7.14 Command-Line Arguments in Python

Problem

You want to run a Python program from the command line and pass it parameters.

Solution

Import `sys` and use its `argv` property, as shown in the following example. This returns an array, the first element of which is the name of the program. The other elements are any parameters (separated by spaces) that were typed on the command line after the program name.

```
import sys

for (i, value) in enumerate(sys.argv):
    print("arg: %d %s" % (i, value))
```

Running the program from the command line, with some parameters after it, results in the following output:

```
$ python cmd_line.py a b c
arg: 0 cmd_line.py
arg: 1 a
arg: 2 b
arg: 3 c
```

Discussion

Being able to specify command-line arguments can be useful for automating the running of Python programs, either at startup ([Recipe 3.21](#)) or on a timed basis ([Recipe 3.23](#)).

See Also

For basic information on running Python from the command line, see [Recipe 5.4](#).

In printing out `argv`, we used list enumerations ([Recipe 6.8](#)).

7.15 Running Linux Commands from Python

Problem

You want to run a Linux command or program from your Python program.

Solution

Use the `system` command.

For example, to delete a file called `myfile.txt` in the directory from which you started Python, you could do the following:

```
import os
os.system("rm myfile.txt")
```

Discussion

Sometimes rather than just execute a command blindly as in the example above, you need to capture the response of the command. Let's say you wanted to use the '`hostname`' command to find the IP address (see [Recipe 2.2](#)) of the Raspberry Pi. In this case, you can use the `check_output` function in the `subprocess` library.

```
import subprocess
ip = subprocess.check_output(['hostname', '-I'])
```

In this case, the variable `ip` will contain the IP address of the Raspberry Pi. Unlike `system`, `check_output` requires the command itself and any parameters to be supplied as separate elements of an array.

See Also

For documentation on the OS library, see <http://www.pythonforbeginners.com/os/pythons-os-module>.

For more information on the `subprocess` library, see <https://docs.python.org/3/library/subprocess.html>.

In [Recipe 14.4](#), you will find an example using `subprocess` to display the IP address, hostname, and time of your Raspberry Pi on an LCD screen.

7.16 Sending Email from Python

Problem

You want to send an email message from a Python program.

Solution

Python has a library for the Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) that you can use to send emails:

```
import smtplib

GMAIL_USER = 'your_name@gmail.com'
GMAIL_PASS = 'your_password'
SMTP_SERVER = 'smtp.gmail.com'
SMTP_PORT = 587

def send_email(recipient, subject, text):
    smtpserver = smtplib.SMTP(SMTP_SERVER, SMTP_PORT)
    smtpserver.ehlo()
    smtpserver.starttls()
    smtpserver.ehlo
    smtpserver.login(GMAIL_USER, GMAIL_PASS)
    header = 'To:' + recipient + '\n' + 'From: ' + GMAIL_USER
    header = header + '\n' + 'Subject:' + subject + '\n'
    msg = header + '\n' + text + '\n\n'
    smtpserver.sendmail(GMAIL_USER, recipient, msg)
    smtpserver.close()

send_email('destination_email_address', 'sub', 'this is text')
```

To use this example to send an email to an address of your choice, first change the variables `GMAIL_USER` and `GMAIL_PASS` to match your email credentials. If you are not using Gmail, then you will also need to change the values of the `SMTP_SERVER` and possibly `SMTP_PORT`.

You also need to change the destination email address in the last line.

Discussion

The `send_email` message simplifies the use of the `smtplib` library into a single function that you can reuse in your projects.

Being able to send emails from Python opens up all sorts of project opportunities. For example, you could use a sensor such as the PIR sensor to send an email when movement is detected.

See Also

For a similar example that uses the IFTTT web service to send emails, see [Recipe 15.3](#).

For performing HTTP requests from the Raspberry Pi, see [Recipe 7.13](#).

For more information on the `smtplib`, see <http://docs.python.org/2/library/smtplib.html>.

For a whole load of Internet-related recipes, see [Chapter 15](#).

7.17 Writing a Simple Web Server in Python

Problem

You need to create a simple Python web server, but don't want to have to run a full web server stack.

Solution

Use the `bottle` Python library to run a pure Python web server that will respond to HTTP requests.

To install `bottle`, use the following command:

```
sudo apt-get install python-bottle
```

The following Python program (called `bottle_test` in the [book resources](#)) simply serves up a message displaying what time the Pi thinks it is. [Figure 7-1](#) shows the page you see if you connect to the Raspberry Pi from a browser anywhere on your network:

```
from bottle import route, run, template
from datetime import datetime

@route('/')
def index(name='time'):
    dt = datetime.now()
    time = "{:%Y-%m-%d %H:%M:%S}".format(dt)
    return template('Pi thinks the date/time is: {{t}}', t=time)

run(host='0.0.0.0', port=80)
```

To start the program, you need to run it with superuser privileges:

```
$ sudo python bottle_test.py
```

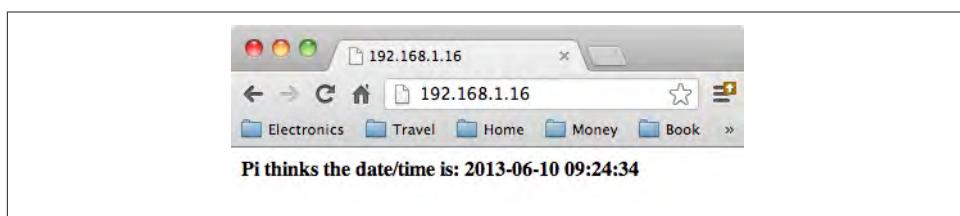


Figure 7-1. Browsing to a Python bottle web server

This example requires a little explanation.

After the `import` commands, the `@route` command links the URL path `/` with the handler function that follows it.

That handler function formats the date and time and then returns a string of the HTML to be rendered by the browser. In this case, it uses a template into which values can be substituted.

The final `run` line actually starts the web serving process. Port 80 is the default port for web serving, so if you wish to use a different port, then you need to add the port number with a `:` after the server address.

Discussion

You can define as many routes and handlers as you like within the program.

`bottle` is perfect for small, simple web server projects, and because it's written in Python, it's very easy to write a handler function to control hardware in response to the user interacting with the page in a browser. You will find other examples using `bottle` in [Chapter 15](#).

See Also

For more information, see the [bottle project documentation](#).

For more on formatting dates and times in Python, see [Recipe 7.2](#).

For a whole load of Internet-related recipes, see [Chapter 15](#).

7.18 Doing More Than One Thing at a Time

Problem

Your Python program is busy doing one thing, and you want it to do something else at the same time.

Solution

Use the Python `thread` library.

The following example, which you can download from the Downloads section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook website](#), sets a thread running that will interrupt the counting of the main thread.

```
import thread, time, random

def annoy(message):
    while True:
        time.sleep(random.randint(1, 3))
        print(message)

thread.start_new_thread(annoy, ('BOO !!',))

x = 0
while True:
    print(x)
    x += 1
    time.sleep(1)
```

The output on the console will look something like this:

```
$ python thread_test.py
0
1
BOO !!
2
BOO !!
3
4
5
BOO !!
6
7
8
```

When you start a new *thread of execution* using the Python thread library, you must specify a function that is to be run as that thread. In this example, the function is called `annoy` and it contains a loop that will continue indefinitely printing out a message after a random interval of between 1 and 3 seconds.

To start the thread, the `start_new_thread` function in the `thread` module is called. This function expects two parameters: the first is the name of the function to run (in this case `annoy`) and the second is a tuple that contains any parameters that are to be passed to the function (in this case '`BOO !!'`).

You can see that the main thread that is just happily counting will be interrupted every few seconds by the thread running in the `annoy` function.

Discussion

Threads like these are also sometimes called *lightweight processes* because they are similar in effect to having more than one program or process running at the same time. They do, however, have the advantage that threads running in the same pro-

gram have access to the same variables, and when the main thread of the program exits, so do any threads that are started in it.

See Also

For a good introduction to threading in Python, see http://www.tutorialspoint.com/python/python_multithreading.htm.

7.19 Doing Nothing in Python

Problem

You want Python to kill time for a while. You might want to do this, say, to delay between sending messages to the terminal.

Solution

Use the `sleep` function in the `time` library as illustrated in the following code example that you can find with the [downloads for the book](#) called `sleep_test.py`.

```
import time

x = 0
while True:
    print(x)
    time.sleep(1)
    x += 1
```

The main loop of the program will delay for a second before printing the next number.

Discussion

The function `time.sleep` takes a number of seconds as its parameter. But if you want shorter delays, you can specify decimals. For example, to delay for a millisecond, you would use `time.sleep(0.001)`.

Its a good idea to put a short delay in any loop that continues indefinitely, or even just continues for more than a fraction of a second, because when sleep is being called, the processor is freed up to allow other processes to do some work.

See Also

For an interesting discussion of how `time.sleep` can reduce the CPU load of your Python program, see <http://raspberrypi.stackexchange.com/questions/8077/how-can-i-lower-the-usage-of-cpu-for-this-python-program>.

7.20 Using Python with Minecraft Pi Edition

Problem

Now that you know some Python, you want to use it with Minecraft.

Solution

Use the Python interface that comes with Minecraft Pi edition to interact with Minecraft Pi while it is running.

Although you can switch back and forth between an LXTerminal session and the Minecraft game, the game will pause each time the window loses focus, so it is a lot easier to connect to the Raspberry Pi by using SSH on a second computer ([Recipe 2.7](#)). This has the added benefit that you get to see the Python script in action, live in the game.

The following example, which you can download from the Downloads section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook website](#), builds a staircase at your current location ([Figure 7-2](#)):

```
from mcpi import minecraft, block
mc = minecraft.Minecraft.create()

mc.postToChat("Lets Build a Staircase!")

x, y, z = mc.player.getPos()

for xy in range(1, 50):
    mc.setBlock(x + xy, y + xy, z, block.STONE)
```

The Python library comes pre-installed in Raspbian, so if it's not there, you should probably update your system ([Recipe 1.5](#)).

After the library imports, the variable `mc` is assigned to a new instance of the Minecraft class.

The `postToChat` method sends a message to the player's screen telling him or her that the staircase is about to be built.

The variables `x`, `y`, and `z` are bound to the player's position and then the `for` loop increments both the `x` and `y` (`y` is height) repeatedly to build the staircase using the `setBlock` method ([Figure 7-2](#)).



Figure 7-2. Building a staircase in Minecraft Pi with Python

Discussion

The `mcpι` library does not just allow you to post to chat, find the player's location, and place a block, it also provides a whole load of other methods that allow you to:

- Find the ID of the block at the coordinates specified
- Find out who's playing and teleport them perhaps?
- Set the position of a player
- Get the direction a player is facing

There is no definitive documentation for the class other than [this useful blog post](#).

See Also

For more information on the Minecraft Pi Edition, see [Recipe 4.7](#).

To learn about running a Minecraft server on a Raspberry Pi, see [Recipe 4.8](#).

Computer Vision

8.0 Introduction

Computer vision (CV) allows your Raspberry Pi to see things. In practical terms, this means that your Raspberry Pi can analyze an image, looking for items of interest and even recognizing faces and text.

If you link this with a camera to supply the images, all sorts of possibilities open up.

8.1 Installing SimpleCV

Problem

You want to install SimpleCV computer vision software on your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

To install SimpleCV, first install the prerequisite packages using these commands:

```
$ sudo apt-get update  
$ sudo apt-get install ipython python-opencv python-scipy  
$ sudo apt-get install python-numpy python-setuptools python-pip  
$ sudo pip install svgwrite
```

Then install SimpleCV itself using the command:

```
$ sudo pip install https://github.com/sightmachine/SimpleCV/zipball/master
```

Once installation is complete, you can check that everything worked by running this command:

```
$ simplecv
+-----+
 SimpleCV 1.3.0 [interactive shell] - http://simplecv.org
+-----+
Commands:
 "exit()" or press "Ctrl+ D" to exit the shell
 "clear()" to clear the shell screen
 "tutorial()" to begin the SimpleCV interactive tutorial
 "example()" gives a list of examples you can run
 "forums()" will launch a web browser for the help forums
 "walkthrough()" will launch a web browser with a walkthrough
```

This will open the SimpleCV console. This is a Python console, with extra features for SimpleCV.

Discussion

SimpleCV is a Python wrapper around the OpenCV computer vision software. SimpleCV, as the name suggests, simplifies the use of OpenCV. If you want to unleash the full power of OpenCV, take a look at <http://opencv.org/>.

Computer vision is both processor- and memory-intensive, so although SimpleCV and OpenCV will work on an older Raspberry Pi, it can be frustratingly slow on anything earlier than a Raspberry Pi 3 or 2.

See Also

For information on OpenCV, see <http://opencv.org/>.

The home page for the SimpleCV project is <http://simplecv.org>.

The first recipe in this chapter to use SimpleCV is [Recipe 8.4](#) and you will find useful details for getting started with SimpleCV there.

8.2 Setting Up a USB Camera for Computer Vision

Problem

You want to set up a USB webcam for use in computer vision projects.

Solution

Use a USB webcam that is compatible with the Raspberry Pi (see http://elinux.org/RPi_USB_Webcams). Choose a good quality camera, and if you are working on a project where you need the camera close to the subject, select one that has a manual focus option. For getting really close to the subject, a low-cost USB endoscope can be useful.

Depending on your CV project, you may wish to set up a well-lighted area for your CV project. Figure 8-1 shows a simple light box made from a translucent plastic storage box illuminated from the sides and top to give even lighting. The webcam is attached to a hole in the top of the box. This arrangement is used in Recipe 8.4.



Figure 8-1. Using a homemade “light tent” for even illumination

You can also buy commercial *light tents* designed for photography that work well.

You may need a little trial and error to get your system brightly and evenly illuminated. Shadows can be particularly problematic.

Discussion

You can test out your USB camera from the SimpleCV console. Start SimpleCV and then enter the commands shown below in bold:

```
SimpleCV:3> i
SimpleCV:3: <SimpleCV.Image Object size:(640, 480), filename: (None),
at memory location: (0x2381af8)>
SimpleCV:4> i.show()
```

Don't worry about the *Invalid argument* messages.

When you issue the command `i.show()`, a second window opens showing the image just captured from the camera.

Although you can use the Raspberry Pi Camera module ([Recipe 8.3](#)) with SimpleCV, it has a very short lead to the Raspberry Pi and you will probably find that you prefer working with a high-quality webcam.

See Also

To use a Raspberry Pi Camera Module with SimpleCV, see [Recipe 8.3](#).

8.3 Using a Raspberry Pi Camera Module for Computer Vision

Problem

You want to use a Raspberry Pi Camera Module that connects directly to your Raspberry Pi with Simple CV.

Solution

The Raspberry Pi Camera Module does not automatically show up as a camera device. The easiest way to make the module work with SimpleCV is to use the `picamera` Python module to capture an image with the camera.

The following code fragment will use `picamera` to capture an image, save it to a temporary file, and then load it as an `Image` suitable for use with SimpleCV.

```
import picamera
from SimpleCV import *

def get_camera_image():
    with picamera.PiCamera() as camera:
        camera.capture('tmp.jpg')
    return Image('tmp.jpg')
```

In [Recipe 8.4](#), the program assumes a USB webcam. A second version of the program using the function above for the Raspberry Pi camera module is also provided in the file `coin_count_pi_cam.py`.

Discussion

It may seem inefficient to write a file each time an image is captured, and indeed it is, but any processing that you apply to the image with SimpleCV on a Raspberry Pi is likely to take a lot longer than the time taken to load and save the image.

The `picamera` module allows you to set various features of the camera. Most usefully, you can control the resolution, automatic exposure, and white-balance adjustments, which can make it easier to get consistent results with CV.

The native resolution of the camera is 2592×1944, which will make for pretty slow image processing, so you may want to set the resolution to something closer to 1024×768 and turn off auto-white balance. The `get_camera_image` function can be modified to include these settings, as shown here:

```
import picamera
from SimpleCV import *

def get_camera_image():
    with picamera.PiCamera() as camera:
        camera.resolution = (1024, 768)
        camera.awb_mode = 'off'
        camera.capture('tmp.jpg')
    return Image('tmp.jpg')
```

See Also

See [Recipe 1.14](#) for information on installing the Raspberry Pi camera module.

For information on the `picamera` Python module, see <http://picamera.readthedocs.org/>.

To use a USB camera with SimpleCV, see [Recipe 8.2](#).

8.4 Counting Coins

Problem

You want to use computer vision to count the number of coins under your webcam.

Solution

Use SimpleCV and its `findCircle` function to provide a real-time count of the number of coins placed under the webcam.

This is one use of CV where you really need good lighting and a camera fixed in position. I used the setup shown in [Figure 8-1](#).

Before writing a Python program that will simply tell you the number of coins your Raspberry Pi can see, you need to experiment with the SimpleCV console to get the parameters for circle recognition right.

Start SimpleCV by using the command `simplecv` and then enter the commands below to start the camera, capture an image, and then display it in a separate window.

```
SimpleCV:1> c = Camera()  
SimpleCV:2> i = c.getImage()  
SimpleCV:3> i.show()
```

This should open up an image of your coins that looks something like [Figure 8-2](#).

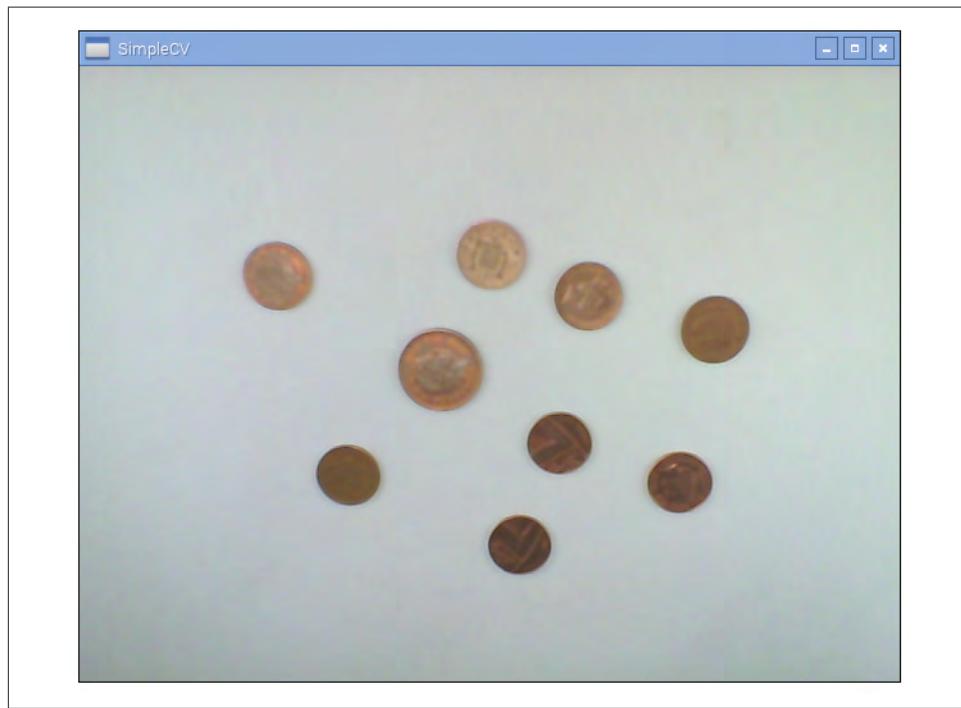


Figure 8-2. A basic image of some coins

Circle detection needs the image to be inverted, or you can use a black background. To invert the image and then display it, run the commands below:

```
SimpleCV:4> i2 = i.invert()  
SimpleCV:5> i2.show()
```

This command makes an inverted copy of `i` that looks like [Figure 8-3](#).



Figure 8-3. An inverted image of some coins

Your image is now prepared, so the next step is to have SimpleCV search for circles using the `findCircle` command. This command takes three parameters that you will need to tune to prevent misidentification. The parameters are:

canny

This is the threshold for edge detection. In CV terms, an edge is the line between significant changes in the image pixel colors. The default for this parameter is 100, and if you decrease this value, you will find more edges. This might not result in more circles being found because those extra edges might corrupt the good circle shapes. In the case of a coin, the edges could be writing or graphics on the coin.

thresh

Having found edges, the circle detection then needs to decide which are strong enough to represent the circles. Decreasing this value will result in more circles being found.

distance

This parameter sets the required gap (in pixels) between adjacent circles.

Run the following command to find some circles:

```
SimpleCV:6> coins = i2.findCircle(canny=100, thresh=70, distance=15)
SimpleCV:7> coins
SimpleCV.Features.Detection.Circle at (237,297),
SimpleCV.Features.Detection.Circle at (307,323),
SimpleCV.Features.Detection.Circle at (373,305),
SimpleCV.Features.Detection.Circle at (305,261),
SimpleCV.Features.Detection.Circle at (385,253),
SimpleCV.Features.Detection.Circle at (243,231),
SimpleCV.Features.Detection.Circle at (307,383),
SimpleCV.Features.Detection.Circle at (407,371),
SimpleCV.Features.Detection.Circle at (235,373)]
```

If you don't get any coins back, try decreasing the `canny` and `thresh` parameters. If you get too many, then increase `thresh`. We can check that SimpleCV is actually finding coins by superimposing the coin circles onto the original image using the following command.

```
SimpleCV:8> coins.draw(width=4)
SimpleCV:9> coins.show()
```

This will show the circles superimposed on the actual coins ([Figure 8-4](#)).



Figure 8-4. Coins found!

Try moving the coins around and adding and removing coins before capturing another photo and repeating the steps above to make sure things are reliable. You can tweak the parameters until you get the results you want.

We can bundle the commands that we used in the SimpleCV console into a Python program that will (as fast as the Raspberry Pi can) print out the number of coins detected. The program can be found with the other [downloads for the book](#) in the file *coin_count.py*.

```
from SimpleCV import *
c = Camera()
while True:
    i = c.getImage().invert()
    coins = i.findCircle(canny=100, thresh=70, distance=1)
    print(len(coins))
```

After importing the SimpleCV library, the commands are the same as the ones you typed into the console. The only difference is that rather than displaying the coins, the `len` function is used to display the count.

```
$ sudo python count_coins.py
9
9
9
10
10
```

Try adding a coin and moving the coins around to see how well the project works.

Discussion

After the initial delay while the library loads and the camera is set up, I found I could get about two “countings” per second using a Raspberry Pi B+. Using a Raspberry Pi 2, this increased to about five readings per second.

Although not something that you would want to put into a vending machine, it would be an interesting project to use the diameter of the coins to identify their monetary value and add up the value of the coins on the table.

You can access the diameter by using the `diameter` method on one of the coins like this:

```
SimpleCV:10> coins[0].diameter()
SimpleCV:11> 60
```

See Also

For information on installing SimpleCV, see [Recipe 8.1](#).

For information on setting up a camera, see [Recipe 8.2](#).

8.5 Face Detection

Problem

You want to find the coordinates of faces in a photograph or webcam image.

Solution

Use the Haar-like feature detection in SimpleCV to analyze an image and pick out the faces.

If you have not already done so, install SimpleCV (see [Recipe 8.1](#)). Open the SimpleCV console and load an image containing faces. You will find a suitable file [with the downloads for the book](#) called *faces.jpg*. Then run the following commands:

```
SimpleCV:1> i=Image("faces.jpg")
SimpleCV:2> faces = i.findHaarFeatures('face.xml', min_neighbors=5)
SimpleCV:3> faces.draw(width=4)
SimpleCV:4> i.show()
```

This opens the image viewing window with the faces marked with rectangles, as shown in [Figure 8-5](#).

Discussion

As well as interfacing with a camera, you can also load existing files into SimpleCV. In the previous example, the image *i* is loaded from the file *faces.jpg*. The method `find HaarFeatures` has one mandatory file, which is the type of feature that is being searched for. These features are called `haar` features and are described by an XML file. SimpleCV comes preloaded with some of these files, but you can also find more specific `haar` files on the Internet.

The second parameter used in this example (`min_neighbors`) will tune the `haar` function. Decreasing `min_neighbors` increases the number of false positives. When you see the false positives, they often have a face-ish element to them (mouth, nose, and eyes).

There are many built-in `haar` features. You can list them all by using the command:

```
SimpleCV:5> i.listHaarFeature()
SimpleCV:4> fullbody.xml', 'face4.xml', 'face.xml',
'upper_body.xml', 'right_ear.xml', 'eye.xml', 'lower_body.xml',
'two_eyes_small.xml', 'nose.xml', 'face2.xml', 'lefteye.xml',
'right_eye.xml', 'two_eyes_big.xml', 'face3.xml', 'mouth.xml',
'glasses.xml', 'profile.xml', 'left_ear.xml', 'left_eye2.xml',
'upper_body2.xml', 'right_eye2.xml', 'face_cv2.xml'
```

As you can see, they are all associated with parts of the body.

Finding haar features takes a few seconds, even on a Raspberry Pi 3.



Figure 8-5. Detecting faces

See Also

For information on installing SimpleCV, see [Recipe 8.1](#).

For information on setting up a camera, see [Recipe 8.2](#).

For a whole load of interesting Haar files, take a look at <https://github.com/Itseez/opencv/tree/master/data/haarcascades>.

8.6 Motion Detection

Problem

You want to use a camera connected to your Raspberry Pi to detect something moving in its field of view.

Solution

Use SimpleCV to detect changes between successive frames from the camera.

The program below compares each captured image with the previous image. It then detects any blobs (areas of similar color) in the difference image and if there are any larger than MIN_BLOB_SIZE, it prints out a message saying that movement was detected.

```
from SimpleCV import *
MIN_BLOB_SIZE = 1000
c = Camera()
old_image = c.getImage()
while True:
    new_image = c.getImage()
    diff = new_image - old_image
    blobs = diff.findBlobs(minsize=MIN_BLOB_SIZE)
    if blobs :
        print("Movement detected")
    old_image = new_image
```

Discussion

Successive frames of the image might look like Figures 8-6 and 8-7. When the first image is subtracted from the first, the resulting image will look like Figure 8-8. Running blob detection on it will result in the outlined blobs shown in Figure 8-9.



Figure 8-6. Movement detection frame 1



Figure 8-7. Movement detection frame 2



Figure 8-8. Movement detection, the difference image



Figure 8-9. Movement detection blobs

Using a Raspberry Pi 2, the motion detection program above will process about five frames per second.

See Also

For information on installing SimpleCV, see [Recipe 8.1](#). For information on setting up a camera, see [Recipe 8.2](#).

An alternative way to detect movement is to use a Passive Infrared (PIR) sensor; see [Recipe 12.9](#).

8.7 Optical Character Recognition

Problem

You want to be able to convert an image containing text to actual text.

Solution

Use the `tesseract` Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software to extract text from the image.

To install `tesseract`, run the following commands:

```
$ sudo apt-get install python-distutils-extra tesseract-ocr tesseract-ocr-eng  
libopencv-dev libtesseract-dev libleptonica-dev python-all-dev swig  
libcv-dev python-opencv python-numpy python-setuptools  
build-essential subversion  
$ sudo apt-get install tesseract-ocr-eng tesseract-ocr-dev libleptonica-dev  
python-all-dev swig libcv-dev  
$ sudo svn checkout  
http://python-tesseract.googlecode.com/svn/python-tesseract-0.7.4/  
$ cd python-tesseract-0.7.4  
$ sudo python setup.py build  
$ sudo python setup.py install
```

To try out `tesseract`, you will need an image file that contains some text. You will find one called `ocr_example.png` with the [downloads for the book](#).

To convert the image to text, run the command:

```
$ tesseract ocr_example.png found  
Tesseract Open Source OCR Engine v3.02 with Leptonica  
$ more found.txt  
The quick brown fox jumped over  
the lazy dogs back.  
$
```

Discussion

The `tesseract` library will work with most image types, including PDF, PNG, and JPG files.

See Also

For more information on the `tesseract` library, see <https://github.com/tesseract-ocr/tesseract/wiki/TrainingTesseract>.

Hardware Basics

9.0 Introduction

This chapter contains some basic recipes for setting up and using the Raspberry Pi's general-purpose input/output (GPIO) connector. This connector allows you to connect all sorts of interesting electronics to your Raspberry Pi.

9.1 Finding Your Way Around the GPIO Connector



Be sure to check out the accompanying video for this recipe at
<http://razzpisampler.oreilly.com>.

Problem

You need to connect electronics to the GPIO connector, but first you need to know more about what all the pins do.

Solution

There have actually been three versions of the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector. Two 26-pin layouts for the original Raspberry Pi and one 40-pin layout that came in with the Raspberry Pi "+" models.

Figure 9-1 shows the GPIO pinout for revisions 1 and 2 of the original Raspberry Pi Model B. The quick way to distinguish the boards is knowing that if you have one of the very first revision 1 boards, it has a black audio socket. The revision 2 boards have a blue audio socket.

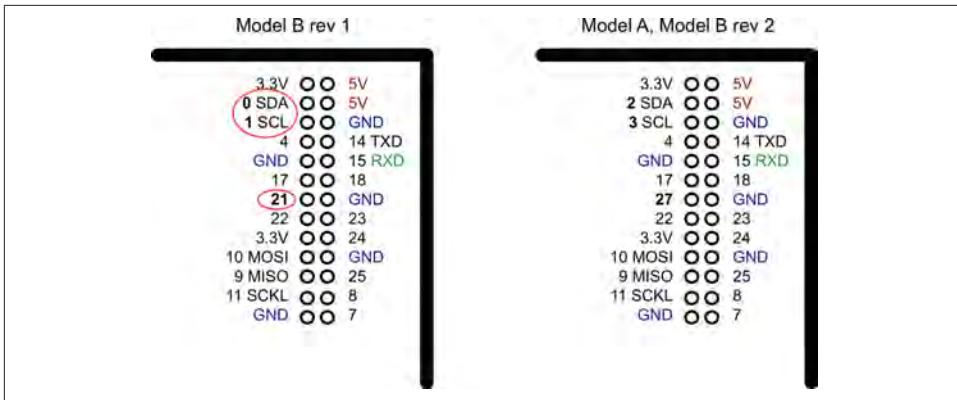


Figure 9-1. The GPIO pinout (26-pin models)

There were three changes to the GPIO connector between revision 1 and revision 2. These are highlighted in Figure 9-1. First, the I2C port was swapped. The two pins SDA and SCL are still SDA and SCL but use a different internal I2C interface. This means that if you’re using the pins as GPIO rather than I2C, then you will refer to them as 2 and 3 on a revision 2 board. Also, GPIO 21 was replaced by GPIO 27 on revision 2.

At the top of the connector, there are 3.3V and 5V power supplies. The GPIO uses 3.3V for all inputs and outputs. Any pin with a number next to it can act as a GPIO pin. Those that have another name after them also have some other special purpose, so 14 TXD and 15 RXD are the transmit and receive pins of the serial interface. SDA and SCL form the I2C interface, and MOSI, MISO, and SCKL from the SPI interface.

Figure 9-2 shows the current 40-pin layout, which is the same for all 40-pin GPIO Raspberry Pi models.

The top 26 pins are the same as the 26 pins of the original Raspberry Pi Model B revision 2. This allows the 40-pin Raspberry Pi models to use hardware and software designed for the earlier 26-pin Raspberry Pi designs. The extra pins of the 40-pin connector are made up of three useful extra GND connections and 9 GPIO pins. The ID_SD and ID_SC pins are intended for use in communicating with a special serial memory chip, which can be included on interface boards that conform to the Hardware At Top (HAT) standard and allows the Raspberry Pi to identify the board (see Discussion, next).

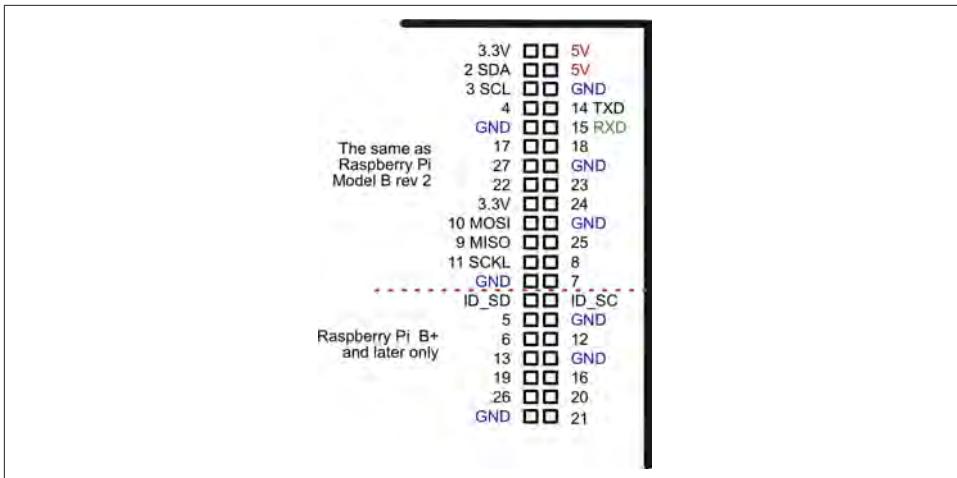


Figure 9-2. The GPIO pinout (40-pin models)

Discussion

Working out which pin is which on a Raspberry Pi is quite error-prone if you rely on counting down the pin connector to find the pin you need. A better way of finding the right pin is to use a GPIO template like the Raspberry Leaf shown in [Figure 9-3](#).

This paper template fits over the GPIO pins telling you which is which. Other GPIO templates include the Pi GPIO Reference Board.

The Hardware At Top standard is an interface standard that you can use with the Raspberry Pi 2, B+ and A+. This standard does not in any way stop you from just using GPIO pins directly; however, interface boards that conform to the HAT standard can call themselves HATs and differ from regular Raspberry Pi interface boards in that a HAT must contain a little Electrically Erasable Programmable Read-Only Memory (EEPROM) chip that is used to identify the HAT so that ultimately the Raspberry Pi can auto-install necessary software. At the time of writing, HATs have not quite met that level of sophistication, but the idea is a good one. The pins ID_SD and ID_SC are used to communicate with a HAT EEPROM.



Figure 9-3. The Raspberry Leaf

See Also

The Raspberry Pi GPIO connector only has digital inputs and outputs; it does not have the analog inputs found on some similar boards. You can get around this shortcoming by using a separate ADC chip ([Recipe 13.5](#)) or using resistive sensors ([Recipe 13.1](#)).

For an example of a HAT, see the Sense HAT described in [Recipe 9.16](#).

9.2 Keeping Your Raspberry Pi Safe When Using the GPIO Connector

Problem

You want to connect external electronics to your Raspberry Pi but don't want to accidentally damage or break it.

Solution

Obey these simple rules to reduce the risk of damaging your Raspberry Pi when using the GPIO connector:

- Do not put more than 3.3V on any GPIO pin being used as an input.
- Do not draw more than 16mA per output and keep the total for all outputs below 50mA in total for an older 26-pin Raspberry Pi, and below 100mA on a 40-pin Raspberry Pi.
- When using LEDs, 3mA is enough to light a red LED reasonably brightly with a 470Ω series resistor.
- Do not poke at the GPIO connector with a screwdriver or any metal object when the Pi is powered up.
- Do not power the Pi with more than 5V.
- Do not draw more than a total of 250mA from the 5V supply pins.

Discussion

There is no doubt about it, the Raspberry Pi is a little fragile when it comes to adding external electronics. The newer Raspberry Pi models are a little more robust but still quite easy to break. Exercise caution and check what you have done *before* you power up the Raspberry Pi, or you run the risk of having to replace your Raspberry Pi.

See Also

Read this very good discussion of the [Raspberry Pi's GPIO output capabilities](#).

9.3 Setting Up I2C

Problem

You have an I2C device that you want to use with your Raspberry Pi, but you don't know how.

Solution

In the latest versions of Raspbian, enabling I2C is simply a matter of using the Raspberry Pi Configuration tool that you will find on the main menu under Preferences ([Figure 9-4](#)). Just check the box for I2C and click OK. You will be prompted to restart.

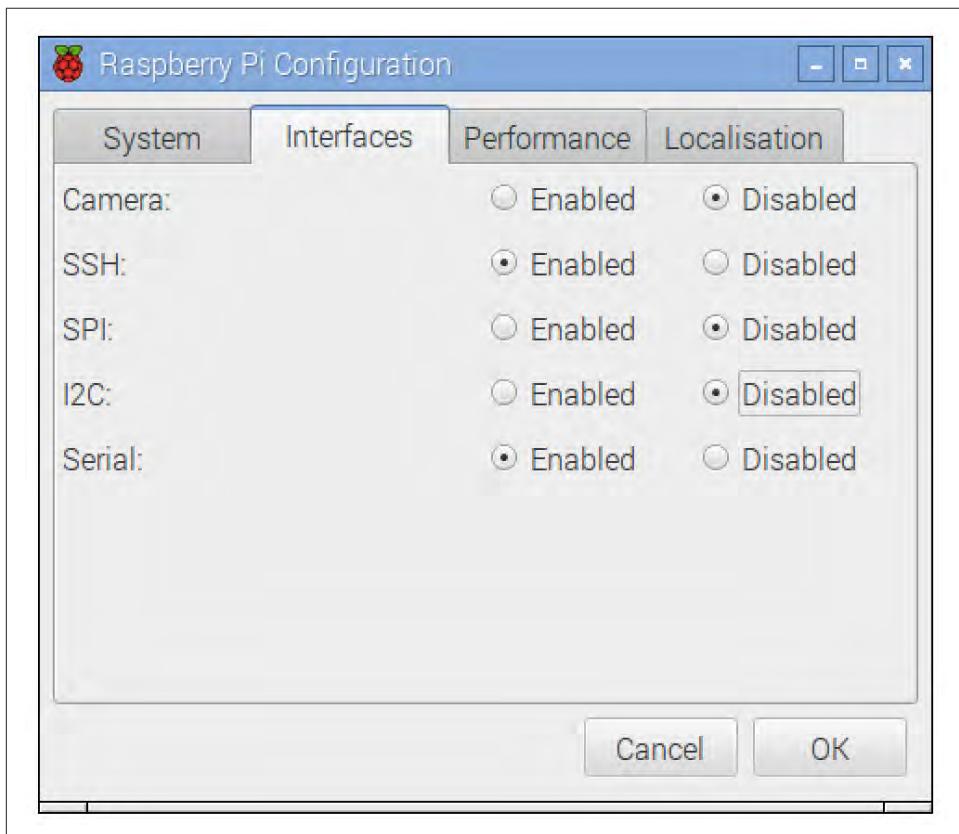


Figure 9-4. Enabling I2C using the Pi Configuration tool

On older versions of Raspbian, the `raspi-config` tool does the same job.

Start `raspi-config` using the following command:

```
$ sudo raspi-config
```

Then select Advanced from the menu and scroll down to I2C ([Figure 9-5](#)).

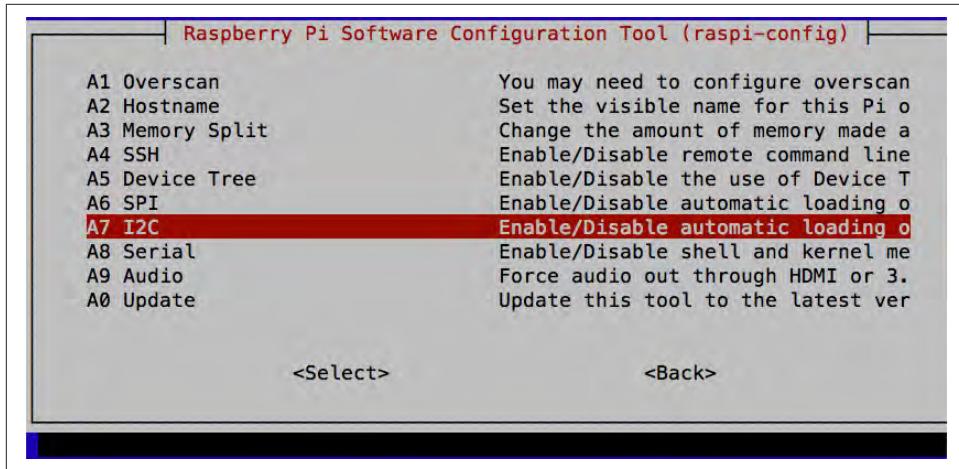


Figure 9-5. Enabling I2C using raspi-config

You will then be asked “Would you like the ARM I2C interface to be enabled?”, to which you should say “Yes.” You will also be asked if you want the I2C module loading at startup, to which you should also say “Yes.”

At this point, you will probably also want to install the Python I2C library by using the command:

```
$ sudo apt-get install python-smbus
```

You will then need to reboot the Raspberry Pi for the changes to take effect.

Discussion

Using I2C modules is actually a really good way of interfacing with the Pi. It reduces the number of wires that you need to connect everything (to just four), and there are some really neat I2C modules available.

However, don’t forget to calculate the total of the current used by the I2C modules and make sure that it doesn’t exceed those specified in [Recipe 9.2](#).

[Figure 9-6](#) shows a selection of I2C modules available from Adafruit. Other suppliers, such as SparkFun, also have I2C devices. From left to right, there are LED matrix displays; a four-digit, seven-segment LED display; a 16-channel PWM/servo controller; and a real-time clock module.

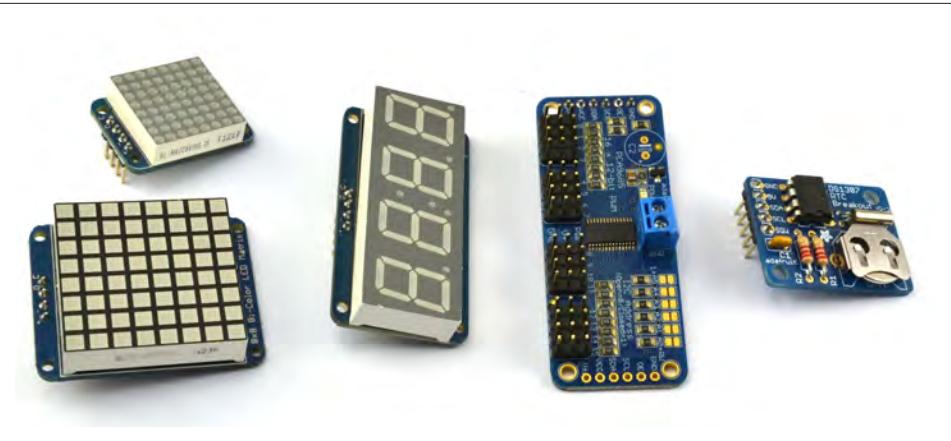


Figure 9-6. I2C modules

Other I2C modules include FM radio transmitters, ultrasonic rangefinders, OLED displays, and various types of sensors.

See Also

See some of the I2C recipes in this book, including Recipes 11.3, 14.1, 14.2, and 14.4.

9.4 Using I2C Tools

Problem

You have an I2C device attached to your Raspberry Pi, and you want to check that it's attached and find its I2C address.

Solution

Install and use `i2c-tools`.



On newer distributions, you may find that `i2c-tools` is already installed.

From a Terminal window on your Pi, type the following commands to fetch and install the `i2c-tools`:

```
$ sudo apt-get install i2c-tools
```

Attach your I2C device to the Pi and run the command:

```
$ sudo i2cdetect -y 1
```

Note that if you are using a very old Raspberry Pi revision 1 board, you need to change 1 to 0 in the preceding line of code.

If I2C is available, you will see some output like that shown in Figure 9-7. This shows that two I2C addresses are in use—0x68 and 0x70.

```
pi@raspberrypi: ~
pi@raspberrypi: $ sudo i2cdetect -y 1
      0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  a  b  c  d  e  f
00: -
10: -
20: -
30: -
40: -
50: -
60: -          +-----+ 68
70: +-----+
pi@raspberrypi: $
```

Figure 9-7. *i2C-tools*

Discussion

i2cDetect is a useful diagnostic tool and one that is worth running the first time you use a new I2C device.

See Also

See some of the I2C recipes in this book, including Recipes 11.3, 14.1, 14.2, and 14.4.

For more information on installing with apt-get, see [Recipe 3.16](#).

9.5 Setting Up SPI

Problem

You have a Serial Peripheral Interface (SPI) bus that you want to use with your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

By default, Raspbian is not configured for the Raspberry Pi's SPI interface to be enabled. To enable it, the procedure is almost the same as [Recipe 9.3](#). Use the Raspberry Pi Configuration tool that you will find on the main menu under Preferences, or on older versions of Raspbian, use the `raspi-config` using the command:

```
$ sudo raspi-config
```

Then select Advanced, followed by SPI, and then Yes before rebooting your Raspberry Pi. After the reboot, SPI will be available.

Discussion

SPI allows serial transfer of data between the Raspberry Pi and peripheral devices, such as analog-to-digital converter (ADC) and port expander chips, among other devices.

You may come across some examples of interfacing to SPI that do not use the SPI interface but instead use an approach called *bit banging*, where the `RPi.GPIO` library is used to interface with the four GPIO pins used by the SPI interface.

See Also

We use a SPI analog-to-digital converter chip in [Recipe 13.5](#).

9.6 Installing PySerial for Access to the Serial Port from Python

Problem

You want to use the serial port (Rx and Tx pins) on the Raspberry Pi using Python.

Solution

Install the PySerial library:

```
$ sudo apt-get install python-serial
```

Discussion

The library is pretty easy to use. Creating a connection uses the following syntax:

```
ser = serial.Serial(DEVICE, BAUD)
```

Where `DEVICE` is the device for the serial port (`/dev/ttymA0`) and `BAUD` is the baud rate as a number, not a string. For example:

```
ser = serial.Serial('/dev/ttyAMA0', 9600)
```

Once a connection is established, you can send data over serial like this:

```
ser.write('some text')
```

Listening for a response normally involves a loop that reads and prints, as illustrated in this example:

```
while True:  
    print(ser.read())
```

See Also

You will need to use this technique in recipes that connect hardware to the serial port, such as [Recipe 12.10](#).

9.7 Installing Minicom to Test the Serial Port

Problem

You want to send and receive serial commands from a Terminal session.

Solution

Install Minicom:

```
$ sudo apt-get install minicom
```

Once Minicom is installed, you can start a serial communications session with a serial device connected to the RXD and TXD pins of the GPIO connector by using this command:

```
$ minicom -b 9600 -o -D /dev/ttyAMA0
```

The parameter after `-b` is the baud rate, and after `-D`, the serial port. Remember to use the same baud rate as the one on the device you are communicating with.

This will start a Minicom session. One of the first things you want to do is turn on *local echo* so you can see the command that you are typing. To do this, press Ctrl-A and then Z; you'll see the command list shown in [Figure 9-8](#). Press E to turn on local echo.

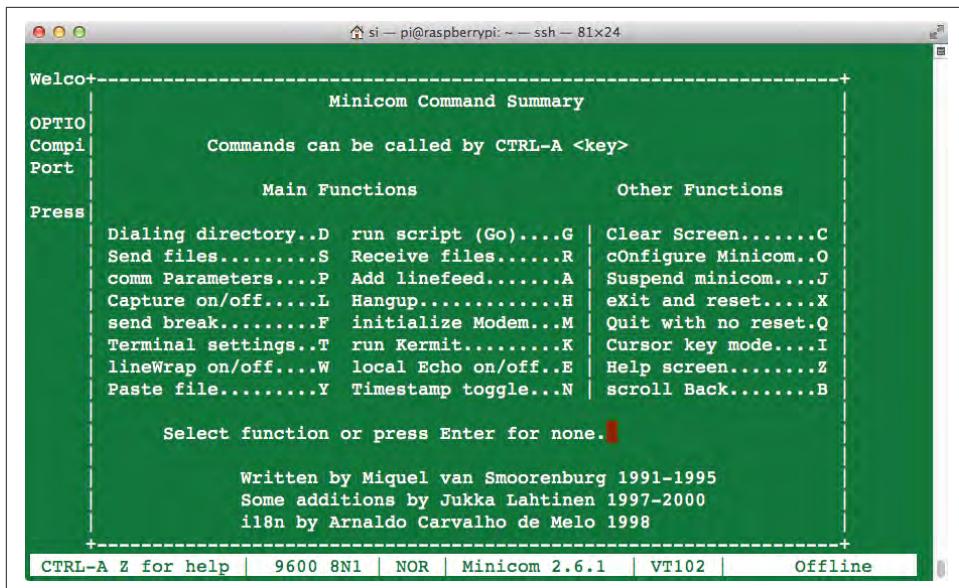


Figure 9-8. Minicom commands

Now anything you type will be sent to the serial device, and all messages coming from the device will also be displayed.

Discussion

Minicom is a great tool for checking out the messages coming from a serial device or making sure that it's working.

See Also

Check out the [Minicom documentation](#).

If you want to write a Python program to handle the serial communications, you will need the Python serial library ([Recipe 9.6](#)).

9.8 Using a Breadboard with Jumper Leads

Problem

You want to do some electronic prototyping using your Raspberry Pi and solderless breadboard.

Solution

Use male-to-female jumper wires and a GPIO pin label template like the Raspberry Leaf (Figure 9-9).

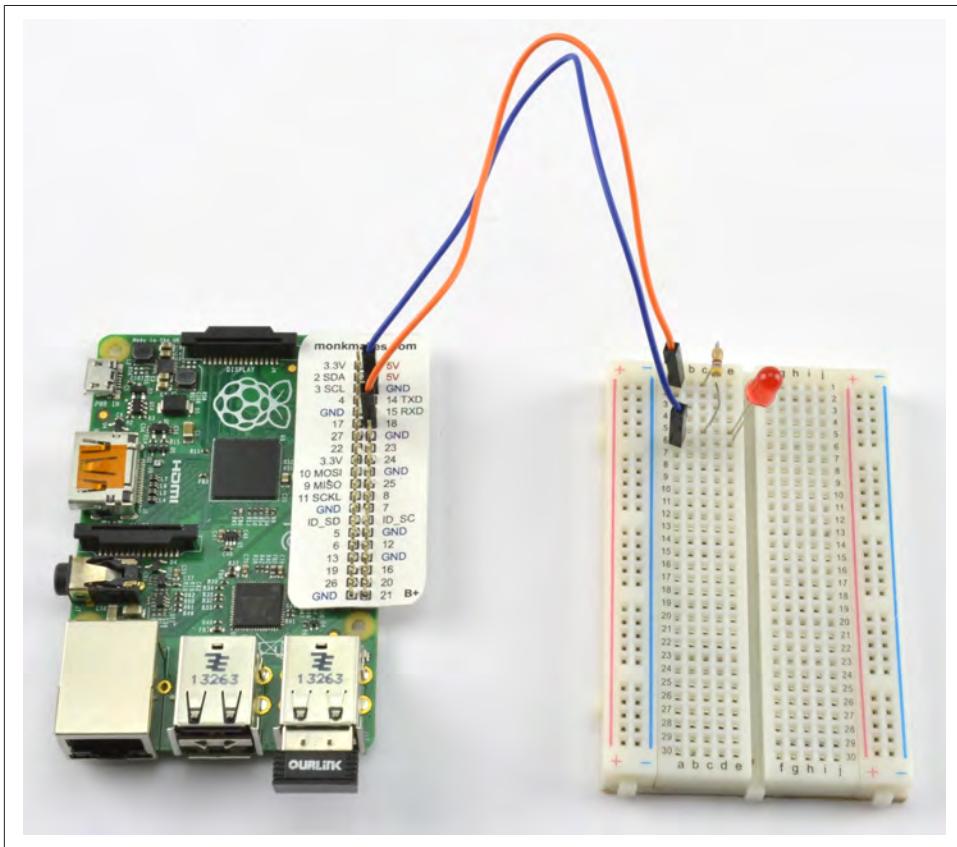


Figure 9-9. Connecting Pi to breadboard using male-to-female jumper wires

Discussion

It's not always easy to identify the pins you want on a bare Raspberry Pi board. You can greatly simplify this by printing out a template, like the Raspberry Leaf, to fit over the pins.

It is also useful to have a selection of male-to-male jumper wires for making connections from one part of the breadboard to another.

Female-to-female jumper wires are useful for connecting modules with male header pins directly to the Raspberry Pi, when no other components might warrant the use of a breadboard.

A good way of getting a breadboard, Raspberry Leaf, and set of jumper wires is to buy a starter kit based around a breadboard like the Electronics Starter Kit for Raspberry Pi from MonkMakes (see [Appendix A](#)).

See Also

This approach works well when you have a small number of connections. When you have more to make, a Pi Cobbler is better (see [Recipe 9.9](#)).

9.9 Using a Breadboard with a Pi Cobbler

Problem

You want to do some electronic prototyping using a Raspberry Pi and solderless breadboard.

Solution

Use an Adafruit Pi Cobbler, a device consisting of a small printed circuit board (PCB) with header pins that are designed to fit into a solderless breadboard like a dual inline package (DIL) chip. The pins are all labeled and the PCB has a header socket. The supplied ribbon cable is used to link the Cobbler to the Raspberry Pi (see [Figure 9-10](#)).

The Pi Cobbler shown in [Figure 9-10](#) is the 26-pin version of the product. There is also a 40-pin version designed for the newer Raspberry Pis, but this leaves little room on the breadboard for other components, so if you have enough GPIO pins for your project in the top 26 pins of the GPIO connector, then it can sometimes be better to use the 26-pin version of the Pi Cobbler even with a 40-pin Raspberry Pi.

Discussion

A great advantage of the Cobbler is that you can assemble the components onto the breadboard and then plug in the ribbon cable when it's ready.

Make sure that the red edge of the ribbon cable is toward the SD card edge of the Raspberry Pi. The cable only fits into the socket on the Pi Cobbler the correct way around.

Once you have built your breadboard prototype, you might decide to make a soldered version of the prototype. A great way to do this is to use an Adafruit Perma-Proto board like the ones shown in [Figure 9-11](#).

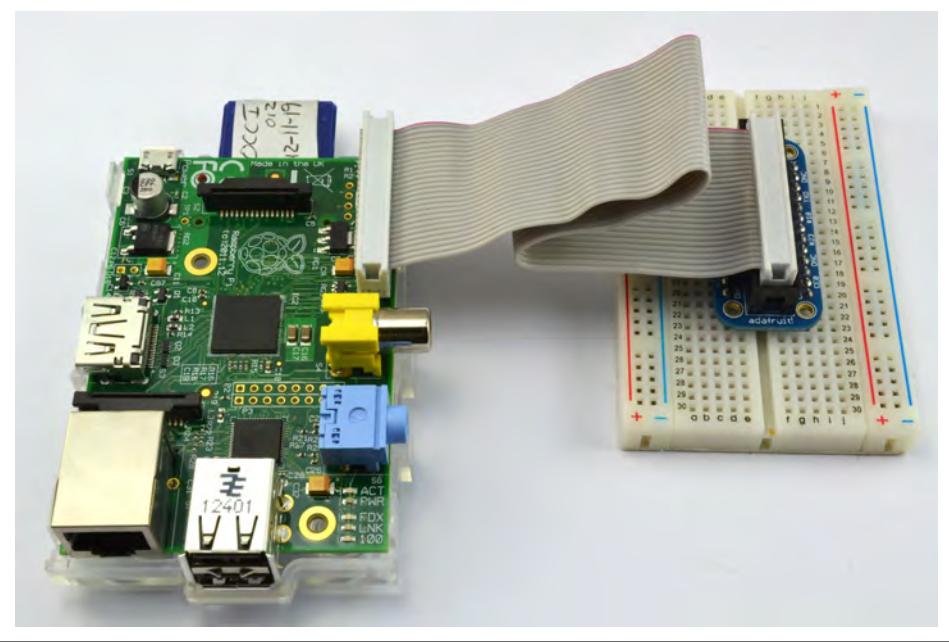


Figure 9-10. Connecting Pi to a breadboard using a Pi Cobbler

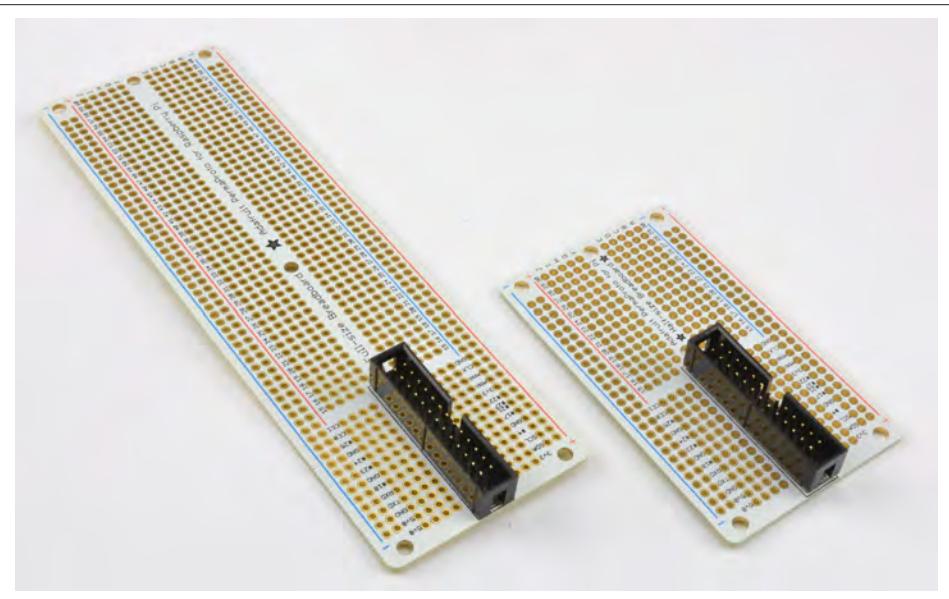


Figure 9-11. Adafruit Perma-Proto boards

These boards are ready-made Printed Circuit Boards (PCB) that have the same layout of tracks and holes as a breadboard. This allows you to transfer your breadboard design to the Perma-Proto board without having to redesign it. The board comes complete with a socket to accept the cable and plug of the Cobbler.

See Also

If you want to make a board that will fit directly onto the Raspberry Pi, see Recipes 9.19 and 9.20.

9.10 Using a Raspberry Squid

Problem

You want to connect an RGB LED to your Raspberry Pi without having to build something on breadboard.

Solution

Use a Raspberry Squid RGB LED (Figure 9-12).

The Raspberry Squid is an RGB LED with built-in series resistors and female header leads, so that it can be plugged directly onto the GPIO pins of a Raspberry Pi. The Squid has color-coded leads. The black lead goes to one of the GPIO GND pins and the red, green, and blue leads go to GPIO pins used for the red, green, and blue channels. The red, green, and blue outputs can be simple digital outputs or PWM outputs (Recipe 10.3) that allow you to mix different colors.

Instructions for making your own Squid can be found at <https://github.com/simon-monk/squid>, but you can also buy ready-made Squid from <http://monkmakes.com>.

The Squid has a Python library that is installed using the following commands:

```
$ git clone https://github.com/simonmonk/squid.git  
$ cd squid  
$ sudo python setup.py install
```

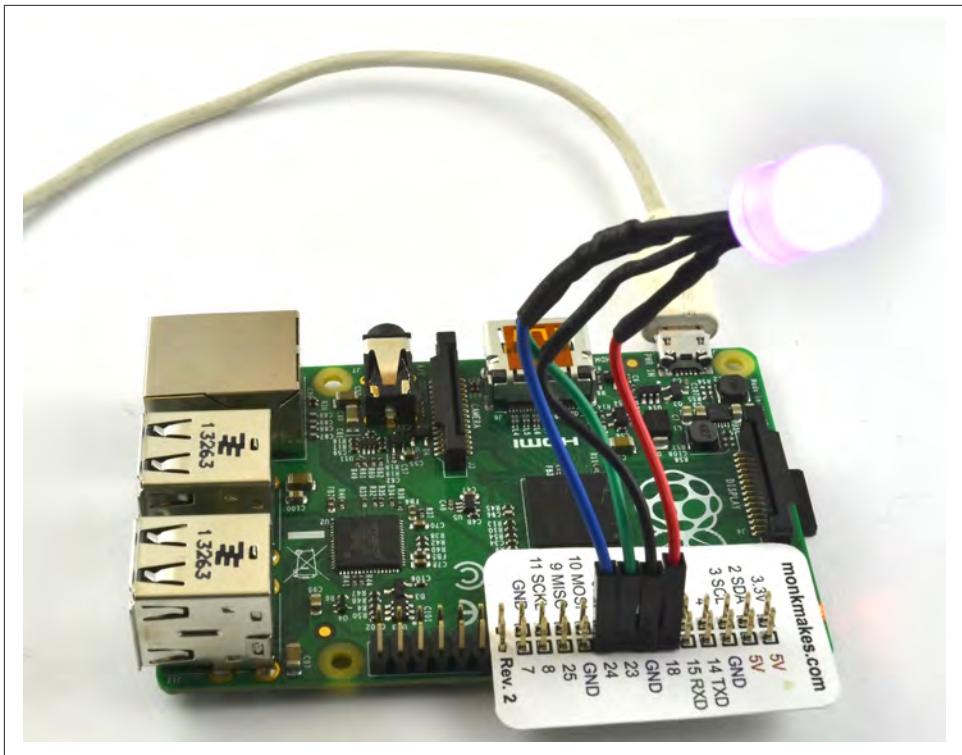


Figure 9-12. A Raspberry Squid

Inside the example folder, you will find the program `test_led.py`, which tells you pretty much all you need to know about using the Raspberry Squid.

```
from squid import *
import time

rgb = Squid(18, 23, 24)
rgb.set_color(RED)
time.sleep(2)
rgb.set_color(GREEN)
time.sleep(2)
rgb.set_color(BLUE)
time.sleep(2)
rgb.set_color(WHITE)
time.sleep(2)
rgb.set_color(WHITE, 300)
time.sleep(2)
```

Having imported the `squid` library, you can create a new Squid object, supplying the three pins to be used for its red, green, and blue channels (in this case, 18, 23, and 24). You can then set the color by using the `set_color` method, which takes either the

name of a color constant (RED, GREEN, WHITE, etc.) or a tuple of three values each between 0 and 100 for the red, green, and blue channels. The optional second parameter to `set_color` is the overall brightness.

After the color is set, `time.sleep(2)` is used to create a two-second delay before the next color change.

Discussion

You do not need to use all three color channels of a Squid, and it can be quite handy to just check that a GPIO pin is turning on and off as you expect before attaching some other electronics to it.

See Also

For information on the Squid library, see <https://github.com/simonmonk/squid>.

For information on the Squid Button, see [Recipe 9.11](#).

[Recipe 10.10](#) is an example project that controls an RGB LED (Squid or breadboard-based).

9.11 Using a Raspberry Squid Button

Problem

You want to connect a push switch to your Raspberry Pi without having to build something on a breadboard.

Solution

Use a Squid Button.

The Squid Button ([Figure 9-13](#)) is a push button with female header leads connected to the contacts so that you can plug it directly into the GPIO connector of a Raspberry Pi. The Squid Button also includes a low-value resistor that limits the current that would flow if the Squid Button were to be accidentally connected to a digital output rather than a digital input.

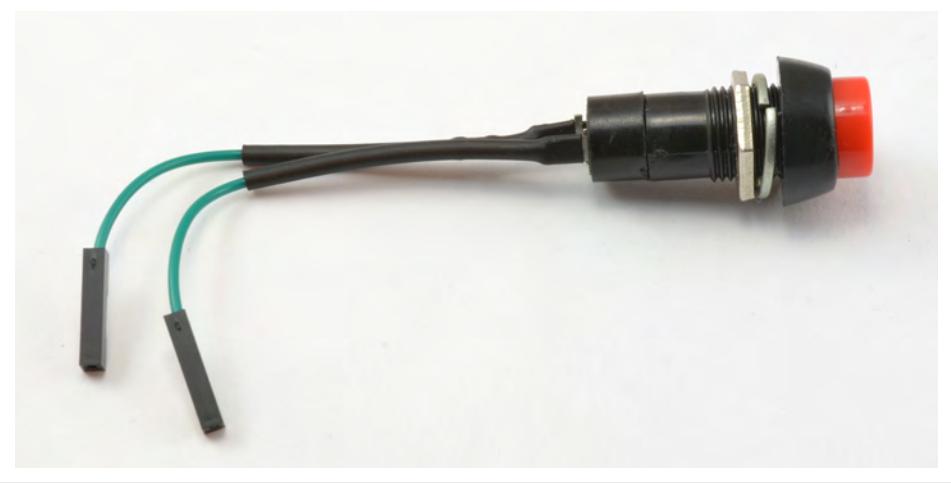


Figure 9-13. A Squid Button

The Squid Button is a natural companion to the Squid RGB LED and shares the same Python library (see [Recipe 9.10](#) to install this library).

The Squid Button could be used directly with the `RPi.GPIO` library, but the `squid` library provides key debouncing (see <https://github.com/simonmonk/squid>) to prevent accidental multiple presses of the button. The file `test_button.py` in the examples folder of the `squid` library illustrates the use of the button.

```
from button import *
import time

b = Button(7)

while True:
    if b.is_pressed():
        print(time.time())
```

The number (in this case, 7) indicates the GPIO pin that the button is connected to. The other pin is connected to GND.

Discussion

The Squid button is useful for testing projects that use a digital input, but since the button is suitable for panel mounting, you can also build it into more permanent projects.

See Also

For information on the `squid` library, see <https://github.com/simonmonk/squid>.

For more information on using switches, see Recipes 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5, and 12.6.

For information on the Squid RGB LED, see Recipe 9.10.

9.12 Converting 5V Signals to 3.3V with Two Resistors

Problem

The Raspberry Pi operates at 3.3V, but you want to know how to connect the 5V output of a module to a GPIO pin on the Pi without damaging it.

Solution

Use a pair of resistors as a potential divider to reduce the output voltage. Figure 9-14 shows how you might use the 5V serial connection of an Arduino to a Raspberry Pi.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- 270Ω resistor (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474 in Appendix A)
- 470Ω resistor (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474 in Appendix A)

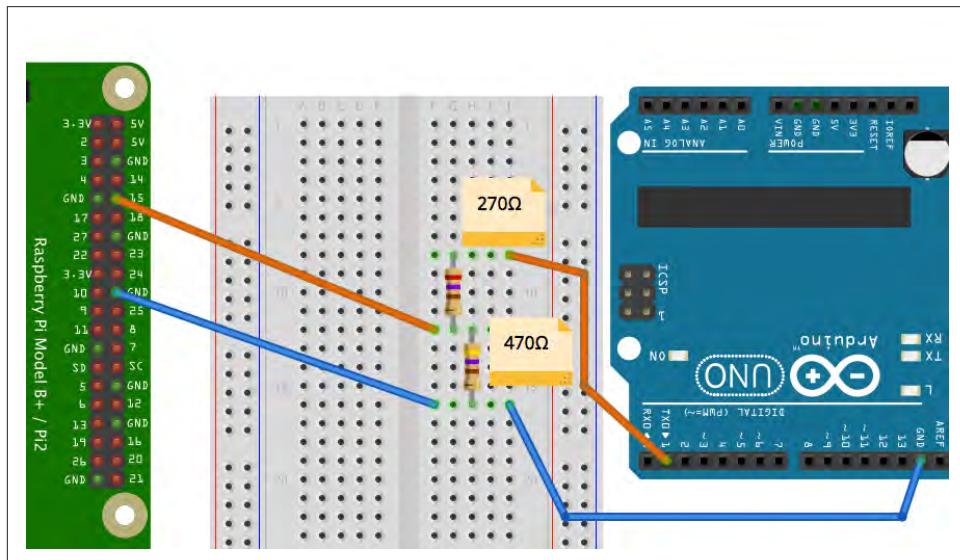


Figure 9-14. Using resistors to convert a 5V signal to 3.3V

The TXD signal from the Pi is a 3.3V output. This can be connected directly to a 5V input on the Arduino without any problem. The Arduino module will recognize anything over about 2.5V as being high.

The problem arises when you need to connect the 5V output of the Arduino module to the RXD pin of the Pi. This *must not* be connected directly to the RXD input. The 5V signal could damage the Pi. Instead, the two resistors shown in [Figure 9-14](#) are used.

Discussion

The resistors used here will draw a current of 6mA. Given that the Pi uses a fairly hefty 500mA, this will not noticeably affect the current consumption of the Pi.

If you want to minimize the current used by the potential divider, then use larger value resistors, scaled proportionally—for example, 27k Ω and 47k Ω , which will draw a miserly 60 μ A.

See Also

For more information on connecting Raspberry Pi to Arduino, see [Chapter 16](#).

If you have multiple signals to convert between 3.3V and 5V, then it's probably best to use a multichannel level converter module—see [Recipe 9.13](#).

9.13 Converting 5V Signals to 3.3V with a Level Converter Module

Problem

The Raspberry Pi operates at 3.3V. You want to connect a number of 5V digital pins to GPIO pins on the Pi without damaging it.

Solution

Use a bidirectional level converter module, such as the ones shown in [Figure 9-15](#).

These modules are very easy to use. One side has the power supply at one voltage and a number of channels that can be either inputs or outputs at that voltage. The pins on the other side of the module have a power pin at the second voltage, and all the inputs and outputs on that side are automatically converted to the voltage level for that side.

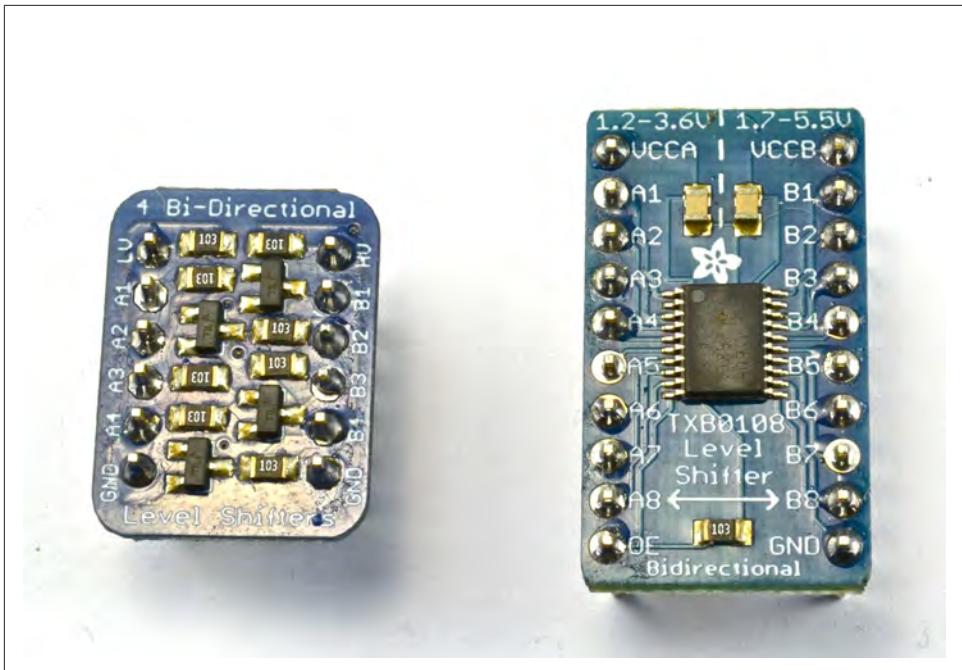


Figure 9-15. Level converter modules

Discussion

These level converters are available with differing numbers of channels. The two shown in Figure 9-15 have four and eight channels.

Sources for such level converters can be found in [Appendix A](#).

See Also

See [Recipe 9.12](#), especially if you have only one or two levels to convert.

Normally 5V logic inputs will accept 3.3V outputs without a problem, however in some cases, such as when using LED strips ([Recipe 14.7](#)), this may not be the case, in which case a transistor or one of the modules described above can be used to raise the logic level.

9.14 Powering a Raspberry Pi with Batteries

Problem

You want to attach your Raspberry Pi to a robot and power it using alkaline batteries.

Solution

A typical project using a Raspberry Pi requires 5V at up to about 600mA (see [Recipe 1.3](#)). The requirement for 5V is strict. You should not try to power your Pi from more or less than 5V. In practice, this means you are most likely to use a battery at a higher voltage than 5V—say, 9V—and use a voltage regulator to drop the voltage to 5V.

The relatively high power requirement of the Pi makes it unsuitable for powering from, say, a small 9V battery or even a set of AAA batteries. Most suitable would be a pack made up of six rechargeable AA batteries and a voltage regulator.

[Figure 9-16](#) shows how you can use a voltage regulator with a battery pack to power a Pi through the 5V pin on the GPIO connector.

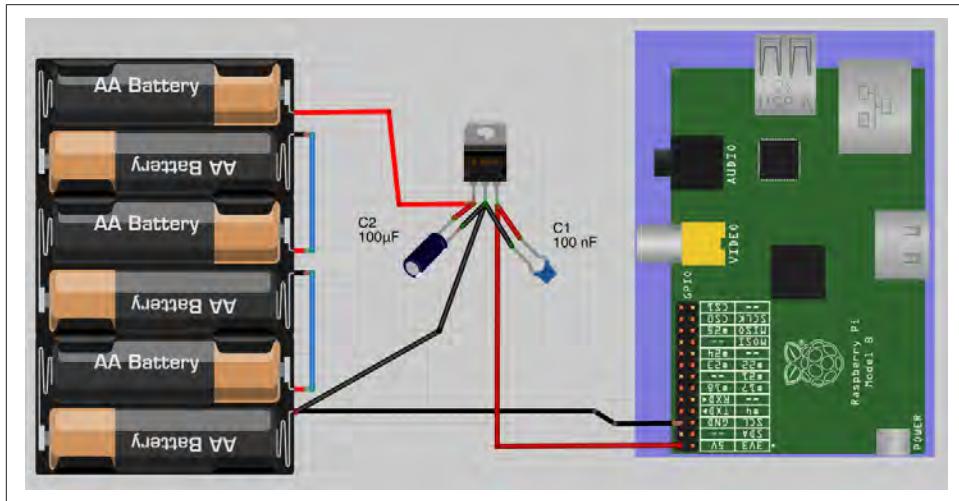


Figure 9-16. Powering a Raspberry Pi with AA batteries

The 7805 voltage regulator will get pretty hot. If it gets too hot, its thermal cutout will kick in and the voltage at its output will drop, probably causing the Pi to reset. A heat sink that clips onto the integrated circuit (IC) will help with this.

An alternative solution, and a cooler one, is to use a RasPiRobot Board V3 ([Recipe 9.18](#)), as shown in [Figure 9-17](#).

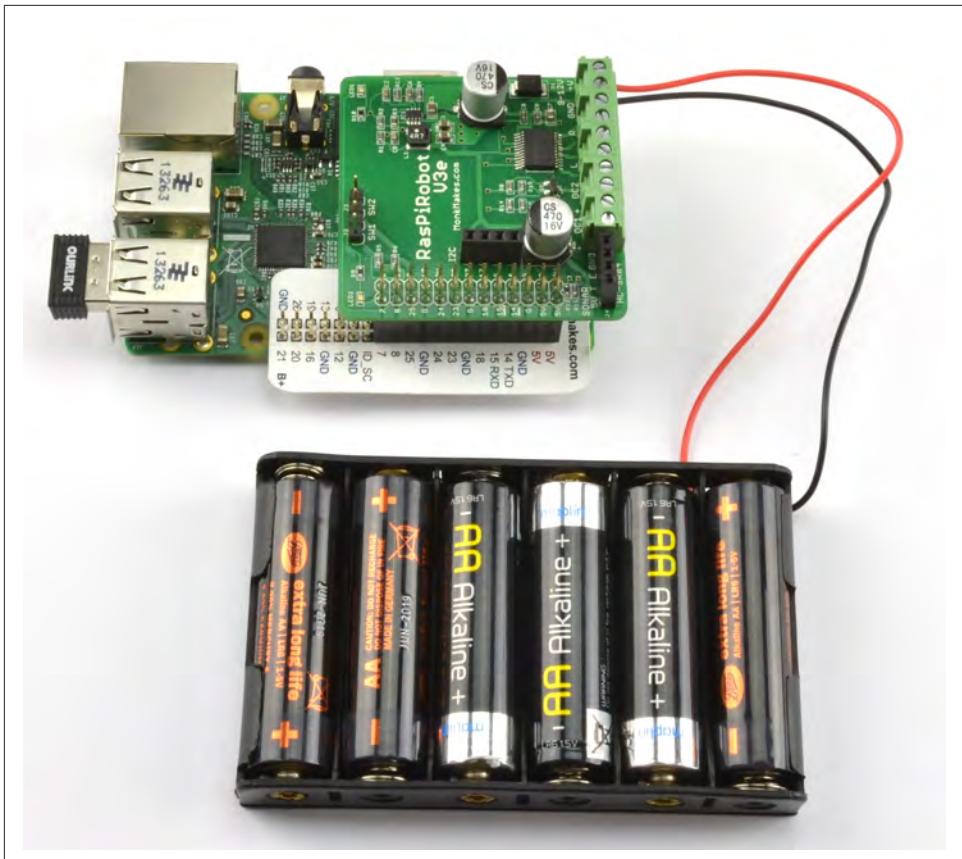


Figure 9-17. Powering a Raspberry Pi using a RasPiRobot Board V3

As well as being a motor driver, the RasPiRobot Board V3 has a built-in switched-mode power supply that will take an input of between 7V and 12V and supply the Raspberry Pi with 5V. Because the RasPiRobot Board V3 power supply is an efficient switching power supply rather than a linear regulator like the 7805, it will not get hot under normal use of the Raspberry Pi.

Discussion

The 7805 requires the input voltage to be at least 2V above 5V. You can also buy low dropout (LDO) regulators, such as the LM2940. The LM2940 has the same pinout as the 7805 but only requires the input to be 0.5V above the 5V output. However, remember that nominally, 1.5V AA cells soon drop to about 1.2V. So a pack of four of them is unlikely to provide enough voltage for more than a few minutes. A pack of six will be fine.

The example above uses a 9V battery pack, but if you want to fit your Raspberry Pi into an automobile or RV's 12V supply, this recipe will still work. You will also need to use a small monitor that can be powered from direct current (DC). Such devices are fairly easily found, as they are commonly used with closed-circuit camera systems.

See Also

Another way to power your Raspberry Pi from a battery is to use a ready-made cell-phone charger that accepts AA batteries. Make sure that it can cope with 600mA or more.

[Recipe 9.15](#) shows you how to power a Raspberry Pi from a LiPo battery pack.

For more information on using the RasPiRobot Board V3, see [Recipe 9.18](#).

9.15 Powering a Raspberry Pi with a LiPo Battery

Problem

You want to attach your Raspberry Pi to a robot and power it from a 3.7V LiPo battery.

Solution

Use a boost regulator module ([Figure 9-18](#)). The module shown is from SparkFun, but similar designs are available on eBay more cheaply.

As always with such low-cost purchases from eBay, you should test the module thoroughly before using it. They do not always work exactly as advertised, and quality can be quite variable.

The advantage of this kind of module is that it acts as both a voltage regulator to supply 5V to the Pi and also has a USB socket of its own to supply power to its charging circuit. If you plug the Pi's power adapter into the socket on the charger, the Pi will be powered and the battery charged, allowing you to unplug the USB power and use the Pi on the battery for as long as it has enough power.

With a 1300mA LiPo battery, you could expect the Pi to be powered for two or three hours.

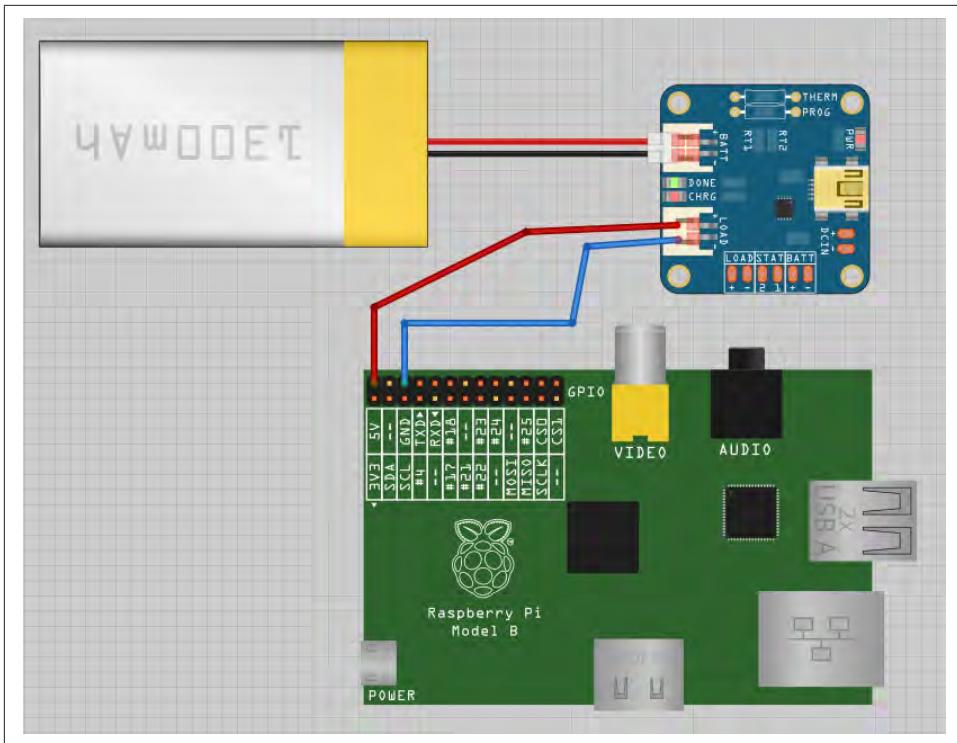


Figure 9-18. Powering a Raspberry Pi with a 3.7V LiPo battery

Discussion

If you plan to handle the charging of the battery elsewhere, you can just go for a boost converter module, without the charger, at a lower cost.

See Also

You can also find ready-made USB LiPo battery packs, often with a high-capacity LiPo battery, that will power your Pi for hours.

9.16 Getting Started with the Sense HAT

Problem

You want to know how to use a Raspberry Pi Sense HAT.

Solution

The Raspberry Pi Sense HAT (Figure 9-19) is a useful and somewhat confusingly named interface board for the Raspberry Pi. Yes, it includes sensors—in fact, it can measure temperature, relative humidity, and atmospheric pressure (Recipe 13.10). It also has an accelerometer, gyroscope (Recipe 13.13), and magnetometer (Recipe 13.14) for navigation type projects. It also has a full-color 8×8 LED matrix display (Recipe 14.3).



Figure 9-19. The Raspberry Pi Sense HAT

The Sense HAT requires a Raspberry Pi with a 40-pin GPIO header, so you will not be able to use it on an older Raspberry Pi with a 26-pin header.

The Sense HAT requires some software to be installed before you can use it. The process is not complicated, but it can take quite a while.

Note that by the time you read this, you might find that Raspbian already includes all the software that you need for the Sense HAT. If this is the case, running these commands will not cause any problems; the installer will just tell you that it has nothing to do.

Install the Sense HAT Python library by using the command:

```
$ sudo apt-get install sense-hat
```

This installer will actually enable I2C automatically, so you do not need to follow the usual I2C setup ([Recipe 9.3](#)).

The Sense HAT's display uses a graphics library called Python Image Library (PIL), which must be installed by using the command:

```
$ sudo pip-3.2 install pillow
```

Installation will take a while, after which you should reboot if I2C was not already enabled.

Discussion

There are more recipes that use the Sense HAT in this book, but for now, you can just check that everything is working by opening a Python console using:

```
$ sudo python
```

Then enter the following commands into the Python console:

```
>>> from sense_hat import SenseHat  
>>> hat = SenseHat()  
>>> hat.show_message('The Raspberry Pi Cookbook')
```

The LED matrix should then display the text of the message above, scrolling it across the screen.

See Also

The programming reference for the Sense HAT, at <https://pythonhosted.org/sense-hat/api/>.

To measure temperature, humidity, and atmospheric pressure, see [Recipe 13.10](#).

To use the Sense HAT's accelerometer and gyroscope, see [Recipe 13.13](#).

To use the magnetometer to detect north and detect the presence of a magnet, see Recipes [13.14](#) and [13.16](#), respectively.

9.17 Getting Started with the Explorer HAT Pro

Problem

You want to know how to get started with the Pimoroni Explorer HAT Pro.

Solution

Plug the HAT into your Raspberry Pi and install the Explorer HAT Pro Python library.

Figure 9-20 shows a Pimoroni Explorer HAT Pro on a Raspberry Pi B+. Note that this HAT will only work on a 40-pin Raspberry Pi.

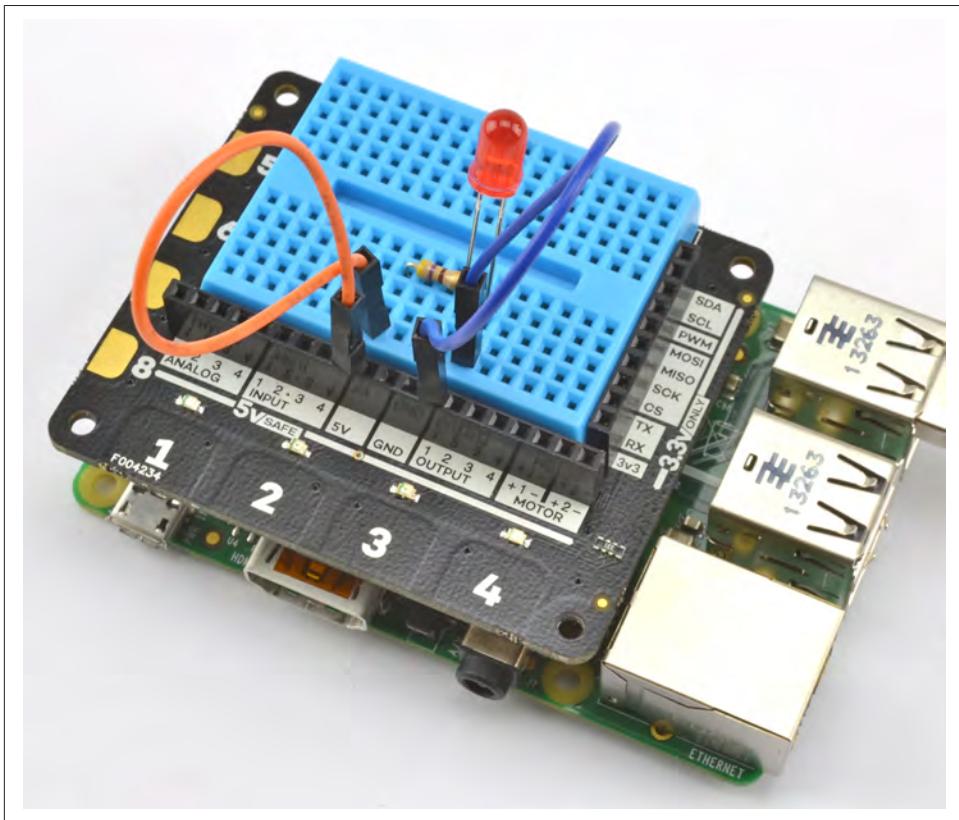


Figure 9-20. A Pimoroni Explorer HAT Pro

The Explorer HAT Pro has some useful input/output options as well as an area where a small solderless breadboard can be attached. Its features include:

- 4 LEDs
- 4 buffered inputs
- 4 buffered outputs (up to 500mA)
- 4 analog inputs
- 2 low-power motor drivers (max 200mA)
- 4 capacitative touch pads
- 4 capacitative crocodile clip pads

To install the Python library for the Explorer HAT Pro, run the following command:

```
$ sudo pip install explorerhat
```

Once the library is installed, you can try a little experiment to make the built-in red LED blink.

```
import explorerhat, time

while True:
    explorerhat.light.red.on()
    time.sleep(0.5)
    explorerhat.light.red.off()
    time.sleep(0.5)
```

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *explorer_blink.py*.

Discussion

The Explorer HAT Pro provides four buffered inputs and outputs—that is inputs and outputs that are not connected directly to the Raspberry Pi, but to chips on the Explorer HAT Pro. This means that if you accidentally connect things incorrectly, the Explorer HAT Pro will be damaged rather than your Raspberry Pi.

See Also

You can use the Explorer HAT for capacitative touch sensing ([Recipe 13.18](#)).

9.18 Getting Started with a RaspiRobot Board

Problem

You want to know how to use a RaspiRobot board.

Solution

[Figure 9-21](#) shows the RaspiRobot board (version 3). The board has a dual-motor controller that can be used for two DC motors or a single stepper motor. It can supply 5V power to the Raspberry Pi by using its built-in switched-mode voltage regulator. The board has two switch inputs and two high-current (2A) outputs, and provides easy connections to a HC-SR04 rangefinder and the I2C interfaces of the Raspberry Pi.

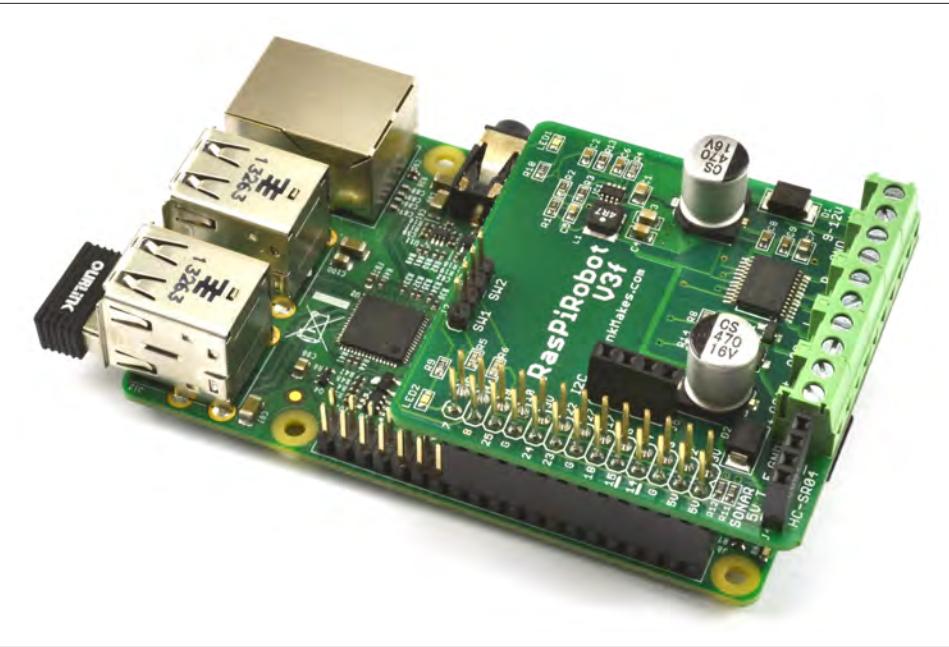


Figure 9-21. The RaspiRobot board V3

The RaspiRobot Board V3 has its own Python library that you need to download and install, using the following commands:

```
$ git clone https://github.com/simonmonk/raspirobotboard3.git  
$ cd raspirobotboard3/python  
$ sudo python setup.py install
```

Discussion

Fit your RaspiRobot V3 onto your Raspberry Pi and then power up the Raspberry Pi. You can try out a few commands with the RaspiRobot board, using just the Python console without attaching external power or motors to the RaspiRobot board. Since the RaspiRobot board library uses the GPIO port, you will need to start Python as a superuser by using this command:

```
$ sudo python
```

When you first power up, you should find that both LEDs on the RaspiRobot board will be lit. Now enter the following commands, and both LEDs should turn off as the library is initialized:

```
>>> from raspirobotboard import *  
>>> rr = RRB3()
```

Try turning one of the LEDs on and off, using these commands:

```
>>> rr.set_led1(1)
>>> rr.set_led1(0)
```

The RaspiRobot board has two pairs of pins, each designed to be connected to a switch. These are labeled SW1 and SW2 on the board. You can test whether SW1 is closed by using the command:

```
>>> print(rr.sw1_closed())
False
```

Shorting the two pins of SW1 together with a screwdriver and issuing the command again will return True.

Other commands are available to set the two open collector outputs (`set_oc1` and `set_oc2`) and motor control commands (`forward`, `reverse`, `left`, `right`, and `stop`). See <http://www.raspirobot.com> for the full command reference.

See Also

To learn how to use this board to make a roving robot, see [Recipe 11.10](#).

To use the RaspiRobot board to control a bipolar stepper motor, see [Recipe 11.9](#).

9.19 Using a Pi Plate Prototyping Board

Problem

You want to know how to use a Pi Plate prototyping board.

Solution

The Pi Plate ([Figure 9-22](#)) is a prototyping board rather than an interface board like the RaspiRobot board ([Recipe 9.18](#)). In other words, it does not include any electronics—it is designed for you to solder your own components to a prototyping area.

The board has an area where a 16-pin, surface-mount chip can be used, and a row of four holes, spaced more widely, where a screw terminal can be soldered in place.

The board has screw terminals on two sides, which are connected to all the GPIO pins. You can ignore the prototyping area entirely and just use the screw terminals to attach wires to the GPIO pins.

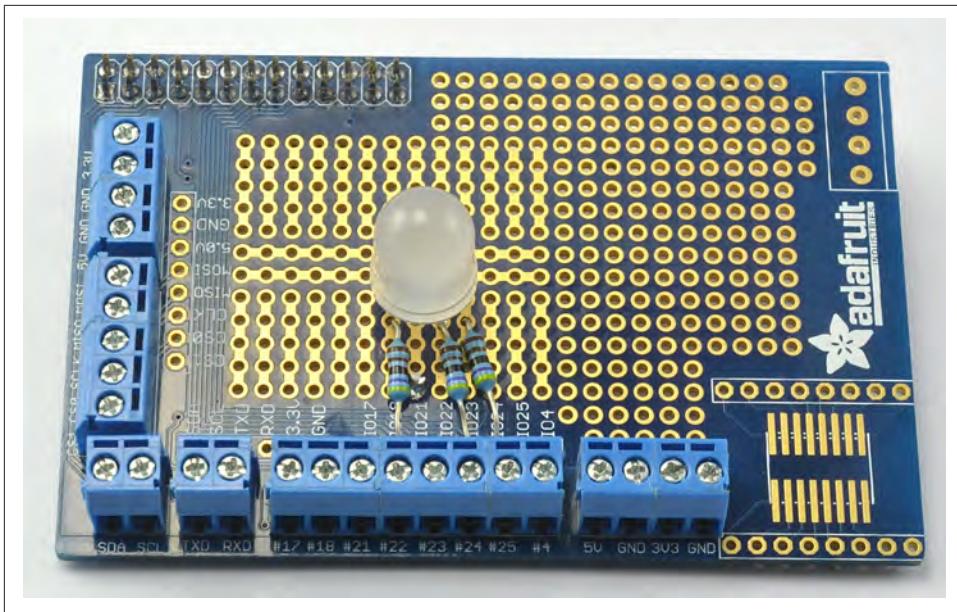


Figure 9-22. The Pi Plate

Discussion

The board design has a grid of holes at a pitch of the standard 0.1 inch used by most through-hole components, including DIL ICs. You solder components to the board by pushing the leads through the holes at the top and soldering the connections underneath.

The tracks that connect the holes are clearly visible on the top of the board, and the board is divided into several zones. There is an area with central power busses intended for DIL ICs, as well as a general prototyping area and areas for a surface-mount chip and extra screw terminals.

Having soldered the components into place, you will need extra wires to link everything together. These can be run on the bottom or top of the board, or both if the design is complicated.

It's a good idea to plan out the layout before you start soldering.

In the following instructions, you will build an RGB LED onto a Pi Plate, using the layout shown in [Figure 9-23](#). This recipe is a version of [Recipe 10.10](#), which is the same except that the design is built onto a solderless breadboard.

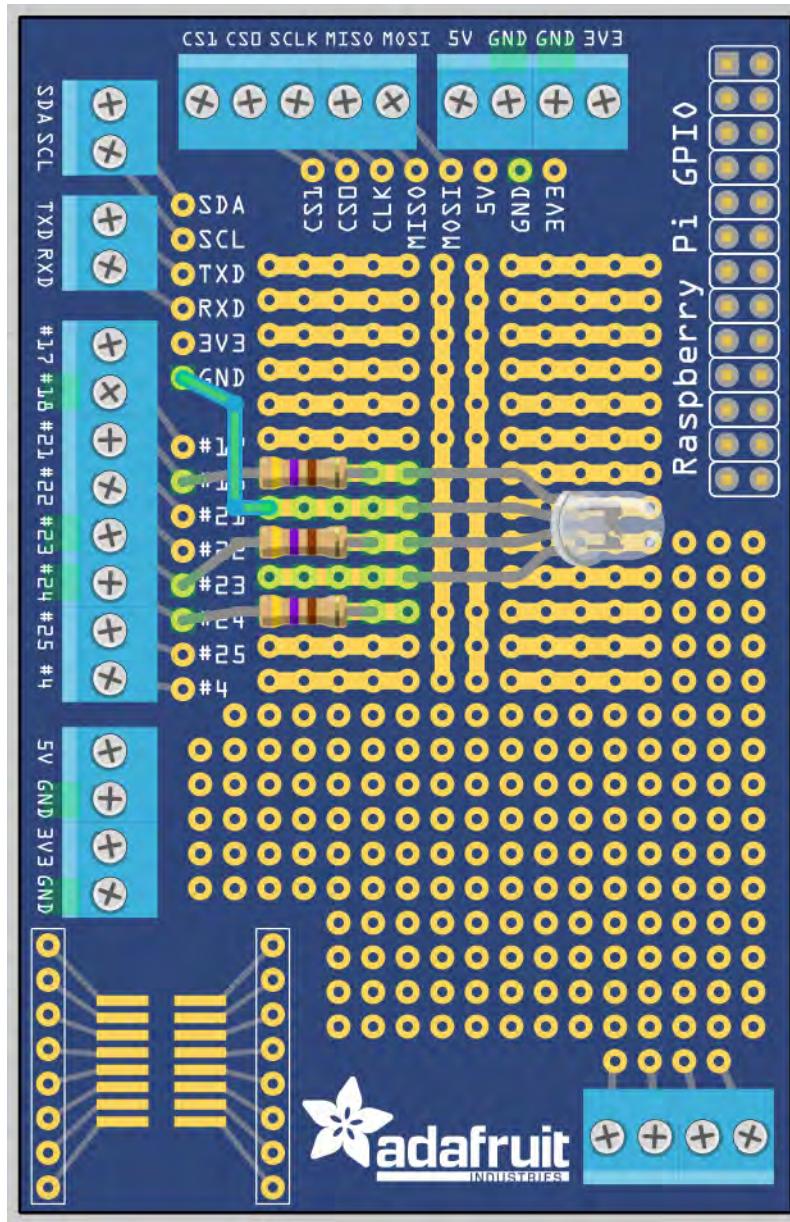


Figure 9-23. Board layout for an RGB LED on a Pi Plate

The first step is to solder the resistors into place. Bend the leads and push them through the appropriate holes in the board. Then flip the board over and touch the soldering iron to where the leads emerge from the holes for a second or so before applying the solder, which should flow around the lead ([Figure 9-24](#)).

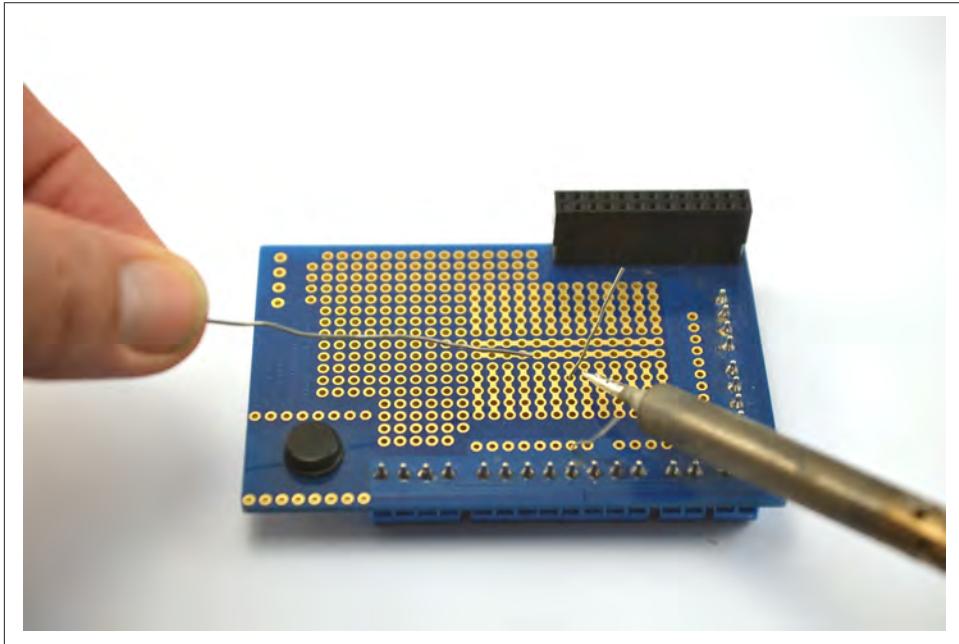


Figure 9-24. Soldering a resistor to the Pi Plate

When you have soldered both ends, snip off the excess lead and repeat for the other two resistors ([Figure 9-25](#)).

Now solder the LED into place, taking care to get it facing the right way. The longest lead is the common cathode and should be the only LED lead attached to the strip of holes that is not connected to any resistor. Very occasionally, you will find LEDs where the longer lead is not the positive lead. This is often the case with infrared LEDs. If you aren't sure, check the datasheet for the LED or the supplier's information page.

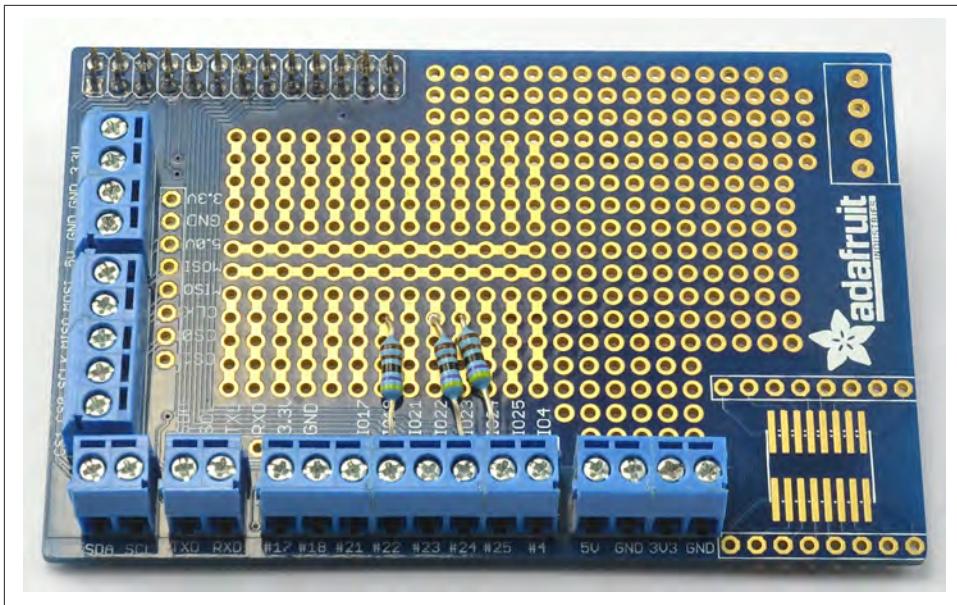


Figure 9-25. Resistors soldered to the Pi Plate

You will also need to solder a short length of wire from that row to the GND connection on the Pi Plate ([Figure 9-26](#)).

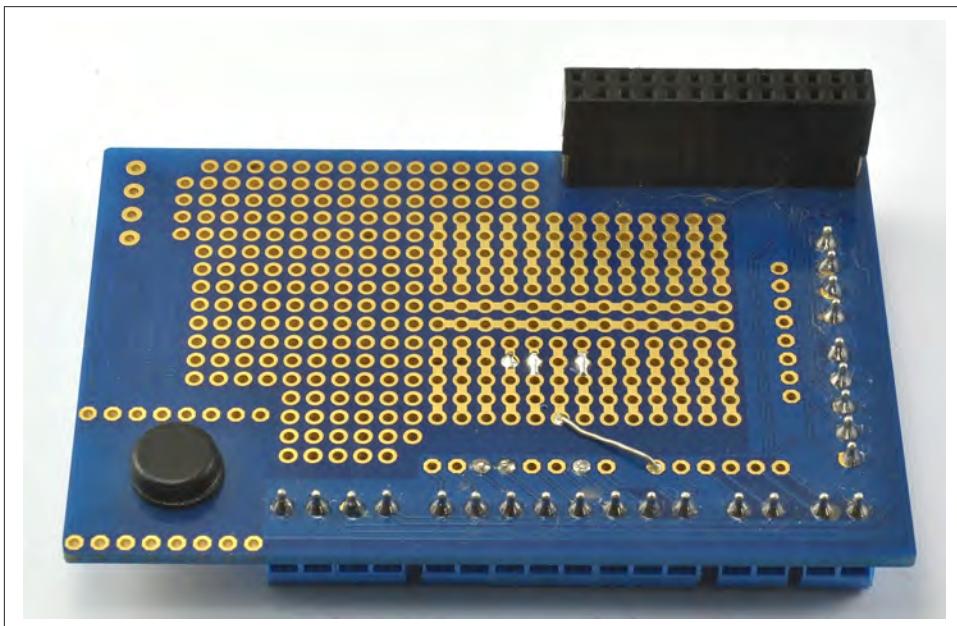


Figure 9-26. Soldering the link wire to the Pi Plate

When the board is complete, it should look like [Figure 9-27](#).

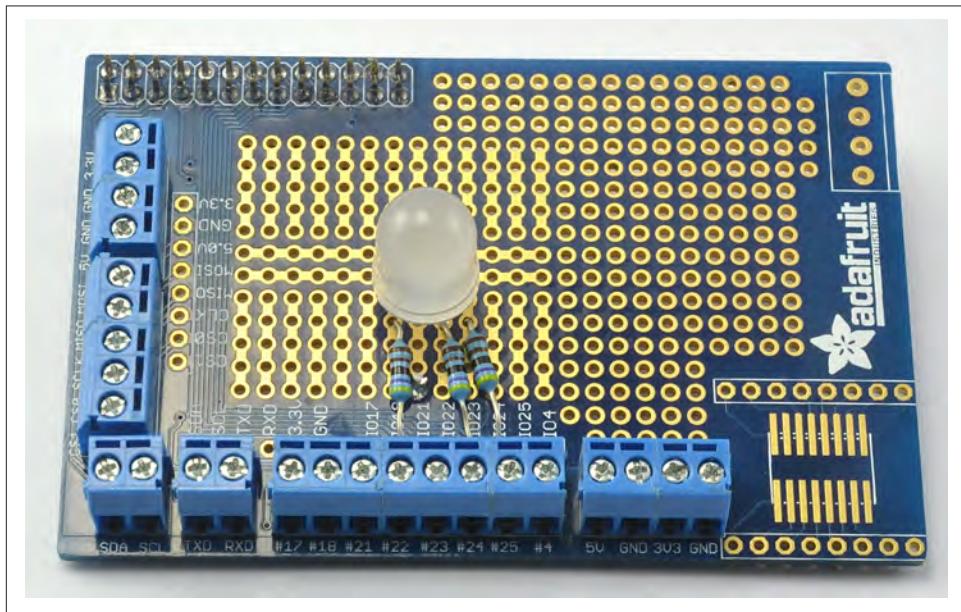


Figure 9-27. The finished RGB LED on a Pi Plate

You can try out the LED using the Python program from [Recipe 10.10](#).

See Also

There is more information about this product at the [Adafruit website](#).

9.20 Making a Hardware At Top (HAT)

Problem

You want to create a prototype Raspberry Pi interface board that conforms to the HAT standard.

Solution

Use a Perma-Proto Pi HAT ([Figure 9-28](#)).

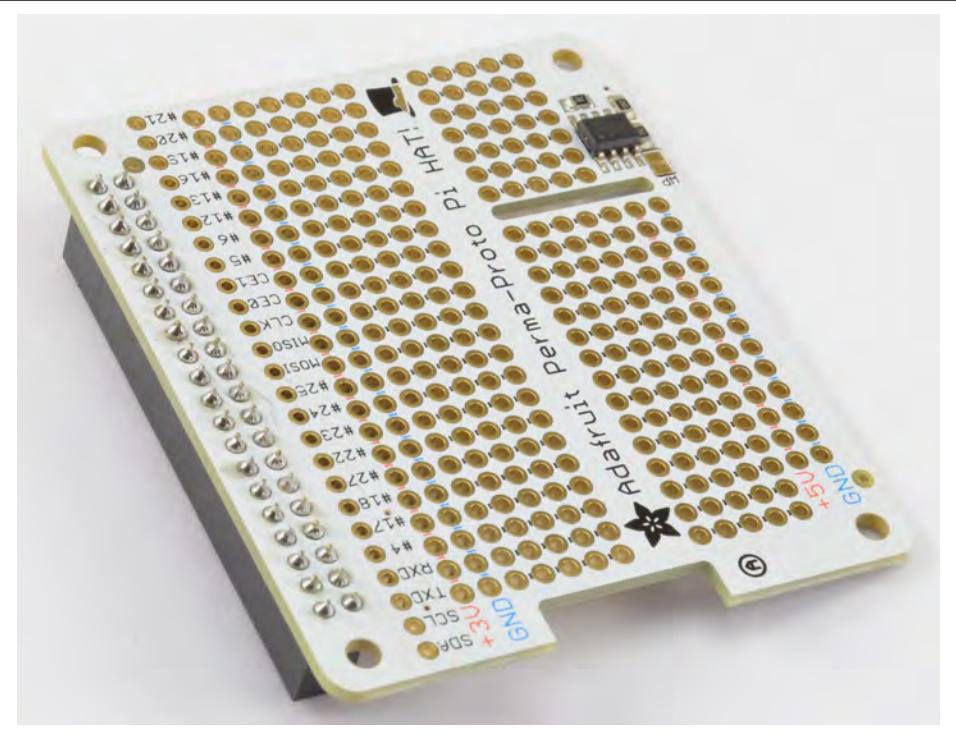


Figure 9-28. A Perma-Proto Pi HAT

With the advent of the Raspberry Pi B+ with a 40-pin GPIO header, a new standard for add-on boards for the Raspberry Pi was defined, called HAT (Hardware At Top). You do not have to stick to this standard, especially if you are just making a one-off product for yourself, but if you are designing a product to sell, then it may make sense for you to conform to the HAT standard.

The HAT standard defines the size and shape of the PCB and also mandates that the PCB has an Electrically Erasable Read-Only Memory (EEPROM) chip soldered onto the board. This chip is connected to the ID_SD and ID_SC pins of the GPIO header, and in the future will allow some configuration of the Pi and even automatic loading of software to occur when the Raspberry Pi is booted up with a HAT attached.

The prototyping area of the board is made up of some power rails and a breadboard format layout of two rows of five holes plus power rails down both sides of the board.

If you don't care about programming the EEPROM, then you can stop here. However, if you want to add your own custom information onto the HAT's EEPROM, then read on to the Discussion next.

Discussion

The HAT standard makes a lot of sense. However, at the time of writing, Raspbian does not make use of any information written in the HAT's EEPROM. This is likely to change in the future and leads to the exciting possibility of HATs automatically doing things like enabling I2C and installing Python libraries for their hardware, just by being present on the Raspberry Pi.

To write data into the EEPROM, you first need to enable the hidden I2C port used by the ID_SD and ID_SC pins that are used to read and write to the EEPROM. To do that, you will need to edit `/boot/config.txt` by adding in or uncommenting the line:

```
dtparam=i2c_vc=on
```

Once this is done, reboot your Raspberry Pi, and you should then be able to detect that the I2C EEPROM is attached to the I2C bus using i2c tools ([Recipe 9.4](#)).

```
$ i2cdetect -y 0
     0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  a  b  c  d  e  f
00: --- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
10: - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
20: - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
30: - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
40: - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
50: 50 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
60: - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
70: - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
```

You can see from the result of the `i2cdetect` command that the EEPROM has an I2C address of 50. Note that the option `-y 0` rather than the usual `-y 1` is used because this is not the normal I2C bus on pins 2 and 3, but rather the I2C bus dedicated to the HAT EEPROM.

To read and write the EEPROM, you need to download some tools by using the commands below:

```
$ git clone https://github.com/raspberrypi/hats.git
$ cd hats/eepromutils
$ make
```

Writing the EEPROM is a three-step process. First, you must edit the file `eeprom_settings.txt`. Change at least the `product_id`, `product_version`, `vendor`, and `product` fields to be your company name and product name. Note that there are lots of other options in this file, which is well-documented. They include specifying back-powering options, GPIO pins used, etc.

Second, after editing the file, run the command below to convert the text file into a file suitable for writing to the EEPROM (`rom_file.eep`).

```
$ ./eepmake eeprom_settings.txt rom_file.eep
Opening file eeprom_settings.txt for read
```

```
UUID=7aa8b587-9c11-4177-bf14-00e601c5025e
Done reading
Writing out...
Done.
```

Finally, copy *rom_file.eep* onto the EEPROM by running the command below:

```
sudo ./eepflash.sh -w -f=rom_file.eep -t=24c32
This will disable the camera so you will need to REBOOT after this...
This will attempt to write to i2c address 0x50. Make sure there is...
This script comes with ABSOLUTELY no warranty. Continue only if you...
Do you wish to continue? (yes/no): yes
Writing...
0+1 records in
0+1 records out
127 bytes (127 B) copied, 2.52071 s, 0.1 kB/s
Done.
pi@raspberrypi ~/$
```

Once writing is complete, you can read the ROM back using the commands below:

```
$ sudo ./eepflash.sh -r -f=read_back.eep -t=24c32
$ ./eepdump read_back.eep read_back.txt
$ more read_back.txt
```

See Also

You can find the Raspberry Pi HAT design guide here: <https://github.com/raspberrypi/hats>.

There are many ready-made HATs on the market, including the Stepper Motor ([Recipe 11.8](#)), Capacitative Touch ([Recipe 13.18](#)), and 16-Channel PWM ([Recipe 11.1](#)) HATs from Adafruit, as well as the Pimoroni Explorer HAT Pro ([Recipe 9.16](#)).

9.21 The Pi Compute Module

Problem

You want to create a product that uses Raspberry Pi Technology, but you don't want to have to include an entire Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use a Raspberry Pi Compute module.

The Raspberry Pi Compute module (shown on the left of [Figure 9-29](#) next to its IO board on the right) is a board containing the Raspberry Pi System on a Chip (SoC) with 512 MB RAM in the form factor of a SODIMM memory module such as you would fit into a laptop when upgrading its memory.

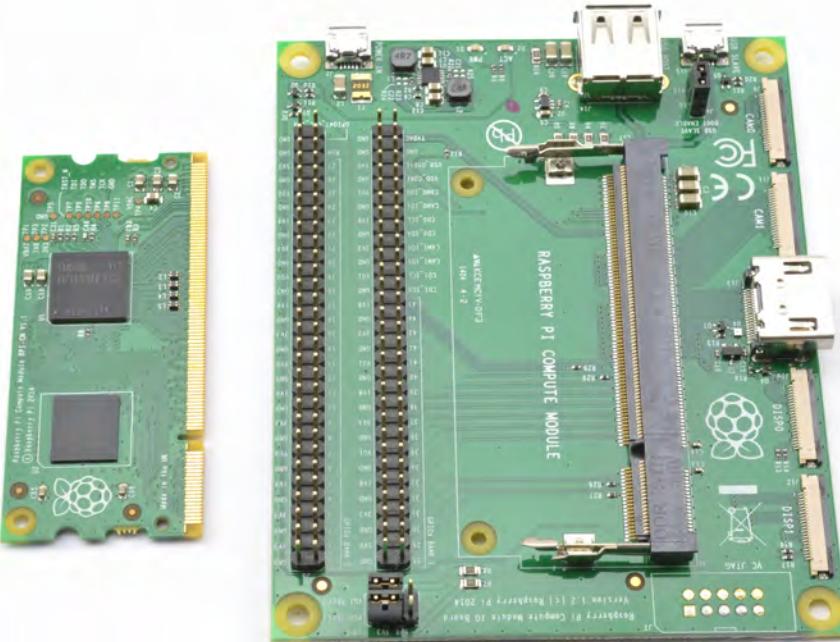


Figure 9-29. The Raspberry Pi Compute module and IO Board

The hardware is based on the original Raspberry Pi, but instead of an SD card slot, there is a 4GB Flash chip built onto the board.

The idea behind this board is that product developers can create their own PCB with a SODIMM socket on it into which the Pi Compute module could be plugged. The companion IO board is just there for you to prototype your designs using the compute board.

Discussion

This board was released before the Raspberry Pi Zero ([Recipe 9.22](#)), and at the time of writing seems somewhat redundant as it is more expensive than the Zero, does not perform as well, and is only slightly smaller. It also lacks any of the connectors present on the Pi Zero, which may be just what you need in your product without having to design your own PCB.

A smattering of products have been produced that use the Compute module, but without a hardware refresh and/or big price drop, this board may have an uncertain future.

See Also

For full information on the Pi Compute module, see <https://www.raspberrypi.org/blog/raspberry-pi-compute-module-new-product/>.

9.22 The Pi Zero

Problem

You want to learn more about the Pi Zero and how to make use of it in electronics projects.

Solution

The small size and extremely low cost of the Pi Zero make it the ideal choice for embedding in electronics projects.

Figure 9-30 shows a Raspberry Pi Zero.

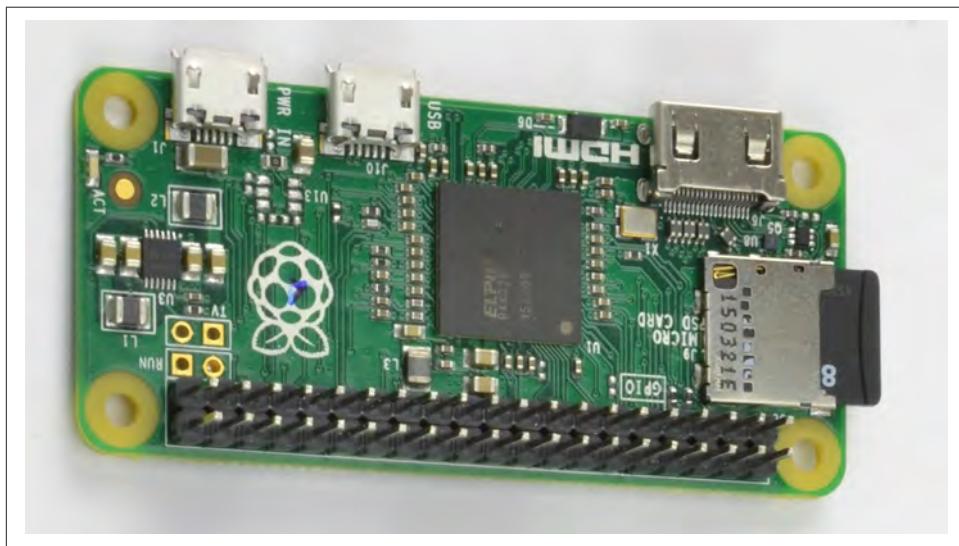


Figure 9-30. The Raspberry Pi Zero

The Pi Zero is supplied without header pins attached, so your first job is likely to be to solder pins to it. Suitable header pins are available in Pi Zero starter kits, such as the one supplied by Pi Hut.

You can also use the easier-to-find single-row header pins, just by soldering two lengths side by side.

Discussion

With only one USB connector—and a micro USB OTG (on the go) connector at that, you will need a USB adapter and USB hub to be able to plug in a USB WiFi dongle, keyboard, and mouse in order to set up the Pi Zero.

Alternatively, you can use a console cable as described in [Recipe 2.6](#) to set up WiFi by editing `/etc/network/interfaces` as described in [Recipe 2.5](#). Once that is set up, you can connect to the Pi Zero wirelessly using SSH ([Recipe 2.7](#)).

See Also

For a comparison of the Raspberry Pi models available, see [Recipe 1.1](#).

Controlling Hardware

10.0 Introduction

In this chapter, you come to grips with the control of electronics through the Raspberry Pi's GPIO connector.

Most of the recipes require the use of solderless breadboard and male-to-female and male-to-male jumper wires (see [Recipe 9.8](#)). To maintain compatibility with older 26-pin Raspberry Pi models, all the breadboard examples here only use the top 26 pins common to both GPIO layouts (see [Recipe 9.1](#)).

10.1 Connecting an LED



Be sure to check out the accompanying video for this recipe at
<http://razzpisampler.oreilly.com>.

Problem

You want to know how to connect an LED to the Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Connect an LED to one of the GPIO pins using a 470Ω or $1k\Omega$ series resistor to limit the current. To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page [474](#))
- 470Ω resistor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page [474](#))

- LED (see “Opto-Electronics” on page 476)

Figure 10-1 shows how you can wire this LED using a solderless breadboard and male-to-female jumper leads.

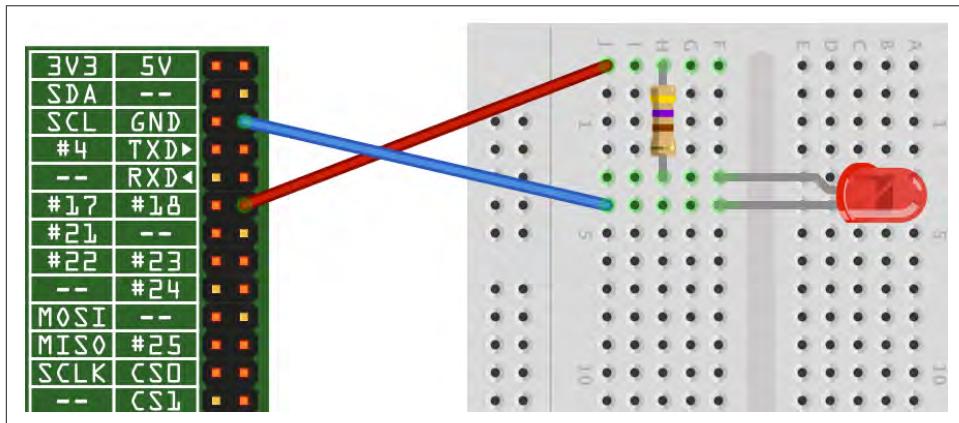


Figure 10-1. Connecting an LED to a Raspberry Pi

Having connected the LED, we need to be able to turn it on and off using commands from Python.

Start a Python console from the Terminal with superuser access and enter these commands:

```
$ sudo python
>>> import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
>>> GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
>>> GPIO.setup(18, GPIO.OUT)
>>> GPIO.output(18, True)
>>> GPIO.output(18, False)
```

This will turn your LED on and off.

Discussion

LEDs are a very useful, cheap, and efficient way of producing light, but you do have to be careful how you use them. If they are connected directly to a voltage source (such as a GPIO output) that is greater than about 1.7 volts, they will draw a very large current. This can often be enough to destroy the LED or whatever is providing the current—which is not good if your Raspberry Pi is providing the current.

You should always use a series resistor with an LED because the series resistor is placed *between* the LED and the voltage source, which limits the amount of current flowing through the LED to a level that is safe for both the LED and the GPIO pin driving it.

Raspberry Pi GPIO pins are only guaranteed to provide about 3mA or 16mA of current (depending on the board and number of pins in use)—see [Recipe 9.2](#). LEDs will generally illuminate with any current greater than 1mA, but will be brighter with more current. Use [Table 10-1](#) as a guide to selecting a series resistor based on the type of LED; the table also indicates the approximate current that will be drawn from the GPIO pin.

Table 10-1. Selecting series resistors for LEDs and a 3.3V GPIO pin

LED type	Resistor	Current (mA)
Red	470Ω	3.5
Red	1kΩ	1.5
Orange, yellow, green	470Ω	2
Orange, yellow, green	1kΩ	1
Blue, white	100Ω	3
Blue, white	270Ω	1

As you can see, in all cases, it is safe to use a 470Ω resistor. If you are using a blue or white LED, you can reduce the value of the series resistor considerably without risk of damaging your Raspberry Pi.

If you want to extend the experiments that you made in the Python console into a program that makes the LED blink on and off repeatedly, you could paste the following code into the IDLE ([Recipe 5.2](#)) or nano ([Recipe 3.6](#)) editors. Save the file as `led_blink.py`. You can also download the program from the Downloads section on the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook](#) website.

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
GPIO.setup(18, GPIO.OUT)

while (True):
    GPIO.output(18, True)
    time.sleep(0.5)
    GPIO.output(18, False)
    time.sleep(0.5)
```

Remember that to run the program, you must have superuser privileges for the `RPi.GPIO` library, so you need to use this command:

```
$ sudo python led_blink.py
```

See Also

Check out this [handy series resistor calculator](#).

For more information on using breadboard and jumper wires with the Raspberry Pi, see [Recipe 9.8](#).

10.2 Leaving the GPIO Pins in a Safe State

Problem

You want all the GPIO pins to be set to inputs whenever your program exits so that there is less of a chance of an accidental short on the GPIO header, which could damage your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use a `try: finally:` construction and the `GPIO.cleanup` method.

The blink example from [Recipe 10.1](#) can be rewritten to exit safely as shown below. The file for the code is called `led_blink_safe.py`.

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
GPIO.setup(18, GPIO.OUT)

try:
    while (True):
        GPIO.output(18, True)
        time.sleep(0.5)
        GPIO.output(18, False)
        time.sleep(0.5)
finally:
    print("Cleaning Up!")
    GPIO.cleanup()
```

Now, when you Ctrl-C the program to close it, `GPIO.cleanup` will be called before the program exits.

Discussion

If `cleanup` is not called or the Pi is not rebooted, then pins set to be outputs will remain as outputs after the program has finished. If you were to start wiring up a new project, unaware of this problem, your new circuit might accidentally short a GPIO output to one of the supply rails or another GPIO pin in the opposite state.

A typical scenario where this might happen would be if you were to connect a push switch, connecting a GPIO pin that you had configured as an output and HIGH to GND, such as in [Recipe 12.1](#).

In summary, either be careful when swapping hardware or use `GPIO.cleanup` as shown earlier, or reboot your Pi. In any case, its a good idea to power down your Pi while you are connecting new hardware to it.

See Also

For more information on exception handling in Python, see [Recipe 7.10](#).

10.3 Controlling the Brightness of an LED

Problem

You want to vary the brightness of an LED from a Python program.

Solution

The `RPi.GPIO` library has a pulse-width modulation (PWM) feature that allows you to control the power to an LED and its brightness.

To try it out, connect an LED as described in [Recipe 10.2](#) and run this test program (`led_brightness.py`):

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO

led_pin = 18
GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
GPIO.setup(led_pin, GPIO.OUT)

pwm_led = GPIO.PWM(led_pin, 500)
pwm_led.start(100)

while True:
    duty_s = raw_input("Enter Brightness (0 to 100):")
    duty = int(duty_s)
    pwm_led.ChangeDutyCycle(duty)
```

If you are using Python 3 rather than Python 2, change the command `raw_input` to `input`.

Run the Python program, and you will be able to change the brightness by entering a number between 0 and 100:

```
pi@raspberrypi ~ $ sudo python led_brightness.py
Enter Brightness (0 to 100):0
Enter Brightness (0 to 100):20
Enter Brightness (0 to 100):10
Enter Brightness (0 to 100):5
Enter Brightness (0 to 100):1
Enter Brightness (0 to 100):90
```

Exit the program by pressing Ctrl-C.

Discussion

PWM is a clever technique where you vary the length of pulses while keeping the overall number of pulses per second (the frequency in Hz) constant. [Figure 10-2](#) illustrates the basic principle of PWM.

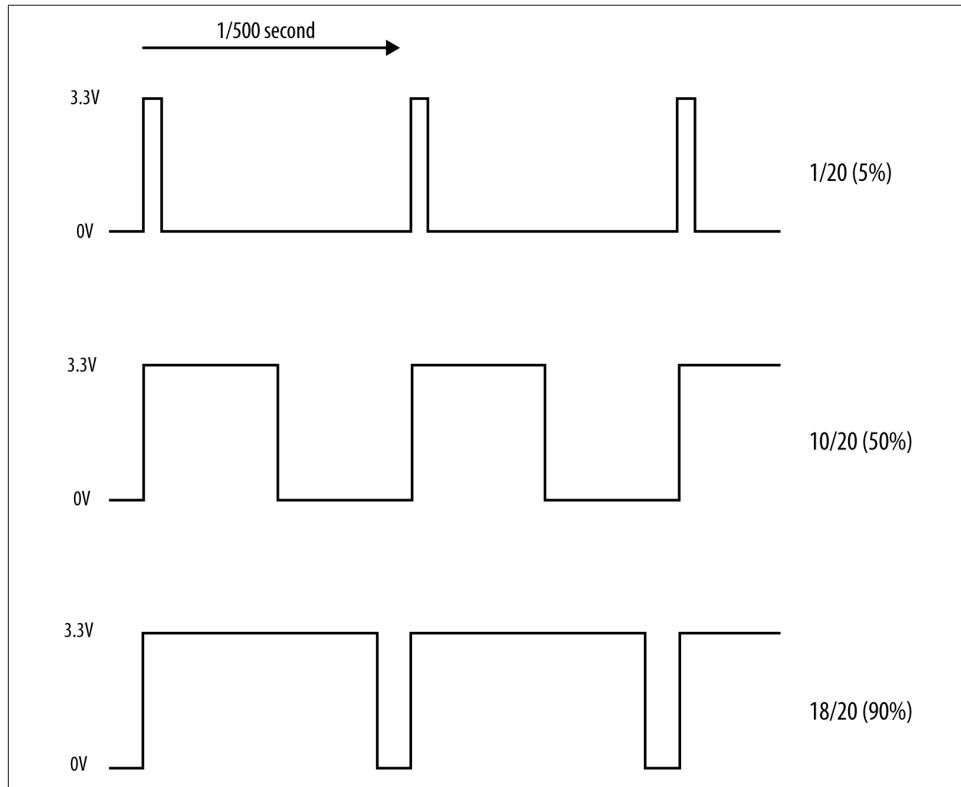


Figure 10-2. Pulse-width modulation

At high frequencies, the measured PWM frequency varies somewhat from the frequency supplied as an argument. This might change in later versions of the PWM feature of `RPi.GPIO`.

You can change the PWM frequency by modifying this line:

```
pwm_led = GPIO.PWM(led_pin, 500)
```

The value is in Hz, so in this case, the frequency is set to 500 Hz.

[Table 10-2](#) compares frequencies specified in the second parameter to `GPIO.PWM` to the actual frequency on the pin measured with an oscilloscope.

Table 10-2. Requested frequency against actual frequency

Requested frequency	Measured frequency
50 Hz	50 Hz
100 Hz	98.7 Hz
200 Hz	195 Hz
500 Hz	470 Hz
1 kHz	890 Hz
10 kHz	4.4 kHz

I also found that as the frequency increased, its stability decreased. This means that this PWM feature is no good for audio but plenty fast enough for controlling the brightness of LEDs or the speed of motors.

See Also

For more information on PWM, see [Wikipedia](#).

[Recipe 10.10](#) uses PWM to change the color of an RGB LED, and [Recipe 11.4](#) uses PWM to control the speed of a DC motor.

For more information on using breadboard and jumper wires with the Raspberry Pi, see [Recipe 9.8](#). You can also control the brightness of the LED with a slider control—see [Recipe 10.9](#).

For another approach to controlling the color of an RGB LED using the Squid RGB LED library, see [Recipe 9.10](#).

10.4 Make a Buzzing Sound

Problem

You want to make a buzzing sound with the Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use a piezo-electric buzzer connected to a GPIO pin.

Most small piezo buzzers work just fine using the arrangement shown in [Figure 10-3](#). The one I used is an Adafruit-supplied component (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477). You can connect the buzzer pins directly to the Raspberry Pi using female-to-female headers (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474).

These buzzers use very little current. However, if you have a large buzzer or just want to play it safe, then put a 470Ω resistor between the GPIO pin and the buzzer lead.

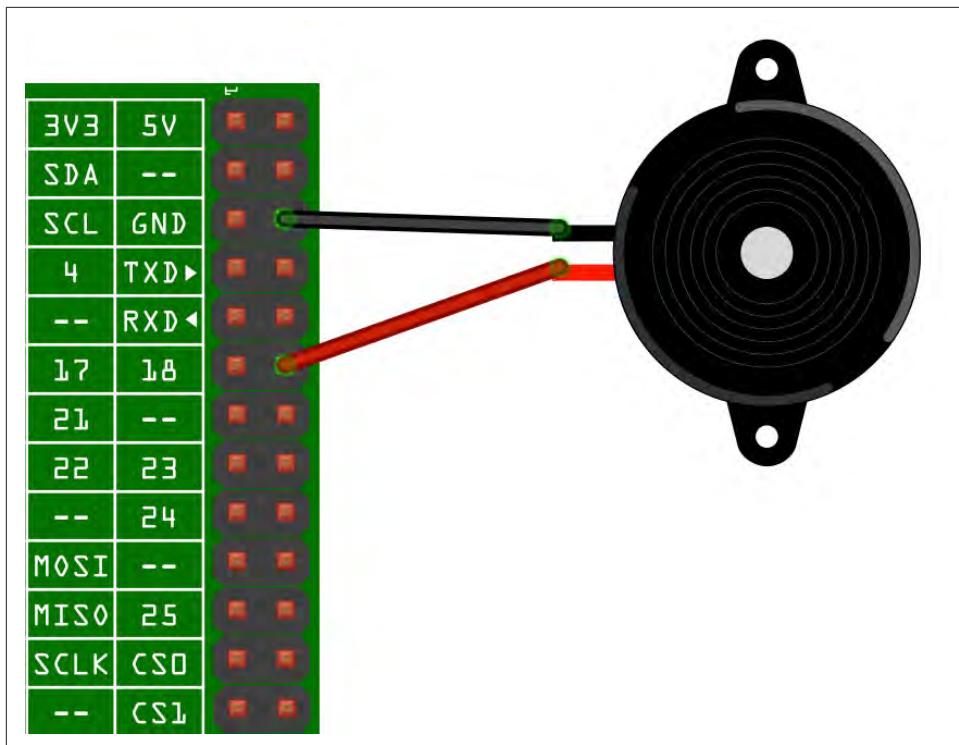


Figure 10-3. Connecting a piezo buzzer to a Raspberry Pi

Paste the following code into the IDLE (Recipe 5.2) or nano (Recipe 3.6) editors. Save the file as *buzzer.py*. You can also download the program from the Downloads section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website.

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

buzzer_pin = 18
GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
GPIO.setup(buzzer_pin, GPIO.OUT)

def buzz(pitch, duration):
    period = 1.0 / pitch
    delay = period / 2
    cycles = int(duration * pitch)
    for i in range(cycles):
        GPIO.output(buzzer_pin, True)
        time.sleep(delay)
        GPIO.output(buzzer_pin, False)
        time.sleep(delay)

while True:
```

```
pitch_s = raw_input("Enter Pitch (200 to 2000): ")
pitch = float(pitch_s)
duration_s = raw_input("Enter Duration (seconds): ")
duration = float(duration_s)
buzz(pitch, duration)
```

When you run the program, it will first prompt you for the pitch in Hz and then the duration of the buzz in seconds:

```
$ sudo python buzzer.py
Enter Pitch (2000 to 10000): 2000
Enter Duration (seconds): 20
```

Discussion

Piezo buzzers don't have a wide range of frequencies, nor is the sound quality remotely good. However, you can vary the pitch a little. The frequency generated by the code is very approximate.

The program works by simply toggling the GPIO pin 18 on and off with a short delay in between. The delay is calculated from the pitch. The higher the pitch (frequency), the shorter the delay needs to be.

See Also

You can find the datasheet for the piezo buzzer here: <http://bit.ly/Iwkv2R>.

10.5 Switching a High-Power DC Device Using a Transistor

Problem

You want to control the power to a high-power, low-voltage DC device such as a 12V LED module.

Solution

These high-power LEDs use far too much current to light directly from a GPIO pin. They also require 12V rather than the 3.3V. To control such a high-power load, you need to use a transistor.

In this case, you will use a high-power type of transistor called a metal–oxide–semiconductor field-effect transistor (MOSFET), which costs less than a dollar but can handle loads up to 30 amps—many times more than is required for the high-power LEDs. The MOSFET used is a FQP30N06L (see “[Transistors and Diodes](#)” on page 475).

[Figure 10-4](#) shows how you can connect a MOSFET on a breadboard. Make sure that you correctly identify the positive and negative supply leads for the LED module.

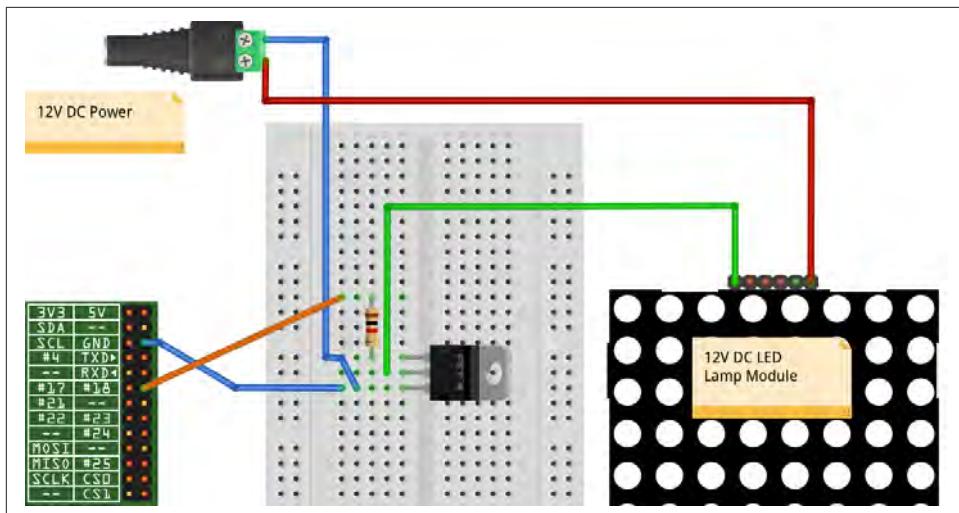


Figure 10-4. Controlling large currents with a MOSFET

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- $1k\Omega$ resistor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)
- FQP30N06L N-Channel MOSFET or TIP120 Darlington transistor (see “[Transistors and Diodes](#)” on page 475)
- 12V power adapter
- 12V DC LED module

The Python code to turn the LED panel on and off is exactly the same as if we were controlling a single low-power LED without the MOSFET (see [Recipe 10.1](#)).

You can also use PWM with the MOSFET to control the brightness of the LED module (see [Recipe 10.3](#)).

Discussion

Whenever you need to power anything significant using the GPIO connector, use batteries or an external power adapter. The GPIO connector can only supply relatively low currents ([Recipe 9.2](#)). In this case, you’ll use a 12V DC power adapter to provide the power to the LED panel. Pick a power adapter that has sufficient power handling. Therefore, if the LED module is 5W, then you need at least a 12V 5W power supply (6W would be better). If the power supply specifies a maximum current rather than power, then you can calculate its power by multiplying the voltage by the maximum current. Therefore, a 500mA 12V power supply can provide 6W of power.

The resistor is necessary to ensure that the peak currents that occur as the MOSFET switches from off to on and vice versa do not overload the GPIO pin. The MOSFET switches the negative side of the LED panel, so the positive supply is connected directly to the positive side of the LED panel, and the negative side of the LED panel is connected to the *drain* of the MOSFET. The *source* connection of the MOSFET is connected to GND, and the MOSFET's *gate* pin controls the flow of current from the drain to the source. If gate voltage is above 2V or so, the MOSFET will turn on and current flows through both it and the LED module.

The MOSFET used here is a FQP30N06L. The L at the end means that it is a logic-level MOSFET whose gate *threshold* voltage is suitable for use with 3.3V digital outputs. The non-L version of this MOSFET is also likely to work just fine, but you cannot guarantee it as the specified range of gate threshold voltages is 2V to 4V. Therefore, if you were unlucky and got a MOSFET at the 4V end, it would not switch well.

An alternative to using a MOSFET is to use a power Darlington transistor like the TIP120. This has a compatible pinout with the FQP30N06L, so you can keep the same breadboard layout.

This circuit is suitable for controlling the power to other low-voltage DC devices. The only real exceptions are motors and relays, which require some extra treatment (see [Recipe 10.6](#)).

See Also

Check out the [datasheet for the MOSFET](#).

If you would like to create a graphical user interface with which to control your LED module, see [Recipe 10.8](#) for simple on/off control, and [Recipe 10.9](#) for variable control of the brightness with a slider.

10.6 Switching a High-Power Device Using a Relay

Problem

You want to turn devices on and off that may not be suitable for switching with a MOSFET.

Solution

Use a relay and small transistor.

[Figure 10-5](#) shows how you can connect a transistor and relay on a breadboard. Make sure that both the transistor and diode are placed the right way. The diode has a stripe at one end, and the transistor used here has one side flat and one curved.

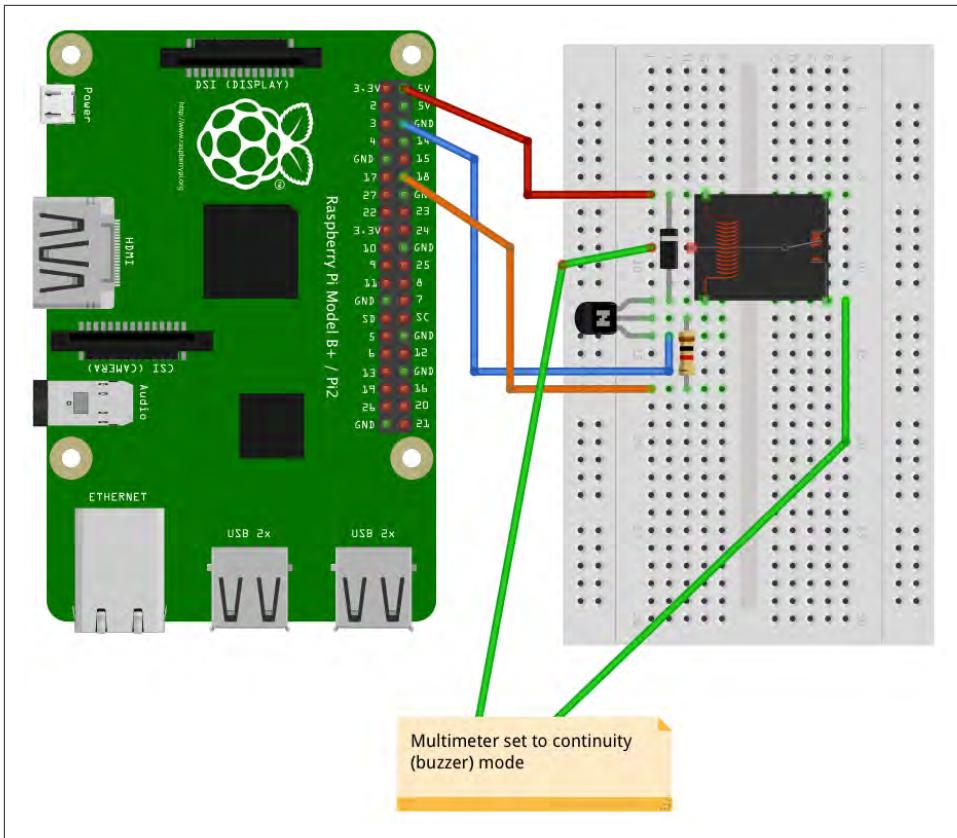


Figure 10-5. Using a relay with a Raspberry Pi

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “Prototyping Equipment” on page 474)
- 1 $k\Omega$ resistor (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)
- Transistor 2N3904 (see “Transistors and Diodes” on page 475)
- 1N4001 diode (see “Transistors and Diodes” on page 475)
- 5V relay (see “Miscellaneous” on page 477)
- Multimeter

You can use the same LED blink program that you used in Recipe 10.1. If all is well, you’ll hear a click from the relay each time the contacts are closed. However, relays are slow mechanical devices, so don’t try to use them with PWM. It may damage the relay.

Discussion

Relays have been around since the early days of electronics and have the great advantage of being easy to use, plus they'll work in any situation where a switch would normally work—for example, when you're switching AC (alternating current) or in situations where the exact wiring of the device being switched is unknown.

If the relay contacts are asked to exceed their specifications, then the relay's life will be shortened. There will be arcing, and the contacts may eventually fuse together. There is also the possibility of the relay becoming dangerously hot. When in doubt, over-specify the relay contacts.

Figure 10-6 shows the schematic symbol, pin layout, and package of a typical relay.

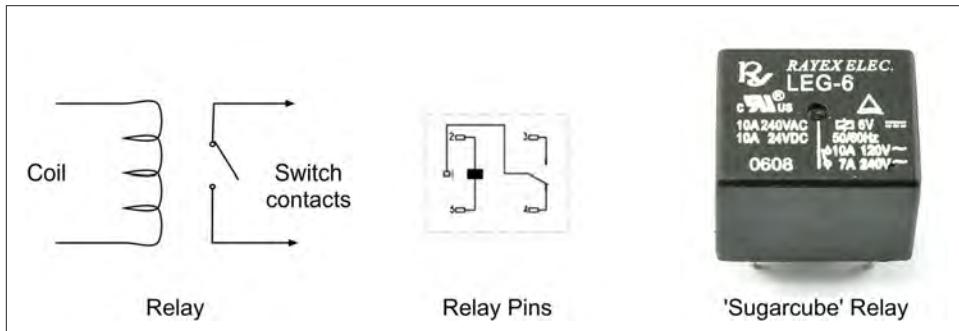


Figure 10-6. The workings of a relay

A relay is essentially a switch whose contacts are closed when an electromagnet pulls them together. Since the electromagnet and switch are not connected electrically in any way, this protects the circuit driving the relay coil from any high voltages on the switch side.

The downside of relays is that they are slow to operate and will eventually wear out after many hundreds of thousands of operations. This means they are only suitable for slow on/off control, and not for fast switching like PWM.

The coil of a relay requires about 50mA to close the connections. Because a Raspberry Pi GPIO pin is only capable of supplying about 3mA, you need to use a small transistor as a switch. You don't need to use a high-power MOSFET like you did in Recipe 10.5, but instead you can just use a small transistor. This has three connections. The base (middle lead) is connected to the GPIO pin via a $1\text{k}\Omega$ resistor to limit the current. The *emitter* is connected to GND, and the *collector* is connected to one side of the relay. The other side of the relay is connected to 5V on the GPIO connector. The diode is used to suppress any high-voltage pulses that occur when the transistor rapidly switches the power to the relay's coil.



Although relays can be used to switch 110V or 240V AC, this voltage is very dangerous and should not be used on a breadboard. If you want to switch high voltages, use [Recipe 10.7](#) instead.

See Also

For switching DC using a power MOSFET, see [Recipe 10.5](#).

10.7 Controlling High-Voltage AC Devices

Problem

You want to switch 110 or 240V AC, using a Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use a PowerSwitch Tail II (see [Figure 10-7](#)). This handy device makes it really easy to switch AC equipment on and off from a Raspberry Pi. It has an AC socket on one end and a plug on the other, like an extension cable; the only difference is that the control box in the middle of the lead has three screw terminals. By attaching terminal 2 to GND and terminal 1 to a GPIO pin, the device acts like a switch to turn the appliance on and off.

You can use the same Python code that you did in [Recipe 10.1](#) to use the PowerSwitch Tail, as shown in [Figure 10-7](#).

Discussion

The PowerSwitch Tail uses a relay, but to switch the relay, it uses a component called an *opto-isolator*, which has an LED shining onto a photo-TRIAC (a high-voltage, light-sensitive switch); when the LED is illuminated, the photo-TRIAC conducts, supplying current to the relay coil.

The LED inside the opto-isolator has its current limited by a resistor so that only 3mA flows through it when you supply it with 3.3V from a GPIO pin.

You will also find similar but cheaper devices to the PowerSwitch Tail for sale on eBay and Amazon.

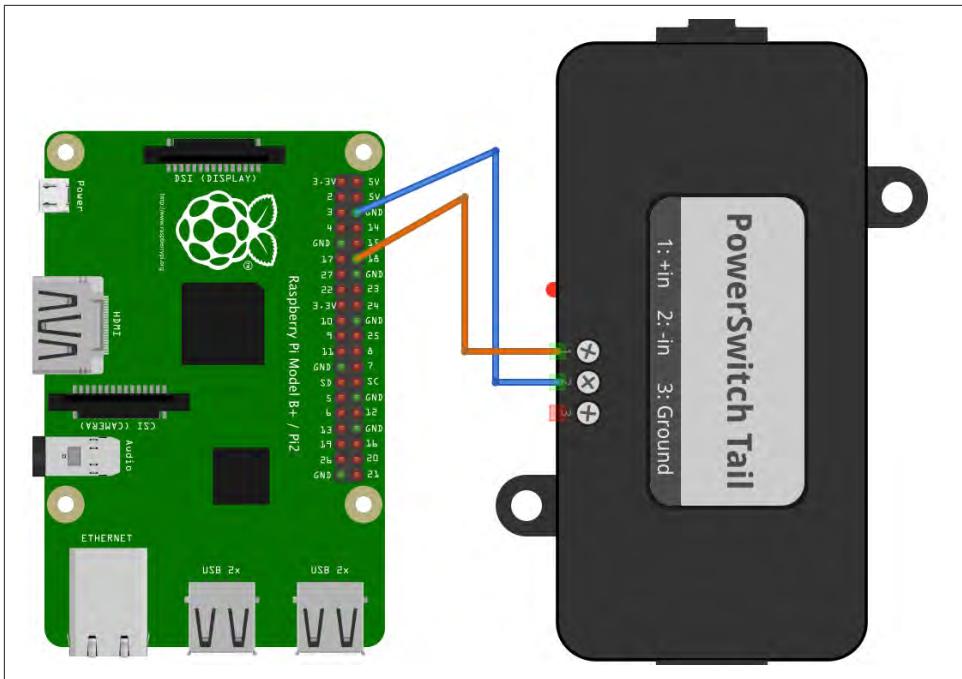


Figure 10-7. Using a PowerSwitch Tail with Raspberry Pi

See Also

For switching DC using a power MOSFET, see [Recipe 10.5](#); and for switching using a relay on a breadboard, see [Recipe 10.6](#).

A 240V version of the PowerSwitch Tail is available as a [kit](#).

10.8 Making a User Interface to Turn Things On and Off

Problem

You want to make an application to run on the Raspberry Pi that has a button for turning things on and off (Figure 10-8).

Solution

Using the Tkinter user interface framework, write a Python program that uses a checkbox to turn the GPIO pin on and off (Figure 10-8).



Figure 10-8. A user interface for turning things on and off

You'll need to connect an LED or some other kind of output device to GPIO pin 18. Using an LED ([Recipe 10.1](#)) is the easiest option to start with.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called *gui_switch.py*.

```
from Tkinter import *
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
GPIO.setup(18, GPIO.OUT)

class App:

    def __init__(self, master):
        frame = Frame(master)
        frame.pack()
        self.check_var = BooleanVar()
        check = Checkbutton(frame, text='Pin 18',
                            command=self.update,
                            variable=self.check_var, onvalue=True, offvalue=False)
        check.grid(row=1)

    def update(self):
        GPIO.output(18, self.check_var.get())

root = Tk()
root.wm_title('On / Off Switch')
app = App(root)
root.geometry("200x50+0+0")
root.mainloop()
```

Note that you will need to run it with `sudo` because the `RPi.GPIO` requires you to have superuser privileges to access the GPIO hardware:

```
$ sudo python gui_switch.py
```



In Python 3, the Tkinter library has been renamed `tkinter` with a lowercase *t*.

Discussion

The example program defines a class called `App` that contains most of the application code. Its initializer function creates a member variable called `check_var` that contains an instance of `BooleanVar` that is then supplied as the `variable` option to the checkbox. This ensures that every time the checkbox is clicked, the value in this variable will be changed. The `command` option runs the `update` command every time such a change occurs.

The `update` function simply writes the value in `check_var` to the GPIO output.

See Also

You can use this program to control an LED ([Figure 10-8](#)), a high-power DC device ([Recipe 10.5](#)), a relay ([Recipe 10.6](#)), or a high-voltage AC device ([Recipe 10.7](#)).

10.9 Making a User Interface to Control PWM Power for LEDs and Motors

Problem

You want to make an application to run on the Raspberry Pi that has a slider to control power to a device using PWM.

Solution

Using the Tkinter user interface framework, write a Python program that uses a slider to change the PWM duty cycle between 0 and 100 percent ([Figure 10-9](#)).

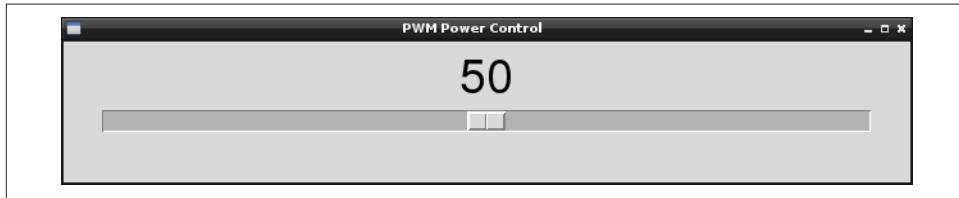


Figure 10-9. User interface for controlling PWM power

You will need to connect an LED or some other kind of output device to GPIO pin 18 that is capable of responding to a PWM signal. Using an LED ([Recipe 10.1](#)) is the easiest option to start with.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called `gui_slider.py`.

```

from Tkinter import *
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
GPIO.setup(18, GPIO.OUT)
pwm = GPIO.PWM(18, 500)
pwm.start(100)

class App:

    def __init__(self, master):
        frame = Frame(master)
        frame.pack()
        scale = Scale(frame, from_=0, to=100,
                      orient=HORIZONTAL, command=self.update)
        scale.grid(row=0)

    def update(self, duty):
        pwm.ChangeDutyCycle(float(duty))

root = Tk()
root.wm_title('PWM Power Control')
app = App(root)
root.geometry("200x50+0+0")
root.mainloop()

```

Note that you will need to run it with `sudo` because the `RPi.GPIO` requires you to have superuser privileges to access the GPIO hardware.

```
$ sudo python gui_slider.py
```

Discussion

The example program defines a class called `App` that contains most of the application code. The `command` option runs the `update` command every time the value of the slider is changed. This updates the duty cycle of the output pin.

See Also

You can use this program to control an LED ([Recipe 10.1](#)), a DC motor ([Recipe 11.4](#)), or a high-power DC device ([Recipe 10.5](#)).

10.10 Changing the Color of an RGB LED

Problem

You want to control the color of an RGB LED.

Solution

Use PWM to control the power to each of the red, green, and blue channels of an RGB LED.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- Three 470Ω resistors (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)
- RGB common cathode LED (“[Opto-Electronics](#)” on page 476)
- A Perma-Proto ([Recipe 9.9](#)) or Pi Plate (see [Recipe 9.19](#)) to make a more permanent project (optional)

[Figure 10-10](#) shows how you can connect your RGB LED on a breadboard. Make sure that the LED is the correct way around; the longest lead should be the second lead from the top of the breadboard. This connection is called the *common cathode*, as the negative connections (cathodes) of the red, green, and blue LEDs within the LED case have all their negative sides connected together to reduce the number of pins needed in the package.

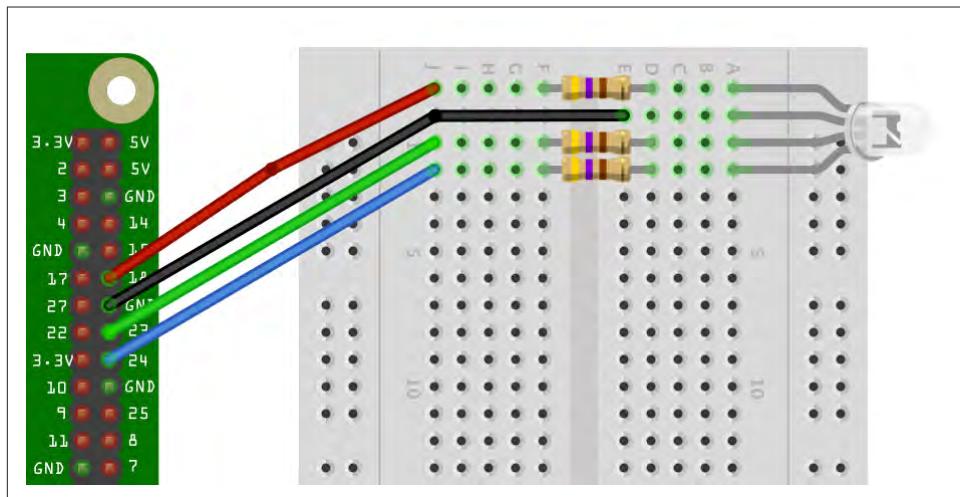


Figure 10-10. Using a RGB LED with a Raspberry Pi

An alternative to using a breadboard is to use a Raspberry Squid (see [Recipe 9.10](#)).

The upcoming program has three sliders to control the red, green, and blue channels of the LED ([Figure 10-11](#)).

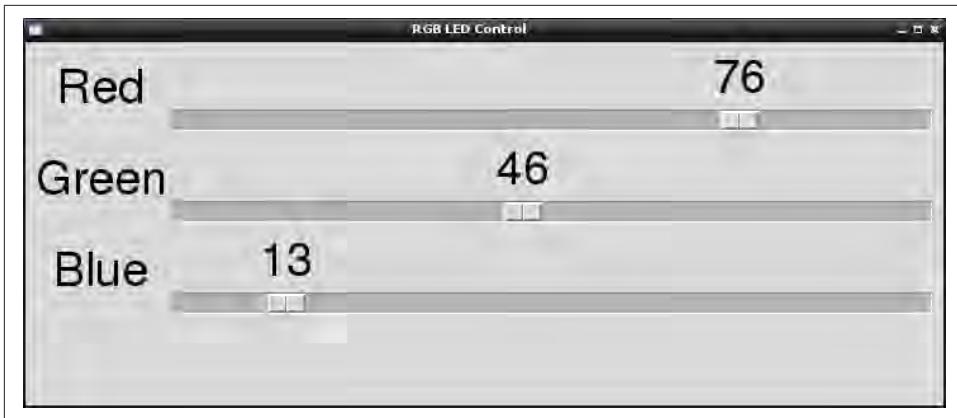


Figure 10-11. Using a user interface to control an RGB LED

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called *gui_sliderRGB.py*.

```
from Tkinter import *
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
GPIO.setup(18, GPIO.OUT)
GPIO.setup(23, GPIO.OUT)
GPIO.setup(24, GPIO.OUT)

pwmRed = GPIO.PWM(18, 500)
pwmRed.start(100)

pwmGreen = GPIO.PWM(23, 500)
pwmGreen.start(100)

pwmBlue = GPIO.PWM(24, 500)
pwmBlue.start(100)

class App:

    def __init__(self, master):
        frame = Frame(master)
        frame.pack()
        Label(frame, text='Red').grid(row=0, column=0)
        Label(frame, text='Green').grid(row=1, column=0)
        Label(frame, text='Blue').grid(row=2, column=0)
        scaleRed = Scale(frame, from_=0, to=100,
                         orient=HORIZONTAL, command=self.updateRed)
        scaleRed.grid(row=0, column=1)
        scaleGreen = Scale(frame, from_=0, to=100,
```

```

        orient=HORIZONTAL, command=self.updateGreen)
scaleGreen.grid(row=1, column=1)
scaleBlue = Scale(frame, from_=0, to=100,
                  orient=HORIZONTAL, command=self.updateBlue)
scaleBlue.grid(row=2, column=1)

def updateRed(self, duty):
    pwmRed.ChangeDutyCycle(float(duty))

def updateGreen(self, duty):
    pwmGreen.ChangeDutyCycle(float(duty))

def updateBlue(self, duty):
    pwmBlue.ChangeDutyCycle(float(duty))

root = Tk()
root.wm_title('RGB LED Control')
app = App(root)
root.geometry("200x150+0+0")
root.mainloop()

```

Discussion

The code is similar in operation to the control for a single PWM channel, described in [Recipe 10.9](#). However, in this case, you need three PWM channels and three sliders, one for each color.

The type of RGB LED used here is a common cathode. If you have the common anode type, then you can still use it, but connect the common anode to the 3.3V pin on the GPIO connector. You will then find that the slider becomes reversed, so a setting of 100 becomes *off* and 0 becomes full *on*.

When you are selecting an LED for this project, LEDs labeled *diffused* are best because they allow the colors to be mixed better.

See Also

If you just want to control one PWM channel, see [Recipe 10.9](#).

For another approach to controlling the color of an RGB LED using the Squid RGB LED library, see [Recipe 9.10](#).

10.11 Using Lots of LEDs (Charlieplexing)



Be sure to check out the accompanying video for this recipe at <http://razzpisampler.oreilly.com>.

Problem

You want to control lots of LEDs using as few GPIO pins as possible.

Solution

The way to do this is to use a technique called *Charlieplexing*. The name comes from the inventor, Charlie Allen of the company Maxim, and the technique takes advantage of the feature of GPIO pins that allows them to be changed from outputs to inputs while a program is running. When a pin is changed to be an input, not enough current will flow through it to light an LED or influence other pins connected to the LED that are set as outputs.

Figure 10-12 shows the schematic for controlling six LEDs with three pins.

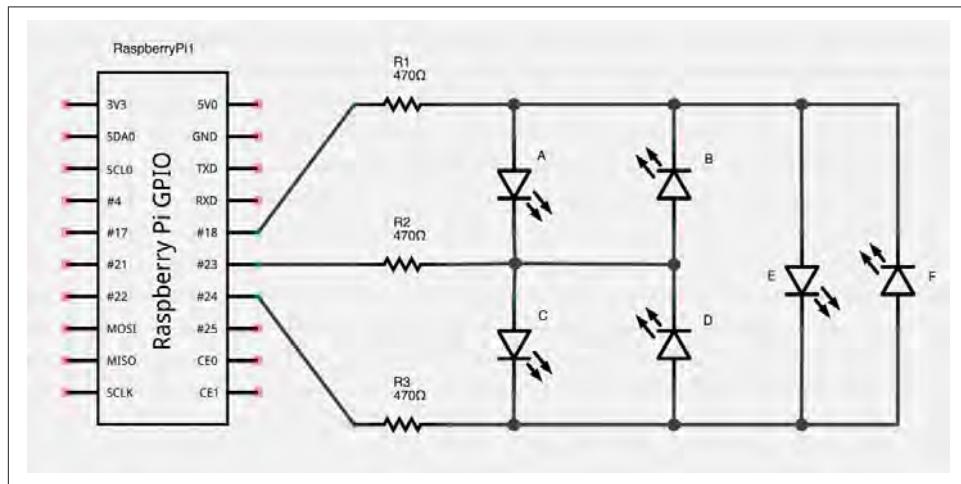


Figure 10-12. Charlieplexing

Figure 10-13 shows the breadboard layout for the LEDs and resistors.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “Prototyping Equipment” on page 474)
- Three 470Ω resistors (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)
- Six LEDs (see “Opto-Electronics” on page 476)

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *charlieplexing.py*.

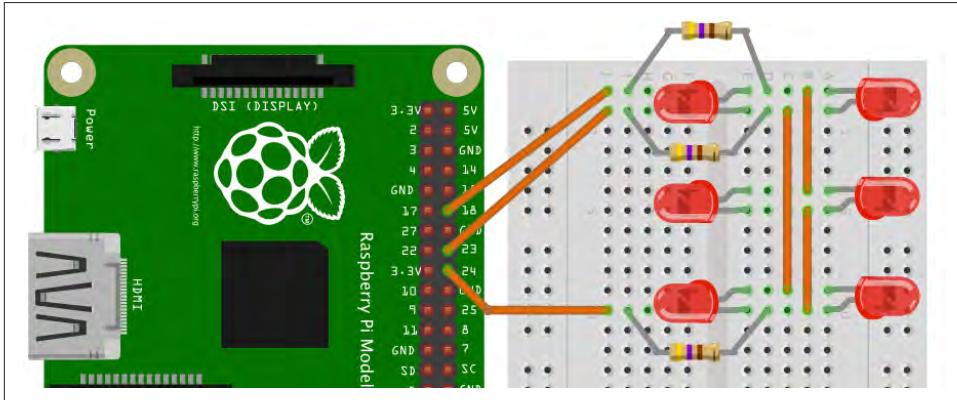


Figure 10-13. Charlieplexing breadboard layout

This example code prompts you to enter a number between 0 and 5, which then lights one of the six LEDs:

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO

pins = [18, 23, 24]

pin_led_states = [
    [1, 0, -1], # A
    [0, 1, -1], # B
    [-1, 1, 0], # C
    [-1, 0, 1], # D
    [1, -1, 0], # E
    [0, -1, 1] # F
]

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)

def set_pin(pin_index, pin_state):
    if pin_state == -1:
        GPIO.setup(pins[pin_index], GPIO.IN)
    else:
        GPIO.setup(pins[pin_index], GPIO.OUT)
        GPIO.output(pins[pin_index], pin_state)
```

```

def light_led(led_number):
    for pin_index, pin_state in enumerate(pin_led_states[led_number]):
        set_pin(pin_index, pin_state)

    set_pin(0, -1)
    set_pin(1, -1)
    set_pin(2, -1)

while True:
    x = int(raw_input("Pin (0 to 5):"))
    light_led(x)

```

Discussion

To understand how Charlieplexing works, imagine that you want to light LED A in [Figure 10-12](#). An LED will only light when its positive lead is high and its negative lead is low. If the voltage is the other way around, it will not light. To light LED A, you need its lead connected to GPIO 18 (via a resistor) to be high, and the other lead to LED A, connected to GPIO 23 by a resistor, to be low. However, you must also make sure that GPIO 24 is set to be an input; otherwise, LED C or D will also light depending on whether GPIO 24 is high or low.

The array *pin_led_states* holds the settings for each GPIO for each of the six LEDs. If the value is 0, the pin is low; 1 means high and -1 means set to be an input.

The number of LEDs that can be controlled per GPIO pin is given by the formula:

$$\text{LEDs} = n^2 - n$$

Using four pins, you can have 16, 4, or 12 LEDs, whereas 10 pins would give you a massive 90 LEDs.

In this example, you're lighting only one LED at a time. To light more than one at a time, you need to run a refresh loop that keeps the desired state of the LEDs in an array and refreshes the display, turning on the LEDs that need to be on before moving on to the next. It must do this fast enough so that it appears that more than one of the LEDs is on at the same time.

The more LEDs you use when it comes to making it appear that more than one LED is on at a time, the less time the LED will actually be lit, and the dimmer the LEDs will become.

See Also

For more information about Charlieplexing, see [Wikipedia](#).

10.12 Using an Analog Meter as a Display

Problem

You want to connect an analog panel volt meter to a Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Assuming you have a 5V volt meter, you can use a PWM output to drive the meter directly, connecting the negative side of the meter to ground and the positive side to a GPIO pin ([Figure 10-14](#)). If the meter is the common 5V kind, you'll only be able to display voltages up to 3.3V.

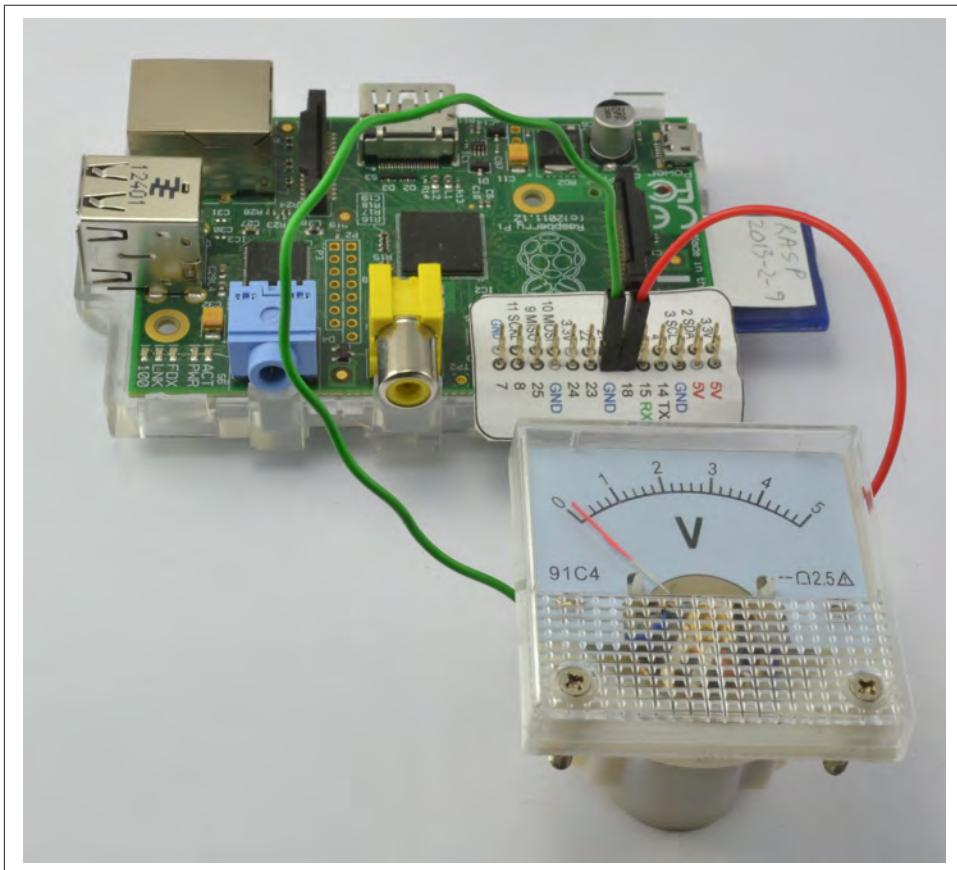


Figure 10-14. Connecting a volt meter directly to a GPIO pin

If you want to use almost the full range of a 5V volt meter, you will need a transistor to act as a switch for the PWM signal and a $1\text{k}\Omega$ resistor to limit the current to the base of the transistor.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- 5V panel meter (“Miscellaneous” on page 477)
- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “Prototyping Equipment” on page 474)
- Two $1\text{k}\Omega$ resistors (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)
- Transistor 2N3904 (see “Transistors and Diodes” on page 475)

The breadboard layout for this is shown in Figure 10-15.

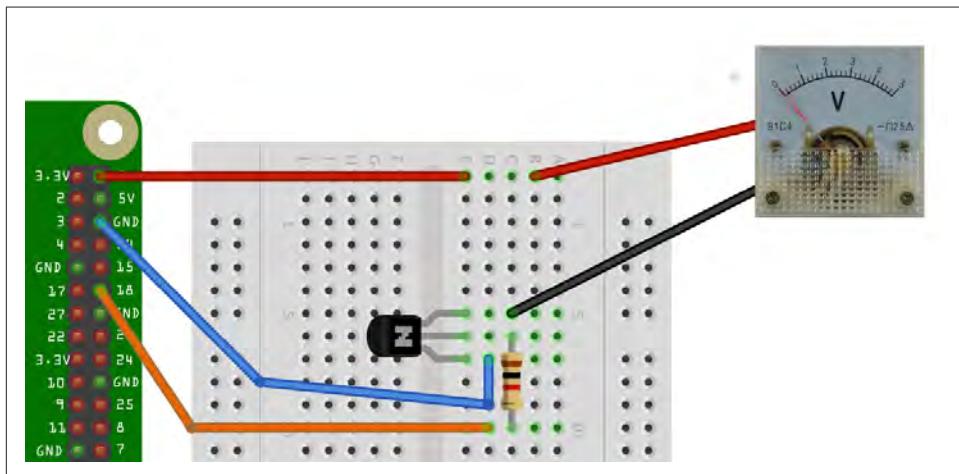


Figure 10-15. Using a 5V panel meter with 3.3V GPIO

Discussion

To test the volt meter, use the same program as you did for controlling the brightness of the LED in Recipe 10.9.

You will probably notice that the needle gives a steady reading at either end of the scale, but everywhere else it jitters a bit. This is a side effect of the way the PWM signals are generated. For a steadier result, you can use external PWM hardware like the 16-channel module used in Recipe 11.3.

See Also

For more information about how old-fashioned volt meters work, see [Wikipedia](#).

For more information on using a breadboard and jumper wires with the Raspberry Pi, see [Recipe 9.8](#).

10.13 Programming with Interrupts

Problem

You want to respond to some event, such as a button push, without having to continually poll the input pin to see if its state has changed.

Solution

Use the `add_event_detect` function of the `RPi.GPIO` library.

The upcoming example shows how you can attach an interrupt service routine to be triggered when a button is pressed.

Wire the switch onto a breadboard, as shown in [Figure 10-16](#). Alternatively, you could use a Squid Button ([Recipe 9.11](#)).

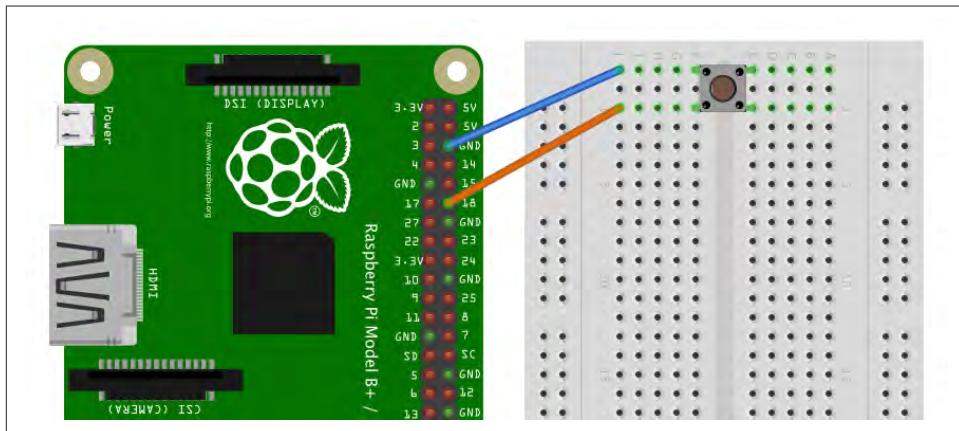


Figure 10-16. Connecting a switch to a GPIO input to demonstrate interrupts

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook website](#), where it is called `interrupts.py`.

This example code continually updates a count in seconds and displays a message when the button is pressed:

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
```

```

def my_callback(channel):
    print('You pressed the button')

GPIO.setup(18, GPIO.IN, pull_up_down=GPIO.PUD_UP)
GPIO.add_event_detect(18, GPIO.FALLING, callback=my_callback)

i = 0
while True:
    i = i + 1
    print(i)
    time.sleep(1)

```

Try running the program with superuser privileges—you should see something like this happen when you press the button:

```

$ sudo python interrupts.py
1
2
3
You pressed the button
4
You pressed the button
5
You pressed the button
You pressed the button
6

```

Discussion

You could detect when a button has been pressed or a GPIO input has changed by simply checking repeatedly in a loop; for example:

```

while True:
    if GPIO.input(18) == False:
        # put the code to be actioned here
    time.sleep(0.1)

```

The disadvantage here is that you can't do much else while you are checking for button presses. A second disadvantage is that if the button press is very quick, it could come and go before you can register it with the `GPIO.input`. This approach is called *polling*.

Interrupts work differently. They allow you to associate a function with one of the pins so that when the voltage at the input changes either from low to high or vice versa, you can trigger the function to be run.

You can see how this works in the preceding example program. First, define a function called `my_callback` that takes a single argument. This argument specifies the input that triggered the interrupt, allowing you to use the same handler function for a number of interrupts.

```
def my_callback(channel):
    print('You pressed the button')
```

In this case, the callback function just displays a message.

The line of code that does the actual linking is:

```
GPIO.add_event_detect(18, GPIO.FALLING, callback=my_callback)
```

The first parameter specifies the pin (18). The second can be `GPIO.FALLING` or `GPIO.RISING`. If this is set to `FALLING`, the function will only be called if the GPIO pin goes from high to low. This is the case in this example, as the switch pulls the input low against the internal pull-up resistor. If, on the other hand, the second argument is set to `RISING`, the function will only be called when the input goes from low to high (when the switch is released).

The event handler function does not stop the main counting loop while it runs; it actually runs in its own separate thread of execution.

Switches often *bounce* when pressed. This means they don't always transition cleanly from open to closed but bounce between the two, possibly several times, making it appear that the button was pressed multiple times in very rapid succession when actually it was pressed only once.

If you keep pressing the button, you'll probably see this reflected in the output as the message appearing more than once for one button press.

The library actually has an option to stop bounce from being a problem, by preventing the interrupt from being triggered again within a certain amount of time. To make use of this feature, just add the extra optional parameter `bouncetime` to the `add_event_detect` call. The value of `bouncetime` is in milliseconds.

```
GPIO.add_event_detect(18, GPIO.FALLING, callback=my_callback, bouncetime=100)
```

See Also

For more information on using switches with the Raspberry Pi, see [Recipe 12.1](#).

CHAPTER 11

Motors

11.0 Introduction

In this chapter, you will investigate the use of different types of motors with the Raspberry Pi.

11.1 Controlling Servo Motors



Be sure to check out the accompanying video for this recipe at
<http://razzpisampler.oreilly.com>.

Problem

You want to use a Raspberry Pi to control the position of a servo motor.

Solution

Use PWM to control the width of pulses to a servo motor to change its angle. Although this will work, the PWM generated is not completely stable, so there will be a little bit of jitter with the servo. For an alternative solution that produces much more stable pulse timing using the ServoBlaster device driver software, see [Recipe 11.2](#).

If you have an older Raspberry Pi 1, you should also power the servo from a separate 5V power supply because peaks in the load current are very likely to crash or overload the Raspberry Pi. If you have a Raspberry Pi B+ or newer, then improvements in

the onboard voltage regulation mean that you may get away with powering small servos directly from the 5V pin on the GPIO port.

Figure 11-1 shows a small 9g servo (see “Miscellaneous” on page 477) working quite happily with a Raspberry Pi B+.

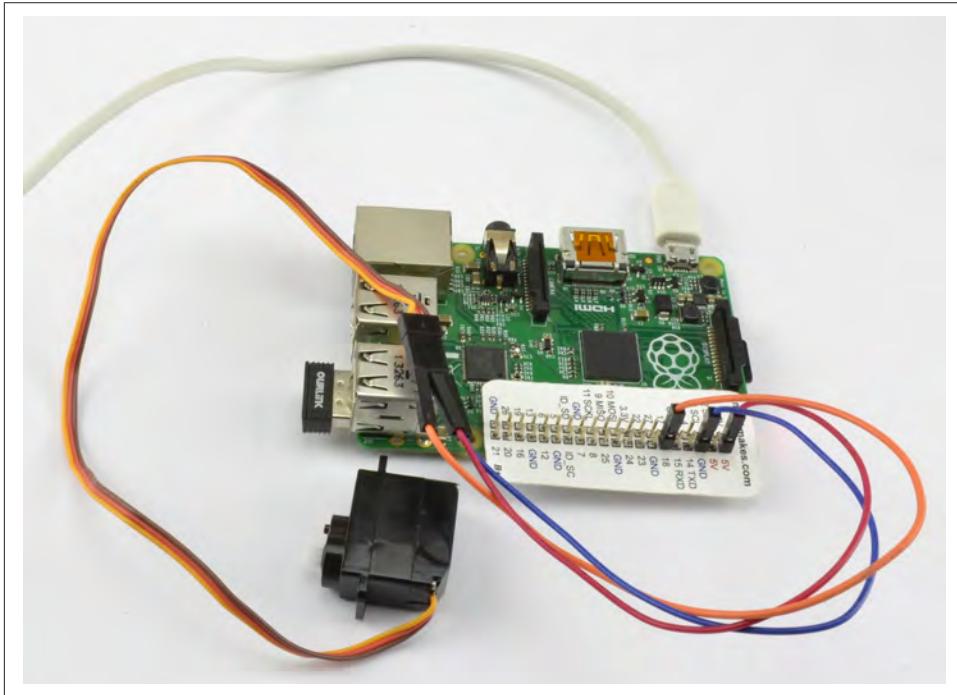


Figure 11-1. Direct connection of a small servo to a Raspberry Pi B+

The leads of the servo are usually 5V wire as red, the ground brown, and the control lead orange. The 5V and ground leads are connected to the GPIO header 5V and GND pins, and the control lead is connected to pin 18. The connections are made with female-to-male header leads.

If you are using a separate power supply, then a breadboard is a good way of keeping all the leads together.

In this case, you will need:

- 5V servo motor (see “Miscellaneous” on page 477)
- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “Prototyping Equipment” on page 474)
- 1k Ω resistor (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)
- 5V 1A power supply or 4.8V battery pack (see “Miscellaneous” on page 477)

The breadboard layout for this is shown in Figure 11-2.

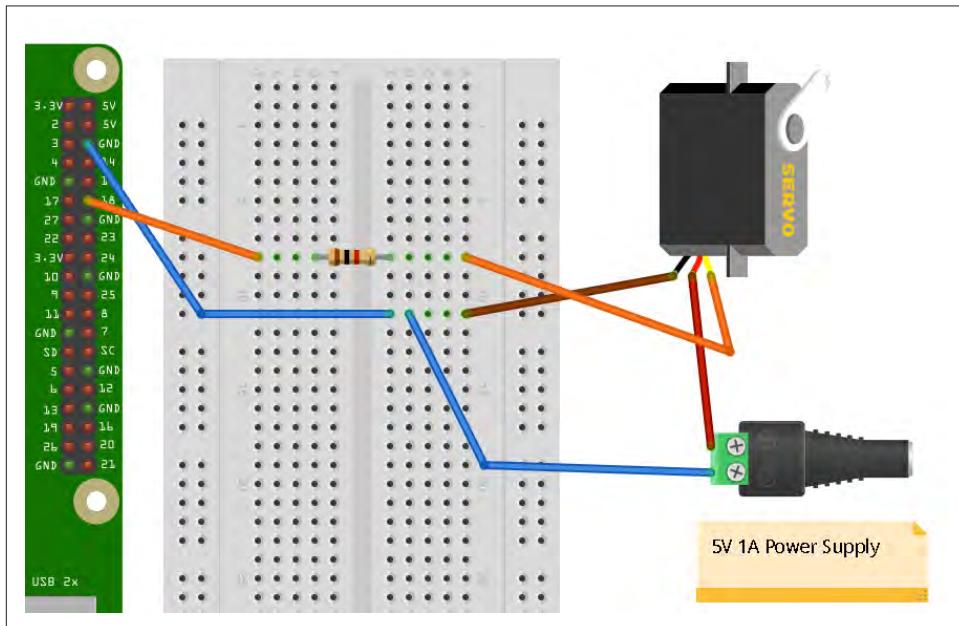


Figure 11-2. Controlling a servo motor

The $1\text{k}\Omega$ resistor is not essential, but it does protect the GPIO pin from unexpectedly high currents in the control signal, which could occur if a fault developed on the servo.

You can, if you prefer, power the servo from a battery pack rather than a power supply. Using a four-cell AA battery holder with rechargeable batteries will provide around 4.8V and work well with a servo. Using four alkali AA cells to provide 6V will be fine for many servos, but check the datasheet of your servo to make sure it is OK with 6V.

The user interface for setting the angle of the servo is based on the `gui_slider.py` program intended for controlling the brightness of an LED (Recipe 10.9). However, you can modify it so that the slider sets the angle to be between 0 and 180 degrees (Figure 11-3).

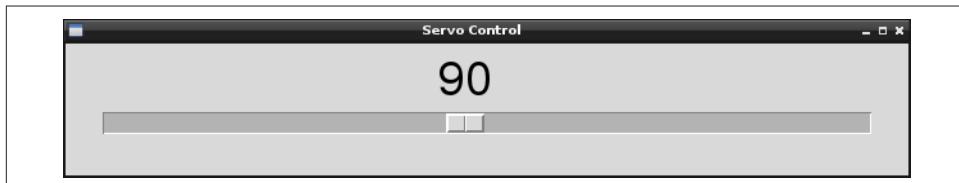


Figure 11-3. User interface for controlling a servo motor

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called `servo.py`.

Note that this program uses a graphical user interface, so you cannot run it from SSH.

You must run it from the windowing environment on the Pi itself or via remote control using VNC ([Recipe 2.8](#)) or RDP ([Recipe 2.9](#)). You also need to run it as super-user, so run it with the command `sudo python servo.py`:

```
from Tkinter import *
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
GPIO.setup(18, GPIO.OUT)
pwm = GPIO.PWM(18, 100)
pwm.start(5)

class App:

    def __init__(self, master):
        frame = Frame(master)
        frame.pack()
        scale = Scale(frame, from_=0, to=180,
                      orient=HORIZONTAL, command=self.update)
        scale.grid(row=0)

    def update(self, angle):
        duty = float(angle) / 10.0 + 2.5
        pwm.ChangeDutyCycle(duty)

root = Tk()
root.wm_title('Servo Control')
app = App(root)
root.geometry("200x50+0+0")
root.mainloop()
```

Discussion

Servo motors are used in remote control vehicles and robotics. Most servo motors are not *continuous*; that is, they cannot rotate all the way around but rather just over an angle of about 180 degrees.

The position of the servo motor is set by the length of a pulse. The servo expects to receive a pulse at least every 20 milliseconds. If that pulse is high for 1 millisecond, the servo angle will be zero; if it is 1.5 milliseconds, it will be at its center position; and if it is 2 milliseconds, it will be at 180 degrees ([Figure 11-4](#)).

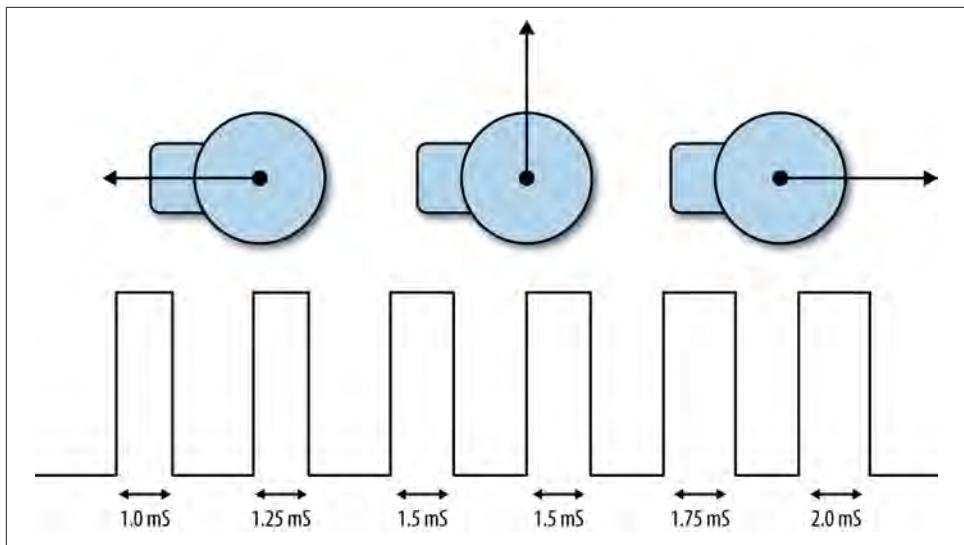


Figure 11-4. Servo motors

The example program sets the PWM frequency to 100 Hz, which will send a pulse to the servo every 10 milliseconds. The angle is converted into a duty cycle between 0 and 100.

See Also

If you have a lot of servos to control, or require greater stability and precision, then you can use a dedicated servo controller module, as described in [Recipe 11.3](#).

Adafruit has developed [another method of servo control](#).

For an alternative solution that produces much more stable pulse timing using the ServoBlaster device driver software, see [Recipe 11.2](#).

11.2 Controlling Servo Motors Precisely

Problem

The PWM function of the `RPi.GPIO` library are not precise or jitter-free for your servo application.

Solution

Install the Servo Blaster device driver.

The Servo Blaster software created by Richard Hurst uses Raspberry Pi CPU hardware to generate pulses with much more accurate timings than are possible using the `RPi.GPIO` library. Install this using the following commands and then reboot your Raspberry Pi.

```
git clone git://github.com/richardghirst/PiBits.git
cd PiBits/ServoBlaster/user
sudo make
sudo make install
```

The program from [Recipe 11.1](#) can be modified to use the Servo Blaster code. The modified program can be found in the file `servo_blaster.py` and assumes that the servo control pin is connected to GPIO 18.

```
from Tkinter import *
import os
import time

servo_min = 500 # uS
servo_max = 2500 # uS

servo = 2 # GPIO 18

def map(value, from_low, from_high, to_low, to_high):
    from_range = from_high - from_low
    to_range = to_high - to_low
    scale_factor = float(from_range) / float(to_range)
    return to_low + (value / scale_factor)

def set_angle(angle):
    pulse = int(map(angle, 0, 180, servo_min, servo_max))
    command = "echo {}={}us > /dev/servoblaster".format(servo, pulse)
    os.system(command)

class App:

    def __init__(self, master):
        frame = Frame(master)
        frame.pack()
        scale = Scale(frame, from_=0, to=180,
                      orient=HORIZONTAL, command=self.update)
        scale.grid(row=0)

    def update(self, angle):
        set_angle(float(angle))

root = Tk()
root.wm_title('Servo Control')
app = App(root)
root.geometry("200x50+0+0")
root.mainloop()
```

The user interface code is just the same as [Recipe 11.1](#). The differences are in the `set_angle` function. The `set_angle` function first uses a utility function called `map` that converts the angle into a pulse duration using the constants `servo_min` and `servo_max`. `set_angle`. Then it constructs a command that will be run as if from the command line. The format of this line starts with the `echo` command followed by the servo number to be controlled, then an equals sign, and then a pulse duration in microseconds. This string part of the command will be directed to the device `/dev/servoblaster`. The servo will then adjust its angle.



Killing ServoBlaster

When ServoBlaster, or more specifically, the service `servo.d`, is running, you will not be able to use the servo pins for anything and audio on the Raspberry Pi will not work. So when you need to use the pins for something else, use the following commands to disable ServoBlaster and then reboot your Pi.

```
$ sudo update-rc.d servoblaster disable  
$ sudo reboot
```

When your Raspberry Pi restarts, ServoBlaster will no longer have control of your pins. You can always turn ServoBlaster back on again using:

```
$ sudo update-rc.d servoblaster enable  
$ sudo reboot
```

Discussion

The ServoBlaster driver is actually very powerful and can be configured to allow you to use pretty much all the GPIO pins to control servos. Its default setup defines eight GPIO pins to act as servo control pins. These are each given a channel number, as shown in [Table 11-1](#).

Table 11-1. Servo channel default pin allocation for ServoBlaster

Servo Channel	GPIO Pin
0	4
1	17
2	18
3	27
4	22
5	23
6	24
7	25

Connecting so many servos can result in jumper-lead spaghetti. A board like the MonkMakes Servo Six greatly simplifies the wiring of the servos to your Raspberry Pi.

See Also

You can find the full documentation for Servo Blaster at <https://github.com/richardghirst/PiBits/tree/master/ServoBlaster>.

If you do not need the precise timing of Servo Blaster, the `RPi.GPIO` library can also generate pulses for your servo, as described in [Recipe 11.1](#).

11.3 Controlling Many Servo Motors

Problem

You need to control lots of servos with high precision.

Solution

Although the Servo Blaster code (see [Recipe 11.2](#)) allows you to control lots of servos accurately, it does not solve the problem of wiring up all those servos. You can do this with a breadboard, but it's messy and wires are quite likely to become loose.

To make connection easy, use a servo motor HAT like the one shown in [Figure 11-5](#).

This HAT allows you to control up to 16 servos or PWM channels using the I2C interface of the Raspberry Pi. The servos just plug straight into the HAT.

Power is supplied to the logic circuits of the module from the 3.3V connection of the Raspberry Pi. This is entirely separate from the power supply for the servo motors, which comes from an external 5V power adapter.

You can, if you prefer, power the servos from a battery pack rather than a power supply. Using a four-cell AA battery holder with rechargeable batteries provides around 4.8V and works well with most servos. Using four alkali AA cells to provide 6V will be fine for many servos, but check the datasheet of your servo to make sure it is OK with 6V.

The pin headers for connecting servos are conveniently arranged so that the servo lead fits directly onto the pins. Be careful to get them facing the right way.

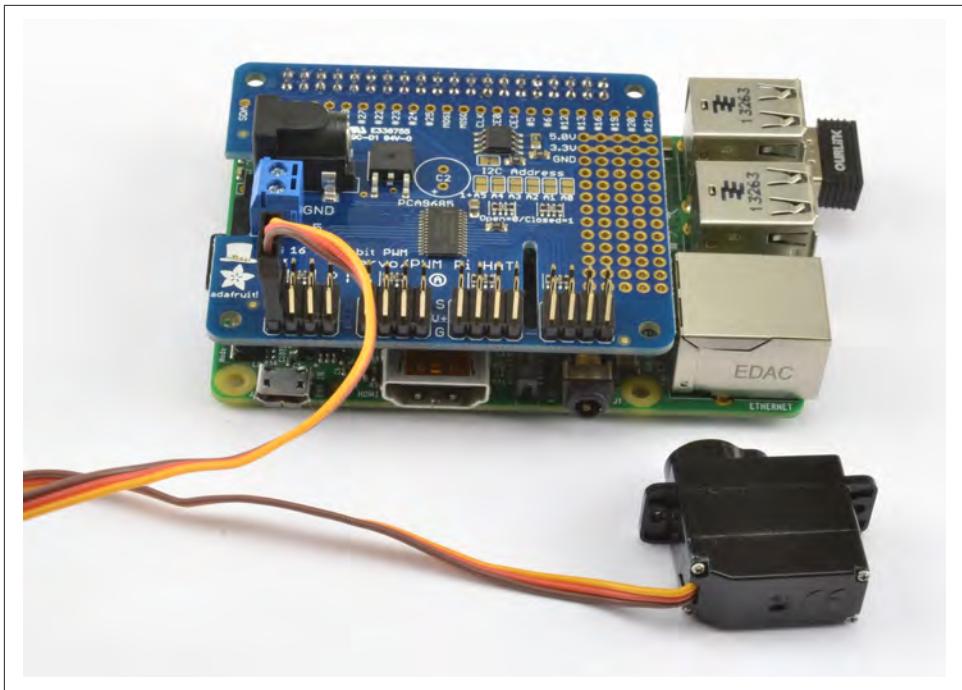


Figure 11-5. Adafruit Servo Motor HAT

To use the Adafruit software for this module, you will need to set up I2C on the Raspberry Pi ([Recipe 9.3](#)).

The Adafruit library isn't really a proper library that contains an installation script, but rather just a directory that contains a number of files. So, when using it, you need to be in the directory to which they are downloaded or your program will not find them.

To download all the Adafruit software libraries for Raspberry Pi, enter the following:

```
$ git clone https://github.com/adafruit/Adafruit-Raspberry-Pi-Python-Code.git  
$ cd Adafruit-Raspberry-Pi-Python-Code  
$ cd Adafruit_PWM_Servo_Driver
```

The last two lines set the current directory to the directory containing the code for PWM as well as an example program supplied by Adafruit, which you can run with the command:

```
$ sudo python Servo_Example.py
```

An alternative example next modifies the example program from [Recipe 10.2](#) so that you can use a slider to set the servo position to be between 0 and 180 degrees. The program file must be saved in the *Adafruit_PWM_Servo_Driver* directory. The slider

will change the servo positions of both channels 0 and 1 at the same time, so both servos will follow the position of the slider.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *servo_module.py*. Note that this program uses a graphical user interface, so you can't run it from SSH. You must run it from the windowing environment on the Pi itself or via remote control using VNC (Recipe 2.8) or RDP (Recipe 2.9).

```
from Tkinter import *
from Adafruit_PWM_Servo_Driver import PWM
import time

pwm = PWM(0x40)
pwm.setPWMFreq(50)

class App:

    def __init__(self, master):
        frame = Frame(master)
        frame.pack()
        scale = Scale(frame, from_=0, to=180,
                      orient=HORIZONTAL, command=self.update)
        scale.grid(row=0)

    def update(self, angle):
        pulse_len = int(float(angle) * 500.0 / 180.0) + 110
        pwm.setPWM(0, 0, pulse_len)
        pwm.setPWM(1, 0, pulse_len)

root = Tk()
root.wm_title('Servo Control')
app = App(root)
root.geometry("200x50+0+0")
root.mainloop()
```

Discussion

The first line after the import creates a new instance of PWM using the I2C address specified as its argument—in this case, `0x40`. The module has solder pad connections that allow you to change the I2C address if this conflicts with another I2C device you are using, or you want to use more than one of these modules.

The next line sets the PWM frequency to 50 Hz, which will provide an update pulse every 20 milliseconds.

The line that actually sets the PWM for a particular channel is:

```
pwm.setPWM(0, 0, pulse_len)
```

The first argument is the PWM channel whose duty cycle is to be changed. Each cycle of PWM is divided into 4,096 ticks, and the second argument is the tick at which the pulse should start. This will always be 0. The third argument is the tick at which the pulse should end. The constants of 500.0 and 110 in the following line were tweaked with a little trial and error to provide a standard servo with as close to 180 degrees of movement as possible:

```
pulse_len = int(float(angle) * 500.0 / 180.0) + 110
```

When selecting a power supply for this module, remember that a standard remote control servo can easily draw 400mA while it's moving, and more if it's under load. So if you plan to have a lot of large servos moving at the same time, you will need a big power adapter.

See Also

A Servo HAT is great if your Raspberry Pi is right by the servo motors, but if your servos are distant from where you want the Raspberry Pi to be, then Adafruit also sells a servo module (product ID 815) that has the same servo controller hardware as the servo HAT, but just has four pins to connect the I2C interface of the board to the Raspberry Pi's I2C interface.

See the [Adafruit documentation for its Raspberry Pi library](#).

11.4 Controlling the Speed of a DC Motor

Problem

You want to control the speed of a DC motor using your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

You can use the same design as [Recipe 10.5](#). It is, however, a good idea to place a diode across the motor to prevent voltage spikes from damaging the transistor or even the Raspberry Pi. The 1N4001 is a suitable diode for this. The diode has a stripe at one end, so make sure that this is facing the right way.

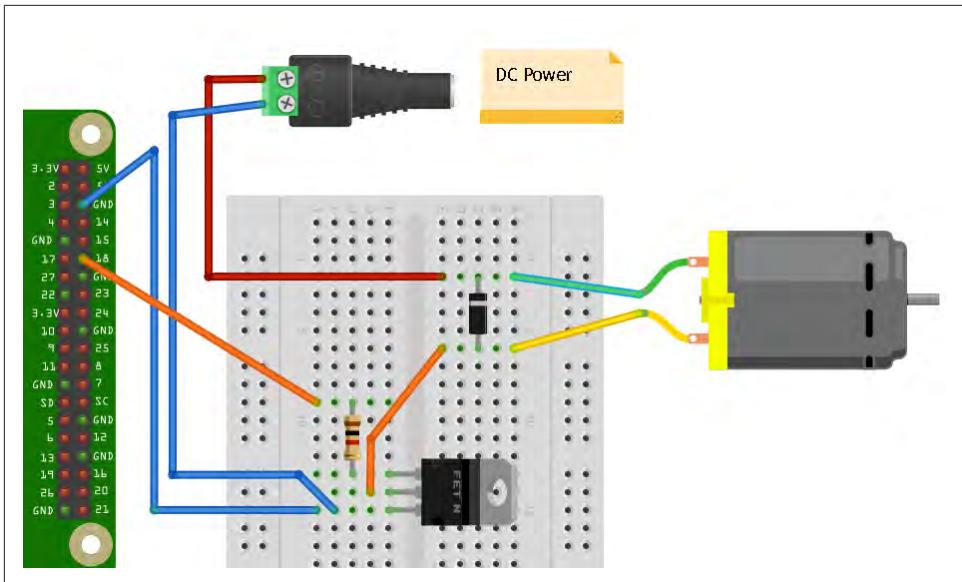


Figure 11-6. Controlling a high-power motor

You will need:

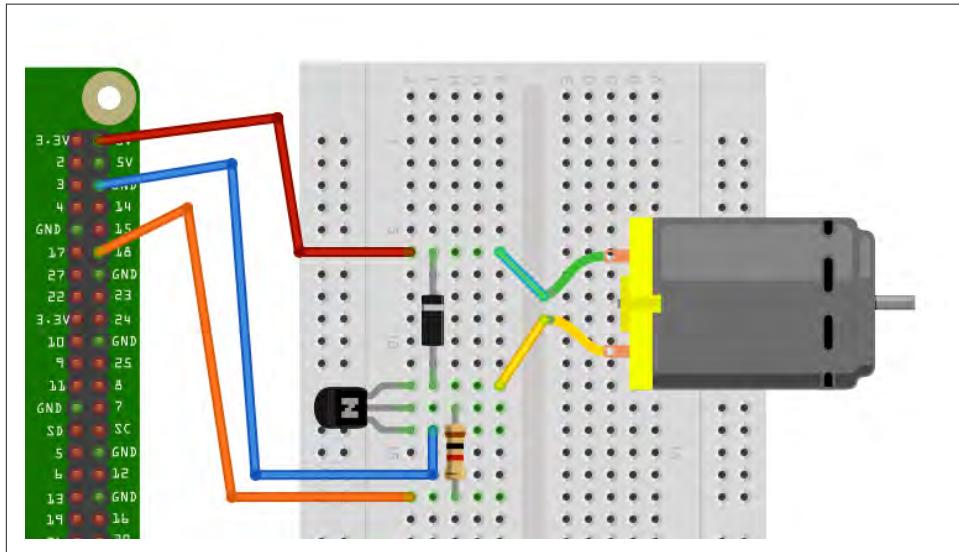
- 3V to 12V DC motor
- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “Prototyping Equipment” on page 474)
- 1k Ω resistor (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)
- MOSFET Transistor FQP30N06L (see “Transistors and Diodes” on page 475)
- Diode 1N4001 (see “Transistors and Diodes” on page 475)
- Power supply with voltage to match the motor

To control the speed of the motor, you can download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called *gui_slider.py*. Note that this program uses a graphical user interface, so you can't run it from SSH. You must run it from the windowing environment on the Pi itself or via remote control using VNC (Recipe 2.8) or RDP (Recipe 2.9).

Discussion

If you are only using a low-power DC motor (less than 200mA), you can use a smaller (and cheaper) transistor such as the 2N3904 (see “Transistors and Diodes” on page 475). The breadboard layout to use a 2N3904 is shown in Figure 11-7.

You can probably get away with powering a small motor from the 5V supply line on the GPIO connector. If you find that the Raspberry Pi crashes, use an external power supply, as shown in [Figure 11-6](#).



Both the L293D and the SparkFun module are capable of driving two motors without any extra hardware. The Discussion also mentions a few other options for controlling DC motors.

Option 1: L293D chip and breadboard

If you take the L293D route, you will need:

- 3V to 12V DC motor
- Breadboard and jumper wires (male to female; see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on [page 474](#))
- L293D chip (see “[Integrated Circuits](#)” on [page 475](#))
- Power supply with voltage to match the motor

The breadboard layout is shown in [Figure 11-8](#).

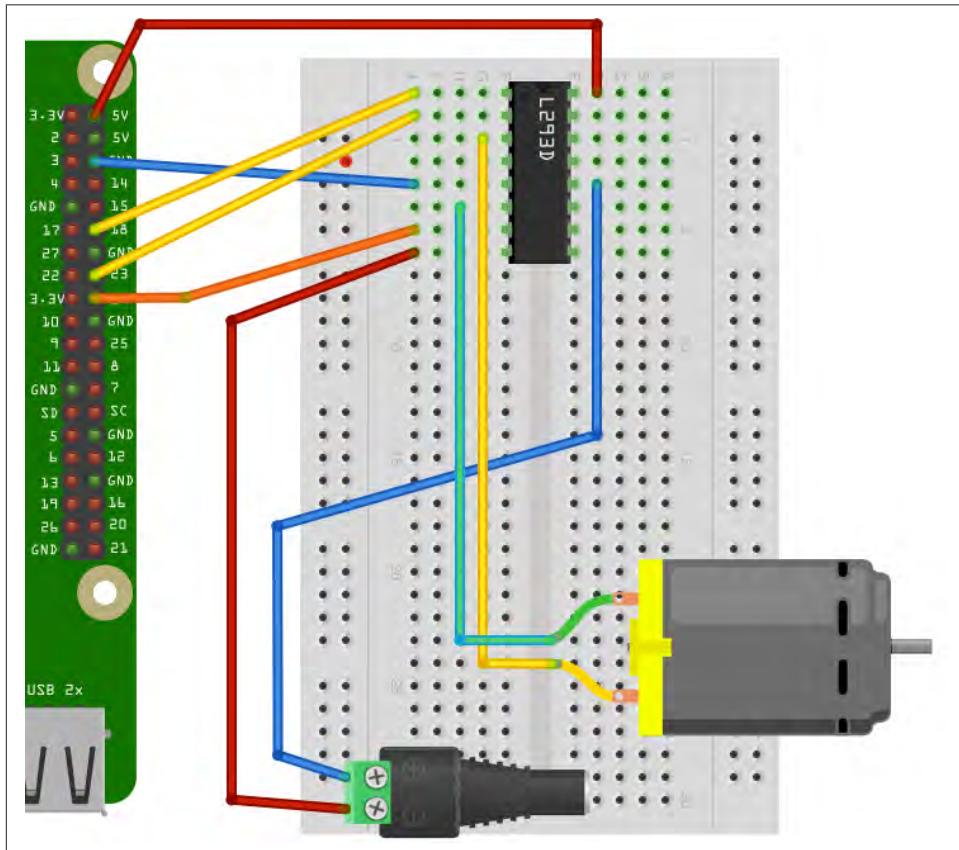


Figure 11-8. Using a L293D chip to control a motor

Make sure the chip is facing the right way: there is a notch in its top, which is the end that should be at the top of the breadboard.

Option 2: Motor controller module

If you decide to use the SparkFun motor controller, or a similar motor controller module, you will need the following:

- 3V to 12V DC motor
- Jumper wires (female to female; see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- Header pins (see “[Integrated Circuits](#)” on page 475)
- SparkFun motor driver 1A dual (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)
- Power supply with voltage to match the motor

The layout is shown in [Figure 11-9](#). Note that the motor shown is just a DC motor on its own. If the project is driving wheels, then you will typically use a *garmotor*, which combines a motor and gearbox to reduce the RPM and increase the torque.

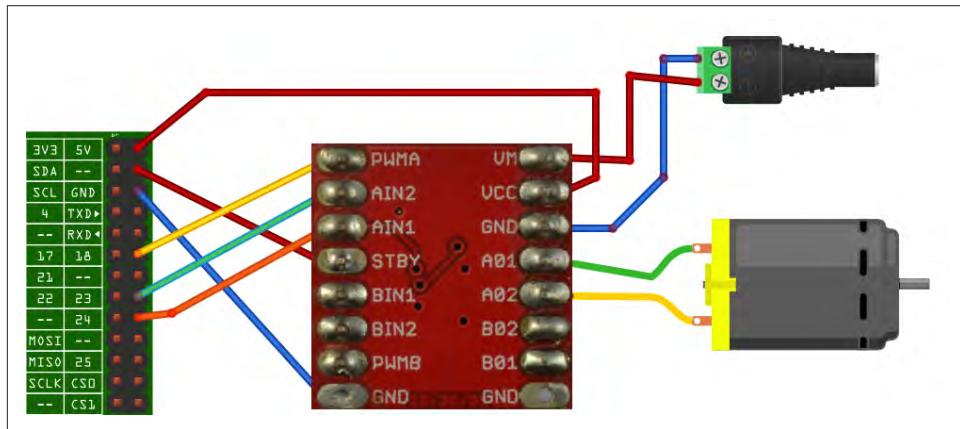


Figure 11-9. Wiring a SparkFun motor controller

The motor controller module comes without header pins attached, so you will need to add these to the board before you get started. The connections are made using female-to-female header leads.

[Figure 11-10](#) shows the module wired up to a small DC garmotor, as per the wiring diagram of [Figure 11-9](#).

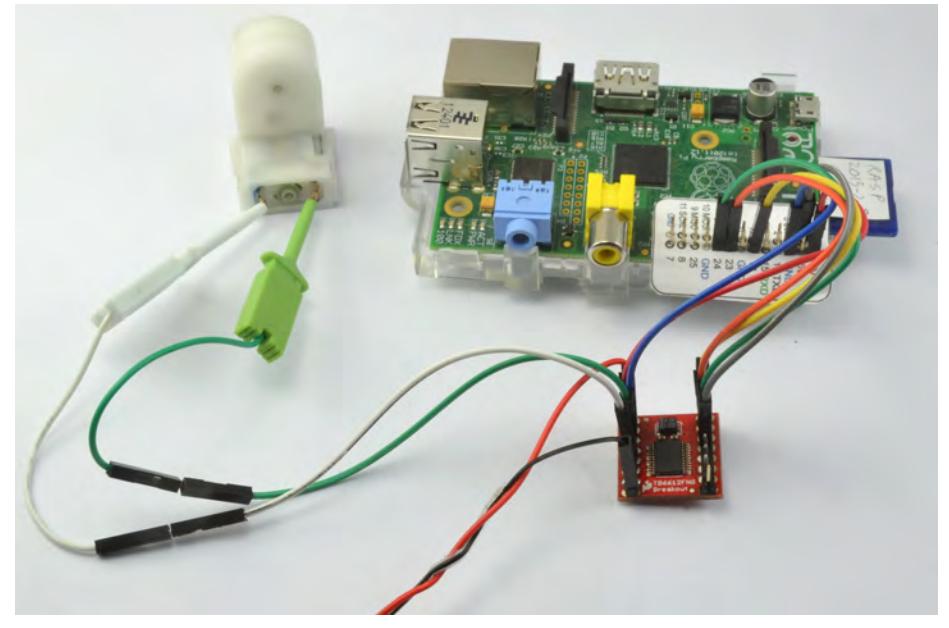


Figure 11-10. Using a SparkFun motor controller with a gearmotor

Software

Whichever hardware option you decided upon, you can use the same program to try out the motor. This allows you to enter a letter *f* or *r* and then a single digit between 0 and 9. The motor will then either go forward or backward, at a speed specified by the digit—0 for stopped, 9 for full speed.

```
$ sudo python motor_control.py
Command, f/r 0..9, E.g. f5 :f5
Command, f/r 0..9, E.g. f5 :f1
Command, f/r 0..9, E.g. f5 :f2
Command, f/r 0..9, E.g. f5 :r2
```

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *motor_control.py*. This program uses the command line, so you can run it from SSH.

If you're using Python 3, change the command `raw_input` to just `input`:

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

enable_pin = 18
in1_pin = 23
in2_pin = 24
```

```

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
GPIO.setup(enable_pin, GPIO.OUT)
GPIO.setup(in1_pin, GPIO.OUT)
GPIO.setup(in2_pin, GPIO.OUT)

pwm = GPIO.PWM(enable_pin, 500)
pwm.start(0)

def clockwise():
    GPIO.output(in1_pin, True)
    GPIO.output(in2_pin, False)

def counter_clockwise():
    GPIO.output(in1_pin, False)
    GPIO.output(in2_pin, True)

while True:
    cmd = raw_input("Command, f/r 0..9, E.g. f5 :")
    direction = cmd[0]
    if direction == "f":
        clockwise()
    else:
        counter_clockwise()
    speed = int(cmd[1]) * 10
    pwm.ChangeDutyCycle(speed)

```

Discussion

Before you look at how the program operates, you need to understand a little more about how an H-Bridge works.

[Figure 11-11](#) shows how one works, using switches rather than transistors or a chip. By reversing the polarity across the motor, an H-Bridge also reverses the direction the motor turns.

In [Figure 11-11](#), S1 and S4 are closed and S2 and S3 are open. This allows current to flow through the motor, with terminal A being positive and terminal B being negative. If we were to reverse the switches so that S2 and S3 are closed and S1 and S4 are open, then B would be positive and A would be negative, and the motor would turn in the opposite direction.

However, you may have spotted a danger with this circuit. If by some chance S1 and S2 are both closed, then the positive supply will be directly connected to the negative supply and you will have a short-circuit. The same is true if S3 and S4 are both closed at the same time.

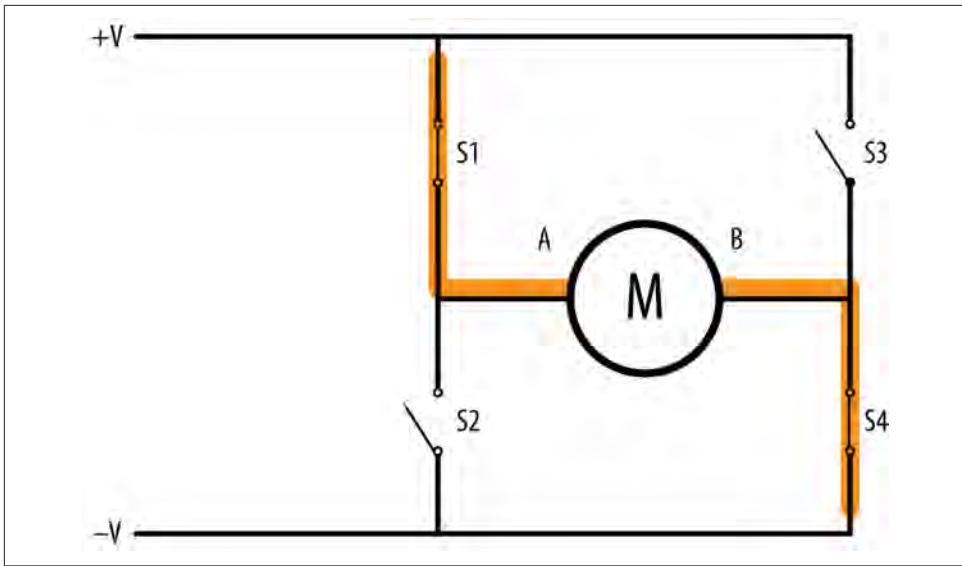


Figure 11-11. An H-Bridge

Although you can use individual transistors to make an H-Bridge, it is simpler to use an H-Bridge IC such as the L293D. This chip actually has two H-Bridges in it, so you can use it to control two motors.

The L293 has three control pins for each of the two motor control channels. The Enable pin just enables or disables the channel as a whole. In the example program, this is connected to a PWM output to control the speed of the motor. The other two pins (IN1 and IN2) control the direction in which the motor will be driven. You can see the use of these two control pins in the functions `clockwise` and `counter_clockwise`:

```
def clockwise():
    GPIO.output(in1_pin, True)
    GPIO.output(in2_pin, False)

def counter_clockwise():
    GPIO.output(in1_pin, False)
    GPIO.output(in2_pin, True)
```

If IN1 is high and IN2 is low, the motor will turn in one direction. If those two pins are reversed, the motor will turn in the opposite direction.

As an alternative to using an L293D on a breadboard, very low-cost modules are available from eBay that include a L293D on a PCB with screw terminals to attach motors and header pins to link directly to the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector. If you need a higher-power motor controller module, then you can find motor controller

modules that operate on the same principles but at much higher currents, even up to 20A or more. [Polulu](#) has an impressive range of such motor controller boards.

See Also

The Adafruit Stepper Motor HAT ([Recipe 11.8](#)) and RaspiRobot board ([Recipe 11.9](#)) can also be used to control the speed and direction of a DC motor.

Check out the [L293D datasheet](#) and the [SparkFun Motor Driver Module product page](#).

For more information on using a breadboard and jumper wires with the Raspberry Pi, see [Recipe 9.8](#).

11.6 Using a Unipolar Stepper Motor

Problem

You want to drive a five-lead unipolar stepper motor using a Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use a ULN2803 Darlington driver chip on breadboard.

Stepper motors fit somewhere between DC motors and servo motors in the world of motor technologies. Like a regular DC motor, they can rotate continuously, but you can also very accurately position them by moving them a step at a time in either direction.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- 5V, five-pin unipolar stepper motor (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477)
- ULN2803 Darlington driver IC (see “[Integrated Circuits](#)” on page 475)
- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)

[Figure 11-12](#) shows the wiring diagram for using a ULN2803. Note that the chip can be used to drive two such motors. To drive a second stepper motor, you will need to connect four more control pins from the GPIO connector to pins 5 to 8 of the ULN2803, and connect the second motor’s four pins to pins 11 to 14 of the ULN2803.

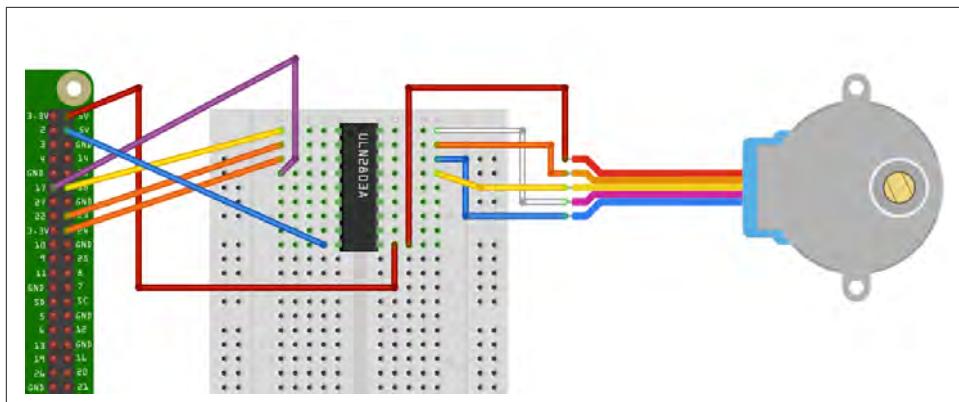


Figure 11-12. Using a ULN2803 to control a unipolar stepper motor

The 5V supply from the GPIO connector may work OK with a small stepper motor. If you experience problems with the Raspberry Pi crashing or need to use a bigger stepper motor, then use a separate supply for the power to the motor (pin 10 of the ULN2803).

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook website](#), where it is called *stepper.py*. This program uses the command line, so you can run it from SSH.

If you're using Python 3, change the command `raw_input` to just `input`:

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)

coil_A_1_pin = 18
coil_A_2_pin = 23
coil_B_1_pin = 24
coil_B_2_pin = 17

GPIO.setup(coil_A_1_pin, GPIO.OUT)
GPIO.setup(coil_A_2_pin, GPIO.OUT)
GPIO.setup(coil_B_1_pin, GPIO.OUT)
GPIO.setup(coil_B_2_pin, GPIO.OUT)

forward_seq = ['1010', '0110', '0101', '1001']
reverse_seq = list(forward_seq) # to copy the list
reverse_seq.reverse()

def forward(delay, steps):
    for i in range(steps):
        for step in forward_seq:
```

```

        set_step(step)
        time.sleep(delay)

def backwards(delay, steps):
    for i in range(steps):
        for step in reverse_seq:
            set_step(step)
            time.sleep(delay)

def set_step(step):
    GPIO.output(coil_A_1_pin, step[0] == '1')
    GPIO.output(coil_A_2_pin, step[1] == '1')
    GPIO.output(coil_B_1_pin, step[2] == '1')
    GPIO.output(coil_B_2_pin, step[3] == '1')

while True:
    set_step('0000')
    delay = raw_input("Delay between steps (milliseconds)?")
    steps = raw_input("How many steps forward? ")
    forward(int(delay) / 1000.0, int(steps))
    set_step('0000')
    steps = raw_input("How many steps backwards? ")
    backwards(int(delay) / 1000.0, int(steps))

```

When you run the program, you will be prompted for a delay between steps. This should be 2 or more. You will then be prompted for the number of steps in each direction:

```

$ sudo python stepper.py
Delay between steps (milliseconds)?2
How many steps forward? 100
How many steps backwards? 100
Delay between steps (milliseconds)?10
How many steps forward? 50
How many steps backwards? 50
Delay between steps (milliseconds)?

```

Discussion

Stepper motors use a cogged rotor and electromagnets to nudge the wheel around a *step* at a time ([Figure 11-13](#)). Note that the colors of the leads will vary.

Energizing the coils in a certain order drives the motor around. The number of steps that the stepper motor has in a 360-degree rotation is actually the number of teeth on the rotor.

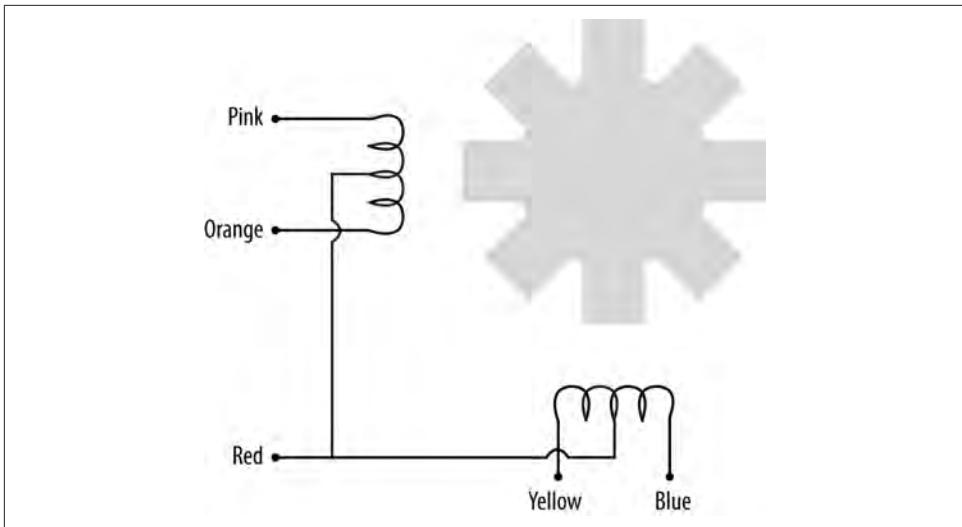


Figure 11-13. A stepper motor

The example program uses a list of strings to represent each of the four energization stages that make up a single step:

```
forward_seq = ['1010', '0110', '0101', '1001']
```

The sequence for rotating the motor in the opposite direction is just the reverse of the sequence for moving forward.

You can use the `forward` and `backward` functions in your programs to step the motor back and forth. The first argument to either function is the delay in milliseconds between each part of the step sequence. This minimum value for this depends on the motor you use. If it's too small, the motor will not turn. Typically, two milliseconds or more will be fine. The second parameter is the number of steps to take.

```
def forward(delay, steps):
    for i in range(steps):
        for step in forward_seq:
            set_step(step)
            time.sleep(delay)
```

The `forward` function has two nested `for` loops. The outer one repeats for the number of steps and the inner one iterates over the sequence of motor activations, calling `setStep` for each in sequence.

```
def set_step(step):
    GPIO.output(coil_A_1_pin, step[0] == '1')
    GPIO.output(coil_A_2_pin, step[1] == '1')
    GPIO.output(coil_B_1_pin, step[2] == '1')
    GPIO.output(coil_B_2_pin, step[3] == '1')
```

The `set_step` function sets each of the control pins to high or low, depending on the pattern supplied as its argument.

The main loop sets the step to `0000` between moving forward and backward, to set the outputs all to zero when the motor is not actually turning. Otherwise, one of the coils may be left on, causing the motor to draw current unnecessarily.

See Also

If you have a four-wire bipolar stepper motor, see [Recipe 11.7](#).

For more information on stepper motors, the different types, and how they work, see [Wikipedia](#), where you will also find a nice animated explanation of the activation pattern for driving the motor.

For information on using servo motors, see [Recipe 11.1](#); for controlling DC motors, see Recipes [7.16](#) and [7.18](#).

For more information on using a breadboard and jumper wires with the Raspberry Pi, see [Recipe 9.8](#).

11.7 Using a Bipolar Stepper Motor

Problem

You want to drive a four-lead bipolar stepper motor using a Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use a L293D H-Bridge driver chip. An H-Bridge is required to drive a bipolar stepper motor because, as the word *bipolar* suggests, the direction of current across the windings needs to be reversed, rather like driving a DC motor in both directions (see [Recipe 11.5](#)).

To make this recipe, you will need:

- 12V, four-pin bipolar stepper motor (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page [477](#))
- L293D H-Bridge IC (see “[Integrated Circuits](#)” on page [475](#))
- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page [474](#))

The motor used here, a 12V, is somewhat larger than the previous unipolar stepper motor example. The power for the motor itself is therefore supplied from an external power supply rather than from the Raspberry Pi. See the wiring diagram in [Figure 11-14](#).

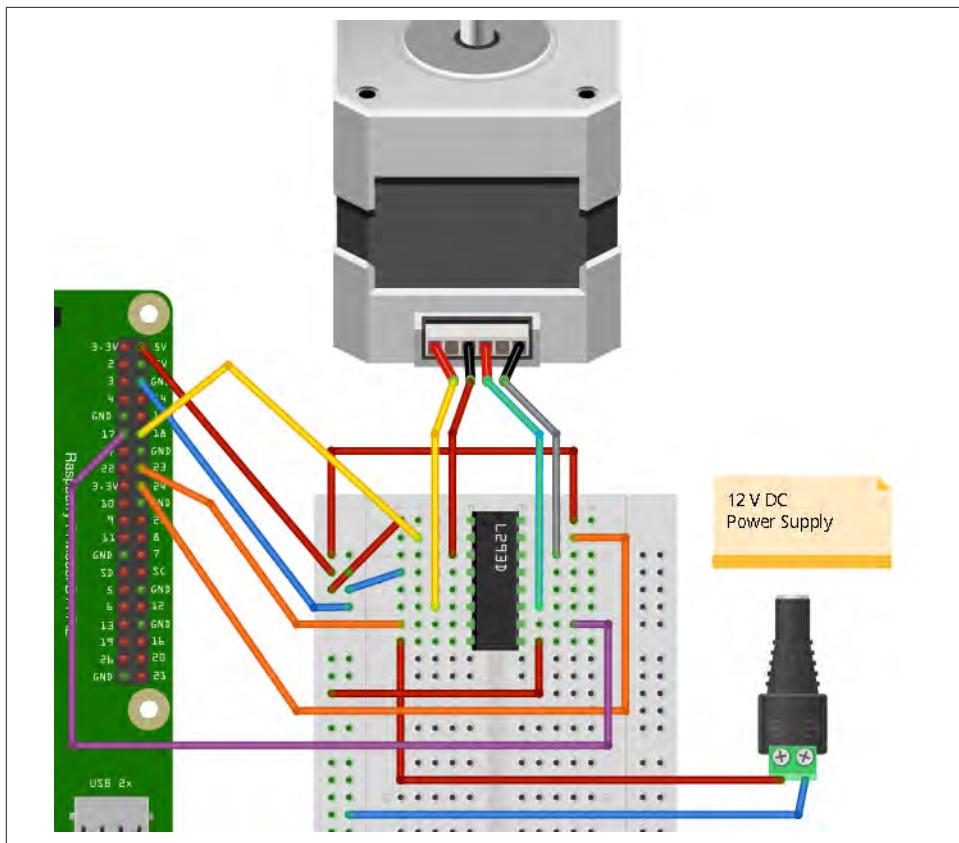


Figure 11-14. Using a L293D to control a bipolar stepper motor

Discussion

You can use the exact same `stepper.py` program to control this stepper (see [Recipe 11.6](#)). The design uses both H-Bridges of the L293D, so you need one of these chips for each motor you want to control.

See Also

If the type of stepper motor you have is a five-wire unipolar stepper motor, see Recipe 11.6.

For more information on stepper motors—the different types and how they work—see [Wikipedia](#), where you will also find a nice animated explanation of the activation pattern for driving the motor.

For information on using servo motors, see [Recipe 11.1](#) and for controlling DC motors, see Recipes [7.16](#) and [7.18](#).

For more information on using a breadboard and jumper wires with the Raspberry Pi, see [Recipe 9.8](#).

You can also drive a stepper motor by using the RasPiRobot board ([Recipe 11.9](#)).

11.8 Using a Stepper Motor HAT to Drive a Bipolar Stepper Motor

Problem

You want to control multiple bipolar stepper motors using a single interface board.

Solution

Use an Adafruit Stepper Motor HAT ([Figure 11-15](#)).

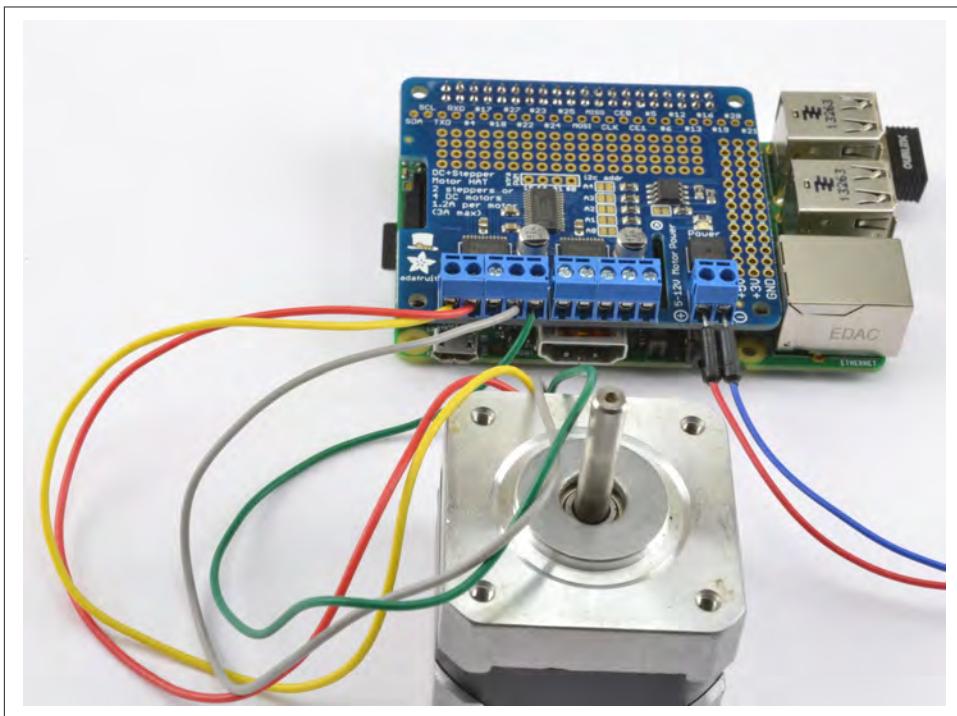


Figure 11-15. Using an Adafruit stepper motor HAT to control a bipolar stepper motor

This board is capable of driving two bipolar stepper motors. [Figure 11-15](#) shows the board with one bipolar stepper motor with one coil connected to the M1 terminals and the other coil to the M2 terminals. The power for the motors is supplied separately at the screw terminals on the right of [Figure 11-15](#).

This HAT uses I2C so make sure that you have I2C enabled ([Recipe 9.3](#)).

To make it easy to use the HAT, Adafruit has written a Python library. To install it, enter the following commands:

```
$ git clone https://github.com/adafruit/Adafruit-Motor-HAT-Python-Library.git  
$ sudo apt-get install python-dev  
$ cd Adafruit-Motor-HAT-Python-Library/  
$ sudo python setup.py install
```

The library includes a few examples, so change directory and then run the basic example using the commands:

```
$ cd examples  
$ sudo python StepperTest.py
```



I2C Busses

If you followed recipe [Recipe 9.20](#) to make your own HAT and enabled the I2C bus 0 as described there, then you will need to reverse the change to `/boot/config.txt` because the Adafruit autodetects the I2C bus to use and will detect the wrong one if bus 0 is enabled.

In `/boot/config.txt`, delete or uncomment out the line:

dtparam=i2c_vc=on

Once this is done, reboot your Raspberry Pi.

Discussion

When you run the program, the motor will start to turn and the program will loop round four different modes of stepping. You might like to try the simple example below to control your stepper motor.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook](#) website, where it is called `stepper_hat.py`. This program uses the command line, so you can run it from SSH.

```
from Adafruit_MotorHAT import Adafruit_MotorHAT  
import time  
  
HAT = Adafruit_MotorHAT  
stepper_hat = Adafruit_MotorHAT()  
  
stepper = stepper_hat.getStepper(200, 1) # 200 steps/rev, port 1 (M1, M2)  
  
try:  
    while True:  
        speed = input("Enter stepper speed (rpm) ")
```

```

stepper.setSpeed(speed)
steps_forward = input("Steps forward ")
stepper.step(steps_forward, HAT.FORWARD, HAT.SINGLE)
steps_forward = input("Steps reverse ")
stepper.step(steps_forward, HAT.BACKWARD, HAT.SINGLE)

finally:
    print("cleaning up")
    stepper_hat.getMotor(1).run(HAT.RELEASE)

```

After importing the Adafruit_MotorHAT module, it is assigned the name HAT just to reduce the verbosity of the code on the lines that follow this.

The `try/finally` block is used to make sure that the power to the coils are released when the program is stopped using Ctrl-C.

See Also

For a discussion of the HAT standard and how to make your own HAT, see [Recipe 9.20](#).

For more information on using this HAT and its accompanying library, see <https://learn.adafruit.com/adafruit-dc-and-stepper-motor-hat-for-raspberry-pi/>.

To use a L293D to control a stepper motor, see [Recipe 11.7](#); and for a RaspiRobot board, see [Recipe 11.9](#).

11.9 Using a RaspiRobot Board to Drive a Bipolar Stepper Motor



Be sure to check out the accompanying video for this recipe at <http://razzpisampler.oreilly.com>.

Problem

You want to control a bipolar stepper motor by using one power supply for both the motor and your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use a RaspiRobot board Version 3.

The RaspiRobot board uses the power supply directly from its screw terminals as the supply to the motor and regulates that same supply down to 5V to drive the Raspberry Pi. So in this case, the 12V power will be supplying both the 12V stepper motor and the Raspberry Pi.



If you are using an earlier version of the RaspiRobot board (version 1 or 2), then do *not* power the Raspberry Pi through its USB connection at the same time as you power it through the RaspiRobot board.

There is no problem powering it through both in version 3 of the board.

Connect the stepper motor and power supply to the RaspiRobot board as shown in **Figure 11-16**. The wire colors for the Adafruit 12V stepper motor are, in order from left to right: yellow, red, gray, and green.

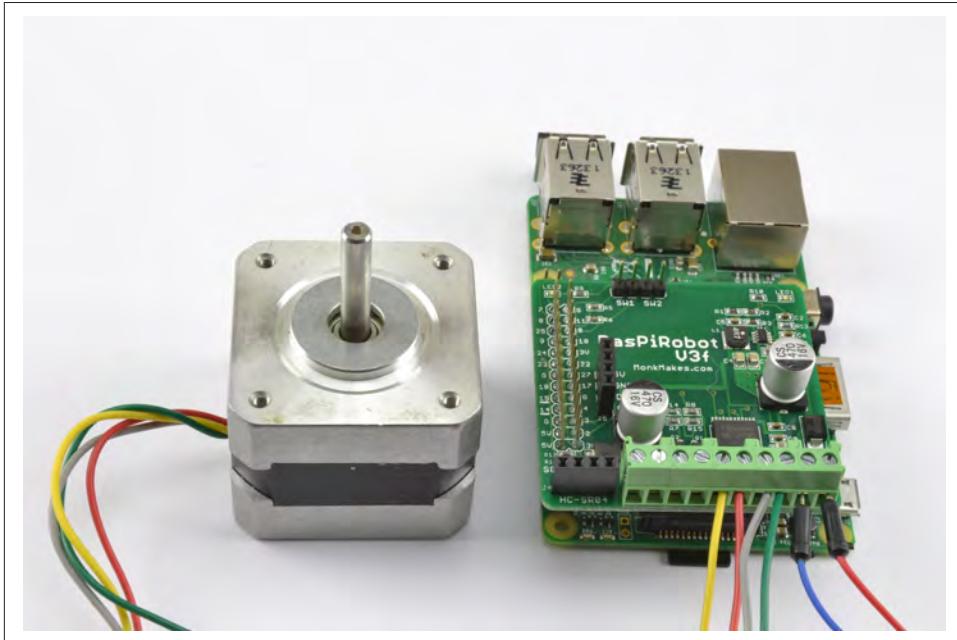


Figure 11-16. Using a RaspiRobot board to control a bipolar stepper motor

Before you can run the program, you will need to install the library for the RaspiRobot V3 using the following commands:

```
$ git clone https://github.com/simonmonk/raspirobotboard3.git  
$ cd raspirobotboard3/python  
$ sudo python setup.py install
```

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *stepper_rrb.py*. This program uses the command line, so you can run it from SSH.

If you're using Python 3, change the command `raw_input` to just `input`:

```
from rrb3 import *
import time

rr = RRB3(12.0, 12.0) # battery, motor

try:
    while True:
        delay = raw_input("Delay between steps (milliseconds)?")
        steps = raw_input("How many steps forward? ")
        rr.step_forward(int(delay) / 1000.0, int(steps))
        steps = raw_input("How many steps backwards? ")
        rr.step_reverse(int(delay) / 1000.0, int(steps))

finally:
    GPIO.cleanup()
```

Discussion

You will find that there is a minimum value of "Delay between steps", below which the motor will just judder rather than turn.

See Also

You can find full documentation for the RaspiRobot board and other projects that use it at the [RaspiRobot website](#).

To drive a stepper motor using a L293D on a breadboard, see [Recipe 11.7](#).

11.10 Building a Simple Robot Rover

Problem

You want to use a Raspberry Pi as the controller for a simple roving robot.

Solution

Use a RaspiRobot board V3 as an interface board to the Raspberry Pi to control two motors and a robot chassis kit such as the Magician Chassis.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- RaspiRobot board V3 (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)
- Gearmotor chassis such as the Magician Chassis (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477)
- 6×AA battery holder (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477)
- USB WiFi adapter

You can also buy a complete kit of parts for building this rover as the MonkMakes RaspiRobot Rover Kit.

The first step in building the robot is to assemble the chassis. Most low-cost gearmotor chassis are supplied with a four-cell AA battery holder, but to provide power to the Raspberry Pi, you really need a six-cell battery holder. When you get to that part of the instructions supplied with the chassis, use a 6×AA battery box.

Follow the wiring instructions as shown in [Figure 11-17](#).

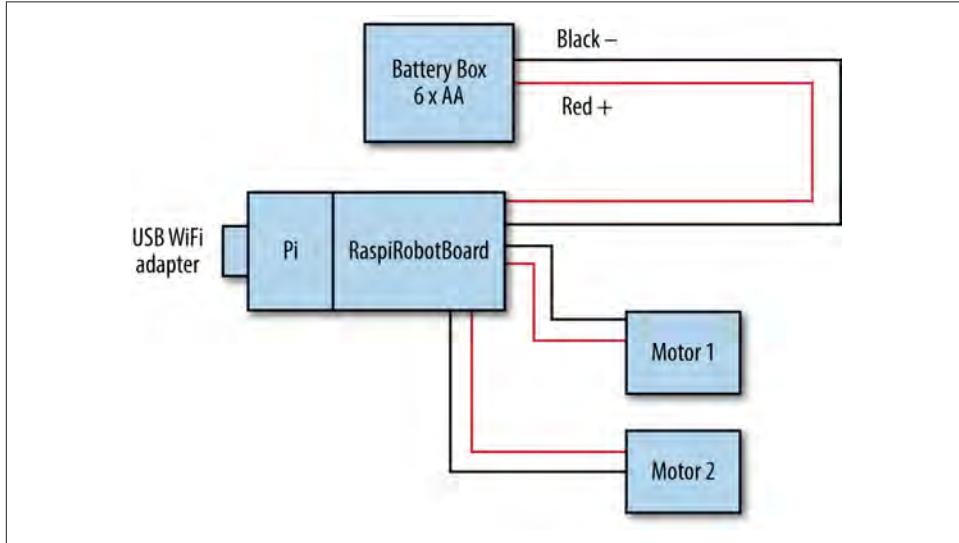


Figure 11-17. Wiring a roving robot

The battery pack will supply power to the RaspiRobot board, which in turn supplies 5V to the Raspberry Pi. So only one power supply is required.

The finished rover should look something like [Figure 11-18](#), which also has a range-finder on the front for good measure.

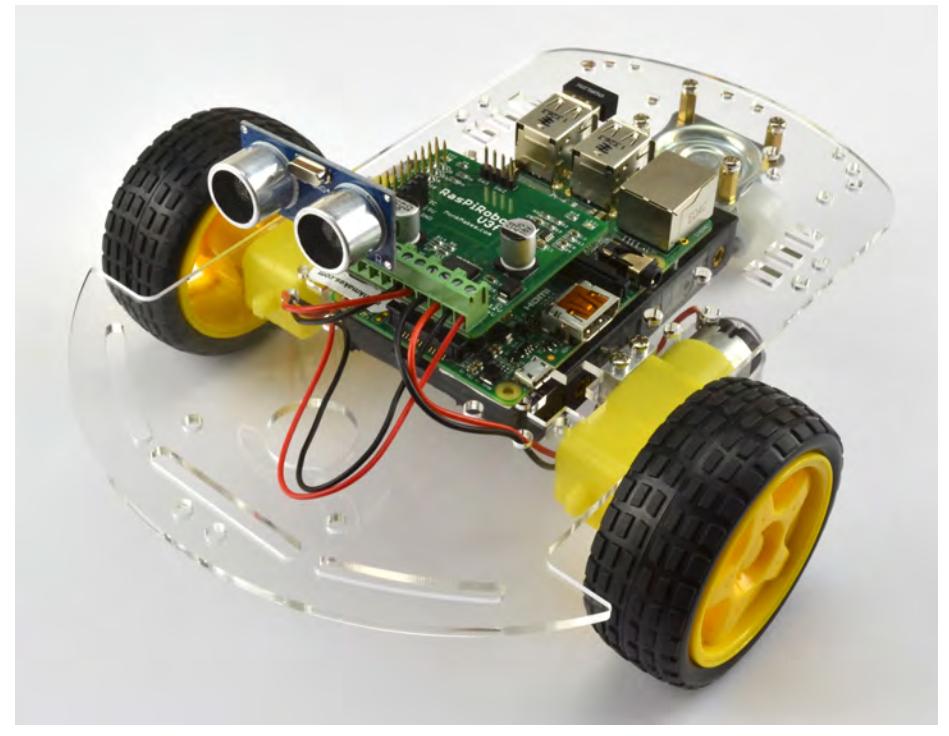


Figure 11-18. The finished robot

To drive the robot, you are going to use a control program that allows you to steer the rover using keys on a laptop or other computer connected to your Raspberry Pi over SSH. If you have not already done so, set up your Raspberry Pi to use WiFi and SSH, using [Recipe 2.5](#) and [Recipe 2.7](#).

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook](#) website, where it is called *rover.py*.

```
from rrb3 import *
import sys
import tty
import termios

rr = RRB3(9.0, 6.0) # battery, motor

UP = 0
DOWN = 1
RIGHT = 2
LEFT = 3
```

```

print("Use the arrow keys to move the robot")
print("Press Ctrl-C to quit the program")

# These functions allow the program to read your keyboard
def readchar():
    fd = sys.stdin.fileno()
    old_settings = termios.tcgetattr(fd)
    try:
        tty.setraw(sys.stdin.fileno())
        ch = sys.stdin.read(1)
    finally:
        termios.tcsetattr(fd, termios.TCSADRAIN, old_settings)
    if ch == '\x03':
        raise KeyboardInterrupt
    return ch

def readkey(getchar_fn=None):
    getchar = getchar_fn or readchar
    c1 = getchar()
    if ord(c1) != 0x1b:
        return c1
    c2 = getchar()
    if ord(c2) != 0x5b:
        return c1
    c3 = getchar()
    return ord(c3) - 65 # 0=Up, 1=Down, 2=Right, 3=Left arrows

# This will control the movement of your robot and display on your screen
try:
    while True:
        keyp = readkey()
        if keyp == UP:
            rr.forward(1)
            print 'forward'
        elif keyp == DOWN:
            rr.reverse(1)
            print 'backward'
        elif keyp == RIGHT:
            rr.right(1)
            print 'clockwise'
        elif keyp == LEFT:
            rr.left(1)
            print 'anti clockwise'
        elif keyp == LEFT:
            rr.left(1)
            print 'anti clockwise'
        elif ord(keyp) == 3:
            break

except KeyboardInterrupt:
    GPIO.cleanup()

```

To be able to intercept keypresses, this program uses the *termios* library and the two functions *readchar* and *readkey*.

After the import commands, a new instance of RRB3 is created. The two parameters to this are the battery voltage and the motor voltage (in this case, 9V and 6V respectively). If your chassis has different voltage motors, then change the second parameter.

The main loop just checks for keypresses and then sends the appropriate commands of *forward*, *reverse*, *left*, or *right* to the RRB3 library.

Discussion

You can make the rover more interesting by adding peripherals to it. You could, for example, attach a webcam and set up web streaming so that your roving robot becomes a roving spycam ([Recipe 4.5](#)).

The RRB3 library also supports the HC-SR04 rangefinders that can be plugged into a socket on the RaspiRobot board V3. You can use this to detect obstacles, and you will find example software for this in the RRB3 library.

See Also

You can find out more about the RaspiRobot board and the RRB3 library on [GitHub](#).

Digital Inputs

12.0 Introduction

In this chapter, you look at recipes for using digital inputs, such as switches and keypads. This chapter also covers modules that have a digital output that can be connected to a Raspberry Pi GPIO input.

Most of the recipes require the use of a solderless breadboard and jumper wires (see [Recipe 9.8](#)).

12.1 Connecting a Push Switch



Be sure to check out the accompanying video for this recipe at
<http://razzpisampler.oreilly.com>.

Problem

You want to connect a switch to your Raspberry Pi so that when you press it, some Python code is run.

Solution

Connect a switch to a GPIO pin and use the `RPi.GPIO` library in your Python program to detect the button press.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- Tactile push switch (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477)

[Figure 12-1](#) shows how to connect a tactile push switch using a breadboard and jumper wires.

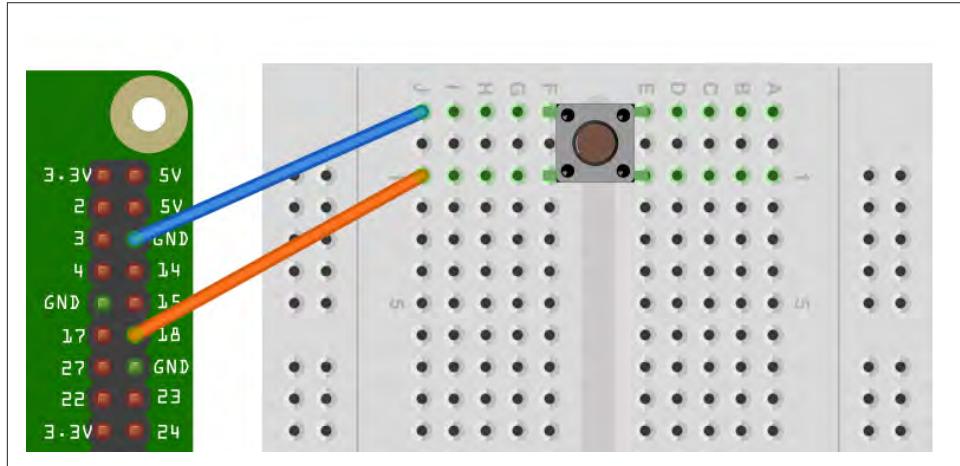


Figure 12-1. Connecting a push switch to a Raspberry Pi

An alternative to using a breadboard and tactile switch is to use a Squid Button ([Figure 12-2](#)). This is a push switch with female header leads soldered to the end, which can be connected directly to a the GPIO connector ([Recipe 9.11](#)).

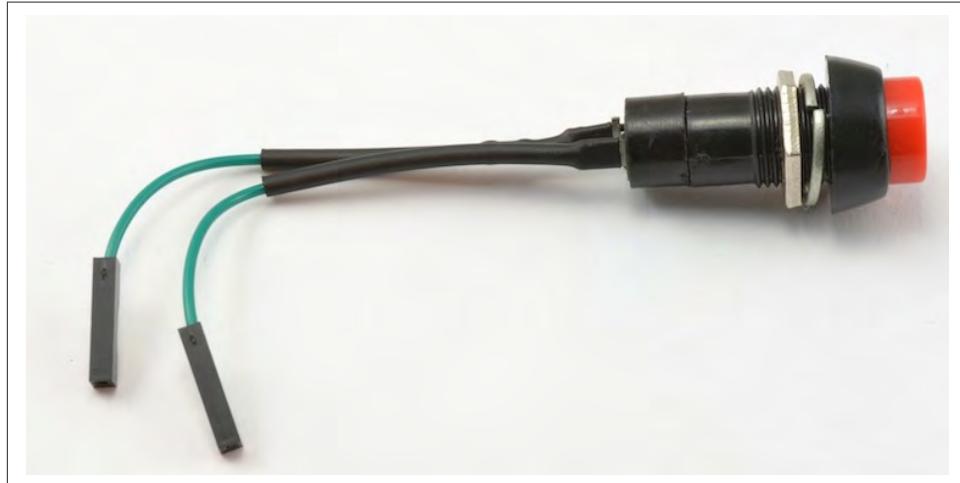


Figure 12-2. A Squid Button

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *switch.py*.

This example code displays a message when the button is pressed:

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)

GPIO.setup(18, GPIO.IN, pull_up_down=GPIO.PUD_UP)

while True:
    input_state = GPIO.input(18)
    if input_state == False:
        print('Button Pressed')
        time.sleep(0.2)
```

You will need to run the program as superuser:

```
pi@raspberrypi ~ $ sudo python switch.py
Button Pressed
Button Pressed
Button Pressed
Button Pressed
```

Discussion

You will notice that the switch is wired so that when it is pressed, it will connect pin 18 configured as an input to GND. The input pin is normally pulled up to 3.3V by the optional argument `pull_up_down=GPIO.PUD_UP` in `GPIO.setup`. This means that when you read the input value using `GPIO.input`, `False` will be returned if the button is pressed. This is a little counterintuitive.

Each GPIO pin has software-configurable pull-up and pull-down resistors. When using a GPIO pin as an input, you can configure these resistors so that one, either, or neither of the resistors is enabled, using the optional `pull_up_down` parameter to `GPIO.setup`. If this parameter is omitted, then neither resistor will be enabled. This leaves the input *floating*, which means that its value cannot be relied upon and it will drift between high and low depending on what it picks up in the way of electrical noise.

If it is set to `GPIO.PUD_UP`, the pull-up resistor is enabled; if it is set to `GPIO.PUD_DOWN`, the pull-down resistor is enabled.

You might expect the push switch to have just two connections, which are either open or closed. While some of these tactile push switches do have just two connections, most have four. [Figure 12-3](#) shows how these connections are arranged.

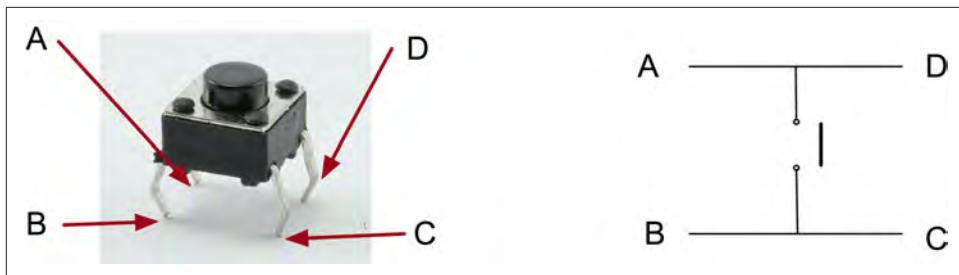


Figure 12-3. A tactile push switch

Actually, there are really only two electrical connections because inside the switch package, pins B and C are connected together, as are A and D.

See Also

For more information on using a breadboard and jumper wires with the Raspberry Pi, see [Recipe 9.8](#).

To use a switch to trigger an interrupt, see [Recipe 10.13](#).

To debounce a switch, see [Recipe 12.5](#).

To use external pull-up or pull-down resistors, see [Recipe 12.6](#).

12.2 Toggling with a Push Switch

Problem

You want to turn something on and off with a push switch so that it toggles between on and off each time you press it.

Solution

Record the last *state* of the button and invert that value each time the button is pressed.

The following example toggles an LED on and off as you press the switch.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- Tactile push switch (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477)
- LED (see “[Opto-Electronics](#)” on page 476)
- 470Ω resistor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)

Figure 12-4 shows how to connect a tactile push switch and LED, using a breadboard and jumper wires.

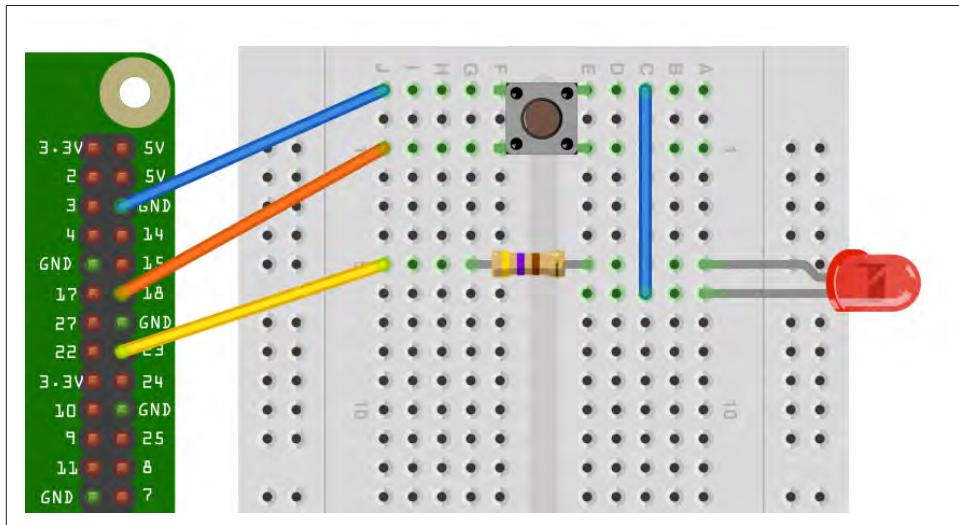


Figure 12-4. Connecting a push switch and LED to a Raspberry Pi

In addition to the male-to-female jumper wires connecting the Raspberry Pi to the breadboard, you will also need one male-to-male jumper wire or solid core wire.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook](#) website, where it's called *switch_on_off.py*:

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)

switch_pin = 18
led_pin = 23

GPIO.setup(switch_pin, GPIO.IN, pull_up_down=GPIO.PUD_UP)
GPIO.setup(led_pin, GPIO.OUT)

led_state = False
old_input_state = True # pulled-up

while True:
    new_input_state = GPIO.input(switch_pin)
    if new_input_state == False and old_input_state == True:
        led_state = not led_state
    old_input_state = new_input_state
    GPIO.output(led_pin, led_state)
```

Discussion

The variable `led_state` contains the current state of the LED (True for on and False for off). Whenever the button is pressed, the following line is run:

```
led_state = not led_state
```

The `not` command inverts the value of `led_state`, so if `led_state` is True, it becomes False and vice versa.

The variable `old_input_state` is used to remember the button position so that a button press is defined as occurring only when the input state changes from being True (switch not pressed) to False (switch pressed).

See Also

You will find that sometimes when you press the button, it does not seem to toggle the LED. This is because of switch bounce. You can find other techniques for avoiding switch bounce in [Recipe 12.5](#).

12.3 Using a Two-Position Toggle or Slide Switch

Problem

You want to connect a two-position toggle or slide switch to your Raspberry Pi, and be able to find the position of the switch in your Python program.

Solution

Use the switch as you would a tactile push switch ([Recipe 12.1](#)): just connect the center and one end contact ([Figure 12-5](#)).

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- Miniature toggle or slide switch (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477)

The same code you used in [Recipe 12.1](#) works with this arrangement.

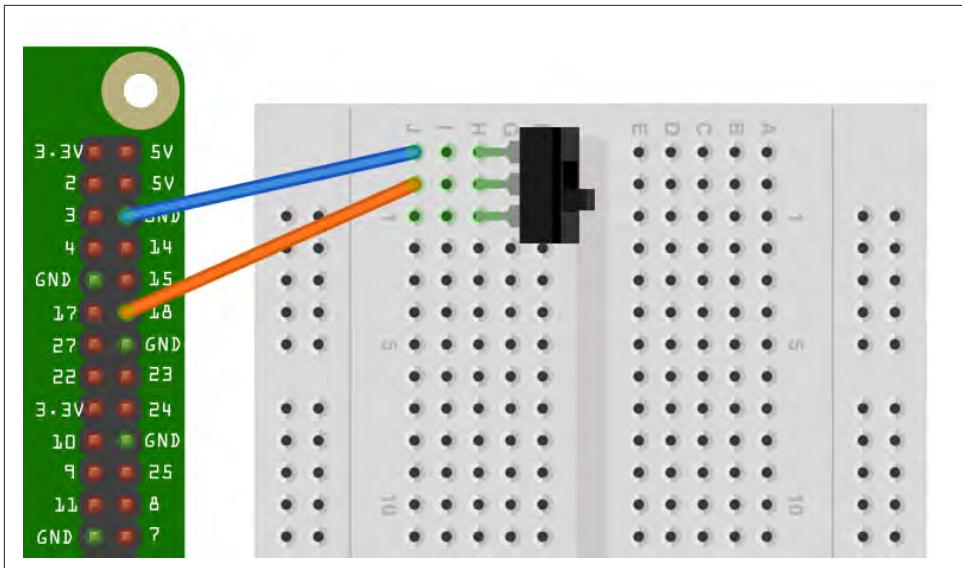


Figure 12-5. Connecting a slide switch to a Raspberry Pi

Discussion

These type of slide switches are useful because you can see the position they are set to without the need for some additional indicator like an LED. However, they are more fragile and a little more expensive than the tactile push switches that are used more and more in consumer electronics because they can sit behind a nicer-looking plastic button.

See Also

To use a three-position switch, with a center-off position, see [Recipe 12.4](#).

12.4 Using a Center-Off Toggle or Slide Switch

Problem

You want to connect a three-position (center-off) toggle switch to your Raspberry Pi, and be able to find the position of the switch in your Python program.

Solution

Connect the switch to two GPIO pins, as shown in [Figure 12-6](#), and use the `RPi.GPIO` library in your Python program to detect the position of the switch.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- Miniature center-off three-position toggle switch (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477)

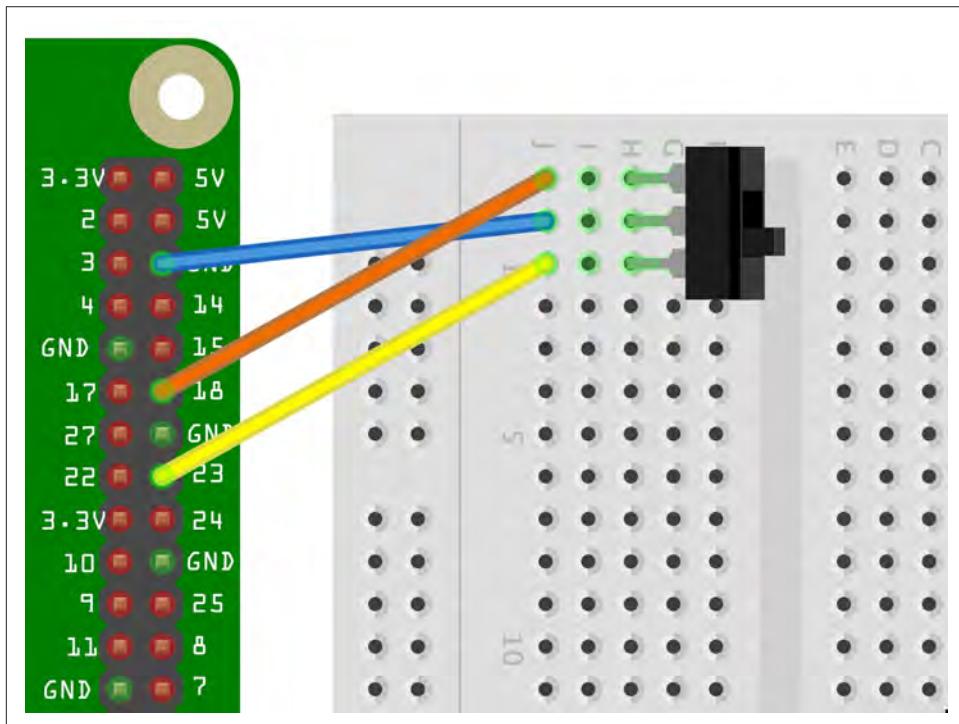


Figure 12-6. Connecting a three-position switch to a Raspberry Pi

The common (center) connection of the switch is connected to ground, and each of the two ends of the switch are connected to a GPIO pin with the internal pull-up resistor enabled.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook](#) website, where it is called *switch_2_pos.py*:

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)

top_input = 18
bottom_input = 23
```

```

GPIO.setup(top_input, GPIO.IN, pull_up_down=GPIO.PUD_UP)
GPIO.setup(bottom_input, GPIO.IN, pull_up_down=GPIO.PUD_UP)

switch_position = "unknown"

while True:
    top_state = GPIO.input(top_input)
    bottom_state = GPIO.input(bottom_input)
    new_switch_position = "unknown"
    if top_state == False:
        new_switch_position = "up"
    elif bottom_state == False:
        new_switch_position = "down"
    else:
        new_switch_position = "center"
    if new_switch_position != switch_position:
        switch_position = new_switch_position
        print(switch_position)

```

Run the program, and as you move the switch from top to center to bottom, the position of the switch will be reported every time it changes:

```

$ sudo python switch_3_pos.py
up
center
down

```

Discussion

The program sets up two inputs with pull-up resistors enabled. The variable `switch_position` is used to record the current position of the switch.

Inside the loop, both GPIO inputs are read and the three conditions of the `if`, `elif`, and `else` structure determine the position of the switch, assigning the value to a variable called `new_switch_position`. If this differs from the previous value, then the switch position is printed.

You will find a wide range of types of toggle switches. Some will be described as DPDT, SPDT, SPST, or SPST, momentary on, and so on. The meaning of these letters is as follows:

- D: Double
- S: Single
- P: Pole
- T: Throw

A DPDT switch is double pole, double throw. The word *pole* refers to the number of separate switch contacts that are controlled from the one mechanical lever. So, a double pole switch can switch two things on and off independently. A single throw switch can only open or close a single contact (or two contacts if it is double pole). However, a double throw switch can connect the common contact to one of two other contacts.

Figure 12-7 shows the most common types of switch.

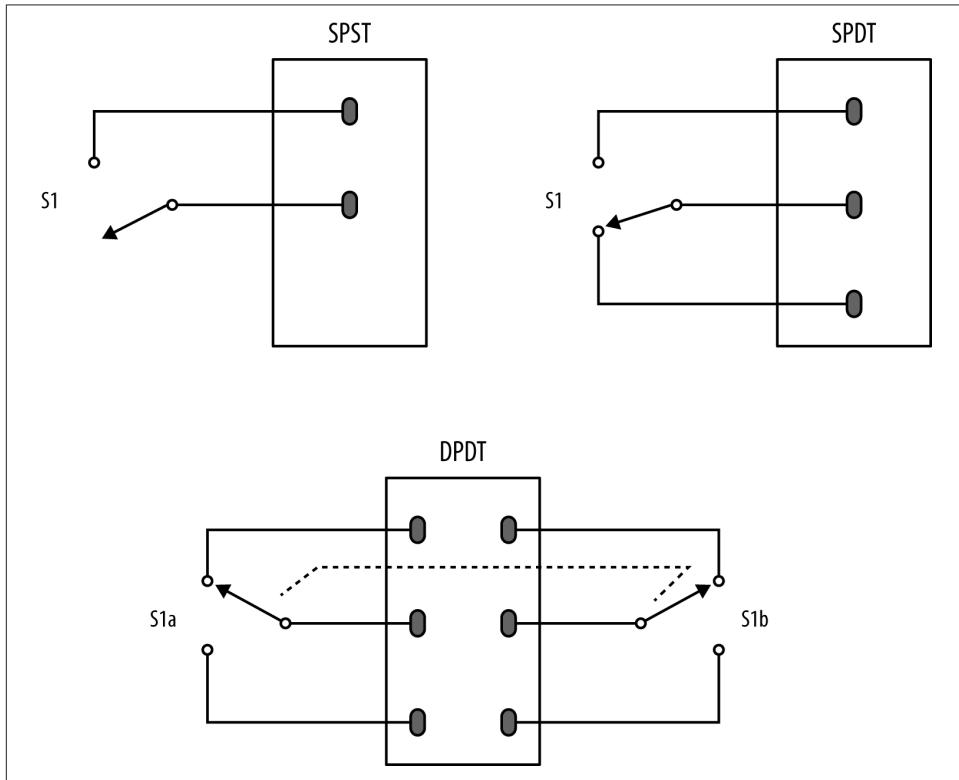


Figure 12-7. Types of toggle switches

See Also

For more information on how `if` statements work, see [Recipe 5.18](#). For the most basic switch recipe, see [Recipe 12.1](#).

12.5 Debouncing a Button Press

Problem

Sometimes when you press the button on a switch, the expected action happens more than once, because the switch contacts *bounce*. In that case, you want to write code to *de-bounce* the switch.

Solution

There are a number of solutions to this problem. To explore them, build the breadboard setup from [Recipe 12.2](#).

The original code for this example, without any attempt at debouncing, looks like this:

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)

switch_pin = 18
led_pin = 23

GPIO.setup(switch_pin, GPIO.IN, pull_up_down=GPIO.PUD_UP)
GPIO.setup(led_pin, GPIO.OUT)

led_state = False
old_input_state = True # pulled-up

while True:
    new_input_state = GPIO.input(switch_pin)
    if new_input_state == False and old_input_state == True:
        led_state = not led_state
    old_input_state = new_input_state
    GPIO.output(led_pin, led_state)
```

The problem is that if the switch contacts bounce, it is just as if the switch were pressed more than once in very rapid succession. If they bounce an odd number of times, then things will seem to be OK. But if they bounce an even number of times, the two events will toggle the LED on and then straight back off again.

You need to ignore any changes after the switch is pressed for a short amount of time, while the switch finishes bouncing.

The quick and easy way to do this is to introduce a short sleep after the button press is detected by adding a `time.sleep` command of, say, 0.2 seconds. This delay is probably much higher than necessary, strictly speaking. You may find that you can reduce this considerably.

```

import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)

switch_pin = 18
led_pin = 23

GPIO.setup(switch_pin, GPIO.IN, pull_up_down=GPIO.PUD_UP)
GPIO.setup(led_pin, GPIO.OUT)

led_state = False
old_input_state = True # pulled-up

while True:
    new_input_state = GPIO.input(switch_pin)
    if new_input_state == False and old_input_state == True:
        led_state = not led_state
        time.sleep(0.2)
    old_input_state = new_input_state
    GPIO.output(led_pin, led_state)

```

Discussion

This solution is OK in most situations, but you might also consider using the switch pin with an interrupt ([Recipe 10.13](#)).

Switch bouncing occurs on most switches and can be quite severe on some switches, as the oscilloscope trace in [Figure 12-8](#) shows.

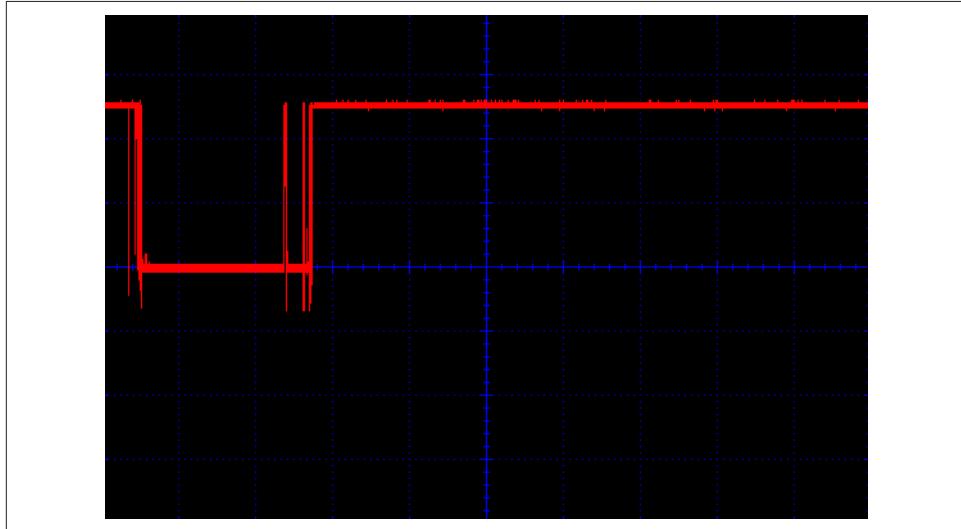


Figure 12-8. Contact bounce with a poor switch

You can see that there is contact bounce both as the switch closes and when it is released. Most switches are not as bad as this one.

See Also

For the basics of connecting a button, see [Recipe 12.1](#).

The Squid Button library debounces button presses, using a similar approach to that described here; see [Recipe 9.11](#) for details about the Squid Button.

12.6 Using an External Pull-up Resistor

Problem

You want to run a long wire from the Raspberry Pi to the switch, but you are getting some false readings on the input pin.

Solution

The internal pull-up resistors are quite weak (about $40\text{k}\Omega$). If you run a long lead to the switch or operate in an electrically noisy environment, you may get false triggerings on the digital input. You can overcome this by turning off the internal pull-up and pull-down resistors and using an external pull-up resistor.

[Figure 12-9](#) shows the use of an external pull-up resistor.

To test out this hardware, you can use the program *switch.py*; see [Recipe 12.1](#).

Discussion

The lower the resistance of the resistor, the longer the range of your switch. However, when you press the button, a current flows from 3.3V through the resistor to ground. A 100Ω resistor draws a current of $3.3\text{V}/100\Omega = 33\text{mA}$. This is within the safe limit for the 3.3V supply of 50mA or a Raspberry Pi 1, so don't use a lower value than this if you have an older Raspberry Pi. If you are using a newer 40-pin GPIO Raspberry Pi, then you could drop this value even further to perhaps 47Ω .

In almost all cases, a $1\text{k}\Omega$ resistor will provide a long range with no problems.

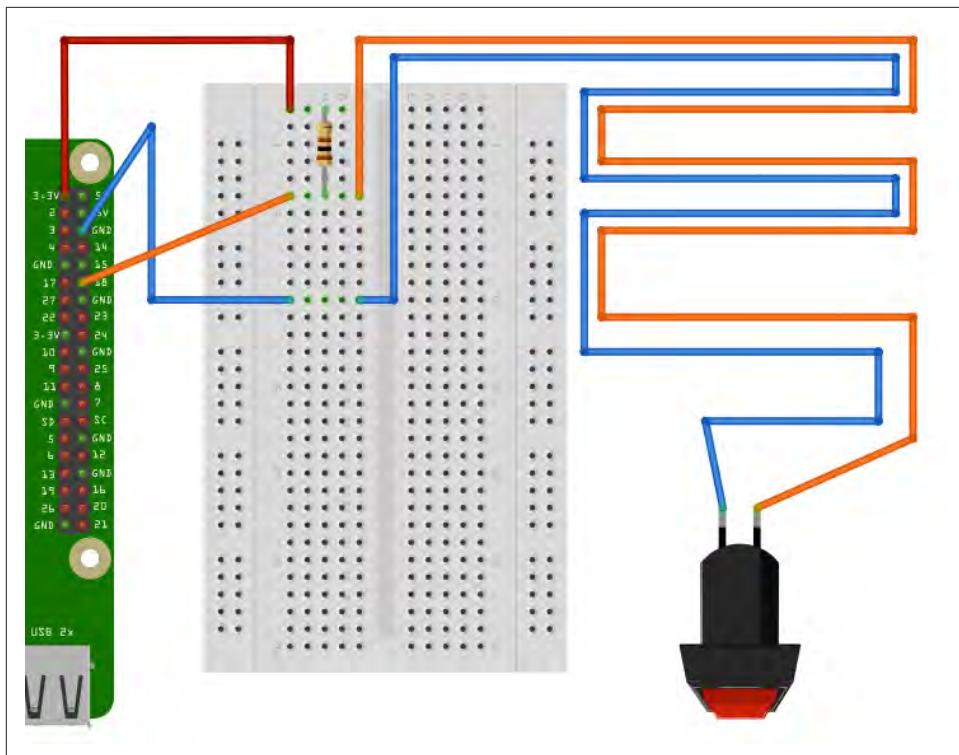


Figure 12-9. Using an external pull-up resistor

See Also

For the basics of connecting a button, see [Recipe 12.1](#).

12.7 Using a Rotary (Quadrature) Encoder

Problem

You want to detect rotation by using a rotary encoder.

Solution

Use a rotary (quadrature encoder) connected to two GPIO pins, as shown in [Figure 12-10](#).

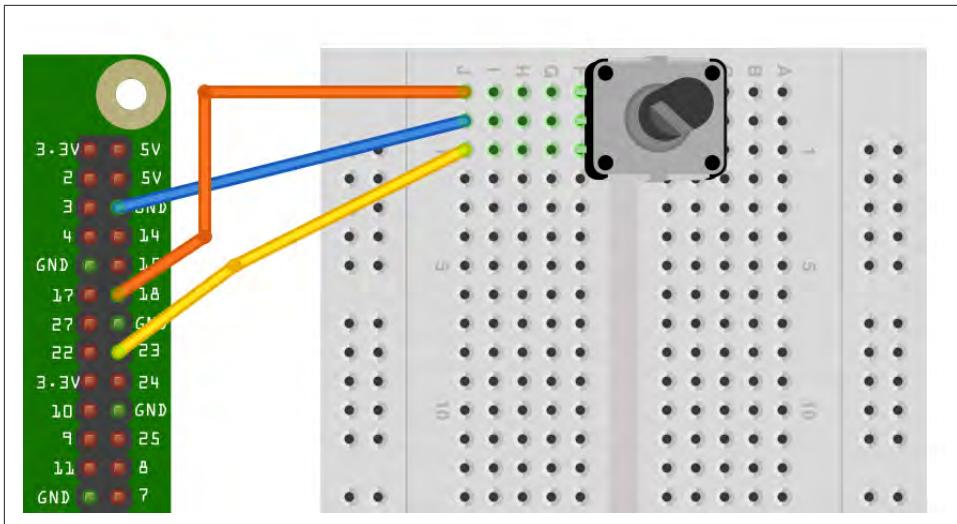


Figure 12-10. Connecting a rotary encoder

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “Prototyping Equipment” on page 474)
- Rotary encoder (quadrature type; see “Miscellaneous” on page 477)

This type of rotary encoder is called a *quadrature encoder*, and it behaves like a pair of switches. The sequence in which they open and close as the rotary encoder’s shaft is turned determines the direction of rotation.

The rotary encoder shown has the center lead as the *common* lead and the two leads on either side as A and B. Not all rotary encoders use this layout, so check the pinout on the datasheet for the rotary encoder that you are using. The issue is often confused further because many rotary encoders include a push switch, which will have a separate pair of contacts.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *rotary_encoder.py*.

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)

input_A = 18
input_B = 23

GPIO.setup(input_A, GPIO.IN, pull_up_down=GPIO.PUD_UP)
```

```

GPIO.setup(input_B, GPIO.IN, pull_up_down=GPIO.PUD_UP)

old_a = True
old_b = True

def get_encoder_turn():
    # return -1, 0, or +1
    global old_a, old_b
    result = 0
    new_a = GPIO.input(input_A)
    new_b = GPIO.input(input_B)
    if new_a != old_a or new_b != old_b :
        if old_a == 0 and new_a == 1 :
            result = (old_b * 2 - 1)
        elif old_b == 0 and new_b == 1 :
            result = -(old_a * 2 - 1)
    old_a, old_b = new_a, new_b
    time.sleep(0.001)
    return result

x = 0

while True:
    change = get_encoder_turn()
    if change != 0 :
        x = x + change
        print(x)

```

The test program simply counts up as you turn the rotary encoder clockwise, and counts down when you rotate it counterclockwise.

```

pi@raspberrypi ~ $ sudo python rotary_encoder.py
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
9
8
7
6
5
4

```

Discussion

Figure 12-11 shows the sequence of pulses that you will get from the two contacts, A and B. You can see that the pattern repeats itself after four steps (hence the name *quadrature encoder*).

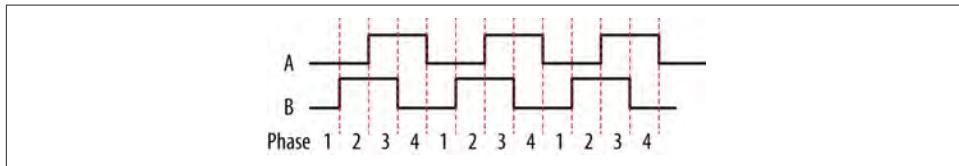


Figure 12-11. How quadrature encoders work

When rotating clockwise (left to right in Figure 12-11), the sequence will be:

Phase	A	B
1	0	0
2	0	1
3	1	1
4	1	0

When rotating in the opposite direction, the sequence of phases will be reversed.

Phase	A	B
4	1	0
3	1	1
2	0	1
1	0	0

The Python program listed previously implements the algorithm for determining the rotation direction in the function `get_encoder_turn`. The function will return 0 (if there has been no movement), 1 for a rotation clockwise, or -1 for a rotation counter-clockwise. It uses two global variables, `old_a` and `old_b`, to store the previous states of the switches A and B. By comparing them with the newly read values, it can determine (using a bit of clever logic) which direction the encoder is turning.

The sleep period of 1 millisecond is to ensure that the next new sample does not occur too soon after the previous sample; otherwise, the transitions can give false readings.

The test program should work reliably no matter how fast you twiddle the knob on the rotary encoder; however, try to avoid doing anything time-consuming in the loop, or you may find that turn steps are missed.

See Also

You can also measure the rotated position of a knob by using a variable resistor with the step response method ([Recipe 13.1](#)) or by using an analog-to-digital converter ([Recipe 13.5](#)).

12.8 Using a Keypad

Problem

You want to interface a keypad with your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Keypads are arranged in rows and columns, with a push switch on the intersection of each row or column. To find out which key is pressed, you first connect all the row and column connections to Raspberry Pi GPIO pins. So, for a 4×3 keypad, you will need four + three pins. By scanning each column in turn (setting it to output high) and reading the value of each of the row inputs, you can determine which (if any) key is pressed.

Note that keypads show considerable variation in their pinouts.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- 4×3 keypad (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477)
- Seven male header pins (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477)

[Figure 12-12](#) shows the wiring diagram for the project using the SparkFun keypad listed in “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477. The keypad is supplied without header pins, which must be soldered onto the keypad.

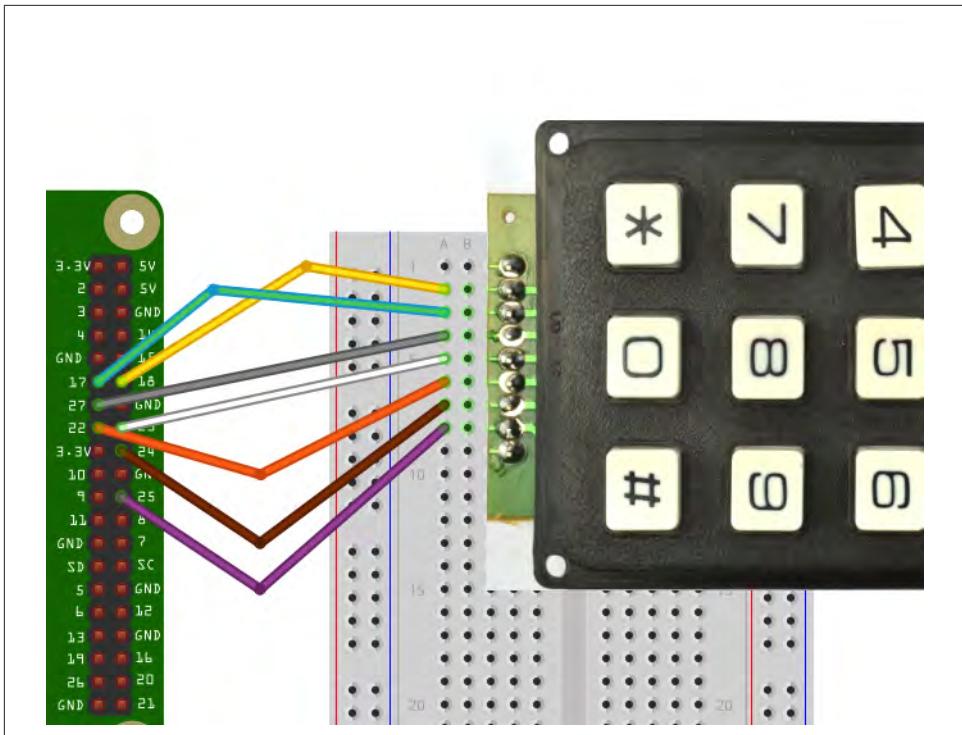


Figure 12-12. Keypad wiring diagram

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *keypad.py*.



Before you run the program, make sure that the row and column pins are correct for the keypad that you are using, and if necessary change the values in the variables `rows` and `cols`. If you do not do this, then it is possible that pressing a key could short one GPIO output to another, where one is high and the other is low. This would likely damage your Raspberry Pi.

The row and columns defined here are correct for the SparkFun keypad listed in “Miscellaneous” on page 477 in Appendix A. The first row is connected to GPIO pin 17, the second to 25, and so on. The wiring of the row and column to the keypad connector is illustrated in Figure 12-13.

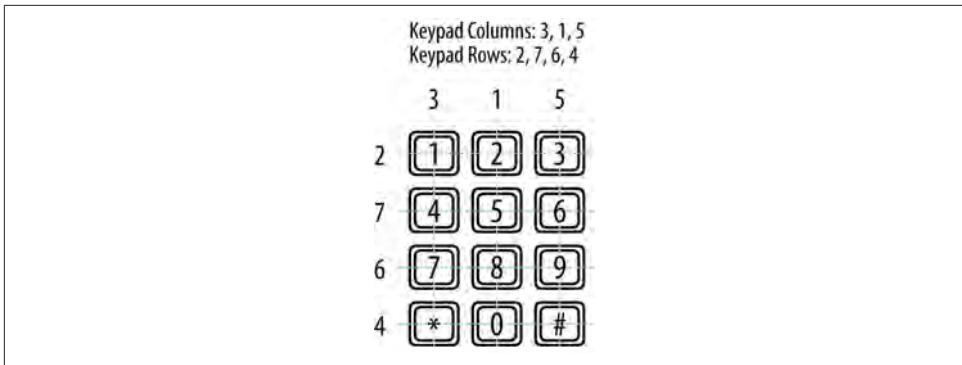


Figure 12-13. Keypad pin connections

```

import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)

rows = [17, 25, 24, 23]
cols = [27, 18, 22]
keys = [
    ['1', '2', '3'],
    ['4', '5', '6'],
    ['7', '8', '9'],
    ['*', '0', '#']]

for row_pin in rows:
    GPIO.setup(row_pin, GPIO.IN, pull_up_down=GPIO.PUD_DOWN)

for col_pin in cols:
    GPIO.setup(col_pin, GPIO.OUT)

def get_key():
    key = 0
    for col_num, col_pin in enumerate(cols):
        GPIO.output(col_pin, 1)
        for row_num, row_pin in enumerate(rows):
            if GPIO.input(row_pin):
                key = keys[row_num][col_num]
        GPIO.output(col_pin, 0)
    return key

while True:
    key = get_key()
    if key :
        print(key)
    time.sleep(0.3)

```

You must run the program with superuser privileges, as it accesses the GPIO. You can see the trace from the program pressing each key in turn.

```
pi@raspberrypi ~ $ sudo python keypad.py
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
*
0
#
```

Discussion

The `keys` variable contains a map of the key name for each row and column position. You can customize this for your keypad.

Because there are quite a lot of pins to initialize as inputs or outputs, both the row and column pins are initialized in loops.

All the real action takes place in the `get_key` function. This enables each column in turn, by setting it to high. An inner loop then tests each of the rows in turn. If one of the rows is high, then the key name corresponding to that row and column is looked up in the `keys` array. If no keypress is detected, then the default value of `key` (0) is returned.

The main `while` loop just gets the key value and prints it. The `sleep` command just slows down the output.

See Also

An alternative to adding a keyboard is simply to use a USB keypad. That way you can just catch keystrokes as described in [Recipe 12.11](#).

12.9 Detecting Movement

Problem

You want to trigger some action in Python when movement is detected.

Solution

Use a passive infrared (PIR) motion detector module.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Female-to-female jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- PIR motion detector module (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)

[Figure 12-14](#) shows how the sensor module is wired. This module expects a power supply of 5V and has an output of 3.3V, making it ideal for use with a Raspberry Pi.



Make sure that the PIR module you use has a 3.3V output. If it has 5V output, you will need to use a pair of resistors to reduce this to 3.3V (see [Recipe 13.6](#)).

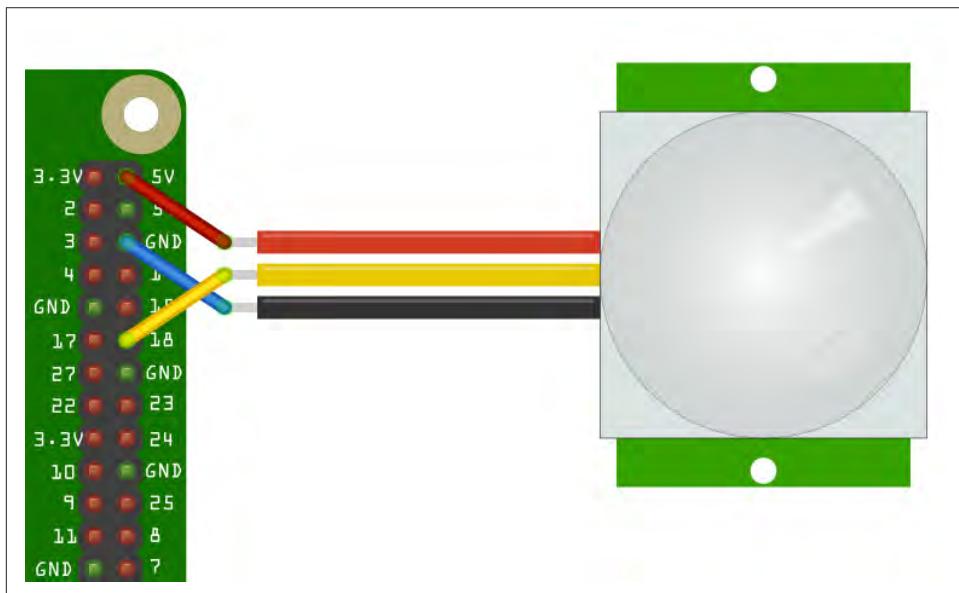


Figure 12-14. Wiring a PIR motion detector

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook](#) website, where it is called *pir.py*.

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)

GPIO.setup(18, GPIO.IN)
```

```
while True:  
    input_state = GPIO.input(18)  
    if input_state == True:  
        print('Motion Detected')  
        time.sleep(1)
```

The program simply prints out the state of the GPIO input 18.

```
$ sudo python pir.py  
Motion Detected  
Motion Detected
```

Discussion

Once triggered, the output of the PIR sensor will stay high for a little while. You can adjust this using one of the trimpots on its circuit board. The second trimpot (if present) will set the threshold of light level that will disable the sensor. This is useful when the sensor is being used to control a light, turning it on when detecting movement, but only when it's dark.

See Also

You could combine this recipe with [Recipe 7.16](#) to send an email when an intruder is detected or integrate it with If This Then That (IFTTT) to provide a whole load of possible ways of being notified (see [Recipe 15.3](#)).

To detect movement using computer vision and a webcam, see [Recipe 8.6](#).

12.10 Adding GPS to the Raspberry Pi

Problem

You want to connect a serial GPS module to a mobile Raspberry Pi and access the data, using Python.

Solution

A 3.3V serial GPS module can be connected directly to Raspberry Pi's RXD connection.

[Figure 12-15](#) shows how the module is wired. The RXD of the Raspberry Pi connects to Tx of the GPS module. The only other connections are for GND and 5V, so we can easily just use three female-to-female headers.

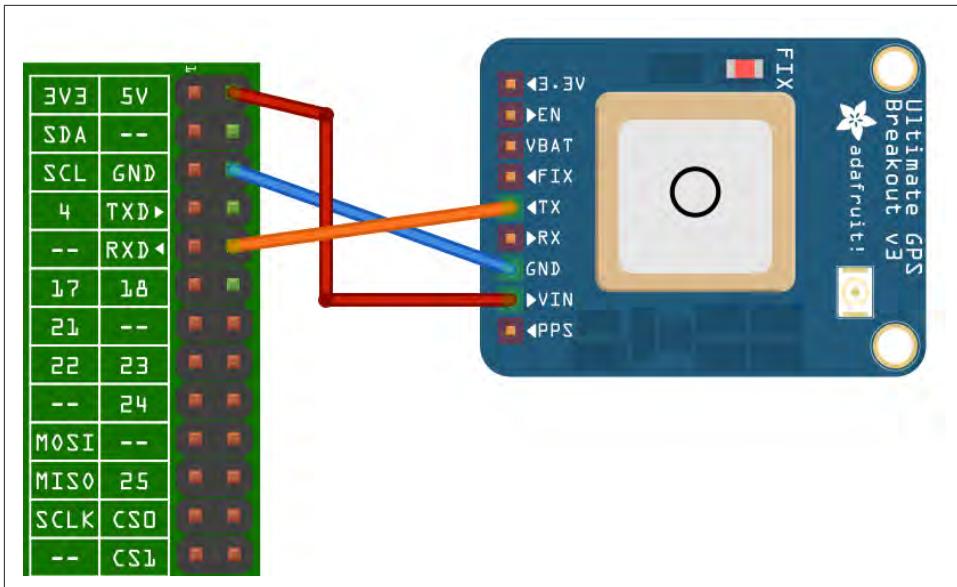


Figure 12-15. Wiring a GPS to a Raspberry Pi

GPS messages require some decoding. Fortunately, there is a good suite of tools to help us do this. Install the following packages:

```
$ sudo apt-get install gpsd
$ sudo apt-get install gpsd-clients
```

The most important of these is *gpsd*. This is a tool that reads GPS data from a serial or USB connection as well as other sources and makes it available for client programs to use by providing a local web service on port 2748.

To start the *gpsd* service running, issue the following command:

```
$ sudo gpsd /dev/ttyAMA0
```

You can see if it is working by entering the command:

```
$ cgps -s
```

The *-s* is optional; it just suppresses the display of the raw data (see Figure 12-16).

The third package that we installed (*python-gps*) is, as you might expect, a Python library for accessing the GPS data in a nice, convenient form. You will use *python_gps* with a short test program to display just the latitude, longitude, and time.

PRN:	Elev:	Azim:	SNR:	Used:
26	64	118	45	Y
15	64	285	18	Y
28	49	072	33	Y
24	29	249	17	Y
9	27	069	21	N
18	26	310	09	N
8	22	064	25	N
5	16	180	17	N
21	09	284	18	N
17	05	117	00	N
19	04	006	00	N
22	01	330	00	N

Figure 12-16. Testing GPS with cgps

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. Do not call the file *gps.py*, or it will conflict with the Python GPS library. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *gps_test.py*.

```
from gps import *
session = gps()
session.stream(WATCH_ENABLE|WATCH_NEWSTYLE)

while True:
    report = session.next()
    if report.keys()[0] == 'epx' :
        lat = float(report['lat'])
        lon = float(report['lon'])
        print("lat=%f\lon=%f\time=%s" % (lat, lon, report['time']))
        time.sleep(0.5)
```

Run the program, and you should see some trace like this:

```
$ python gps_test.py
lat=53.710257  lon=-2.664245  time=2013-08-01T08:06:24.960Z
lat=53.710258  lon=-2.664252  time=2013-08-01T08:06:25.960Z
lat=53.710258  lon=-2.664252  time=2013-08-01T08:06:25.960Z
lat=53.710248  lon=-2.664243  time=2013-08-01T08:06:26.960Z
lat=53.710248  lon=-2.664243  time=2013-08-01T08:06:26.960Z
lat=53.710248  lon=-2.664250  time=2013-08-01T08:06:27.960Z
```

Discussion

The program creates a *session* and then establishes a stream of data to be read. The GPS will repeatedly spit out messages in different formats. The if command selects just the messages you want; those that contain the positional information. The parts of the message are stored in a dictionary from which the fields can be accessed and displayed.

Besides using the GPS data with Python, you can also use the xgps tool to display the GPS data (Figure 12-17). Just enter the command:

```
$ xgps
```

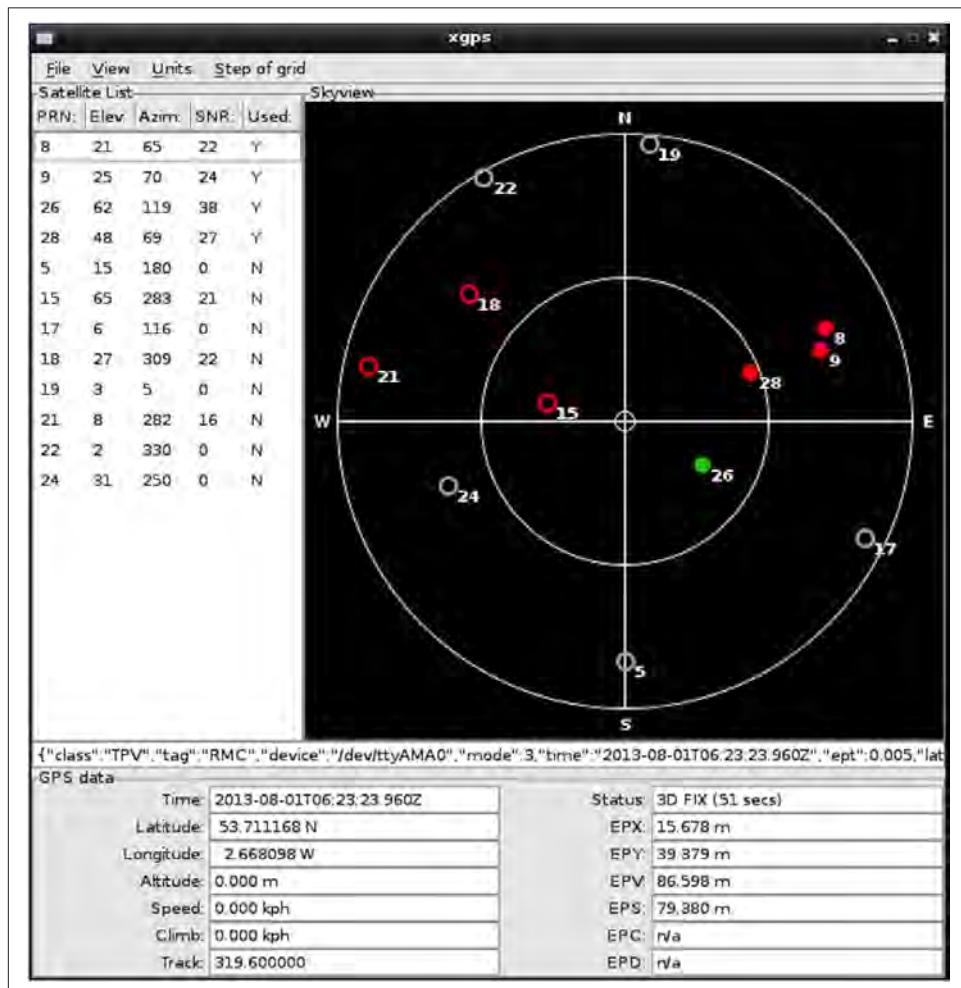


Figure 12-17. Viewing GPS with xgps

This utility requires a display, so you should run it from the Raspberry Pi itself or by using VNC ([Recipe 2.8](#)) or RDP ([Recipe 2.9](#)).

See Also

You can use the same approach using a [USB GPS module](#).

Find out more about [*gpsd*](#).

12.11 Intercepting Keypresses

Problem

You want to intercept individual keypresses on a USB keyboard or numeric keypad.

Solution

There are at least two ways to solve this problem. The most straightforward is to use the `sys.stdin.read` function. This has the advantage over the other method of not requiring a graphical user interface to be running, so a program using it can be run from an SSH session.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook](#) website, where it is called `keys_sys.py`.

```
import sys, tty, termios

def read_ch():
    fd = sys.stdin.fileno()
    old_settings = termios.tcgetattr(fd)
    try:
        tty.setraw(sys.stdin.fileno())
        ch = sys.stdin.read(1)
    finally:
        termios.tcsetattr(fd, termios.TCSADRAIN, old_settings)
    return ch

while True:
    ch = read_ch()
    if ch == 'x':
        break
    print("key is: " + ch)
```

The alternative to this is to use Pygame. Pygame is a Python library intended for writing games. It can also be used to detect keypresses. You could then use this to perform some action. This recipe must be made using Python 2 rather than Python 3, as Pygame is not included with Python 3.

The following example program illustrates the use of Pygame to print out a message each time a key is pressed. However, it only works if the program has access to the windowing system, so you will need to run it using VNC ([Recipe 2.8](#)), RDP ([Recipe 2.9](#)), or directly on the Raspberry Pi. The example code is in the file `keys_pygame.py` on the book's website.

```
import pygame
import sys
from pygame.locals import *

pygame.init()
screen = pygame.display.set_mode((640, 480))
pygame.mouse.set_visible(0)

while True:
    for event in pygame.event.get():
        if event.type == QUIT:
            sys.exit()
        if event.type == KEYDOWN:
            print("Code: " + str(event.key) + " Char: " + chr(event.key))
```

This opens a blank Pygame window, and keys will only be intercepted if the Pygame window is selected. The program produces output in the Terminal window from which the program is run.

If you press an arrow key or Shift key with the first `stdin` read approach, the program will throw an error because those keys don't have an ASCII value.

```
$python keys_pygame.py
Code: 97 Char: a
Code: 98 Char: b
Code: 99 Char: c
Code: 120 Char: x
Code: 13 Char:
```

In this case, Ctrl-C won't stop this program from running. To stop the program, click the X on the PyGame window.

Discussion

When you are using the Pygame approach, other keys have constant values defined for them, which allows you to use the cursor and other non-ASCII keys (like the up arrow key and Home) on the keyboard. This isn't possible with the other approach.

See Also

Intercepting keyboard events can also be an alternative to using a matrix keypad ([Recipe 12.8](#)).

12.12 Intercepting Mouse Movements

Problem

You want to detect mouse movements in Python.

Solution

The solution to this is very similar to that of using Pygame to intercept keyboard events ([Recipe 12.11](#)).

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook](#) website, where it is called *mouse_pygame.py*.

```
import pygame
import sys
from pygame.locals import *

pygame.init()
screen = pygame.display.set_mode((640, 480))
pygame.mouse.set_visible(0)

while True:
    for event in pygame.event.get():
        if event.type == QUIT:
            sys.exit()
        if event.type == MOUSEMOTION:
            print("Mouse: (%d, %d)" % event.pos)
```

The `MOUSEMOTION` event is triggered whenever the mouse moves within the Pygame window. You can find the coordinates from the `pos` value of the event. The coordinates are absolute coordinates relative to the top-left corner of the window:

```
Mouse: (262, 285)
Mouse: (262, 283)
Mouse: (262, 281)
Mouse: (262, 280)
Mouse: (262, 278)
Mouse: (262, 274)
Mouse: (262, 270)
Mouse: (260, 261)
Mouse: (258, 252)
Mouse: (256, 241)
Mouse: (254, 232)
```

Discussion

Other events that you can intercept are `MOUSEBUTTONDOWN` and `MOUSEBUTTONUP`. These can be used to detect when the left mouse button has been pressed or released.

See Also

The Pygame documentation for `mouse` can be found at the [Pygame website](#).

12.13 Using a Real-Time Clock Module

Problem

You want your Raspberry Pi to remember the time, even when it has no network connection.

Solution

Use an real-time clock (RTC) module.

A very common RTC chip is the DS1307. It has an I₂C interface and can be bought as a ready-to-use module that includes the chip itself, a quartz crystal for it to maintain accurate timekeeping, and a battery holder for a 3V lithium cell.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- A DS1307 or compatible RTC module (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)
- Female-to-female jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)



The RTC module that you are using must be 3.3V-compatible. That means that its I₂C interface should either have no pull-up resistors at all, or they should pull up to 3.3V and not 5V. When using the Adafruit model here, simply don’t include the two resistors when soldering together the module. If you have a ready-made module, carefully remove any pull-up resistors.

Assemble the RTC module if it is in kit form, remembering to omit pull-up resistors, and then connect the module to the Raspberry Pi, as shown in [Figure 12-18](#).

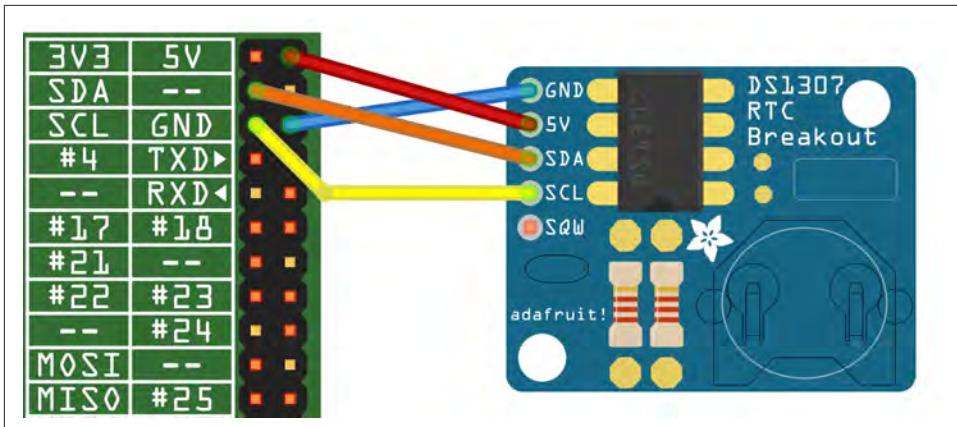


Figure 12-18. Connecting an RTC module

The DS1307 is an I2C module, so your Raspberry Pi must be set up to work with I2C (see [Recipe 9.3](#)). You can check that the device is visible using I2C tools ([Recipe 9.4](#)).

```
$ sudo i2cdetect -y 1
     0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  a  b  c  d  e  f
00:          - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
10:          - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
20:          - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
30:          - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
40:          - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
50:          - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
60:          - - - - - - - - - - 68 - - - - - -
70:          - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
```

The 68 in the table indicates that the RTC module is connected to the I2C bus at hex address 68.

If you are using one of the original Raspberry Pi model B, revision 1, boards, then use 0 after the y option in the preceding line. The revision 1 boards were distinctive for having a black audio socket.

You now need to run the following commands so that the RTC can be used with a program called *hwclock*.

```
$ sudo modprobe rtc-ds1307
$ sudo bash
$ echo ds1307 0x68 > /sys/class/i2c-adapter/i2c-1/new_device
```

Once again, if you are using a revision 1 board, change *i2c-1* to *i2c-0*.

You can now access the RTC using the following command:

```
$ sudo hwclock -r
Sat 01 Jan 2000 00:08:08 UTC -0.293998 seconds
```

As you can see, the clock is not currently set.

To set the time on the RTC module, you first need to make sure that your Raspberry Pi has the right time. If your Pi is connected to the Internet, this should happen automatically. You can check this by using the `date` command:

```
$ date  
Tue Aug 20 06:42:47 UTC 2013
```

If the time is wrong, you can also set it manually using `date` ([Recipe 3.35](#)). To transfer the Raspberry Pi system time onto the RTC module, use the following command:

```
$ sudo hwclock -w
```

You can then read the time by using the `-r` option:

```
$ sudo hwclock -r  
Wed 02 Jan 2013 03:11:43 UTC -0.179786 seconds
```

The RTC having the correct time is pointless unless it is used to set the correct system time in Linux when it reboots. To arrange for this to happen, you need to make a few configuration changes.

First, edit `/etc/modules` (using `sudo nano /etc/modules`) and add **rtc-ds1307** to the end of the list of modules. If you have already added some modules while setting up I2C, SPI, and other options, your file might look something like this:

```
# /etc/modules: kernel modules to load at boot time.  
#  
# This file contains the names of kernel modules that should be loaded  
# at boot time, one per line. Lines beginning with "#" are ignored.  
# Parameters can be specified after the module name.  
  
snd-bcm2835  
i2c-bcm2708  
i2c-dev  
spidev  
rtc-ds1307
```

Next, you need two commands to run automatically during startup to set the system time. So edit the file `/etc/rc.local` using the command `sudo nano /etc/rc.local`, and just before the final `exit 0` line, insert the following two lines. Remember to change `i2c-1` to `i2c-0` if you are using a revision 1 Pi.

```
$ echo ds1307 0x68 > /sys/class/i2c-adapter/i2c-1/new_device  
$ sudo hwclock -s
```

When you finish, the file should look something like this:

```
#  
# In order to enable or disable this script, just change the execution  
# bits.  
#  
# By default, this script does nothing.  
  
# Print the IP address  
_IP=$(hostname -I) || true  
if [ "$_IP" ]; then  
    printf "My IP address is %s\n" "$_IP"  
fi  
echo ds1307 0x68 > /sys/class/i2c-adapter/i2c-1/new_device  
sudo hwclock -s  
exit 0
```

Now, when you reboot, your Raspberry Pi should set its system time from the RTC. However, if there is an Internet connection available, this will take precedence for setting the time.

Discussion

An RTC is not essential for a Raspberry Pi by any means, since a Raspberry Pi that is connected to the Internet will automatically connect to a network time server and set its own clock. However, you may not always be using the Pi when connected to a network, in which case a hardware RTC is a good option.

See Also

AB Electronics has a neat [RTC](#) that plugs directly into the [GPIO socket](#). This is shown in [Figure 12-19](#).

This recipe is based on a [tutorial from Adafruit](#).

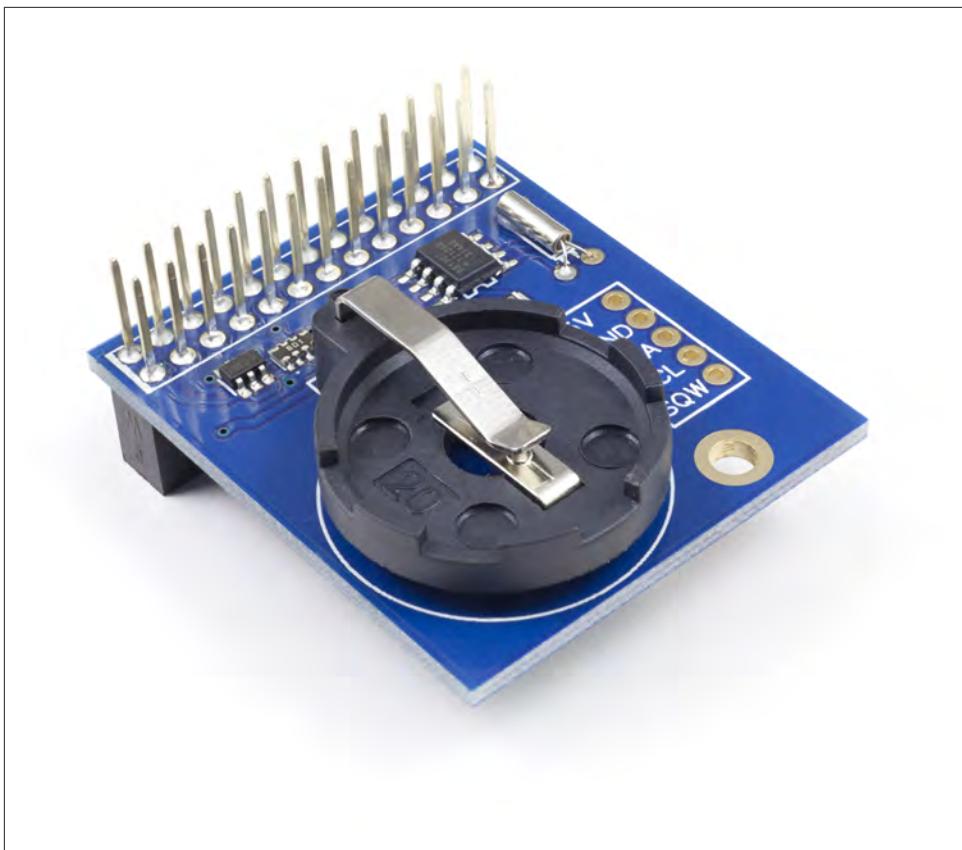


Figure 12-19. AB Electronics RTC module

13.0 Introduction

In this chapter, you will look at recipes for using sensors of various types that will allow the Raspberry Pi to measure temperature, light, and more.

Compared to a board like the Arduino, the Raspberry Pi lacks analog inputs. This means that for many sensors, it is necessary to use additional analog-to-digital (ADC) converter hardware. Fortunately, this is relatively easy to do. It is also possible to use resistive sensors with a capacitor and a couple of resistors.

Most of the recipes will require the use of a solderless breadboard and male-to-female jumper wires (see [Recipe 9.8](#)).

13.1 Using Resistive Sensors



Be sure to check out the accompanying video for this recipe at
<http://razzpisampler.oreilly.com>.

Problem

You want to connect a variable resistor to a Raspberry Pi and measure its resistance so that you can use the position of the variable resistor's knob in your Python program.

Solution

You can measure resistance on a Raspberry Pi using nothing more than a capacitor, a couple of resistors, and two GPIO pins. In this case, you will be able to estimate the position of the knob on a small variable resistor (trimpot) by measuring its resistance from its slider contact to one end of the pot.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “Prototyping Equipment” on page 474)
- 10k Ω trimpot (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)
- Two 1k Ω resistors (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)
- 330 nF capacitor (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)

Figure 13-1 shows the arrangement of components on the breadboard.

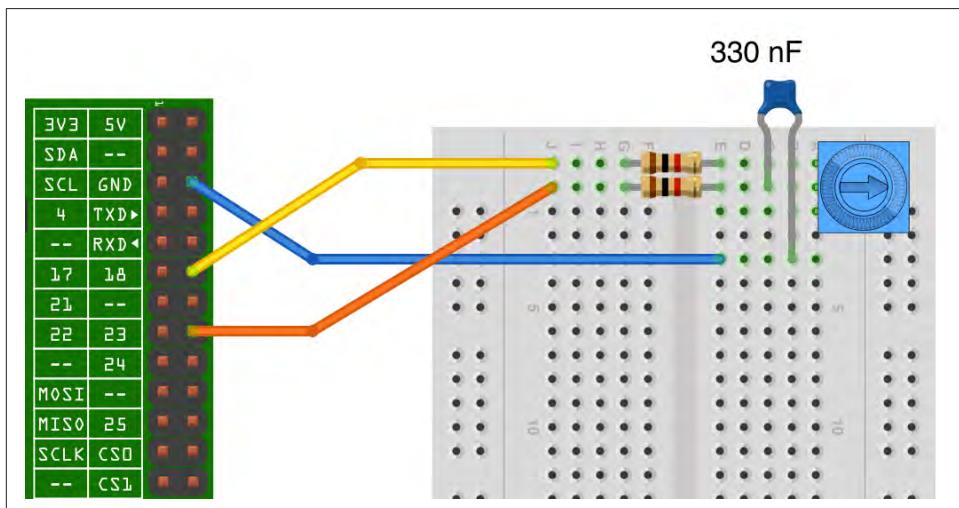


Figure 13-1. Measuring resistance on a Raspberry Pi

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *pot_step.py*.

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time, math

C = 0.36 # uF
R1 = 1000 # Ohms

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
```

```

# Pin a charges the capacitor through a fixed 1k resistor
# and the pot in series
# Pin b discharges the capacitor through a fixed 1k resistor
a_pin = 18
b_pin = 23

# Discharge the capacitor, leaving it ready to start filling up
def discharge():
    GPIO.setup(a_pin, GPIO.IN)
    GPIO.setup(b_pin, GPIO.OUT)
    GPIO.output(b_pin, False)
    time.sleep(0.1)

# Return the time taken (uS) for the voltage on the capacitor
# to count as a digital input HIGH
# which is 1.65V or higher
def charge_time():
    GPIO.setup(b_pin, GPIO.IN)
    GPIO.setup(a_pin, GPIO.OUT)
    GPIO.output(a_pin, True)
    t1 = time.time()
    while not GPIO.input(b_pin):
        pass
    t2 = time.time()
    return (t2 - t1) * 1000000

# Take an analog reading as the time taken to charge after
# first discharging the capacitor
def analog_read():
    discharge()
    t = charge_time()
    discharge()
    return t

# Convert the time taken to charge the capacitor into a value of resistance
# To reduce errors, do it 100 times and take the average
def read_resistance():
    n = 10
    total = 0;
    for i in range(1, n):
        total = total + analog_read()
    t = total / float(n)
    T = t * 0.632 * 3.3
    r = (T / C) - R1
    return r

try:
    while True:
        print(read_resistance())
        time.sleep(0.5)
finally:
    GPIO.cleanup()

```

When you run the program, you should see some output like this:

```
$ sudo python pot_step.py  
10049.2157936  
10105.1559448  
10158.6098671  
11331.0049375  
10162.6154582  
10156.8142573  
9501.27855937  
8216.17444356
```

The reading will vary as you rotate the knob of the trimpot. Ideally, the reading of resistance would vary between 0 and $10,000\Omega$ but in practice, there will be some error. You might like to tweak the value of the constant C at the top of the program if you want more accurate readings, but remember the value of C will probably have to be changed if you put another capacitor in, even if the capacitor was nominally of the same value.

Discussion

To explain how this program works, I first need to explain how the *step response* technique can be used to measure the resistance of the variable resistor.

Figure 13-2 shows the schematic diagram for the recipe.

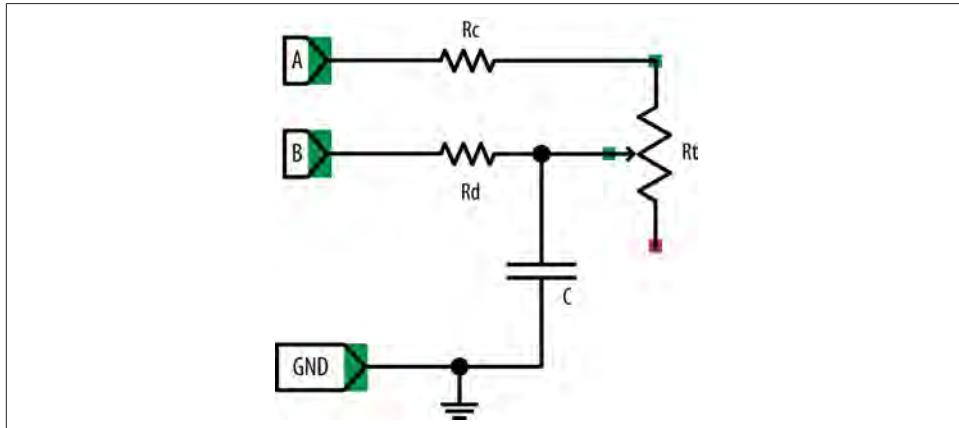


Figure 13-2. Measuring resistance using step response

This way of doing things is called *step response* because it works by seeing how the circuit responds from the *step* change when an output is switched from low to high.

You can think of a capacitor as a tank of electricity, and as it fills with charge, the voltage across it increases. You can't measure that voltage directly, because the Raspberry Pi doesn't have an Analog to Digital Converter (ADC). However, you can time how long it takes for the capacitor to fill with charge to the extent that it gets above the 1.65V or so that constitutes a high digital input. The speed at which the capacitor fills with charge depends on the value of the variable resistor (R_t). The lower the resistance, the faster the capacitor fills with charge and the voltage rises.

To be able to get a good reading, you must also be able to empty the capacitor each time before you take a reading. In [Figure 13-2](#), connection A is used to charge the capacitor through R_c and R_t , and connection B is used to discharge (empty) the capacitor through R_d . The resistors R_c and R_d are used to prevent too much current from flowing as the capacitor is charged and discharged through the Raspberry Pi's relatively fragile GPIO pins.

The steps involved in taking a reading are first to discharge the capacitor through R_d and then to let it charge through R_c and R_t .

To discharge it, connection A (GPIO 18) is set to be an input, effectively disconnecting R_c and R_t from the circuit. Connection B (GPIO 23) is then set to be an output and low. This is held there for 100 milliseconds to empty the capacitor.

Now that the capacitor is empty, you can start to allow charge to flow into it by setting connection B to be an input (effectively disconnecting it) and then enabling connection A to be a high output at 3.3V. Capacitor C will now begin to charge through R_c and R_t . The `while` loop will do nothing until the voltage at connection B switches from being low to high at about 1.65V.

At that point, the time taken is returned.

[Figure 13-3](#) shows how a resistor and capacitor in this kind of arrangement charge and discharge as the voltage is toggled between high and low.

You can see that the voltage at the capacitor increases rapidly at first but then trails off as the capacitor becomes full. Fortunately, you are interested in the area of the curve up until the capacitor reaches about 1.65V, which is a fairly straight line, meaning that the time taken for the voltage across the capacitor to rise to this point is roughly proportional to the resistance of R_t and hence the position of the knob.

This approach is not hugely accurate, but it is very low cost and easy to use. The inaccuracy is largely because capacitors of a suitably high value are only accurate to 10%.

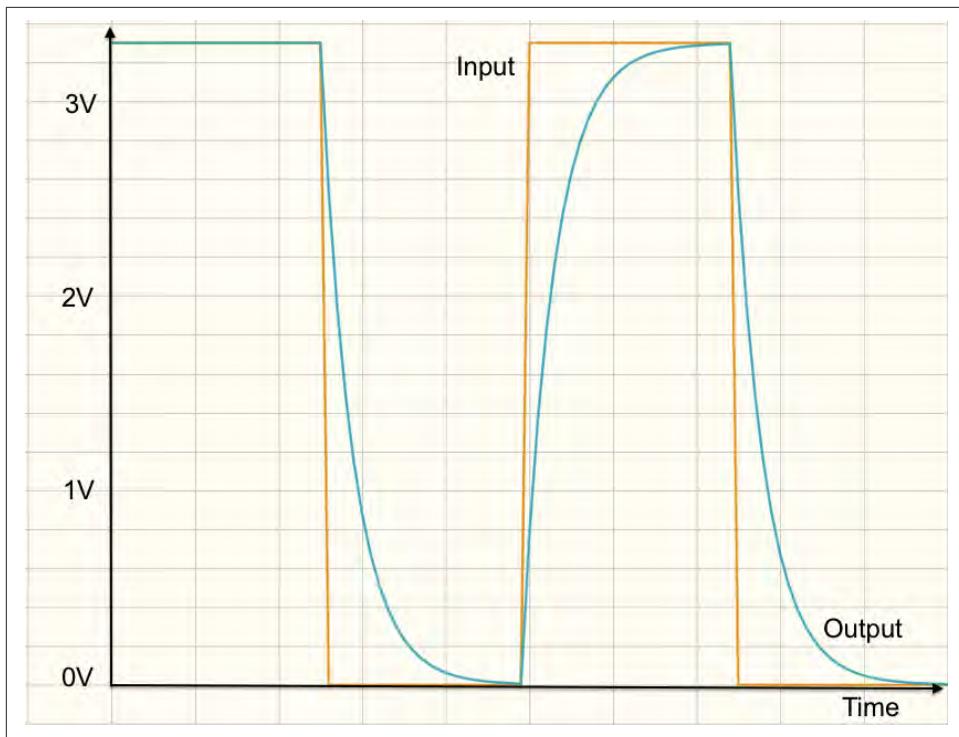


Figure 13-3. Charging and discharging a capacitor

See Also

Using a step response works well with all kinds of resistive sensors for light ([Recipe 13.2](#)), temperature ([Recipe 13.3](#)), and even gas detection ([Recipe 13.4](#)).

For more accurate measurements of the trimpot position, see [Recipe 13.5](#), where the pot is used with an ADC converter.

13.2 Measuring Light

Problem

You want to measure light intensity with a Raspberry Pi and a photoresistor.

Solution

Use the same basic recipe and code as [Recipe 13.1](#), but replace the trimpot with a photoresistor.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- Photoresistor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)
- Two $1\text{k}\Omega$ resistors (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)
- 330nF capacitor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)

All these parts are included in the Electronics Starter Kit for Raspberry Pi from Monk Makes (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474).

[Figure 13-4](#) shows the arrangement of components on the breadboard.

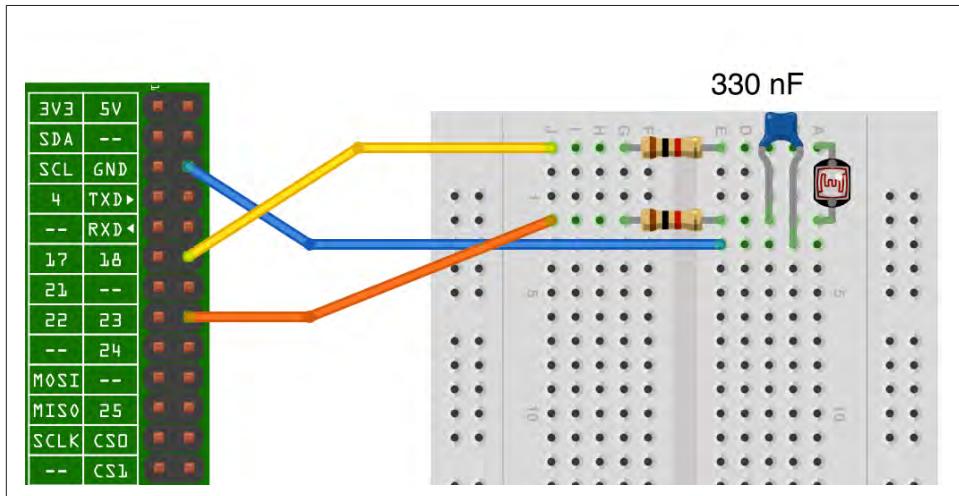


Figure 13-4. Measuring light on a Raspberry Pi

Using the same program as [Recipe 13.1](#) (`pot_step.py`), you will see the output vary as you move your hand over the photoresistor to cut out some of the light.

This solution provides relatively reliable readings of light levels. As an adaptation of the general solution for using resistive sensors ([Recipe 13.1](#)), it also copes with measuring a resistance of 0Ω without any risk of damaging the GPIO pins of the Raspberry Pi. Since a photoresistor is never going to dip to zero resistance, you can take a few shortcuts and do away with both $1\text{k}\Omega$ resistors and one of the GPIO pins and make the simpler schematic shown in [Figure 13-5](#).

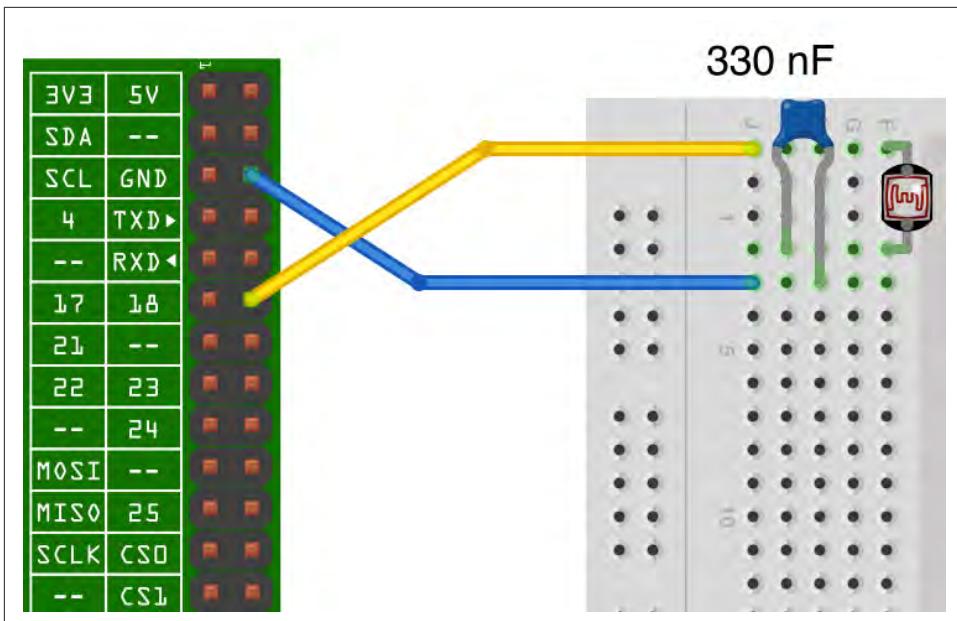


Figure 13-5. A simplified light sensor

In this variation, the same GPIO pin will be used to charge and discharge the capacitor and check to see if it is above the input HIGH threshold. The program can be found in *photoresistor_step.py*.

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)

pin = 18

def discharge():
    GPIO.setup(pin, GPIO.OUT)
    GPIO.output(pin, False)
    time.sleep(0.1)

# Return the time taken for the capacitor to go HIGH
# which is 1.65V or higher
def charge_time():
    t1 = time.time()
    GPIO.setup(pin, GPIO.IN)
    while not GPIO.input(pin):
        # charge for 1ms
        GPIO.setup(pin, GPIO.OUT)
```

```

    GPIO.output(pin, True)
    time.sleep(0.001)
    # set to input to test again
    GPIO.setup(pin, GPIO.IN)
    time.sleep(0.001)
    t2 = time.time()
    return (t2 - t1) * 1000000

# Take an analog reading as the time taken to charge C
def analog_read():
    discharge()
    return charge_time()

while True:
    print(analog_read())
    time.sleep(0.5)

```

In only using one pin, after discharging the capacitor through the photoresistor, the `charge_time` function charges the capacitor through the photoresistor for just 1 ms. It sets the pin to be an input and tests to see if it's over the HIGH threshold, and then repeats until it is HIGH.

Discussion

A photoresistor is a resistor whose resistance varies depending on the amount of light coming through its transparent window. The brighter the light, the lower the resistance. Typically, the resistance varies between about $1\text{k}\Omega$ in bright light up to perhaps $100\text{k}\Omega$ in complete darkness.

The sensors can only really give a rough idea of the light level.

See Also

You could also use an ADC with the photoresistor ([Recipe 13.5](#)).

13.3 Measuring Temperature with a Thermistor

Problem

You want to measure temperature using a thermistor.

Solution

A thermistor is a resistor whose resistance varies with temperature. Use the step response method ([Recipe 13.1](#)) to measure the resistance of the thermistor and then calculate the temperature.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “Prototyping Equipment” on page 474)
- 1k Thermistor (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)
- Two 1k Ω resistors (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)
- 330 nF capacitor (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)

All these parts are included in the Electronics Starter Kit for Raspberry Pi from Monk Makes (see “Prototyping Equipment” on page 474). When you get your thermistor, make sure that you know its values of Beta and R0 (resistance at 25C) and that it is a Negative Temperature Coefficient (NTC) device.

Figure 13-6 shows the breadboard layout for this recipe.

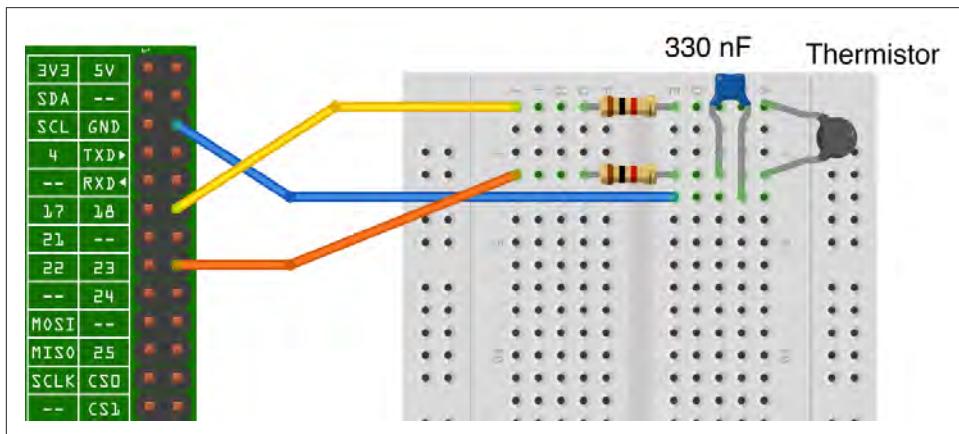


Figure 13-6. Breadboard layout for using a thermistor

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called *thermistor.py*.

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time, math

C = 0.36 # uF
R1 = 1000 # Ohms
B = 3800.0 # The thermistor constant
R0 = 1100.0 # The resistance of the thermistor at 25C

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)

# Pin a charges the capacitor through a fixed 1k resistor
# and the thermistor in series
# Pin b discharges the capacitor through a fixed 1k resistor
```

```

a_pin = 18
b_pin = 23

# Discharge the capacitor, leaving it ready to start filling up
def discharge():
    GPIO.setup(a_pin, GPIO.IN)
    GPIO.setup(b_pin, GPIO.OUT)
    GPIO.output(b_pin, False)
    time.sleep(0.1)

# Return the time taken (uS) for C to charge
# which is 1.65V or higher
def charge_time():
    GPIO.setup(b_pin, GPIO.IN)
    GPIO.setup(a_pin, GPIO.OUT)
    GPIO.output(a_pin, True)
    t1 = time.time()
    while not GPIO.input(b_pin):
        pass
    t2 = time.time()
    return (t2 - t1) * 1000000

# Take an analog reading from charge time
def analog_read():
    discharge()
    t = charge_time()
    discharge()
    return t

# Convert the time taken to charge the capacitor into a value of resistance
# To reduce errors, do it 10 times and take the average.
def read_resistance():
    n = 10
    total = 0;
    for i in range(1, n):
        total = total + analog_read()
    t = total / float(n)
    T = t * 0.632 * 3.3
    r = (T / C) - R1
    return r

def read_temp_c():
    R = read_resistance()
    t0 = 273.15      # 0 deg C in K
    t25 = t0 + 25.0 # 25 deg C in K
    # Steinhart-Hart equation - Google it
    inv_T = 1/t25 + 1/B * math.log(R/R0)
    T = (1/inv_T - t0)
    return T

try:
    while True:

```

```
    print(read_temp_c())
    time.sleep(0.5)
finally:
    GPIO.cleanup()
```

When you run the program, you will see a series of temperature measurements in degrees C. To convert to degrees F, use the formula $T_f = T_c \times 9 / 5 + 32$.

```
$ sudo python thermistor.py
18.3040458984
17.8302664759
17.3917856854
17.9286173793
```

Discussion

Most of the code in this project is the same as for [Recipe 13.1](#). The new part is the function `read_temp_c`, which converts the resistance value into a temperature in degrees C.

Calculating the temperature from the resistance of the thermistor requires some fairly hairy math using logarithms called the Steinhart-Hart equation. This equation needs to know two things about the thermistor: its resistance at 25 degrees C (called T_0 or sometimes T_{25}) and a constant for the thermistor called Beta, or sometimes just B. If you use a different thermistor, you will need to plug these values into the variables B and R0 at the top of the program.

Note that a capacitor typically only has an accuracy of 10%, and thermistors are similarly inaccurate in their value of R0, so to get useful readings from the thermistor, you will need to tweak the variables C and R0.

Adjust C first, using a $1\text{k}\Omega$ 1% accuracy resistor in place of the pot in [Recipe 13.1](#). Then adjust R0 to give readings that agree with an accurate thermometer.

See Also

To measure temperature using a TMP36, see [Recipe 13.8](#).

To measure temperature using a digital temperature sensor (DS18B20), see [Recipe 13.11](#).

To measure temperature using a Sense HAT, see [Recipe 13.10](#).

13.4 Detecting Methane

Problem

You want to measure gas levels using a methane sensor.

Solution

Low-cost resistive gas sensors are available that can easily be wired to a Raspberry Pi to detect gases such as methane. You can use the *step response* method that you first used in [Recipe 13.1](#).

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- Methane sensor (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)
- Two $1\text{k}\Omega$ resistors (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)
- 330nF capacitor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)

The sensor contains a heating element that requires 5V at up to 150mA. The Raspberry Pi is capable of providing this as long as its power supply can supply the extra 150mA.

The sensor module has rather thick legs—too thick to fit into breadboard holes. One way around this is to solder short lengths of solid core wire to each lead ([Figure 13-7](#)). Another is to buy [SparkFun’s gas sensor breakout board](#).

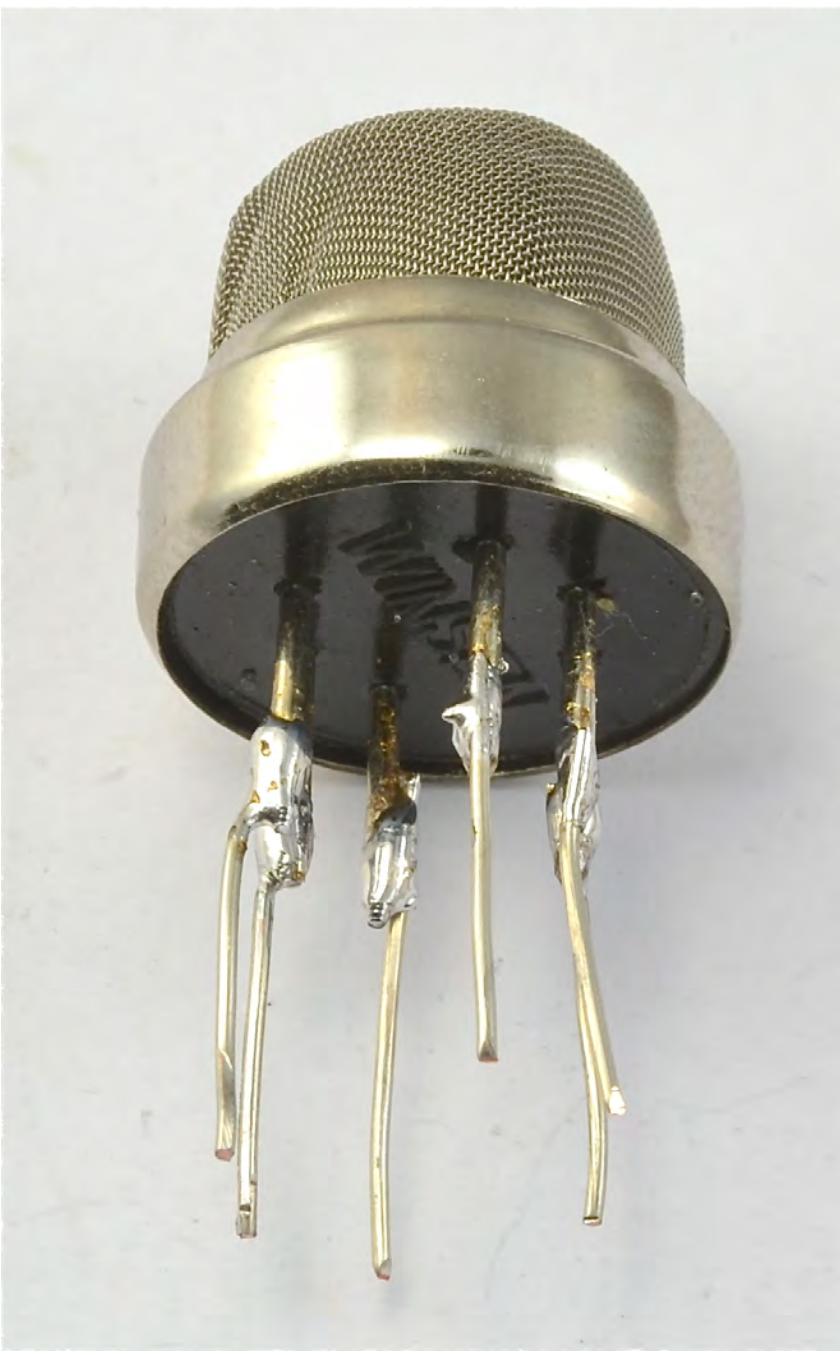


Figure 13-7. Soldering leads onto the gas sensor

Wire the breadboard as shown in [Figure 13-8](#) if you're using the SparkFun breakout board, or as shown in [Figure 13-9](#) if you soldered longer leads to the gas sensor.

Note that the direct connection shown in [Figure 13-9](#) uses the same symbol for the breakout board rather than the sensor on its own, but if you look carefully, the connections are to the six sensor pins, not the four pins of the breakout.

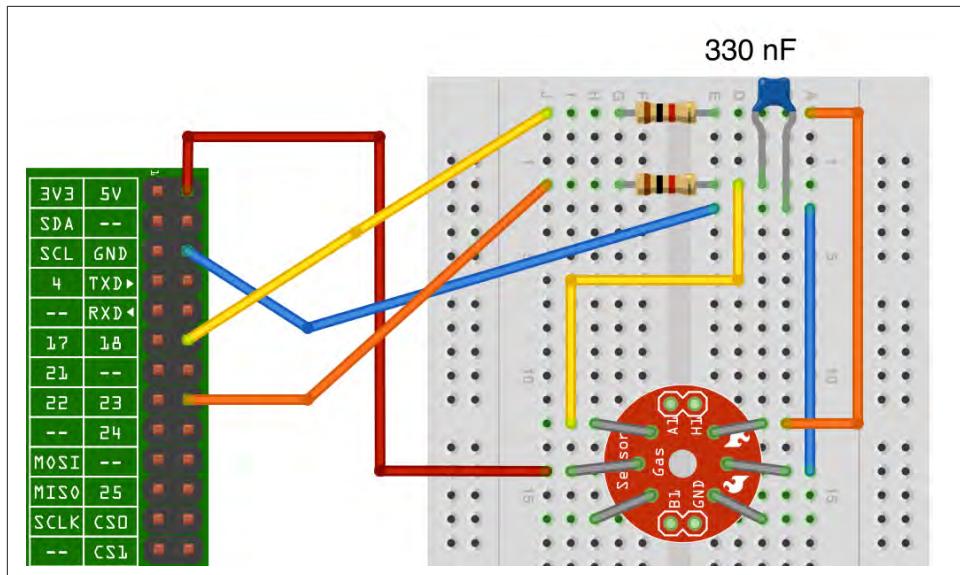


Figure 13-8. Connecting a methane gas sensor to a Raspberry Pi (breakout board)

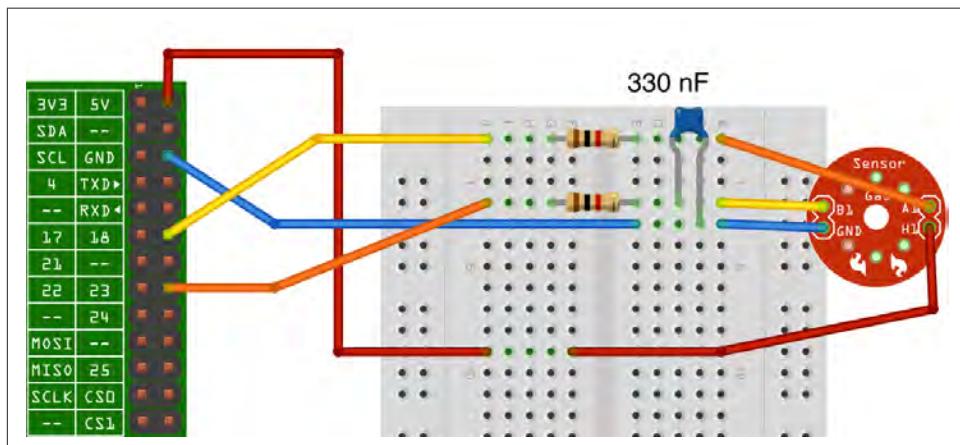


Figure 13-9. Connecting a methane gas sensor to a Raspberry Pi (direct)

You can use the exact same program as [Recipe 13.1](#), and you can test the methane sensor by breathing on it. You should see the readings from the sensor drop when you breathe on it.

Discussion

The obvious use of a methane gas sensor is for novelty *fart detecting* projects. A more serious use would be for detecting leaks of natural gas. You could, for instance, imagine a Raspberry Pi home-watch project that monitored the home with various sensors. It could then send you an email, while you are on vacation, informing you that your house is about to explode. Or maybe not.

These types of sensors ([Figure 13-10](#)) use a heating element that warms a resistive surface impregnated with a catalyst sensitive to a particular gas. When the gas is present, the resistance of the catalyst layer changes.

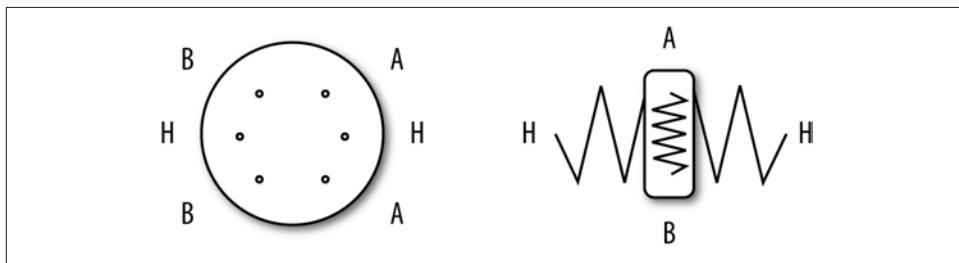


Figure 13-10. A methane gas sensor

Both the heater and the sensing surface are electrically just resistors. So both can be connected either way around.

This particular gas sensor is most sensitive to methane, but will also detect other gases to a lesser extent. That is why breathing on the sensor alters the reading, as healthy individuals will not normally breathe out methane. The cooling effect of blowing on the element may also have an effect.

See Also

The datasheet for this sensor can be found at <http://bit.ly/1gYupsu>. This will give you all sorts of useful information about the sensor's sensitivity to various gases.

There are a range of these low-cost sensors available for sensing different gases. For a list of sensors offered by SparkFun, see the [SparkFun website](#).

13.5 Measuring a Voltage

Problem

You want to measure an analog voltage.

Solution

The Raspberry Pi GPIO connector has only digital inputs. If you wish to measure a voltage, you need to use a separate analog-to-digital converter (ADC).

Use the MCP3008 eight-channel ADC chip. This chip actually has eight analog inputs, so you can connect up to eight sensors to one of these and interface to the chip using the Raspberry Pi SPI interface.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- MCP3008 eight-channel ADC IC (see “[Integrated Circuits](#)” on page 475)
- 10k Ω trimpot (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)

[Figure 13-11](#) shows the breadboard layout for using this chip. Make sure that you get the chip facing the right way. The little notch in the package should be toward the top of the breadboard.

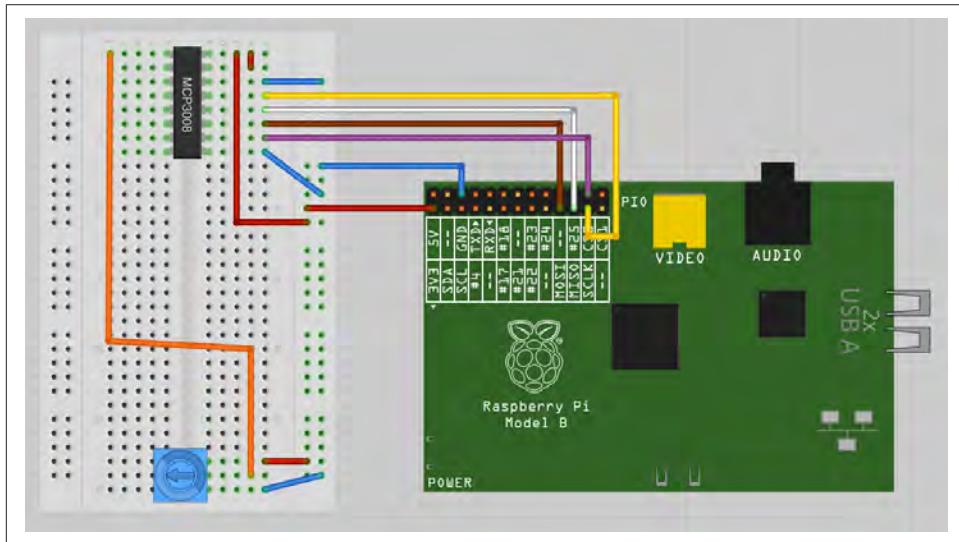


Figure 13-11. Using an MCP3008 ADC IC with a Raspberry Pi

The variable resistor has one end connected to 3.3V and the other to ground, which allows the middle connection to be set to any voltage between 0 and 3.3V.

Before trying the program, make sure you have SPI enabled and the SPI Python library installed ([Recipe 9.5](#)).

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called *adc_test.py*.

```
import spidev, time

spi = spidev.SpiDev()
spi.open(0, 0)

def analog_read(channel):
    r = spi.xfer2([1, (8 + channel) << 4, 0])
    adc_out = ((r[1]&3) << 8) + r[2]
    return adc_out

while True:
    reading = analog_read(0)
    voltage = reading * 3.3 / 1024
    print("Reading=%d\tVoltage=%f" % (reading, voltage))
    time.sleep(1)
```

The interesting part of the program is contained in the `analog_read` function. This takes a parameter that should be between 0 and 7 and specifies which of the eight analog inputs down the lefthand side of the chip should be read.

The bit manipulation sets up a request for the appropriate channel and then sends the bits to the MCP3008, which reads the resultant data:

```
$ sudo python adc_test.py
Reading=0      Voltage=0.000000
Reading=126    Voltage=0.406055
Reading=221    Voltage=0.712207
Reading=305    Voltage=0.982910
Reading=431    Voltage=1.388965
Reading=527    Voltage=1.698340
Reading=724    Voltage=2.333203
Reading=927    Voltage=2.987402
Reading=1020   Voltage=3.287109
Reading=1022   Voltage=3.293555
```

Discussion

The MCP3008 has 10-bit ADCs, so when you take a reading, it gives you a number between 0 and 1023. The test program converts this into a voltage reading by multiplying the reading by the voltage range (3.3V) and then dividing it by 1,024.

You can combine any of the following recipes that use the MCP3008 to allow readings to be taken from up to eight sensors.

You can also use resistive sensors with the MCP3008 by combining them with a fixed-value resistor and arranging them as a voltage divider (see [Recipe 13.6](#) and [Recipe 13.7](#)).

See Also

If you're just interested in detecting the turning of a knob, you can use a rotary encoder instead of a pot ([Recipe 12.7](#)).

You can also detect the position of a pot without the use of an ADC chip by using the step response method ([Recipe 13.1](#)).

Check out the [datasheet for the MCP3008](#).

The Explorer HAT Pro from Pimoroni also has an ADC ([Recipe 9.17](#)).

13.6 Reducing Voltages for Measurement

Problem

You want to measure a voltage, but it is higher than the 3.3V possible using an MCP3008 ([Recipe 13.5](#)).

Solution

Use a pair of resistors to act as a voltage divider to reduce the voltage to a suitable range.

To try this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- MCP3008 eight-channel ADC IC (see “[Integrated Circuits](#)” on page 475)
- $10\text{k}\Omega$ resistor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)
- $3.3\text{k}\Omega$ resistor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)
- 9V battery and clip lead

[Figure 13-12](#) shows the arrangement for this, using a breadboard. The setup will measure the voltage of the battery.

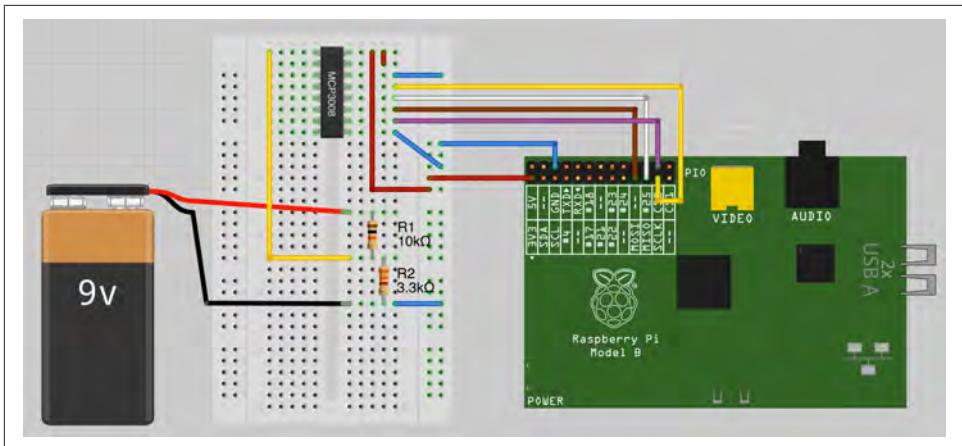


Figure 13-12. Reducing the voltage of analog inputs



Never use this recipe to measure high-voltage AC, or for that matter, any type of AC. It is for low-voltage DC only.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *adc_scaled.py*.

```
import spidev

R1 = 10000.0
R2 = 3300.0

spi = spidev.SpiDev()
spi.open(0,0)

def analog_read(channel):
    r = spi.xfer2([1, (8 + channel) << 4, 0])
    adc_out = ((r[1]&3) << 8) + r[2]
    return adc_out

reading = analog_read(0)
voltage_adc = reading * 3.3 / 1024
voltage_actual = voltage_adc / (R2 / (R1 + R2))
print("Battery Voltage=" + str(voltage_actual))
```

The program is very similar to that of [Recipe 13.5](#). The main difference is the scaling, using the values of the two resistors. The values of these two resistors are held in the variables *R1* and *R2*.

When you run the program, the battery voltage will be displayed:

```
$ sudo python adc_scaled.py  
Battery Voltage=8.62421875
```



Read the discussion carefully before attaching anything higher than 9V, or you may destroy the MCP3008.

Discussion

This arrangement of resistors is called a *voltage divider* or sometimes a *potential divider* (Figure 13-13). The formula for calculating the output voltage, given the input voltage and the values of the two resistors, is:

$$V_{out} = V_{in} * R_2 / (R_1 + R_2)$$

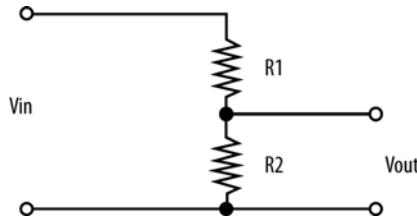


Figure 13-13. A voltage divider

This means that if R_1 and R_2 were both the same value (say, $1\text{k}\Omega$), then V_{out} would be half of V_{in} .

When choosing R_1 and R_2 , you also need to consider the current flowing through R_1 and R_2 . This will be $V_{in}/(R_1 + R_2)$. In the preceding example, R_1 is $10\text{k}\Omega$ and R_2 is $3.3\text{k}\Omega$. So the current flowing will be $9\text{V}/13.3\text{k}\Omega = 0.68\text{mA}$. This is low, but still enough to eventually drain the battery, so do not leave it connected all the time.

See Also

To avoid the math, you can use an [online resistor calculator](#).

The voltage divider is also used to convert resistance to voltage when using a resistive sensor with an ADC ([Recipe 13.7](#)).

13.7 Using Resistive Sensors with an ADC

Problem

You have a resistive sensor that you wish to use with an MCP3008 ADC chip.

Solution

Use a potential divider with one fixed resistor and the resistive sensor to convert the resistance of the sensor into a voltage that can be measured with the ADC.

As an example, you can remake the light sensor project of [Recipe 13.2](#) to use the MCP3008 instead of the step response technique.

To try this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “Prototyping Equipment” on page 474)
 - MCP3008 eight-channel ADC IC (see “Integrated Circuits” on page 475)
 - $10\text{k}\Omega$ resistor (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)
 - Photoresistor (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)

Figure 13-14 shows the arrangement for this, using a breadboard.

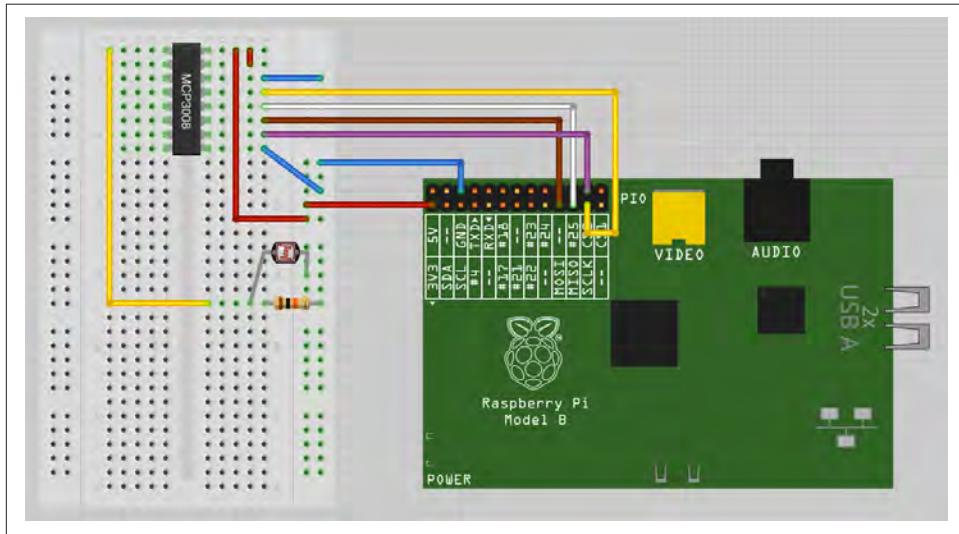


Figure 13-14. Using a photoresistor with an ADC

You can use the exact same program as [Recipe 13.5](#) (`adc_test.py`). Covering up the light sensor with your hand changes the readings. You also need to set up SPI on your Raspberry Pi, so if you haven't already done so, follow [Recipe 9.5](#).

```
$ sudo python adc_test.py
```

Reading=341	Voltage=1.098926
Reading=342	Voltage=1.102148
Reading=227	Voltage=0.731543
Reading=81	Voltage=0.261035
Reading=86	Voltage=0.277148

These readings may be quite a bit different, depending on your photoresistor, but the important thing is that the figure changes as the light level changes.

Discussion

Choice of fixed value resistor is not very critical. If the value is too high or low, then you will find that the range of readings is rather narrow. Select a resistor value somewhere between the minimum and maximum resistance of the sensor. You may need to experiment with a few resistors before deciding on one that suits your sensor over the range of readings you're interested in. If in doubt, start with $10\text{k}\Omega$ and see how that works.

You can swap out the photoresistor for pretty much any resistive sensor. So, for instance, you could use the gas sensor from [Recipe 13.4](#).

See Also

To measure light intensity without the complication of an ADC, see [Recipe 13.2](#). For an example of using more than one channel of the ADC at a time, see [Recipe 13.12](#).

13.8 Measuring Temperature with an ADC

Problem

You want to measure temperature using a TMP36 and an analog-to-digital converter.

Solution

Use an MCP3008 ADC chip.

However, unless you need more than one analog channel, you should consider using the DS18B20 digital temperature sensor, which is more accurate and doesn't require a separate ADC chip ([Recipe 13.11](#)).

To try this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
 - MCP3008 eight-channel ADC IC (see “[Integrated Circuits](#)” on page 475)
 - TMP36 temperature sensor (see “[Integrated Circuits](#)” on page 475)

Figure 13-15 shows the arrangement for this, using a breadboard.

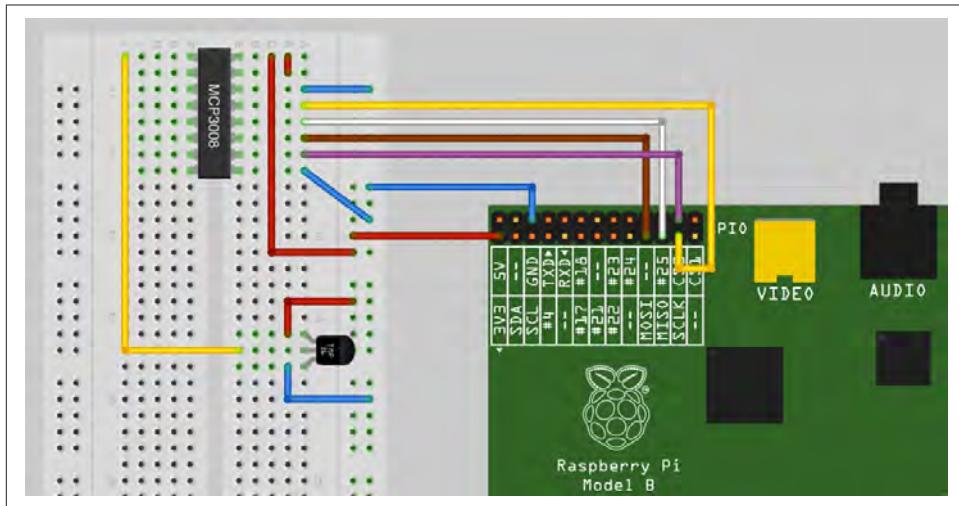


Figure 13-15. Using a TMP36 with an ADC

Make sure that you get the TMP36 facing the right way. One side of the package is flat, while the other is curved.

You will need to set up SPI on your Raspberry Pi, so if you haven't already done so, follow [Recipe 9.5](#).

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook website](#), where it is called *adc_tmpr36.py*.

```
import spidev, time

spi = spidev.SpiDev()
spi.open(0,0)

def analog_read(channel):
    r = spi.xfer2([1, (8 + channel) << 4, 0])
    adc_out = ((r[1]&3) << 8) + r[2]
    return adc_out

while True:
```

```

reading = analog_read(0)
voltage = reading * 3.3 / 1024
temp_c = voltage * 100 - 50
temp_f = temp_c * 9.0 / 5.0 + 32
print("Temp C=%f\tTemp f=%f" % (temp_c, temp_f))
time.sleep(1)

```

The program is based on that of [Recipe 13.8](#). A little bit of additional math calculates the temperature in degrees Celsius and Fahrenheit:

```

$ sudo python adc_tmp36.py
Temp C=19.287109      Temp f=66.716797
Temp C=18.642578      Temp f=65.556641
Temp C=18.964844      Temp f=66.136719
Temp C=20.253906      Temp f=68.457031
Temp C=20.898438      Temp f=69.617188
Temp C=20.576172      Temp f=69.037109
Temp C=21.865234      Temp f=71.357422
Temp C=23.154297      Temp f=73.677734
Temp C=23.476562      Temp f=74.257812
Temp C=23.476562      Temp f=74.257812
Temp C=24.121094      Temp f=75.417969
Temp C=24.443359      Temp f=75.998047
Temp C=25.087891      Temp f=77.158203

```

Discussion

The TMP36 outputs a voltage that is proportional to the temperature. According to the datasheet for the TMP36, the temperature in degrees C is calculated as the voltage (in volts) times 100 minus 50.

The TMP36 is fine for measuring the approximate temperature but is specified as having an accuracy of only 2 degrees C. This will only get worse if you attach long leads to it. To some extent, you can calibrate an individual device, but for better accuracy, use a DS18B20 ([Recipe 13.11](#)), which has a stated accuracy of 0.5% over a temperature range of -10 to +85 degrees C. Being a digital device, it should not suffer any loss of accuracy when attached to long leads.

See Also

Take a look at the [TMP36 datasheet](#).

To measure temperature using a thermistor, see [Recipe 13.3](#).

To measure temperature using a digital temperature sensor (DS18B20), see [Recipe 13.11](#).

To measure temperature using a Sense HAT, see [Recipe 13.10](#).

13.9 Measuring the Raspberry Pi CPU Temperature

Problem

You want to know just how hot your Raspberry Pi's CPU is getting.

Solution

Use the `os` library to access the temperature sensor built into the Broadcom chip.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called `cpu_temp.py`.

```
import os, time

while True:
    dev = os.popen('/opt/vc/bin/vcgencmd measure_temp')
    cpu_temp = dev.read()
    print(cpu_temp)
    time.sleep(1)
```

When you run this program, it will report the temperature. Note that the message printed is actually a string with `temp=` before the temperature and `'C` after it.

```
$ python cpu_temp.py
temp=33.6'C
temp=33.6'C
```

Discussion

If you want the temperature as a number rather than a string, you need to chop off the extra text and then convert the number to a float. You can find an example program for this in `cpu_temp_float.py`.

```
import os, time

while True:
    dev = os.popen('/opt/vc/bin/vcgencmd measure_temp')
    cpu_temp_s = dev.read()[5:-3] # top and tail string
    cpu_temp = float(cpu_temp_s)
    print(cpu_temp)
    time.sleep(1)
```

See Also

For more information on chopping up strings, see [Recipe 5.15](#).

To measure temperature using a thermistor, see [Recipe 13.3](#).

To measure temperature using a TMP36, see [Recipe 13.8](#).

To measure temperature using a digital temperature sensor (DS18B20), see [Recipe 13.11](#).

To measure temperature using a Sense HAT, see [Recipe 13.10](#).

13.10 Measuring Temperature, Humidity, and Pressure with a Sense HAT

Problem

You want to measure temperature, humidity, and pressure, but don't really want to have to attach three separate sensors.

Solution

Use a Raspberry Pi Sense HAT ([Figure 13-16](#)). That way you get all those sensors plus some extras like a display.



Figure 13-16. A Sense HAT

Start by following [Recipe 9.16](#) to install the libraries needed by the Sense HAT.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *sense_hat_thp.py*.

```
from sense_hat import SenseHat
import time

hat = SenseHat()

while True:
    t = hat.get_temperature()
    h = hat.get_humidity()
    p = hat.get_pressure()
    print('Temp C:{:.2f} Hum:{:.0f} Pres:{:.0f}'.format(t, h, p))
    time.sleep(1)
```

When you run the program, the terminal will display something like this:

```
$ sudo python sense_hat_thp.py
Temp C:27.71 Hum:56 Pres:1005
Temp C:27.60 Hum:55 Pres:1005
```

The temperature is in degrees C, the humidity is the percentage of relative humidity, and the atmospheric pressure is in millibars.

Discussion

You will find that the temperature readings from the Sense HAT are on the high side. This is because the temperature sensor is built into the humidity sensor and is on the Sense HAT PCB. The Sense HAT generates very little heat (unless you use the display) but the Raspberry Pi under the Sense HAT does get warm and will increase the temperature of the HAT. The best way to avoid this problem is to use a 40-way ribbon cable to move the Sense HAT away from the Raspberry Pi. There are also attempts to adjust the readings by using the temperature reading of the Raspberry Pi, and you can follow a discussion on that at <http://bit.ly/1OfEWf>. Personally, I feel that these compensation attempts are probably very specific to the users posting and are unlikely to produce reliable results.

As well as reading the temperature from the humidity sensor, the pressure sensor also has a temperature sensor built in that you can read like this:

```
t = hat.get_temperature_from_pressure()
```

It is unclear from the documentation as to whether this reading is any more accurate than using the humidity sensor, but for my setup, it reported temperatures about 1 degree C lower than the humidity sensor.

See Also

To get started with the Sense HAT, see [Recipe 9.16](#).

The programming reference for the Sense HAT is here: <https://pythonhosted.org/sense-hat/api/>.

The Sense HAT also has an accelerometer, gyroscope ([Recipe 13.13](#)) and magnetometer ([Recipe 13.14](#)) for navigation type projects. It also has a full-color 8×8 LED matrix display ([Recipe 14.3](#)).

13.11 Measuring Temperature Using a Digital Sensor

Problem

You want to measure temperature using an accurate digital sensor.

Solution

Use the DS18B20 digital temperature sensor. This device is more accurate than the TMP36 used in [Recipe 13.8](#) and uses a digital interface, so it doesn't require an ADC chip.

Although the interface to this chip is called *one-wire*, this just refers to the data pin. You do need at least one other wire to connect to a one-wire device.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- DS18B20 temperature sensor (see “[Integrated Circuits](#)” on page 475)
- 4.7kΩ resistor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)

Fit the components onto the breadboard as shown in [Figure 13-17](#). Make sure that you get the DS18B20 facing the right way.

The latest version of Raspbian has support for the one-wire interface used by the DS18B20 but you do have to enable it.

To enable 1-wire support, edit the file `/boot/config.txt` using the command `sudo nano /boot/config.txt` and add the line shown below to the end of the file. Then reboot your Raspberry Pi for the change to take effect.

```
$ dtoverlay=w1-gpio
```

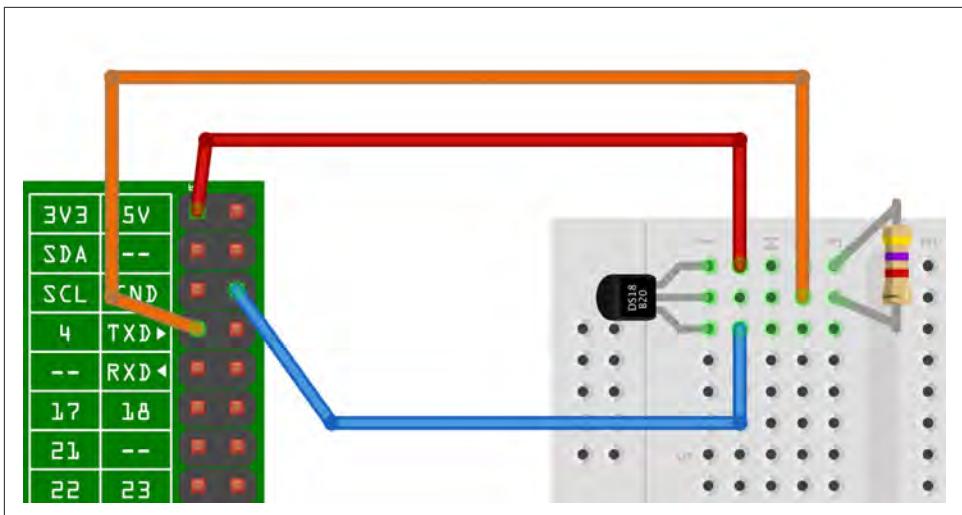


Figure 13-17. Connecting a DS18B20 to a Raspberry Pi

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook](#) website, where it is called `temp_DS18B20.py`.

```

import glob, time

base_dir = '/sys/bus/w1/devices/'
device_folder = glob.glob(base_dir + '28*')[0]
device_file = device_folder + '/w1_slave'

def read_temp_raw():
    f = open(device_file, 'r')
    lines = f.readlines()
    f.close()
    return lines

def read_temp():
    lines = read_temp_raw()
    while lines[0].strip()[-3:] != 'YES':
        time.sleep(0.2)
        lines = read_temp_raw()
    equals_pos = lines[1].find('t=')
    if equals_pos != -1:
        temp_string = lines[1][equals_pos+2:]
        temp_c = float(temp_string) / 1000.0
        temp_f = temp_c * 9.0 / 5.0 + 32.0
    return temp_c, temp_f

while True:

```

```
print("temp C=%f\ttemp F=%f" % read_temp())
time.sleep(1)
```

When the program is run, it will report the temperature once a second in both degrees Celsius and Fahrenheit:

```
$ python temp_DS18B20.py
temp C=25.187000 temp F=77.336600
temp C=25.125000      temp F=77.225000
temp C=25.062000      temp F=77.111600
temp C=26.312000      temp F=79.361600
temp C=27.875000      temp F=82.175000
temp C=28.875000      temp F=83.975000
```

Discussion

At first sight, the program looks a little odd. The interface to the DS18B20 uses a file-like interface. The file interface for the device will always be in the folder `/sys/bus/w1/devices/` and the name of the file path will start with 28, but the rest of the file path will be different for each sensor.

The code assumes that there will only be one sensor, and finds the first folder starting with 28. To use multiple sensors, use different index values inside the square brackets.

Within that folder will be a file called `w1_slave`, which is opened and read to find the temperature.

The sensor actually returns strings of text like this:

```
81 01 4b 46 7f ff 0f 10 71 : crc=71 YES
81 01 4b 46 7f ff 0f 10 71 t=24062
```

The remainder of the code extracts the temperature part of this message. This appears after `t=` and is the temperature in one-thousandths of a degree Celsius.

The `read_temp` function calculates the temperature in both degrees Celsius and Fahrenheit and returns both values.

Besides the basic chip version of the DS18B20, you can also buy a version encapsulated in a rugged and waterproof probe.

See Also

To find out about logging readings, see [Recipe 13.20](#).

This recipe is heavily based on an [Adafruit tutorial](#).

Take a look at the [datasheet for the DS18B20](#).

To measure temperature using a thermistor, see [Recipe 13.3](#).

To measure temperature using a TMP36, see [Recipe 13.8](#).

To measure temperature using a Sense HAT, see [Recipe 13.10](#).

13.12 Measuring Acceleration with an MCP3008 Module

Problem

You want to connect a triple-axis accelerometer to a Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use an analog accelerometer with an MCP3008 ADC chip to measure the X, Y, and Z analog outputs.

To try this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- MCP3008 eight-channel ADC IC (see “[Integrated Circuits](#)” on page 475)
- ADXL335 triple-axis accelerometer (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)

[Figure 13-18](#) shows the arrangement for this, using a breadboard. It uses three channels of the ADC to measure the X, Y, and Z acceleration forces.

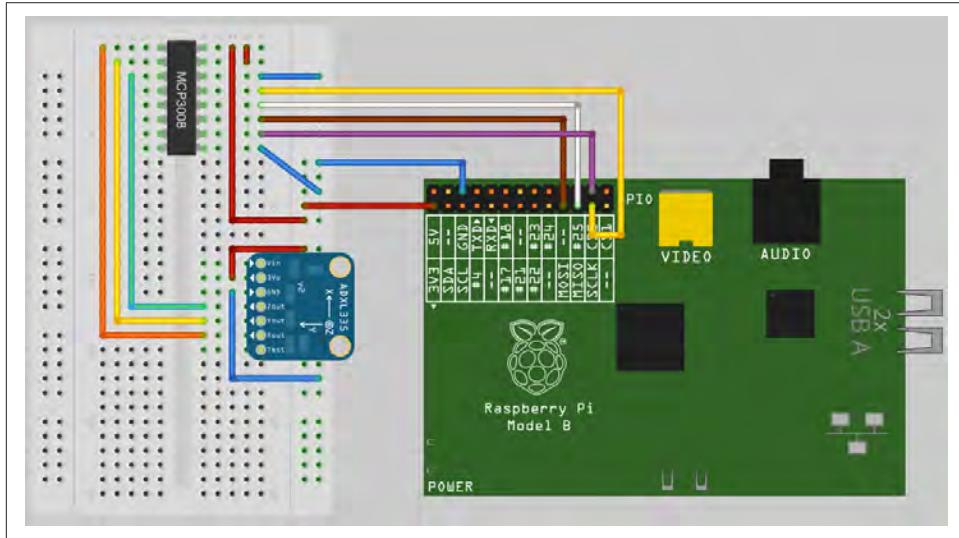


Figure 13-18. Using a triple-axis accelerometer

You will need to set up SPI on your Raspberry Pi, so if you have not already done so, follow [Recipe 9.5](#).

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *adc_accelerometer.py*.

```
import spidev, time

spi = spidev.SpiDev()
spi.open(0,0)

def analog_read(channel):
    r = spi.xfer2([1, (8 + channel) << 4, 0])
    adc_out = ((r[1]&3) << 8) + r[2]
    return adc_out

while True:
    x = analog_read(0)
    y = analog_read(1)
    z = analog_read(2)
    print("X=%d\tY=%d\tZ=%d" % (x, y, z))
    time.sleep(1)
```

The program simply reads the three forces and prints them out:

```
$ sudo python adc_accelerometer.py
X=508  Y=503  Z=626
X=508  Y=504  Z=624
X=506  Y=505  Z=627
X=423  Y=517  Z=579
X=411  Y=513  Z=548
X=532  Y=510  Z=623
X=609  Y=518  Z=495
X=607  Y=521  Z=496
X=610  Y=513  Z=499
```

The first three readings took place with the accelerometer level. In the next three, the whole breadboard was tipped to one side. You can see that the X reading has decreased. Tipping the breadboard the other way causes the X reading to increase.

Discussion

The most common use for an accelerometer is to detect tilt. This works because the Z axis force is dominated by the pull of gravity (Figure 13-19).

When the accelerometer is tilted in one direction, some of that vertical force of gravity becomes active on another axis of the accelerometer.

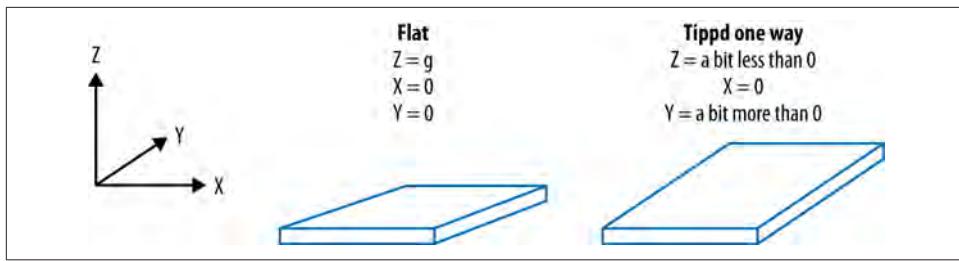


Figure 13-19. Detecting tilt with an accelerometer

We can use this principle to detect when the tilt is past a certain threshold. The following program (*tilt.py*) illustrates this point:

```
import spidev, time

spi = spidev.SpiDev()
spi.open(0,0)

def analog_read(channel):
    r = spi.xfer2([1, (8 + channel) << 4, 0])
    adc_out = ((r[1]&3) << 8) + r[2]
    return adc_out

while True:
    x = analog_read(0)
    y = analog_read(1)
    z = analog_read(2)
    if x < 450:
        print("Left")
    elif x > 550:
        print("Right")
    elif y < 450:
        print("Back")
    elif y > 550:
        print("Forward")
    time.sleep(0.2)
```

When you run the program, you will start to see direction messages. You could use this to control a roving robot or a motorized pan-tilt head with a webcam attached:

```
$ sudo python tilt.py
Left
Left
Right
Forward
Forward
Back
Back
```

See Also

See the [datasheet](#) for the accelerometer chip used in the module.

There are many other analog accelerometer modules available. You may find that they give different readings. Make sure that the analog outputs do not exceed 3.3V.

The Sense HAT includes an accelerometer ([Recipe 13.13](#)).

13.13 Using the Inertial Management Unit (IMU) of the Sense HAT

Problem

You want more accurate orientation information from your Raspberry Pi than the accelerometer from [Recipe 13.12](#) provides.

Solution

Use the Inertial Management Unit (IMU) of the Sense HAT. This unit includes a 3-axis accelerometer like the one in [Recipe 13.12](#) but also has a 3-axis gyroscope and magnetometer. The readings from these different sensors are combined to let you get a more accurate orientation for the Sense HAT expressed as pitch, roll, and yaw (as shown in [Figure 13-20](#)).

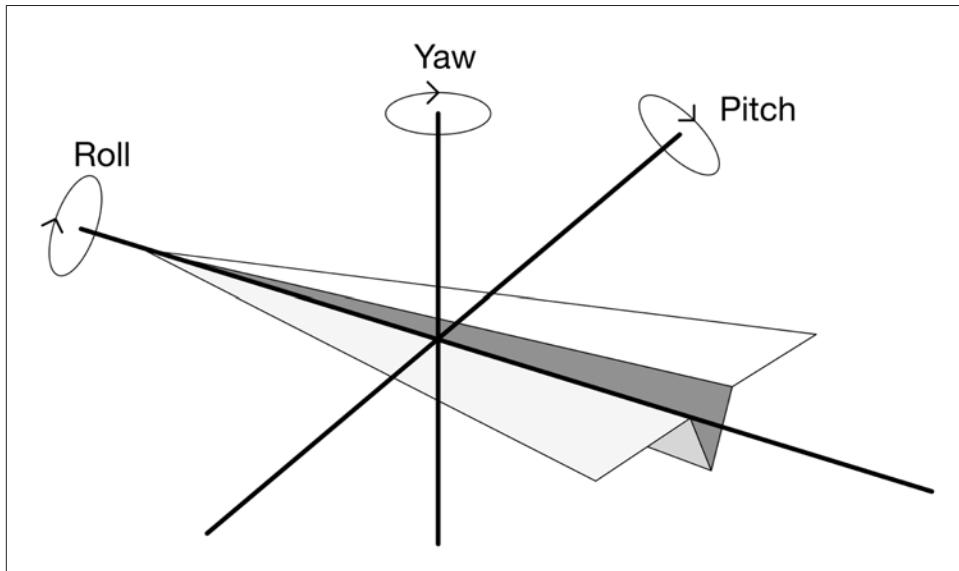


Figure 13-20. Pitch, roll, and yaw

Pitch, roll, and yaw are three terms that come from aviation. They are relative to the axis of the plane's flight. The pitch is the angle to the horizontal. The roll is the degree of rotation around the plane's axis of flight (imagine one wing going up and the other down), and yaw is the rotation on the horizontal axis (think changing bearing).

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *sense_hat_orientation.py*.

```
from sense_hat import SenseHat

sense = SenseHat()

sense.set_imu_config(True, True, True)

while True:
    o = sense.get_orientation()
    print("p: {:.0f}, r: {:.0f}, y: {:.0f}".format(o['pitch'], o['roll'],
o['yaw']))
```

The function `set_imu_config` specifies which of the compass, gyroscope, and accelerometer (in that order) should be used to measure the orientation. Setting all three to `True` will mean that all are used to make the measurement.

When you run the program, you will see output similar to this:

```
$ sudo python sense_hat_orientation.py
p: 1, r: 317, y: 168
p: 1, r: 318, y: 169
```

Try tilting the Sense HAT and Raspberry Pi forward toward the USB ports, and you should see the value of pitch increase.

Discussion

An accelerometer measures forces on a stationary mass and can therefore measure the degree of tilt by calculating how much of the force supplied by gravity (z-axis) influences the force measured on the x and y axes.

A gyroscope is different. It measures the force on moving masses (vibrating back and forth) as those masses turn relative to the path of the movement, using an effect called the Coriolis effect.

See Also

For more information on the Sense HAT's IMU, see <https://www.raspberrypi.org/learning/astro-pi-guide/sensors/movement.md>.

To measure temperature, humidity, and atmospheric pressure, see [Recipe 13.10](#).

The IMU of the Sense HAT can also be used to make a compass and detect the presence of a magnet ([Recipe 13.16](#)).

To find out more about gyroscopes and the Coriolis effect, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coriolis_effect.

13.14 Finding Magnetic North with the Sense HAT

Problem

You want to use a Sense HAT to detect magnetic north.

Solution

Use the Python library for the built-in 3-axis magnetometer in the Sense HAT.

First follow [Recipe 9.16](#) to install the Sense HAT library.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook](#) website, where it is called *sense_hat_compass.py*.

```
from sense_hat import SenseHat

sense = SenseHat()

while True:
    bearing = sense.get_compass()
    print('Bearing: {:.0f} to North'.format(bearing))
```

When you run this program, you will see a series of bearing readings.

```
$ sudo python sense_hat_compass.py
Bearing: 138 to North
Bearing: 138 to North
```

Discussion

The compass will be sensitive to any other nearby sources of magnetic field so you may find it difficult to get accurate bearings.

See Also

You can find documentation for Sense HAT at <https://github.com/RPi-Distro/python-sense-hat> and <http://pythonhosted.org/sense-hat/api/>.

To use the Sense HAT to detect a magnet, see [Recipe 13.16](#).

13.15 Sensing a Magnet with a Reed Switch

Problem

You want to detect the presence of a magnet.

Solution

Use a reed switch ([Figure 13-21](#)). It works just like a regular switch except it only activates when a magnet is near. [Figure 13-22](#) shows how a reed switch works.

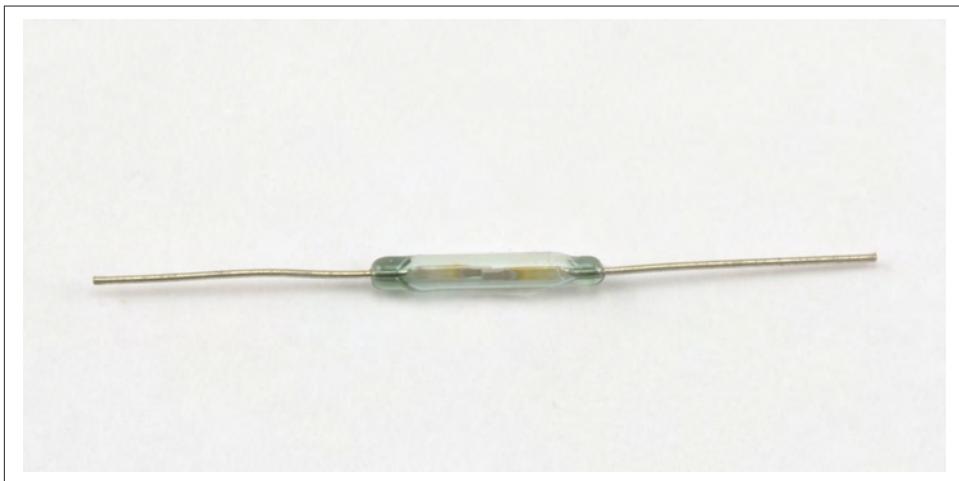


Figure 13-21. A reed switch

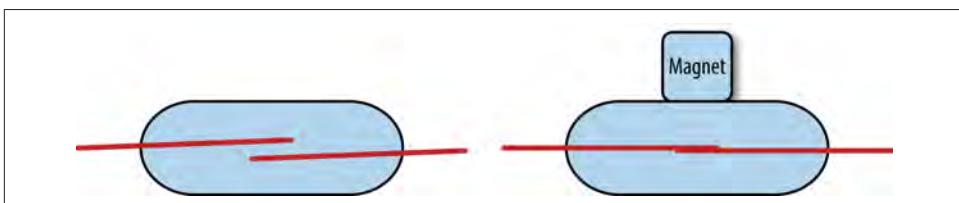


Figure 13-22. How a reed switch works

The two reed contacts are encased in a glass tube. When a magnet is placed near the reed switch, the reeds are pulled together and make contact.

You can use any of the regular switch recipes in [Chapter 12](#) with a reed switch, starting with [Recipe 12.1](#).

Discussion

Reed switches are a low-tech way of detecting a magnet. They have been around since the 1930s and are extremely reliable. They are also commonly used in security systems where a plastic encased reed switch is placed on a door frame, with a fixed magnet in another plastic enclosure on the door itself. When the door opens, the reed switch contacts open, triggering the alarm.

See Also

To detect a magnet using the magnetometer of the Sense HAT, see [Recipe 13.16](#).

13.16 Sensing a Magnet with the Sense HAT

Problem

You want to detect the presence of a magnet, and have a Sense Hat with built-in magnetometer from a Python program.

Solution

Use the Sense HAT's Python library to interface with its magnetometer.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook](#) website, where it is called *sense_hat_magnet.py*.

```
from sense_hat import SenseHat
import time

hat = SenseHat()
fill = (255, 0, 0)

while True:
    reading = int(hat.get_compass_raw()['z'])
    if reading > 200:
        hat.clear(fill)
        time.sleep(0.2)
    else:
        hat.clear()
```

When the magnet gets close to the Sense HAT, the LEDs will all turn red for 1/5 of a second.

Discussion

It doesn't matter which axis of the compass data you use; they will all be greatly disrupted by the presence of a fixed magnet.

See Also

To detect a magnet using a reed switch, see [Recipe 13.15](#).

For other ways to use the Sense HAT display, see [Recipe 14.3](#).

13.17 Measuring Distance

Problem

You want to measure distance using an ultrasonic rangefinder.

Solution

Use a low-cost SR-04 rangefinder. These devices need two GPIO pins: one to trigger the pulse of ultrasound and the other to monitor how long it takes for the echo to return.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- SR-04 rangefinder ([eBay](#))
- 470Ω resistor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)
- 270Ω resistor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)

Fit the components onto the breadboard as shown in [Figure 13-23](#). The resistors are necessary to reduce the *echo* output of the rangefinder from 5V to 3.3V (see [Recipe 9.12](#)).

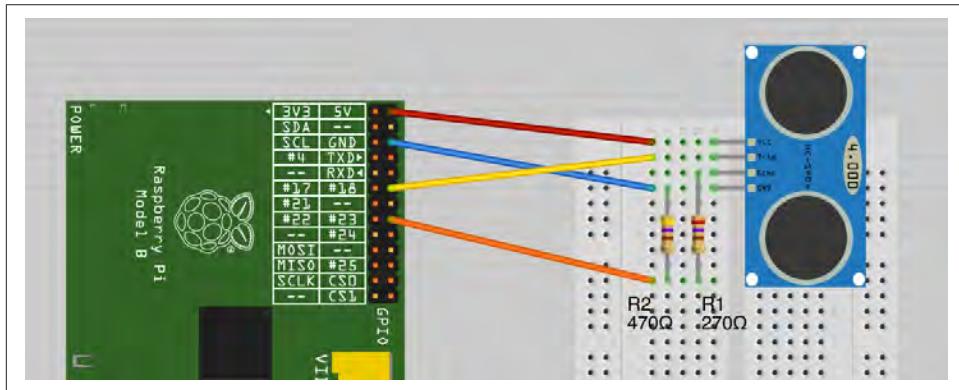


Figure 13-23. Connecting an SR-04 rangefinder to a Raspberry Pi

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *ranger.py*.

```
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO
import time

trigger_pin = 18
echo_pin = 23

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
GPIO.setup(trigger_pin, GPIO.OUT)
GPIO.setup(echo_pin, GPIO.IN)

def send_trigger_pulse():
    GPIO.output(trigger_pin, True)
    time.sleep(0.0001)
    GPIO.output(trigger_pin, False)

def wait_for_echo(value, timeout):
    count = timeout
    while GPIO.input(echo_pin) != value and count > 0:
        count = count - 1

def get_distance():
    send_trigger_pulse()
    wait_for_echo(True, 10000)
    start = time.time()
    wait_for_echo(False, 10000)
    finish = time.time()
    pulse_len = finish - start
    distance_cm = pulse_len / 0.000058
    distance_in = distance_cm / 2.5
    return (distance_cm, distance_in)

while True:
    print("cm=%f\tinches=%f" % get_distance())
    time.sleep(1)
```

The operation of the program is described in the next Discussion. When the program is run, it will report the distance in both centimeters and inches, once per second. Use your hand or some other obstacle to change the reading.

```
sudo python ranger.py
cm=154.741879  inches=61.896752
cm=155.670889  inches=62.268356
cm=154.865199  inches=61.946080
cm=12.948595   inches=5.179438
cm=14.087249   inches=5.634900
cm=13.741954   inches=5.496781
```

```
cm=20.775302    inches=8.310121
cm=20.224473    inches=8.089789
```

Discussion

While there are a number of ultrasonic rangefinders available, the type used here is easy to use and low cost. It works by sending a pulse of ultrasound and then measuring the amount of time taken for the echo to be received. One of the round ultrasonic transducers on the front of the device is the transmitter, and the other is the receiver.

This process is controlled from the Raspberry Pi. The difference between this type of device and more expensive models is that the more expensive versions include their own microcontroller, which carries out all the necessary timing and provides an I2C or serial interface to return a final reading.

When you are using one of these sensors with a Raspberry Pi, the *trig* (trigger) input to the rangefinder is connected to a GPIO output, and the *echo* output of the rangefinder is connected to a GPIO input on the Raspberry Pi after having its voltage range lowered from 5V to a safe 3.3V.

Figure 13-24 shows an oscilloscope trace of the sensor in action. The top (red) trace is connected to *trig*, and the bottom (yellow) trace is connected to *echo*. You can see that first the *trig* pin is taken high for a short pulse. There is then a short delay before the *echo* pin goes high. This stays high for a period that is proportional to the distance from the sensor.

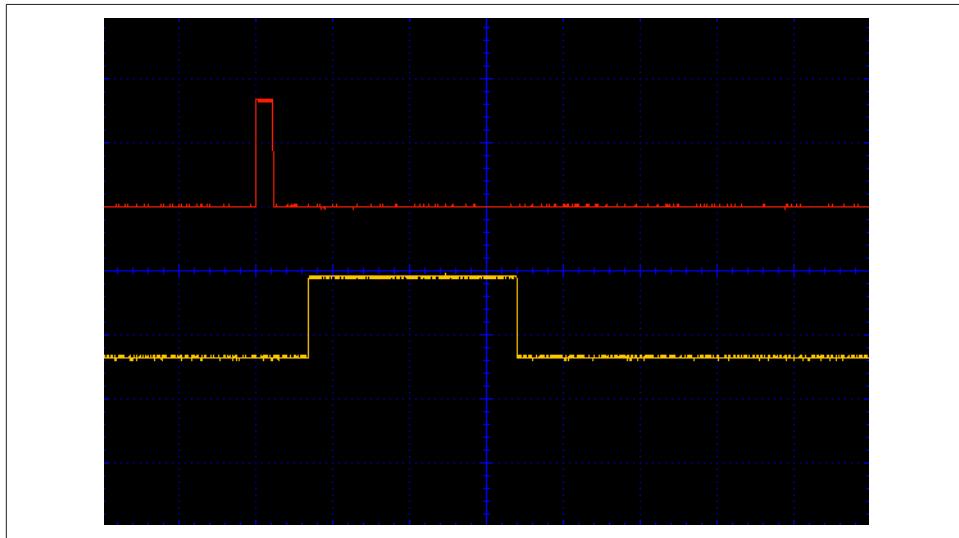


Figure 13-24. The oscilloscope trace for trigger and echo

The code for this sensor first generates a trigger pulse (using the function `send_trigger_pulse`). It must wait until the `echo` pin goes high, and then times how long the `echo` pin stays high.

We can then calculate the distance by using the time taken for the echo pulse and the speed of sound.

The `wait_for_echo` function waits until the `echo` pin either goes high or low, depending on its first argument. Its second argument is used to provide a timeout so that if for any reason, the `echo` pin does not change to the state being waited for, the loop won't hang indefinitely.

This method of measuring distance is not terribly accurate because temperature, pressure, and relative humidity all alter the speed of sound and hence the distance readings.

See Also

Take a look at the [datasheet for the ultrasonic rangefinder](#).

13.18 Capacitative Touch Sensing

Problem

You want to provide a touch interface to your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use an Adafruit Capacitative Touch HAT ([Figure 13-25](#)).

Touch sensors are a lot of fun and are great for educational use. You can attach anything that conducts electricity a little, including fruit. A popular project is to construct a fruit keyboard using a variety of fruits and vegetables attached to the sense terminals on the board using alligator clips. Then as you touch the different items of fruit, different sounds are made.

The Adafruit Touch HAT uses the Raspberry Pi's I2C interface. You also need SPI tools installed, so if you have not already done so, follow [Recipe 9.3](#).

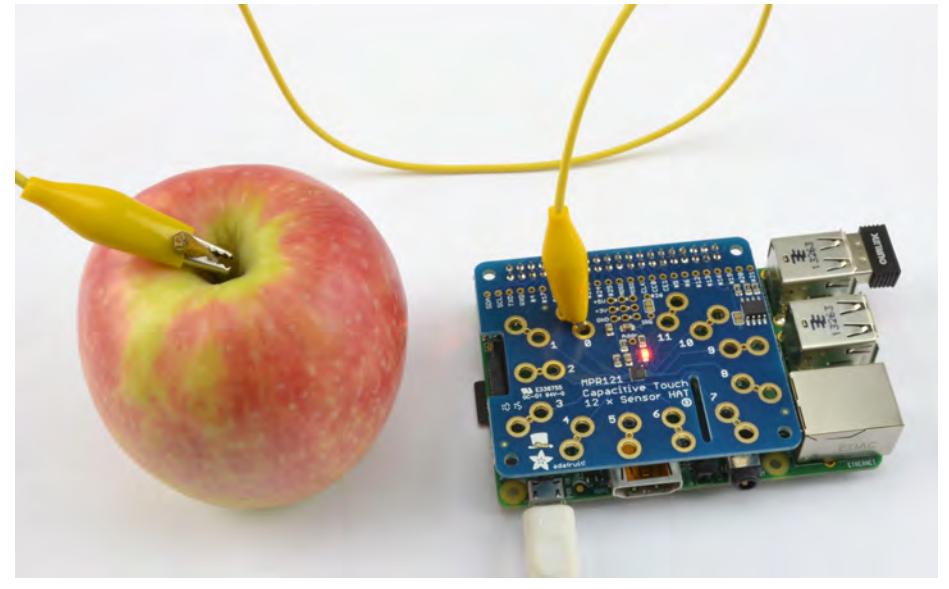


Figure 13-25. An Adafruit Capacitive Touch HAT attached to an apple

To install the Python library for the HAT, run the following commands:

```
$ cd /home/pi  
$ git clone https://github.com/adafruit/Adafruit_Python_MPR121.git  
$ cd Adafruit_Python_MPR121/  
$ sudo python setup.py install
```

To test out the Touch HAT, run the *simpletest.py* example supplied with the library by using the commands:

```
$ cd examples  
$ sudo python simpletest.py  
Adafruit MPR121 Capacitive Touch Sensor Test  
Press Ctrl-C to quit.  
0 touched!  
0 released!
```

You can either just touch the connection pads or connect the pads to a piece of fruit using an alligator clip as shown in [Figure 13-25](#).

Discussion

You will find other example programs in the *examples* folder, including the ever popular fruit-based musical keyboard.

The Adafruit Touch HAT has 12 touch contacts. If you only need a few touch contacts, you can use the Pimoroni Explorer HAT Pro, which has four alligator-clip-compatible contacts (Figure 13-26).

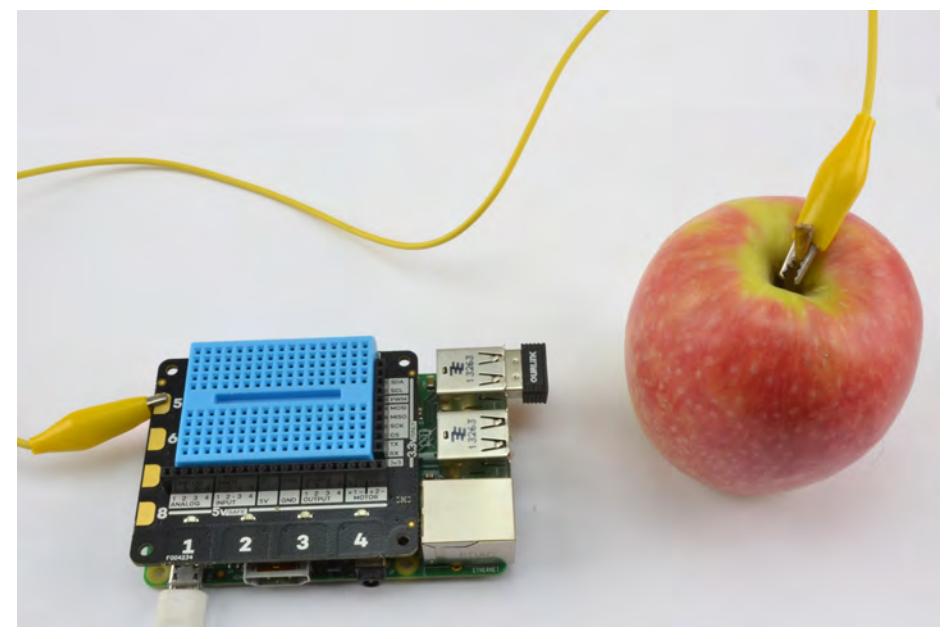


Figure 13-26. The Explorer HAT Pro with fruit

To use the Explorer HAT Pro's touch contacts, first follow [Recipe 9.17](#) to install the library for the HAT.

In addition to the four terminals on the side, designed for alligator clips, there are also four touch switches labeled 1 to 4 that also use the touch interface.

To try out touch on the Explorer HAT Pro, open a Python console and run the following commands to detect touches:

```
>>> import explorerhat  
Explorer HAT Pro detected...  
>>> explorerhat.touch.five.is_pressed()  
True  
>>> explorerhat.touch.five.is_pressed()  
False  
>>>
```

If you run the `is_pressed()` function while holding the apple, the result will be `True`; otherwise, it will be `False`.

See Also

For documentation of the Adafruit Touch HAT, see <https://www.adafruit.com/products/2340>, and for the Explorer HAT Pro, see <https://github.com/pimoroni/explorer-hat>.

13.19 Displaying Sensor Values

Problem

You have a sensor wired to your Raspberry Pi, and want a big digital display of the reading on the screen.

Solution

Use the Tkinter library to open a window and write the reading on it as a label with a large font ([Figure 13-27](#)).



Figure 13-27. Displaying a sensor reading using Tkinter

This example uses data from the ultrasonic rangefinder of [Recipe 13.17](#). So, complete that recipe first if you want to try out this example.

To test out the rangefinder, open an editor (nano or idle) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of [the book's website](#), where it is called `gui_sensor_reading.py`. The code for measuring distances using the ultrasonic sensor is the same as in [Recipe 13.17](#), so only the section of the code concerned with displaying the value is repeated here:

```

class App:

    def __init__(self, master):
        self.master = master
        frame = Frame(master)
        frame.pack()
        label = Label(frame, text='Distance (inches)', font=("Helvetica", 32))
        label.grid(row=0)
        self.reading_label = Label(frame, text='12.34', font=("Helvetica", 110))
        self.reading_label.grid(row=1)
        self.update_reading()

    def update_reading(self):
        cm, inch = get_distance()
        reading_str = "{:.2f}".format(inch)
        self.reading_label.configure(text=reading_str)
        self.master.after(500, self.update_reading)

root = Tk()
root.wm_title('Range Finder')
app = App(root)
root.geometry("400x300+0+0")
root.mainloop()

```

Discussion

Although this recipe uses a distance sensor, it works equally well with the other sensor recipes in this chapter. You just need to change the labels and the method of obtaining a reading from the sensor.

See Also

For information on formatting numbers to a certain number of decimal places, see [Recipe 7.1](#).

For an example of displaying sensor data in a web browser rather than an application window, see [Recipe 15.2](#).

13.20 Logging to a USB Flash Drive

Problem

You want to log data measured with a sensor onto a USB flash drive.

Solution

Write a Python program that writes the data to a file on a USB flash drive. By writing the file in comma-separated values (CSV), you can import it directly into a spreadsheet, including Gnumeric on the Raspberry Pi ([Recipe 4.2](#)).

The example program will log temperature readings recorded from a DS18B20. So if you wish to try this out, first build [Recipe 13.11](#).

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website, where it is called *temp_log.py*.

```
import os, glob, time, datetime

log_period = 600 # seconds

logging_folder = glob.glob('/media/*')[0]
dt = datetime.datetime.now()
file_name = "temp_log_{%Y_%m_%d}.csv".format(dt)
logging_file = logging_folder + '/' + file_name

os.system('modprobe w1-gpio')
os.system('modprobe w1-therm')

base_dir = '/sys/bus/w1/devices/'
device_folder = glob.glob(base_dir + '28*')[0]
device_file = device_folder + '/w1_slave'

def read_temp_raw():
    f = open(device_file, 'r')
    lines = f.readlines()
    f.close()
    return lines

def read_temp():
    lines = read_temp_raw()
    while lines[0].strip()[-3:] != 'YES':
        time.sleep(0.2)
        lines = read_temp_raw()
    equals_pos = lines[1].find('t=')
    if equals_pos != -1:
        temp_string = lines[1][equals_pos+2:]
        temp_c = float(temp_string) / 1000.0
        temp_f = temp_c * 9.0 / 5.0 + 32.0
    return temp_c, temp_f

def log_temp():
    temp_c, temp_f = read_temp()
    dt = datetime.datetime.now()
    f = open(logging_file, 'a')
    f.write('\n"{:H}:{:M}:{:S}"'.format(dt))
```

```

f.write(str(temp_c))
f.close()

print("Logging to: " + logging_file)
while True:
    log_temp()
    time.sleep(log_period)

```

The program is set to log the temperature every 10 minutes (600 seconds). You can alter this by changing the value of `log_period`.

Discussion

When you plug a USB flash drive into a Raspberry Pi, it automatically installs it under `/media`. If there is more than one removable drive attached to your Raspberry Pi, then the program uses the first folder it finds inside `/media`. The name of the logging file is constructed from the current date.

If you open the file in a spreadsheet like Open Office, you will be able to edit it directly. Your spreadsheet may ask you to specify the separator for the data, which will be a comma.

Figure 13-28 shows a set of data captured using this recipe, and the resulting file has been opened with the Gnumeric spreadsheet running on the Raspberry Pi.

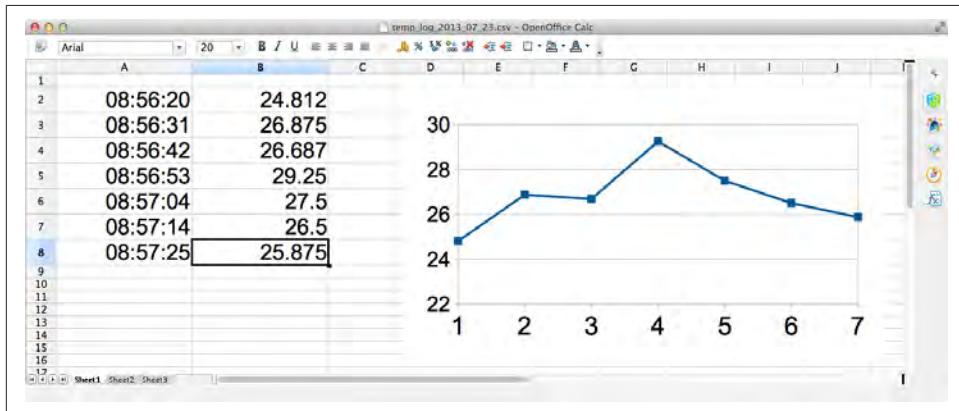


Figure 13-28. Charting data

See Also

This program could easily be adapted for use with any of the other sensors used in this chapter.

For an example of logging sensor data to a web service, see [Recipe 15.6](#).

CHAPTER 14

Displays

14.0 Introduction

Although the Raspberry Pi can use a monitor or TV as a display, it is often nice to use a smaller, more specialized display with it. In this chapter, you will explore a range of different displays that can be attached to a Raspberry Pi.

Some of the recipes require the use of a solderless breadboard and male-to-female jumper wires (see [Recipe 9.8](#)).

14.1 Using a Four-Digit LED Display



Be sure to check out the accompanying video for this recipe at
<http://razzpisampler.oreilly.com>.

Problem

You want to display a four-digit number in an old-fashioned, seven-segment LED display.

Solution

Use an I₂C LED module, such as the model shown in [Figure 14-1](#), to a Raspberry Pi using female-to-female jumper wires.

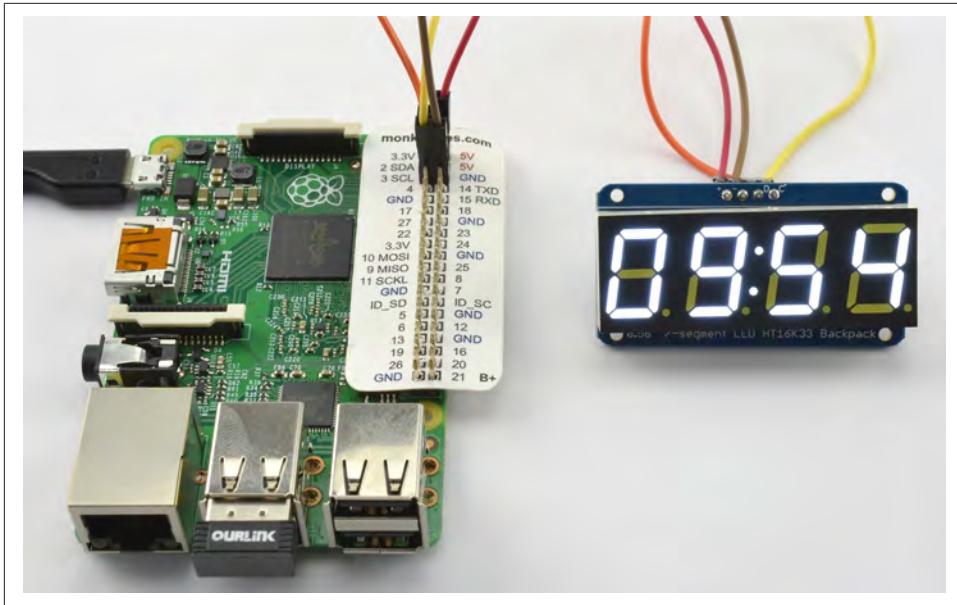


Figure 14-1. Seven-segment LED display with Raspberry Pi

To make this recipe, you need:

- Four female-to-female jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- Adafruit 4x7-segment LED with I2C backpack (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)

The connections between the Raspberry Pi and the module are as follows:

- VCC (+) on the display to 5V on the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector
- GND (-) on the display to GND on the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector
- SDA (D) on the display to GPIO 2 (SDA) on the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector
- SCL (C) on the display to GPIO 3 (SCL) on the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector

Note that Adafruit also supplies a jumbo-sized LED display. This can be connected to the Raspberry Pi using the connections above, but the larger display has two positive power pins: one for the logic (V_{IO}) and one for the display (5V). You can just use an extra female-to-female jumper wire to connect this extra pin to the second 5V pin on the GPIO connector. This is because, being a large display, it requires more current for the LED display. Fortunately, the Raspberry Pi can supply enough power for it.

For this recipe to work, you will also need to set up your Raspberry Pi for I2C, so follow [Recipe 9.3](#) first.

The display has an accompanying Python library written by Adafruit. It isn’t installed as a *proper* library, so to use it, you first need to download the folder structure.

```
$ git clone https://github.com/adafruit/Adafruit-Raspberry-Pi-Python-Code.git
```

Change directory into the Adafruit code by using:

```
$ cd Adafruit-Raspberry-Pi-Python-Code  
$ cd Adafruit_LEDBackpack
```

In this folder, you will find a test program that will display the time. Run it by using the command:

```
$ sudo python ex_7segment_clock.py
```

Discussion

If you open the example file *ex_7segment_clock.py* in nano, you'll see that the key commands are:

```
from Adafruit_7Segment import SevenSegment
```

This imports the library code into your program. You then need to create a instance of SevenSegment using the next line of code. The address supplied as an argument is the I2C address (see [Recipe 9.4](#)).

Every I2C slave device has an address number. The LED board has three pairs of solder pads on the back that can be bridged with solder if you want to change the address. This is essential if you need to operate more than one I2C device from a single Raspberry Pi.

```
segment = SevenSegment(address=0x70)
```

To actually set the contents of a particular digit, use a line like this one:

```
segment.writeDigit(0, int(hour / 10))
```

The first argument (0) is the digit position. Note that these positions are 0, 1, 3, and 4. Position 2 is reserved for the two dots in the center of the display.

The second argument is the number to display.

See Also

You can find out more about the Adafruit library at <http://bit.ly/HQBE6W>.

14.2 Displaying Messages on an I2C LED Matrix

Problem

You want to control the pixels of a multicolor LED matrix display.

Solution

Use an I2C LED module, such as the model shown in [Figure 14-2](#), attached to a Raspberry Pi using female-to-female jumper wires.

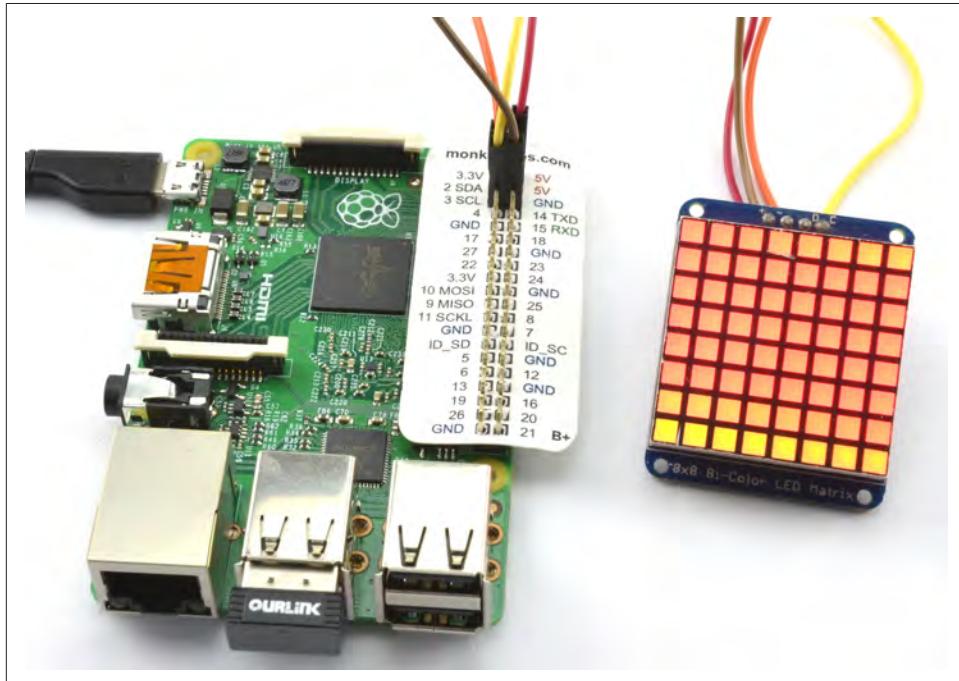


Figure 14-2. LED matrix display with Raspberry Pi

To make this recipe, you need:

- Four female-to-female jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page [474](#))
- Adafruit bicolor LED square-pixel matrix with I2C backpack (see “[Modules](#)” on [page 476](#))

The connections between the Raspberry Pi and the module are as follows:

- VCC (+) on the display to 5V on the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector
- GND (-) on the display to GND on the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector
- SDA (D) on the display to GPIO 2 (SDA) on the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector
- SCL (C) on the display to GPIO 3 (SCL) on the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector

For this recipe to work, you will also need to set up your Raspberry Pi for I2C, so follow [Recipe 9.3](#) first.

The display has an accompanying Python library written by Adafruit. It's not installed as a *proper* library, so to use it, you first need to download the folder structure.

```
$ git clone https://github.com/adafruit/Adafruit-Raspberry-Pi-Python-Code.git
```

Change directory into the Adafruit code by using:

```
$ cd Adafruit-Raspberry-Pi-Python-Code  
$ cd Adafruit_LEDBackpack
```

In this folder, you will find a test program that displays the time as scrolling digits. Run it by using the command:

```
$ sudo python ex_8x8_color_pixels.py
```

Discussion

The program cycles through all the colors for each pixel in turn. The code is listed here, with some of the comments and an unnecessary import removed:

```
import time  
from Adafruit_8x8 import ColorEightByEight  
  
grid = ColorEightByEight(address=0x70)  
  
iter = 0  
  
# Continually update the 8x8 display one pixel at a time  
while(True):  
    iter += 1  
  
    for x in range(0, 8):  
        for y in range(0, 8):  
            grid.setPixel(x, y, iter % 4 )  
            time.sleep(0.02)
```

The address supplied as an argument to the next line is the I2C address (see [Recipe 9.4](#)):

```
grid = ColorEightByEight(address=0x70)
```

Every I2C slave device has an address number. The LED board has three pairs of solder pads on the back that can be bridged with solder if you want to change the address. This is essential if you need to operate more than one I2C device with the same base address from a single Raspberry Pi.

The variable `iter` gets 1 added to it each time through the loop. The command `grid.setPixel` takes `x` and `y` coordinates as its first two parameters. The final parameter is the color to which the pixel will be set. This is a number between 0 and 3 (0 is off, 1 is green, 2 is red, and 3 is orange).

The variable `iter` is used to generate the number between 0 and 3 using the `%` operator, which is the modulo remainder (i.e., what is left over when you divide `iter` by 4).

See Also

You can find out more about this product at <http://www.adafruit.com/products/902>.

14.3 Using the Sense HAT LED Matrix Display

Problem

You want to display messages and graphics, using the display of a Sense HAT.

Solution

Follow [Recipe 9.16](#) and install the software that the Sense HAT needs and then use the library commands to display text.

The program `sense_hat_clock.py` illustrates this by repeatedly displaying the date and time in a scrolling message. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook](#) website.

```
from sense_hat import SenseHat
from datetime import datetime
import time

hat = SenseHat()
time_color = (0, 255, 0)
date_color = (255, 0, 0)

while True:
    now = datetime.now()
    date_message = '{:%d %B %Y}'.format(now)
    time_message = '{:%H:%M:%S}'.format(now)

    hat.show_message(date_message, text_colour=date_color)
    hat.show_message(time_message, text_colour=time_color)
```

Discussion

Two colors are defined so that the date and time parts of the message can be displayed in different colors. These colors are then used as an optional parameter to `show_message`.

Other optional parameters to `show_message` are:

- `scroll_speed` which is actually the delay between each scrolling step rather than the speed. So a higher value makes the scrolling slower.
- `back_colour` sets the background color. Note the British spelling of “back_colour” with a “u.”

The display can be used for a lot more than just displaying scrolling text. Starting at its most basic, you can set individual pixels using `set_pixel`, set the orientation of the display using `set_rotation`, and display an image (albeit a small one) with `load_image`. The example below, which you can find in `sense_hat_taster.py`, illustrates these function calls. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website.

The image must be just 8×8 pixels, but most common graphics formats like `.jpg` and `.png` can be used and the bit depth will be handled automatically.

```
from sense_hat import SenseHat
import time

hat = SenseHat()

red = (255, 0, 0)

hat.load_image('small_image.png')
time.sleep(1)
hat.set_rotation(90)
time.sleep(1)
hat.set_rotation(180)
time.sleep(1)
hat.set_rotation(270)
time.sleep(1)

hat.clear()
hat.set_rotation(0)
for xy in range(0, 8):
    hat.set_pixel(xy, xy, red)
    hat.set_pixel(xy, 7-xy, red)
```

Figure 14-3 shows the Sense HAT displaying a crude image.



Figure 14-3. A Sense HAT displaying an “image”

See Also

For full documentation on the Sense HAT, see <https://pythonhosted.org/sense-hat/api/>.

For information on formatting dates and times, see [Recipe 7.2](#).

Other recipes that use the Sense HAT are Recipes [9.16](#), [13.10](#), [13.13](#), [13.14](#), and [13.16](#).

14.4 Displaying Messages on an Alphanumeric LCD HAT

Problem

You have a few lines of text that you want to display neatly on an LCD display.

Solution

Use a Displayotron Pimoroni HAT attached to your Raspberry Pi as shown in [Figure 14-4](#).



Figure 14-4. A Displayotron LCD HAT

This HAT requires both I2C and SPI to be enabled, so if you have not already done so, follow [Recipe 9.3](#) and [Recipe 9.5](#).

Then fetch the code for its accompanying library from GitHub and install it by using the following commands:

```
$ git clone https://github.com/pimoroni/dot3k.git  
$ cd dot3k/python/library  
$ sudo python setup.py install
```

By way of example, the following program (*displayotron_ip.py*) finds the hostname and IP address of your Raspberry Pi and displays them along with the time. If all is well, then the backlit LED will be green, but if the network connection is down, the backlight will turn red.

As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook website](#).

```
import dothat.lcd as lcd  
import dothat.backlight as backlight  
import time  
from datetime import datetime  
import subprocess  
  
while True:  
    lcd.clear()  
    backlight.rgb(0, 255, 0)
```

```

try:
    hostname = subprocess.check_output(['hostname']).split()[0]
    ip = subprocess.check_output(['hostname', '-I']).split()[0]
    t = '{:<%H:%M:%S}'.format(datetime.now())
    lcd.write(hostname)
    lcd.set_cursor_position(0, 1)
    lcd.write(ip)
    lcd.set_cursor_position(0, 2)
    lcd.write(t)
except:
    backlight.rgb(255, 0, 0)
    time.sleep(1)

```

Discussion

The test program imports the necessary libraries, including subprocess (see [Recipe 7.15](#)), which will be used to find the IP address (see [Recipe 2.2](#)) of the Raspberry Pi and its hostname.

The main methods in the library are:

- `lcd.clear` clears the display of any text
- `lcd.set_cursor_position` sets the position for new text to be written to the column and row specified as its two parameters
- `lcd.write` adds the text supplied as its parameter to the current cursor position
- `backlight.rgb` sets the red, green, and blue values of the backlight (0 to 255)

See Also

You can find out more about this HAT on [PiMoroni's product page](#).

To attach a low-cost LCD module directly to a Raspberry Pi without a HAT, see [Recipe 14.5](#).

14.5 Displaying Messages on an Alphanumeric LCD Module

Problem

You want to display text on an alphanumeric LCD display, but do not want to use a ready-made display HAT.

Solution

Use an HD44780-compatible LCD module and wire it to the GPIO connector.

This is clearly a lot more complex than using a ready-made shield, but, if you are planning a complex project where the display is one element and you need access to other GPIO pins, then it is useful to know how to use an LCD module directly.

You will find many low-cost LCD modules, such as the one shown connected to a Raspberry Pi in [Figure 14-5](#). These have 16 pins, although fortunately, not all of them have to be connected to a GPIO pin.

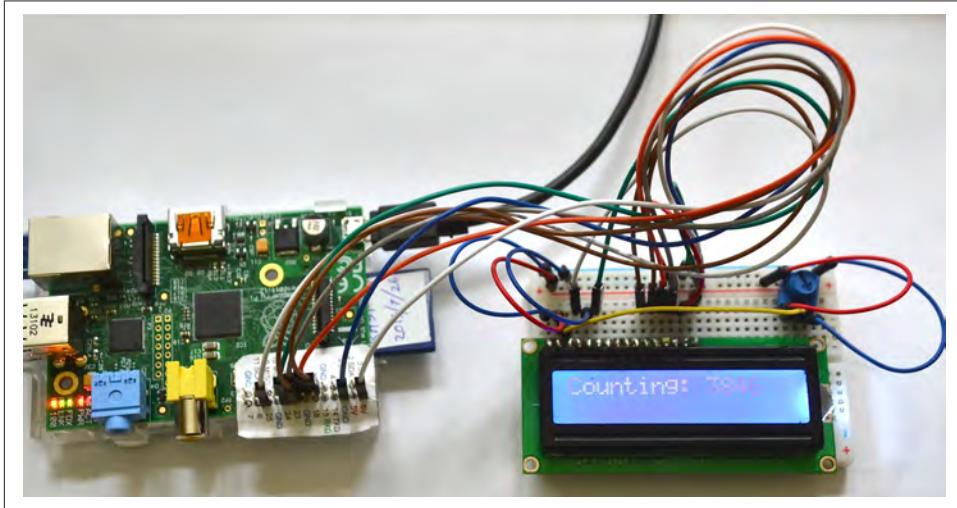


Figure 14-5. A 16×2 LCD display connected to a Raspberry Pi

These modules are available in a number of sizes and are specified by the number of columns and rows of letters they can display. So, for example, the module used in this recipe is described as 16×2 because it can display two rows each of 16 characters. Other common sizes are 8×1, 16×1, 16×2, 20×2, and 20×4.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- 16×2 HD44780-compatible LCD module (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)
- Row of 16 header pins (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477)
- 10kΩ trimpot (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)

[Figure 14-6](#) shows the breadboard layout for connecting the display. The LCD modules are not normally supplied with header pins, so you will need to solder these in place.

The trimpot is used to control the contrast of the display. Note that if it looks like the project has not worked, try moving the knob of the trimpot over its entire range. It may well be that the contrast is so off that the display characters are not visible at all.

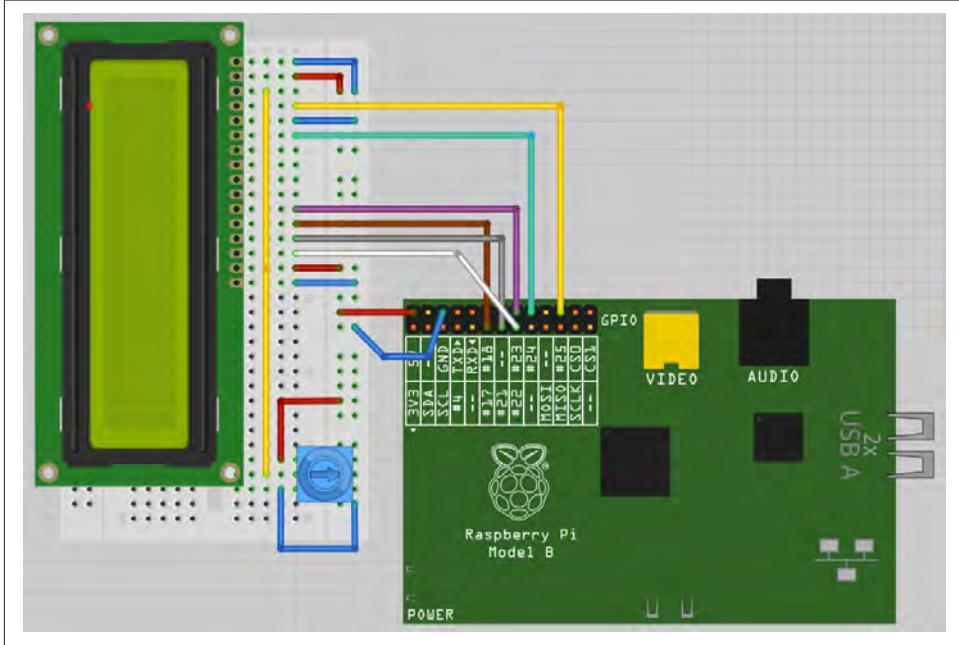


Figure 14-6. Wiring an LCD display to a Raspberry Pi

The Adafruit Raspberry Pi example code, available from [GitHub](#), includes a library for controlling LCD displays that use the HD44780 driver. Before installing it, follow [Recipe 9.2](#) to install the `RPi.GPIO` library.

The Adafruit library is not installed as a *proper* library, so to use it, you first need to download the folder structure.

```
$ git clone https://github.com/adafruit/Adafruit-Raspberry-Pi-Python-Code.git
```

Change directory into the one that holds the Adafruit code by using:

```
$ cd Adafruit-Raspberry-Pi-Python-Code  
$ cd Adafruit_CharLCD
```

There is a test program here that displays the time and IP address of the Raspberry Pi. But first, if you are using a newer Raspberry Pi model B, revision 2, you will need to edit the file *Adafruit_CharLCD.py*:

```
$ nano Adafruit_CharLCD.py
```

Search for the line:

```
def __init__(self, pin_rs=25, pin_e=24, pins_db=[23, 17, 21, 22], GPIO = None):
```

Replace the number 21 with 27 so that the line looks as follows, and then save and exit the file:

```
def __init__(self, pin_rs=25, pin_e=24, pins_db=[23, 17, 27, 22], GPIO = None):
```

You can now run the example program with the command:

```
$ sudo python Adafruit_CharLCD_IPclock_example.py
```

Discussion

These displays can operate either with a four- or eight-bit data bus and also require three control pins. The pins are connected as per [Table 14-1](#).

Table 14-1. Raspberry Pi and LCD display pin connections

LCD module pin	GPIO pin	Notes
1	GND	0V
2	+5V	5V logic supply
3	No connection	Contrast control voltage
4	25	RS: Register select
5	GND	RW: Read/write (always write)
6	24	EN: Enable
7-10	No connection	Only used in eight-bit mode
11	23	D4: Data line 4
12	17	D5: Data line 5
13	21	D6: Data line 6
14	22	D7: Data line 7
15	+5V	LED backlight
16	GND	LED backlight

The Adafruit library file *Adafruit_CharLCD.py* is responsible for setting the values on the data pins and then sending them to the display module. It provides the following functions, which you can use in your programs:

```
home()
```

Move to top left.

```
clear()
```

Clear all text off the display.

```
setCursor(column, row)
```

Set the cursor position from where text will be written.

```
cursor()  
    Turn on cursor display.
```

```
noCursor()  
    Turn off cursor display (default).
```

```
message(text)  
    Write the text at the current cursor position.
```

The following minimal example program shows how easy it is to display a simple message by using the library:

```
from Adafruit_CharLCD import Adafruit_CharLCD  
from time import sleep  
  
lcd = Adafruit_CharLCD()  
lcd.begin(16,2)  
  
i = 0  
  
while True:  
    lcd.clear()  
    lcd.message('Counting: ' + str(i))  
    sleep(1)  
    i = i + 1
```

See Also

This recipe is based on the Adafruit tutorial at the [Adafruit learning website](#). Adafruit also sells a plug-in *board* with an LCD display attached that is compatible with this recipe.

For the convenience of using a ready-made alphanumeric LCD display on a HAT, see [Recipe 2.2](#).

14.6 Using an OLED Graphical Display

Problem

You want to attach a graphical OLED (Organic LED) display to your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use an OLED display based on the SSD1306 driver chip, using an I2C interface ([Figure 14-7](#)).

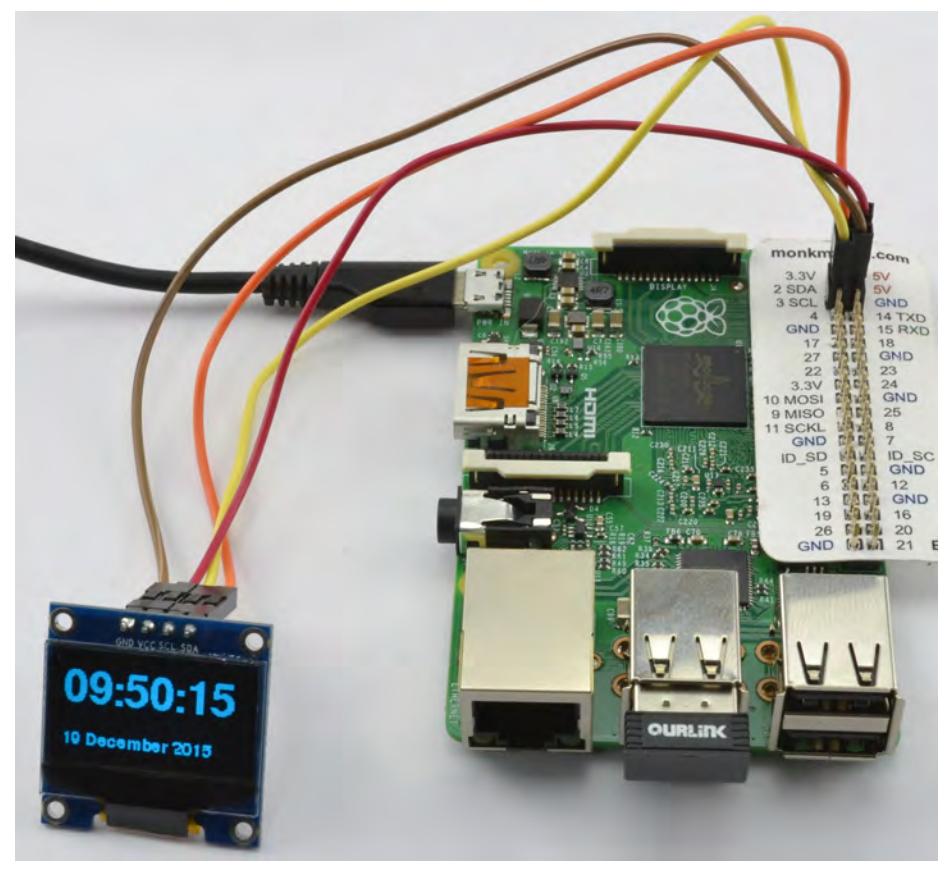


Figure 14-7. An I2C OLED display

To make this recipe, you need:

- Four female-to-female jumper wires (see “Prototyping Equipment” on page 474)
- I2C OLED display 128×64 pixels (see “Modules” on page 476)

Some of these displays have just four pins, whereas others have eight pins. The 8-pin varieties (including Adafruit’s displays) have more pins because they have both an I2C and SPI interfaces. The 4-pin displays just have an I2C. The I2C interface is better suited for use with the Raspberry Pi because the display operates at 5V, and both interface pins for I2C (SDA and SCL) are 3.3V outputs from the Raspberry Pi, whereas the SPI interface’s MISO pin is a 3.3V input that requires level conversion before connecting to the Raspberry Pi.

The connections between the Raspberry Pi and the module are as follows:

- VCC on the display to 5V on the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector
- GND on the display to GND on the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector
- SDA on the display to GPIO 2 (SDA) on the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector
- SCL on the display to GPIO 3 (SCL) on the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector

For this recipe to work, you will also need to set up your Raspberry Pi for I2C, so follow [Recipe 9.3](#) first.

Adafruit has a library for these displays. Install it by using these commands:

```
$ git clone https://github.com/adafruit/Adafruit_Python_SSD1306.git  
$ cd Adafruit_Python_SSD1306  
$ sudo python setup.py install
```

This library uses the Python Image Library (PIL), which can be installed by using the command:

```
$ sudo pip install pillow
```

The code example *old_clock.py* displays the time and date on the OLED display. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website.

```
from oled.device import ssd1306  
from oled.render import canvas  
from PIL import ImageFont  
import time  
from datetime import datetime  
  
# Set up display  
device = ssd1306(port=1, address=0x3C)  
font_file = '/usr/share/fonts/truetype/freefont/FreeSansBold.ttf'  
small_font = ImageFont.truetype('FreeSans.ttf', 12, filename=font_file)  
large_font = ImageFont.truetype('FreeSans.ttf', 33, filename=font_file)  
  
# Display a message on 3 lines, first line big font  
def display_message(top_line, line_2):  
    global device  
    with canvas(device) as draw:  
        draw.text((0, 0), top_line, font=large_font, fill=255)  
        draw.text((0, 50), line_2, font=small_font, fill=255)  
  
    while True:  
        now = datetime.now()  
        date_message = '{:%d %B %Y}'.format(now)  
        time_message = '{:%H:%M:%S}'.format(now)  
        display_message(time_message, date_message)  
        time.sleep(0.1)
```

Every I2C slave device has an address, which is set in the line:

```
device = ssd1306(port=1, address=0x3C)
```

This is fixed at 3C (hex) for many of the low-cost I2C modules but may vary, so you should check any documentation that comes with the device or use I2C tools ([Recipe 9.4](#)) to list all the I2C devices attached to the bus so that you can see the address of your display.

Discussion

Small, organic LED (OLED) displays are cheap, don't use much current, and have high resolution despite their diminutive size. They are replacing LCD displays in many consumer products.

See Also

The instructions here are for 4-pin I2C interfaces. If you really want to use the SPI interface, then take a look at [Adafruit's tutorial on this](#).

14.7 Using Addressable RGB LED Strips

Problem

You want to connect an RGB LED strip (Neopixels) to your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use an LED strip based on the WS2812 RGB LED chips on your Raspberry Pi.

Using these LED strips ([Figure 14-8](#)) can be really easy, with a direct connection to the Raspberry Pi and power for the LEDs supplied by the Raspberry Pi. This is the "Happy Day" scenario that should work just fine, but do see the Discussion for this recipe for potential pitfalls with this approach and ways to guarantee that your LED strip use is trouble-free.



Don't Power the LEDs from the Pi's 3.3V Supply

While it might be tempting to power the LEDs from the 3.3V supply pin on the GPIO connector, do not do this—it can only supply low currents (see [Recipe 9.2](#)). Using this pin could easily damage your Raspberry Pi.

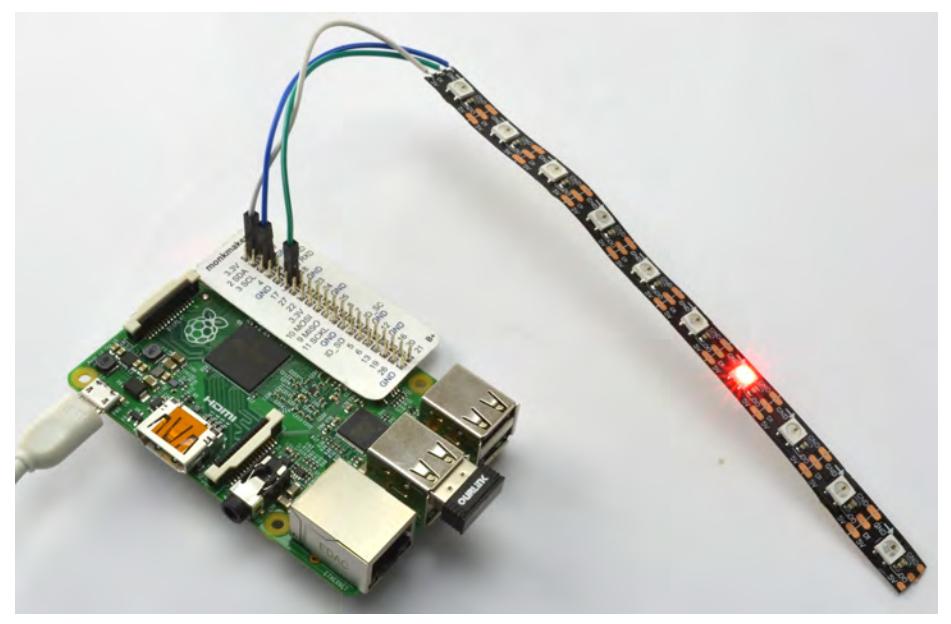


Figure 14-8. An LED strip of 10 LEDs

The LED strip used in [Figure 14-8](#) is cut from a reel. In this case, there are 10 LEDs. As each LED can use up to 60mA, 10 is probably a sensible limit for the number of LEDs that can be used without arranging for a separate power supply for the LED strip (see [Discussion](#)).

To connect the strip to the Raspberry Pi, jumper wires with female connectors on one end were cut and the wire ends soldered to the three connections on the LED strip: GND, DI (Data In), and 5V. These can then be attached to GPIO pins GND, GPIO 18, and 5V, respectively.

Notice that the LED strip has an arrow printed on it ([Figure 14-9](#)). Make sure that when you solder leads to the LED strip, you start from the cut end to the left of the arrow.

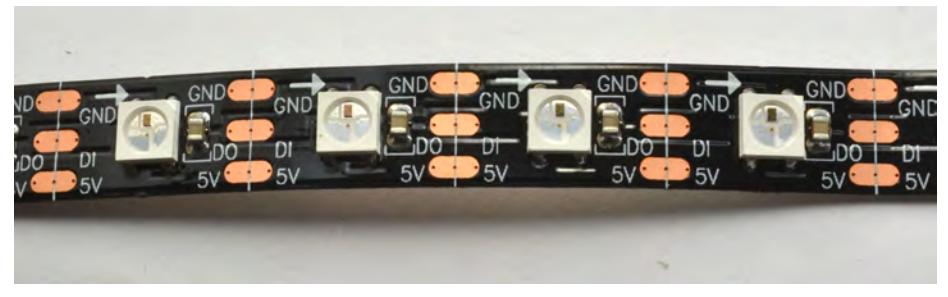


Figure 14-9. An LED strip close-up

Finding a library for the WS2812 that works with all Raspberry Pi models is, at the time of writing, a little tricky. The original library was developed by [Jeremy Garff](#), and Raspberry Pi 2 support was added to this by [Richard Hurst](#). Adafruit also had a hand in the library. However, Raspbian's switch to Linux Kernel 4.1.6 broke a few things. At the time of writing, the Pimoroni Unicorn HAT (which uses a modified version of Richard Hurst's library) seems to be most reliable. Being tied to a commercial product, this version is most likely to be maintained for any future changes to Raspbian or Raspberry Pi boards. To install this library, run the following commands:

```
$ git clone https://github.com/pimoroni/unicorn-hat.git  
$ cd unicorn-hat/python/rpi-ws281x  
$ make  
$ sudo python setup.py install
```

The following example program (*led_strip.py*) will set the LED red in successive positions along the strip. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website.

```
import time  
from neopixel import *  
  
# LED strip configuration:  
LED_COUNT      = 10      # Number of LED pixels.  
LED_PIN        = 18      # GPIO pin connected to the pixels (must support PWM!).  
LED_FREQ_HZ    = 800000  # LED signal frequency in hertz (usually 800khz)  
LED_DMA        = 5       # DMA channel to use for generating signal (try 5)  
LED_BRIGHTNESS = 255    # Set to 0 for darkest and 255 for brightest  
LED_INVERT     = False   # True to invert the signal  
  
RED = Color(255, 0, 0)  
NO_COLOR = Color(0, 0, 0)  
  
strip = Adafruit_NeoPixel(LED_COUNT, LED_PIN, LED_FREQ_HZ, LED_DMA,  
                         LED_INVERT, LED_BRIGHTNESS)  
strip.begin()  
  
def clear():
```

```

for i in range(0, LED_COUNT):
    strip.setPixelColor(i, NO_COLOR)
    strip.show()

i = 0
while True:
    clear()
    strip.setPixelColor(i, RED)
    strip.show()
    time.sleep(1)
    i += 1
    if i >= LED_COUNT:
        i = 0

```

The parameters in the section *LED strip configuration* can be modified for different LED configurations. If you have a different number of LEDs in your strip, then modify `LED_COUNT`. The rest of the constants do not need to be changed.

Each of the LEDs can have its color set independently using the `setPixelColor` method. The first parameter to this is the index position (starting at 0) of the LED whose color you want to set. The second parameter is the color to set it to. The changes to the LED colors are not actually updated until the method `show` is called.

Discussion

Each LED in the strip can use a maximum of about 60mA. It will only do this if all three color channels (red, green, and blue) are at maximum brightness (255). So, if you plan to use a lot of LEDs, then you will need to use a separate 5V power supply sufficient to supply all the LEDs in your strip. [Figure 14-10](#) shows how you would wire up a separate power supply. A female DC jack-to-screw terminal adapter (“[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474) makes it easy to connect an external power supply to a breadboard.

The datasheet for the WS2812 states that the input signal should have a logic high of at least 4V for a 5V power supply to the LEDs. So, when using this with a Raspberry Pi’s 3.3V GPIO output, there are no guarantees that the LEDs will work reliably. Having said that, I have never had any trouble.

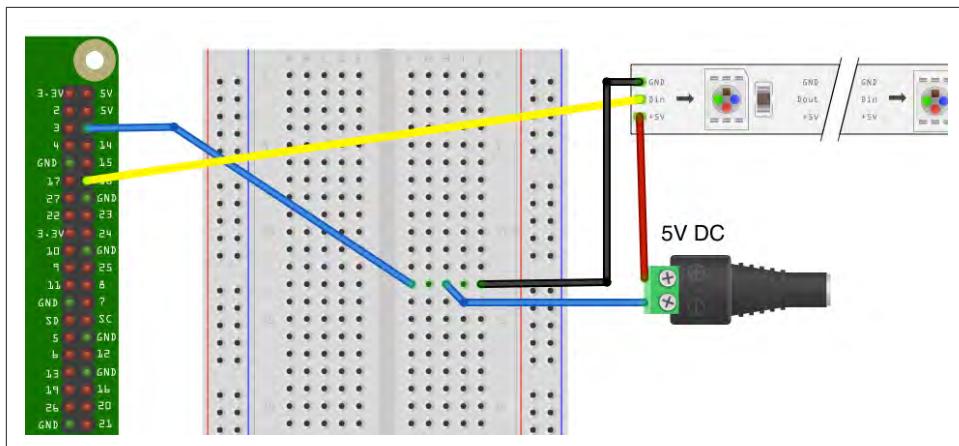


Figure 14-10. Powering an LED strip with an external power supply

If you do have problems with the signal not being strong enough, you can use a single transistor logic-level converter as shown in [Figure 14-11](#). A suitable transistor is the 2N7000 (note that a 2N3904 will not work in this situation as it cannot respond quickly enough to invert the pulses).

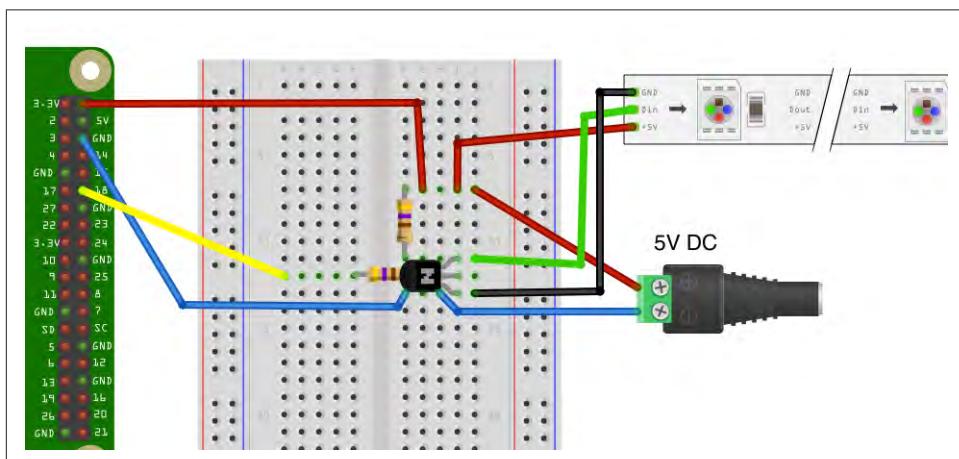


Figure 14-11. Using a logic-level converter

This transistor converts the 3.3V signal to 5V but has the side effect of inverting the signal, so if the output of the GPIO pin is HIGH, the signal into the LED strip will be LOW and vice-versa. This means that the logic in your program will need to be modified by changing the line:

```
LED_INVERT      = False
```

to read:

```
LED_INVERT      = True
```

See Also

An alternative to using a transistor to raise the signal level from 3.3V to 5V is to use a level converter module (see [Recipe 9.13](#)).

The Unicorn HAT, whose library is used here, has 64 WS2812 LEDs arranged in an 8×8 grid. You can find out more about this display at <https://shop.pimoroni.com/products/unicorn-hat>.

The Internet of Things

15.0 Introduction

The *Internet of Things* (IoT) is the rapidly growing network of devices (things) connected to the Internet. That doesn't just mean more and more computers using browsers, but actual appliances and wearable and portable technology. This includes all sorts of home automation from smart appliances and lighting, to security systems and even Internet-operated pet feeders, as well as lots of less practical but fun projects.

In this chapter, you will learn how your Raspberry Pi can participate in the Internet of Things in various ways.

15.1 Controlling GPIO Outputs Using a Web Interface

Problem

You want to control GPIO outputs using a web interface to your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use the `bottle` Python web server library ([Recipe 7.17](#)) to create an HTML web interface to control the GPIO port.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- Three $1\text{k}\Omega$ resistors (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)
- Three LEDs (see “[Opto-Electronics](#)” on page 476)
- Tactile push switch (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477)

The breadboard layout for this is shown in Figure 15-1.

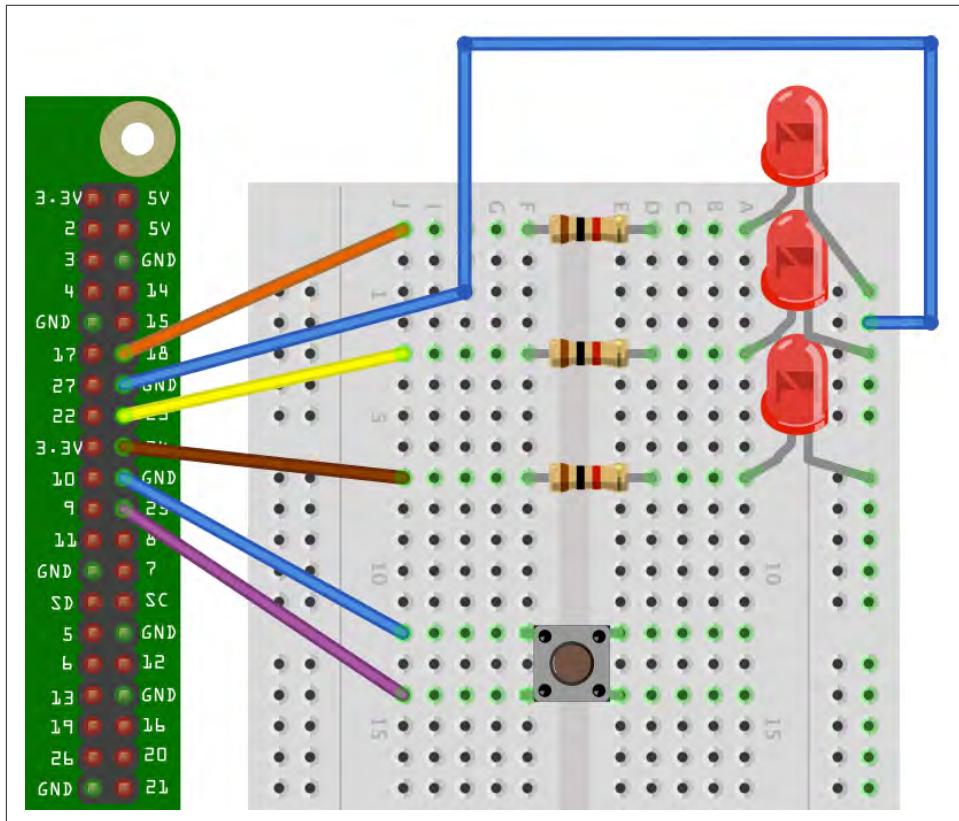


Figure 15-1. The breadboard layout controlling GPIO outputs from a web page

An alternative to using a breadboard is to attach a Raspberry Squid and Squid Button (see [Recipe 9.10](#) and [Recipe 9.11](#)). These can be plugged directly into the GPIO pins of the Raspberry Pi, as shown in Figure 15-2.



Figure 15-2. Raspberry Squid and Squid Button

To install the `bottle` library, see [Recipe 7.17](#).

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook website](#), where it is called `web_control.py`. You will also find a program called `web_control_test.py`. This program simply tests the hardware by flashing the LEDs in sequence and displaying the state of the switch, without any of the complications of the web server.

Here's the `web_control.py` program:

```
from bottle import route, run
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO

GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
led_pins = [18, 23, 24]
led_states = [0, 0, 0]
```

```

switch_pin = 25

GPIO.setup(led_pins[0], GPIO.OUT)
GPIO.setup(led_pins[1], GPIO.OUT)
GPIO.setup(led_pins[2], GPIO.OUT)
GPIO.setup(switch_pin, GPIO.IN, pull_up_down=GPIO.PUD_UP)

def switch_status():
    state = GPIO.input(switch_pin)
    if state:
        return 'Up'
    else:
        return 'Down'

def html_for_led(led):
    l = str(led)
    result = " <input type='button' onClick='changed(" + l +
")' value='LED " + l + "'/>"
    return result

def update_leds():
    for i, value in enumerate(led_states):
        GPIO.output(led_pins[i], value)

@route('/')
@route('/<led>')
def index(led):
    if led >= '0' and led <= '9':
        led_num = int(led)
        led_states[led_num] = not led_states[led_num]
        update_leds()
        response = "<script>"
        response += "function changed(led)"
        response += "{"
        response += "    window.location.href='/"
        response += led
        response += "'"
        response += "</script>"

        response += '<h1>GPIO Control</h1>'
        response += '<h2>Button=' + switch_status() + '</h2>'
        response += '<h2>LEDs</h2>'
        response += html_for_led(0)
        response += html_for_led(1)
        response += html_for_led(2)
        return response

    try:
        run(host='0.0.0.0', port=80)
    finally:
        print('\nCleaning up')
        GPIO.cleanup()

```

You must run the program as superuser:

```
sudo python web_control.py
```

If it starts correctly, you should see a message like this:

```
Bottle server starting up (using WSGIRefServer())...
Listening on http://0.0.0.0:80/
Hit Ctrl-C to quit.
```

Open a browser window from any machine on your network, even the Raspberry Pi itself, and navigate to the IP address of the Raspberry Pi. The web interface shown in [Figure 15-3](#) should appear.

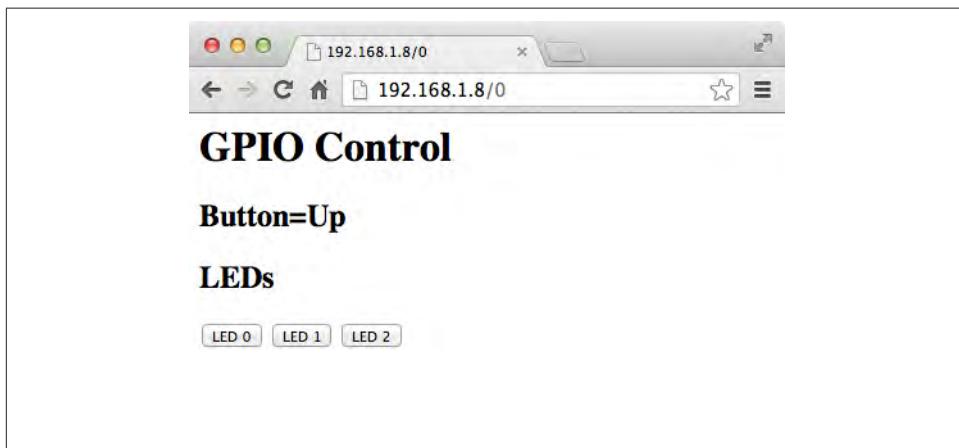


Figure 15-3. A web interface to GPIO

If you click on one of the three LED buttons at the bottom of the screen, you should find that the appropriate LED toggles on and off.

Also, if you hold down the button as you reload the web page, you should see that the text next to *Button* says *Down* rather than *Up*.

Discussion

To understand how the program works, we first need to look at how a web interface works. All web interfaces rely on a server somewhere (in this case, a program on the Raspberry Pi) responding to requests from a web browser.

When the server receives a request, it looks at the information that comes with the request and formulates some HyperText Markup Language (HTML) in response.

If the web request is just to the root page (<http://192.168.1.8/>), then `led` will be given a default value of `n`. However, if we were to browse the URL <http://192.168.1.8/2>, then the `2` on the end of the URL would be assigned to the `led` parameter.

The `led` parameter is then used to determine that LED 2 should be toggled.

To be able to access this LED-toggling URL, we need to arrange things so that when the button for LED 2 is pressed, the page is reloaded with this extra parameter on the end of the URL. The trick here is to include a JavaScript function in HTML that is returned to the browser. When the browser runs this function, it causes the page to be reloaded with the appropriate extra parameter.

This all means that we have the rather mind-bending situation where the Python program is generating code in JavaScript to be run later by the browser. The lines that generate this JavaScript function are as follows:

```
response = "<script>\nresponse += "function changed(led)\nresponse += "{\nresponse += "    window.location.href='/' + led\nresponse += "}\nresponse += "</script>"
```

Rather than repeat the HTML for each of the buttons, this is generated by the function `html_for_led`:

```
def html_for_led(led):\n    l = str(led)\n    result = " <input type='button' onClick='changed(" + l + ")"\n    result += " value='LED " + l + "'/>\"\n    return result
```

This code is used three times, once for each button, and links a button press with the `changed` function. The function is also supplied with the LED number as its parameter.

The code that actually changes the GPIO outputs lives in the `update_leds` function. This function is called every time the server receives a request that includes an LED number that requires toggling:

```
def update_leds():\n    for i, value in enumerate(led_states):\n        GPIO.output(led_pins[i], value)
```

The function simply iterates over an array of states, setting each output in turn to its current value.

The following line in the `index` function toggles the value in the state array for the LED supplied in the `led` parameter:

```
led_states[led_num] = not led_states[led_num]
```

The process of reporting the state of the push button is much more straightforward. It is simply the act of reading the state of the input and generating HTML that reports the button position. This is all contained in the `switch_status` function:

```
def switch_status():
    state = GPIO.input(switch_pin)
    if state:
        return 'Up'
    else:
        return 'Down'
```

See Also

For more information on using `bottle`, see the [bottle documentation](#).

15.2 Displaying Sensor Readings on a Web Page

Problem

You want to display sensor readings from your Raspberry Pi on a web page that automatically updates.

Solution

Use the `bottle` web server and some fancy JavaScript to automatically update your display.

The example shown in [Figure 15-4](#) displays the Raspberry Pi's CPU temperature using its built-in sensor.

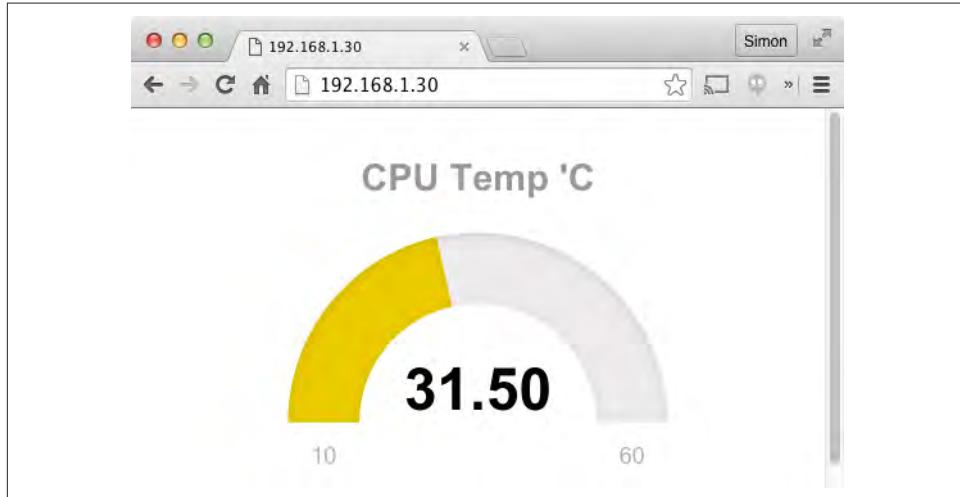


Figure 15-4. Displaying the Raspberry Pi CPU temperature

To install the `bottle` library, see [Recipe 7.17](#).

There are four files for this example, which are contained in the folder *web_sensor*:

web_sensor.py

Contains the Python code for the bottle server

main.html

Contains the web page that will be displayed in your browser

justgage.1.0.1.min.js

A third-party JavaScript library that displays the temperature meter

raphael.2.1.0.min.js

A library used by the *justgage* library

As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website.

To run the program, change directory to *web_sensor* and then run the Python program using:

```
$ sudo python web_sensor.py
```

Then open a browser, either on the same Raspberry Pi or any computer on the same network as the Raspberry Pi, and enter the IP address of the Raspberry Pi into the browser's address bar. The page shown in [Figure 15-4](#) should appear.

Discussion

The main program (*web_sensor.py*) is actually quite concise:

```
import os, time
from bottle import route, run, template

def cpu_temp():
    dev = os.popen('/opt/vc/bin/vcgencmd measure_temp')
    cpu_temp = dev.read()[5:-3]
    return cpu_temp

@route('/temp')
def temp():
    return cpu_temp()

@route('/')
def index():
    return template('main.html')

@route('/raphael')
def index():
    return template('raphael.2.1.0.min.js')

@route('/justgage')
```

```

def index():
    return template('justgage.1.0.1.min.js')

run(host='0.0.0.0', port=80)

```

The function `cpu_temp` reads the temperature of the Raspberry Pi's CPU, as described in [Recipe 13.9](#).

Four routes are then defined for the bottle web server. The first (`/temp`) returns a string containing the CPU temperature in degrees C. The root route (`/`) returns the main HTML template for the page (`main.html`). The other two routes provide access to copies of the `raphael` and `justgage` JavaScript libraries.

The file `main.html` mostly contains the JavaScript to render the user interface.

```

<html>
<head>
<script src="http://ajax.googleapis.com/ajax/libs/jquery/1.7.2/jquery.min.js"
type="text/javascript" charset="utf-8"></script>
<script src="raphael"></script>
<script src="justgage"></script>

<script>
function callback(tempStr, status){
if (status == "success") {
    temp = parseFloat(tempStr).toFixed(2);
    g.refresh(temp);
    setTimeout(getReading, 1000);
}
else {
    alert("There was a problem");
}
}

function getReading(){
    $.get('/temp', callback);
}
</script>
</head>

<body>
<div id="gauge" class="200x160px"></div>

<script>
var g = new JustGage({
    id: "gauge",
    value: 0,

```

```

        min: 10,
        max: 60,
        title: "CPU Temp 'C"
    });
getReading();
</script>

</body>
</html>

```

The JQuery, Raphael, and JustGage libraries are all imported (JQuery from <https://developers.google.com/speed/libraries/#jquery> and the other two from local copies).

Getting a reading from the Raspberry Pi to the browser window is a two-stage process. First, the function `getReading` is called. This sends a web request with the route `/temp` to `web_sensor.py` and specifies a function called `callback` to be run when the web request completes. The `callback` function is then responsible for updating the JustGage display before setting a timeout to call `getReading` again after a second.

See Also

For an example of using Tkinter to display sensor values in an application rather than a web page, see [Recipe 13.19](#).

The JustGage library has all sorts of useful options for displaying sensor values. See <http://justgage.com/> for more information.

15.3 Sending Email and Other Notifications with IFTTT

Problem

You want a flexible way for your Raspberry Pi to send notifications by email, Facebook status, Twitter, or Slack.

Solution

Have your Raspberry Pi send requests to the If This Then That (IFTTT) *Maker* channel to trigger configurable notifications.

This recipe is illustrated with an example that sends you an email when the CPU temperature of your Raspberry Pi exceeds a threshold.

You need to create an account with IFTTT before you can start using it, so visit www.ifttt.com and sign up.

The next step is to create a new IFTTT *recipe*. Rather confusingly, IFTTT uses the word *recipe* to refer to a rule, such as *When I get a web request from a Raspberry Pi, send an email*. Click on the Create a Recipe button. This will prompt you to first enter the IF part of the recipe and later the THAT part.

In this case, the IF THIS part (the trigger) is going to be the receipt of a web request from your Raspberry Pi, so click on THIS and then enter *Maker* into the search field to find the Maker channel. Select the Maker channel and when prompted to Choose a Trigger, select the option (Receive a Web Request). This will open the form shown in [Figure 15-5](#).

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Create Recipe - IFTTT". The URL in the address bar is <https://ifttt.com/myrecipes/personal/new>. The main content area is titled "Complete Trigger Fields" and displays the message "Receive a web request". Below this, there is a section for "Event Name" with a text input field containing "cpu_too_hot". A descriptive note below the input field says "The name of the event, like "button_pressed" or "front_door_opened"". At the bottom of the form is a large blue button labeled "Create Trigger". In the top right corner of the browser window, it says "step 3 of 7".

Figure 15-5. The “Receive a web request” trigger form

Enter the text *cpu_too_hot* into the Event Name field and click Create Trigger.

This will now move you to the THAT portion of the recipe, the *action*, and you will need to select an action channel. Here there are many options, but for this example you will use the Email channel, so type Email into the search field and then select the Email channel. You will see several email-related channels, including Gmail. Use the *email* channel, even if you are sending from a Gmail account.

Having selected the Email channel, select the action Send Me an Email, and the form shown in [Figure 15-6](#) will be displayed.

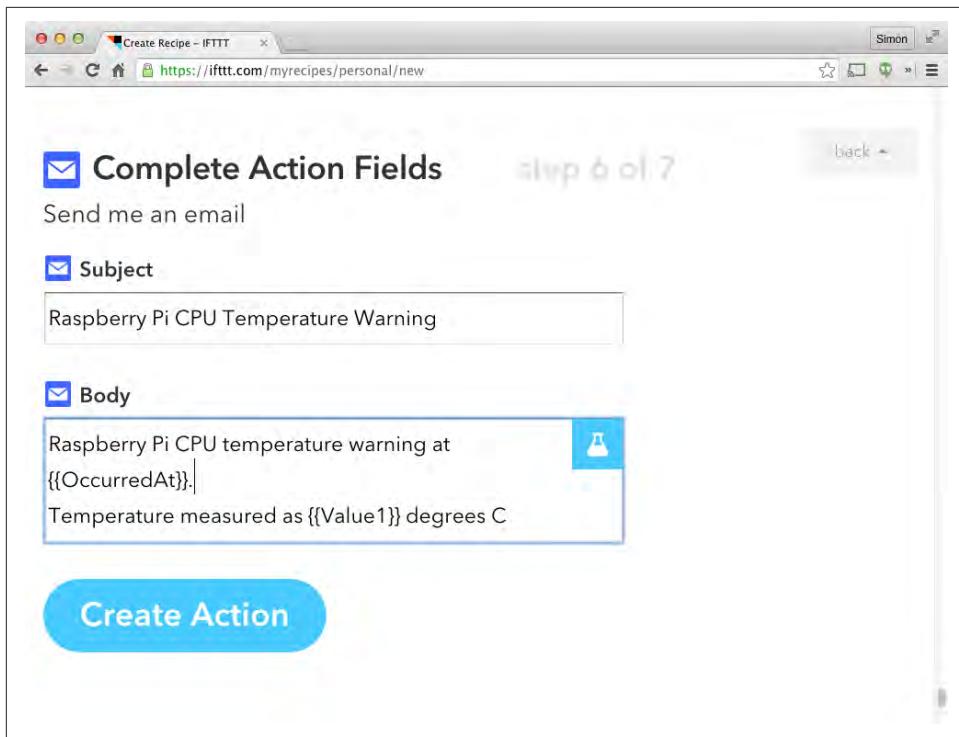


Figure 15-6. Configuring the Send Me an Email action

Change the text so that it appears as shown in Figure 15-6. Note that the special values OccurredAt and Value1 will both be surrounded by {{ and }}. These values are called ingredients and are variable values that will be taken from the web request and substituted into the email subject and body.

Click Create Action and then Create Recipe to finish the recipe creation.

That's it—the recipe is now live, and once the Raspberry Pi is ready to send web requests to it, it will start emailing.

The Python program to send the web request can be found with the downloads for the book on the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website and is called *ifttt_cpu_temp.py*.

```
import time, os, urllib, urllib2

MAX_TEMP = 37.0
MIN_T_BETWEEN_WARNINGS = 60 # Minutes

EVENT = 'cpu_too_hot'
BASE_URL = 'https://maker.ifttt.com/trigger/'
KEY = 'cyR3vPNfLP9K32W4NZB9cd'
```

```

def send_notification(temp):
    data = urllib.urlencode({'value1' : str(temp)})
    url = BASE_URL + EVENT + '/with/key/' + KEY
    response = urllib2.urlopen(url=url, data=data)
    print(response.read())

def cpu_temp():
    dev = os.popen('/opt/vc/bin/vcgencmd measure_temp')
    cpu_temp = dev.read()[5:-3]
    return float(cpu_temp)

while True:
    temp = cpu_temp()
    print("CPU Temp (C): " + str(temp))
    if temp > MAX_TEMP:
        print("CPU TOO HOT!")
        send_notification(temp)
        print("No more notifications for: " + str(MIN_T_BETWEEN_WARNINGS) +
" mins")
        time.sleep(MIN_T_BETWEEN_WARNINGS * 60)
    time.sleep(1)

```

Before running the program, you will need to get an access key for the Maker Action channel by selecting Channels (at the top of the IFTTT web page), and then searching for Maker. Connect to the channel, and then you will see your key displayed near the bottom of the web page ([Figure 15-7](#)).

Paste the key into `ifttt_cpu_temp.py` on the line that starts `KEY=` and then run the program using:

```
$ sudo python ifttt_cpu_temp.py
```

You can increase your CPU temperature by playing a video or *temporarily* wrapping your Raspberry Pi in bubble wrap. Once the event is triggered, you should receive an email that looks like [Figure 15-8](#). Notice how the values have been substituted into the email.

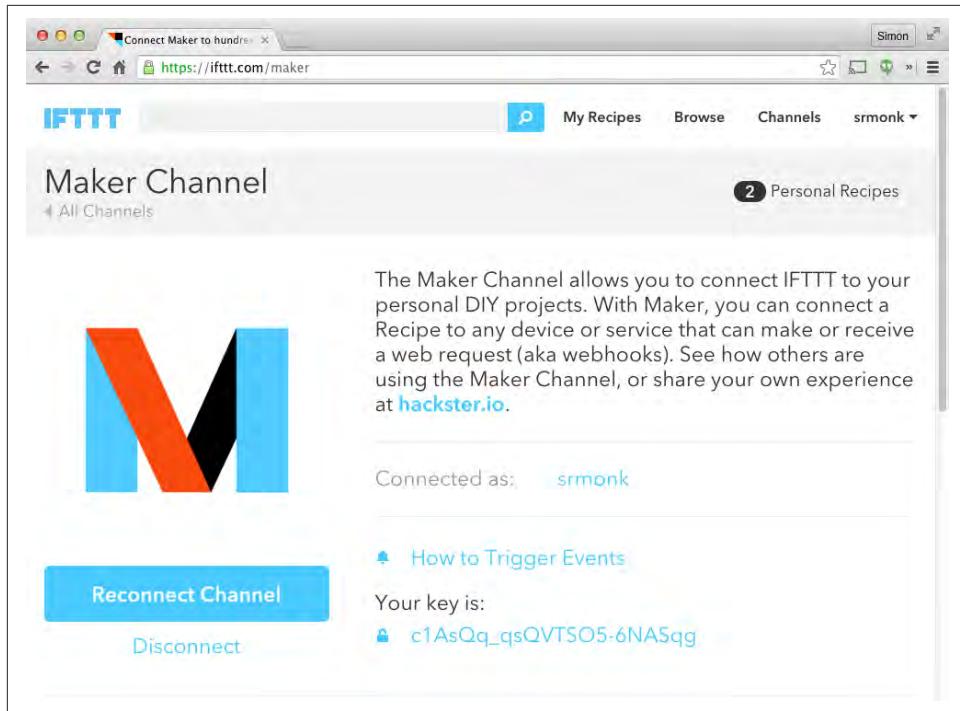


Figure 15-7. Getting an IFTTT key

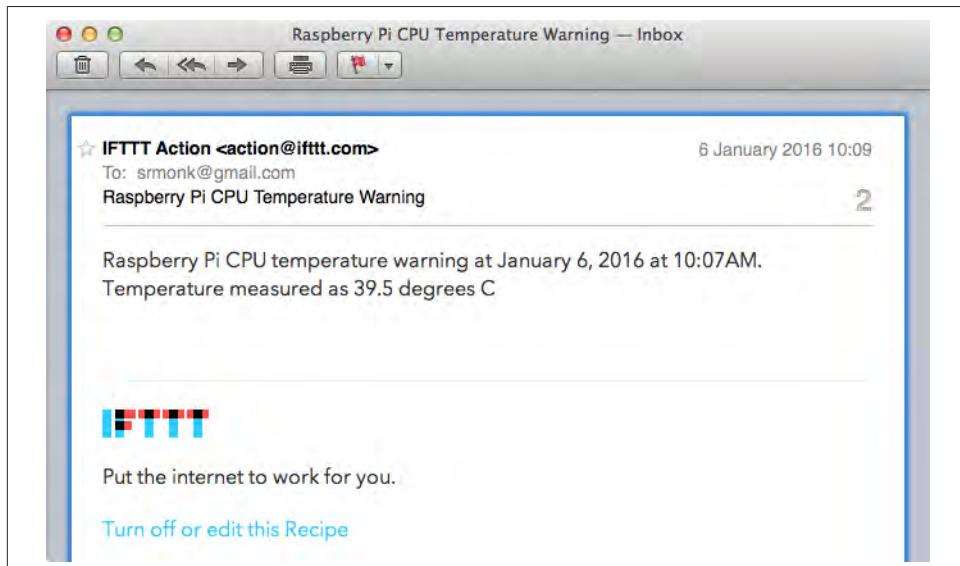


Figure 15-8. A notification email

Discussion

Most of the action for this program takes place in the `send_notification_email`. This first constructs a URL including the key and request parameter `value1` (containing the temperature) and then uses the Python `urllib2` to send the web request to IFTTT.

The main loop continually checks the temperature against the `MAX_TEMP`, and if the CPU temperature exceeds `MAX_TEMP`, the web request is sent and a long sleep is started as specified by `MIN_T_BETWEEN_WARNINGS` to prevent your inbox from being flooded with notifications.

As an alternative to using IFTTT, you could, of course, just send an email directly using [Recipe 7.16](#). However, by using IFTTT to send the messages, you are not restricted to email notifications—you could use any of the action channels available in IFTTT without having to write any code.

See Also

To send an email directly from Python, see [Recipe 7.16](#).

The code to measure the CPU temperature is described in [Recipe 13.9](#).

15.4 Sending Tweets Using ThingSpeak

Problem

You want to automatically send tweets from your Raspberry Pi; for example, to irritate people by telling them the temperature of your CPU.

Solution

You could just use [Recipe 15.3](#) and change the Action Channel to be Twitter. However, the ThingSpeak service is an alternative way of doing this.

ThingSpeak is similar to IFTTT but is aimed squarely at IoT projects. It allows you to create channels that can store and retrieve data using web requests, and also has a number of actions, including ThingTweet, which provides a web services wrapper around Twitter. This is easier to use than the Twitter API, which requires you to register your application with Twitter.

Start by visiting <https://thingspeak.com> and signing up. Then select the ThingTweet action ([Figure 15-9](#)). You will be prompted to log in to Twitter.

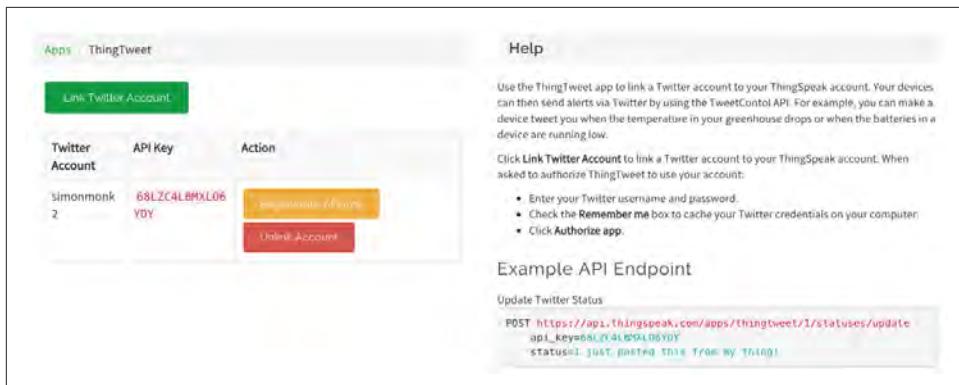


Figure 15-9. The ThingTweet action

The Python program to send the web request that triggers the tweet can be found with the downloads for the book on the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website and is called *send_tweet.py*:

```
import time, os, urllib, urllib2

MAX_TEMP = 37.0
MIN_T_BETWEEN_WARNINGS = 60 # Minutes

BASE_URL = 'https://api.thingspeak.com/apps/thingtweet/1/statuses/update/'
KEY = '68LZC4LBMXL06YDY'

def send_notification(temp):
    status = 'Raspberry Pi getting hot. CPU temp=' + temp
    data = urllib.urlencode({'api_key': KEY, 'status': status})
    response = urllib2.urlopen(url=BASE_URL, data=data)
    print(response.read())

def cpu_temp():
    dev = os.popen('/opt/vc/bin/vcgencmd measure_temp')
    cpu_temp = dev.read()[5:-3]
    return cpu_temp

while True:
    temp = cpu_temp()
    print("CPU Temp (C): " + str(temp))
    if temp > MAX_TEMP:
        print("CPU TOO HOT!")
        send_notification(temp)
        print("No more notifications for: " + str(MIN_T_BETWEEN_WARNINGS) +
" mins")
        time.sleep(MIN_T_BETWEEN_WARNINGS * 60)
        time.sleep(1)
```

As with [Recipe 15.3](#), you will need to paste your key from [Figure 15-9](#) into the code before you run the program. Run and test the program in just the same way you did in [Recipe 15.3](#).

Discussion

The code is very similar to [Recipe 15.3](#). The main difference is in the function `send_notification`, which constructs the tweet and then sends the web request with the message as the parameter `status`.

See Also

For full documentation of the ThingSpeak service, see <https://uk.mathworks.com/help/thingspeak/>.

In [Recipe 15.5](#), you use the popular Cheerlights, implemented in ThingSpeak; and in [Recipe 15.6](#), you learn how to use ThingSpeak to collect sensor data.

15.5 CheerLights

Problem

You want to hook your Raspberry Pi up to an RGB LED and participate in the popular Cheerlights project.

Cheerlights is a web service that, when anyone sends a tweet to @cheerlights containing the name of a color, will record that color as being the last color. Around the world, many people have Cheerlight projects that use a web service to request the last color and set their lighting to that color. So when anyone tweets, everyone's lights change color.

Solution

Use a Raspberry Squid RGB LED connected to your Raspberry Pi ([Figure 15-10](#)) and run the test program called `cheerlights.py`, which can be found with the downloads for the book on the [Raspberry Pi Cookbook](#) website.

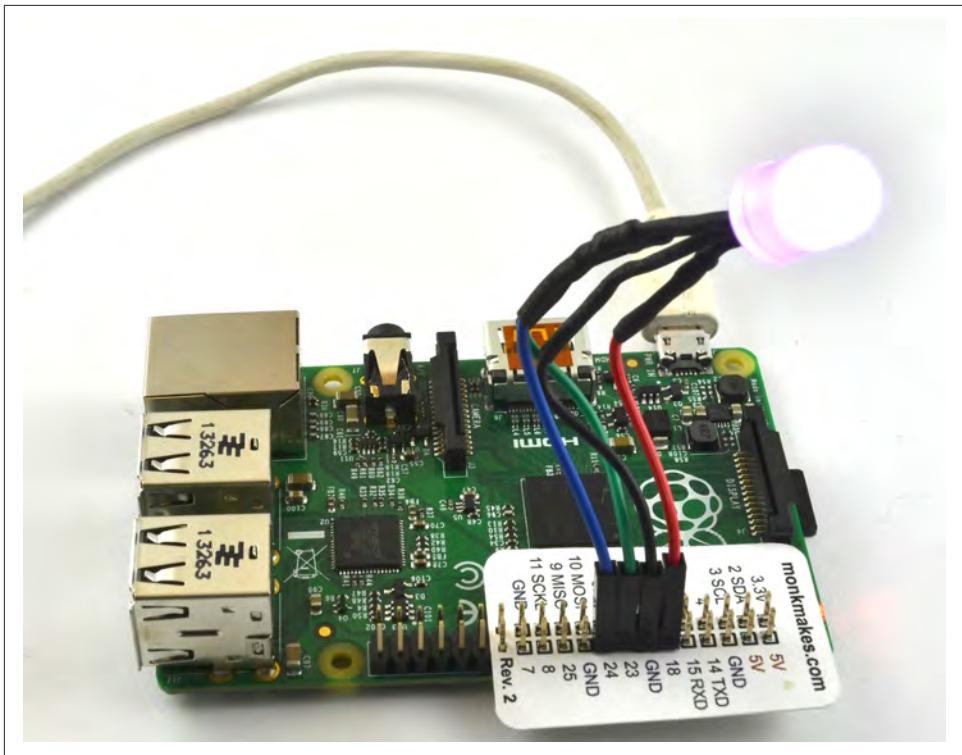


Figure 15-10. A Cheerlight

```
from squid import *
import urllib, time

squid = Squid(18, 23, 24)
cheerlights_url = "http://api.thingspeak.com/channels/1417/field/2/last.txt"

try:
    while True:
        try:
            cheerlights = urllib.urlopen(cheerlights_url)
            c = cheerlights.read()
            cheerlights.close()
            print(c)
            squid.set_color_rgb(c)
        except:
            print('Error')
            time.sleep(2)

finally:
    GPIO.cleanup()
```

Before running the program, you will need to install the Squid library (see [Recipe 9.10](#)).

Your LED should immediately set itself to the last color. It will probably change color after a while as someone tweets; if it doesn't, try tweeting a message such as "@cheer-lights red" and the color of both your LED and the rest of the world's LEDs should all change. Valid color names for Cheerlights are red, blue, cyan, white, oldlace, purple, magenta, yellow, orange, and pink.

Discussion

The code just sends a web request to ThingSpeak, which returns a string of colors as a 6-digit hexadecimal number. This is then used to set the LED color.

The inner `try/except` code is used to ensure that the program does not crash if there is a temporary network outage.

See Also

Cheerlights uses ThingSpeak to store the last color in a channel. In [Recipe 15.6](#), a channel is used to record sensor data.

If you don't have a Squid, you can use an RGB on a breadboard (see [Recipe 10.10](#)), or even adapt [Recipe 14.7](#) to control an entire LED strip.

15.6 Sending Sensor Data to ThingSpeak

Problem

You want to log sensor data to ThingSpeak.

Solution

Log into ThingSpeak, and from the Channels drop-down, select My Channels. Now create a new channel by completing the top of the form as shown in [Figure 15-11](#).

New Channel

Name	My Raspberry Pi CPU Temperature	
Description	This channel keeps track of the CPU Temperature of my Raspberry Pi.	
Field 1	tempc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Field 2		<input type="checkbox"/>
Field 3		<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 15-11. Creating a channel in ThingSpeak

The rest of the form can be left blank. When you have finished editing, click Save Channel at the bottom of the page. Click on the Data Import/Export tab to find a summary of the web requests that you can use, customized to the channel you just created (Figure 15-12).

Update Channel Feed - GET GET <code>https://api.thingspeak.com/update?api_key=DYHDDKKLU80V58T&field1=0</code>
Update Channel Feed - POST POST <code>https://api.thingspeak.com/update.json</code> <code>api_key=DYHDDKKLU80V58T</code> <code>field1=73</code>
Get a Channel Feed GET <code>https://api.thingspeak.com/channels/77483/feeds.json?results=2</code>
Get a Channel Field Feed GET <code>https://api.thingspeak.com/channels/77483/fields/1.json?results=2</code>
Get Status Updates GET <code>https://api.thingspeak.com/channels/77483/status.json</code>

Figure 15-12. Getting data into a ThingSpeak channel

To send data to the channel, a web request must be sent. The Python program to send the web request can be found with the downloads for the book on the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website and is called *thingspeak_data.py*.

```
import time, os, urllib, urllib2

PERIOD = 60 # Seconds

BASE_URL = 'https://api.thingspeak.com/update.json'
KEY = 'DYHHDDKKLU80V58T'

def send_data(temp):
    data = urllib.urlencode({'api_key' : KEY, 'field1': temp})
    response = urllib2.urlopen(url=BASE_URL, data=data)
    print(response.read())

def cpu_temp():
    dev = os.popen('/opt/vc/bin/vcgencmd measure_temp')
    cpu_temp = dev.read()[5:-3]
    return cpu_temp

while True:
    temp = cpu_temp()
    print("CPU Temp (C): " + str(temp))
    send_data(temp)
    time.sleep(PERIOD)
```

Run the program. On the ThingSpeak channel page on the Private View tab, you should see a graph like the one shown in Figure 15-13.

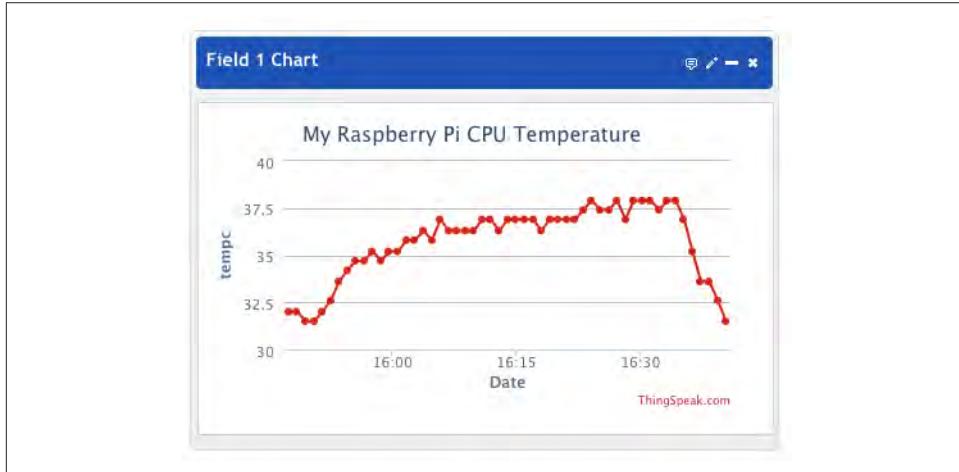


Figure 15-13. Charting the sensor data

This will update as a new reading arrives every minute.

Discussion

The variable `PERIOD` is used to determine the time interval between each sending of the temperature. This period is in seconds.

The `send_data` function constructs the web request, supplying the temperature in a parameter called `field1`.

If your data might be of public interest—say, accurate environmental readings—then you might want to make the channel public so that anyone can make use of it. This probably isn't the case for your Pi's CPU temperature.

See Also

For an example of exporting sensor data into a spreadsheet, see [Recipe 13.20](#).

For an explanation of the code that reads the CPU temperature, see [Recipe 13.9](#).

15.7 Responding to Tweets Using Dweet and IFTTT

Problem

You want your Raspberry Pi to perform some action in response to a certain hashtag or mention in a tweet.

[Recipe 15.5](#) does just this, but it does it very inefficiently because it relies on you continually polling with web requests to see if the color has changed.

Solution

An efficient mechanism for monitoring tweets that does not rely on polling is to use IFTTT (see [Recipe 15.3](#)) to spot tweets of interest and then send a web request to a service called Dweet that can push notifications to a Python program running on your Raspberry Pi ([Figure 15-14](#)).

For example, you could flash an LED for 10 seconds every time there is a mention of your username on Twitter by using a Raspberry Squid or an LED attached to a breadboard.

As far as the hardware goes, this recipe just requires some electronics that do something noticeable when GPIO 18 goes high. This could be one channel of a Raspberry Squid (see [Recipe 9.10](#)) or a single LED attached to breadboard (see [Recipe 10.1](#)) or for ultimate flexibility, a relay (see [Recipe 10.6](#)). Using a relay would allow you to create a project like [Bubblino](#).

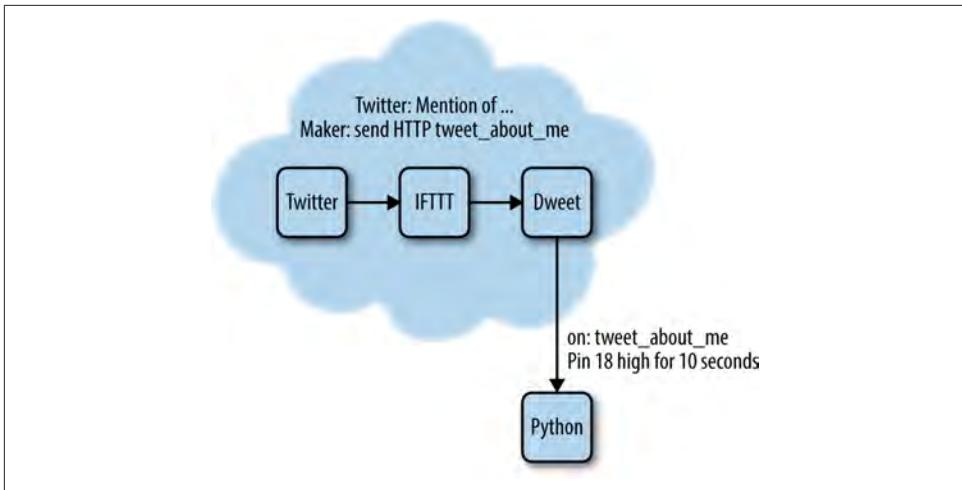


Figure 15-14. IFTTT, Dweet, and Python, working together

The first step is to log in to IFTTT (see [Recipe 15.3](#)) and then create a new recipe. Choose an action channel of New Mention of You and then click Create Trigger. For the recipe's action channel, select Maker and then select the action “Make a Web Request” and complete the fields as shown in [Figure 15-15](#).

The URL includes a request parameter with the ingredient of text. This will contain the body of the tweet. Although this will not be used other than to print it in the console, you might have the message displayed on an LCD screen for a more sophisticated project, so it is useful to know how to pass data from tweet to the Python program.

Then click Create Recipe to take the IFTTT recipe live.

The dweet.io web service operates rather like Twitter for IoT things. It has a web interface that allows you to both post and listen for *dweets*.

Dweet does not require an account or any login details to make use of it; you can just have one thing (IFTTT in this case) send a message to it and have another thing (your Raspberry Pi Python program) wait for notifications from it that something you are interested in has happened. In this case, the token that links the two is `tweet_about_me`. This is not very unique, and if several people are trying out this example from the book at the same time, then they will get each other’s messages. To avoid this, use a more unique token (say, by adding a random string of letters and numbers to the message).

Action

Make a web request

This Action will make a web request to a publicly accessible URL. NOTE: Requests may be rate limited.

M URL

`https://dweet.io/dweet/for/tweet_about_me?text=`

Text

Surround any text with "<<<" and ">>>" to escape the content.

M Method

GET

The method of the request e.g. GET, POST, DELETE

M Content Type

text/plain

Optional

M Body

Figure 15-15. Completing the Send HTTP Request action channel in IFTTT

To access Dweet from your Python program, the `dweeypy` library needs to be installed, using the following commands:

```
$ git clone git://github.com/paddycarey/dweeypy.git  
$ cd dweeypy  
$ sudo python setup.py install
```

The program for this recipe can be found with the downloads for the book on the *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* website and is called *twitter_trigger.py*.

```
import time  
import dweeypy  
import RPi.GPIO as GPIO  
  
KEY = 'tweet_about_me'  
OUTPUT_PIN = 18  
OUTPUT_DURATION = 10
```

```
GPIO.setmode(GPIO.BCM)
GPIO.setup(OUTPUT_PIN, GPIO.OUT)

while True:
    try:
        for dweet in dweepy.listen_for_dweets_from(KEY):
            print('Tweet: ' + dweet['content']['text'])
            GPIO.output(OUTPUT_PIN, True)
            time.sleep(OUTPUT_DURATION)
            GPIO.output(OUTPUT_PIN, False)
    except Exception:
        pass
```

Discussion

The program uses the `listen_for_dweets_from` method to leave an open connection to the dweet.io server, listening for any push messages from the server as a result of a dweet arriving from IFTTT in response to a tweet. The `try/except` block ensure that if there is any communication outage, the program will just start the listennning process again.

See Also

For a similar project using a different approach, see [Recipe 15.5](#).

Arduino and Raspberry Pi

16.0 Introduction

While a Raspberry Pi is ideal for projects that need a network connection or a graphical user interface, the low-power GPIO outputs and lack of any analog inputs puts it at a disadvantage to microcontroller boards, such as the Arduino ([Figure 16-1](#)). Fortunately, it is possible to have the best of both worlds by connecting an Arduino to a Raspberry Pi and allowing the Arduino to interface with external electronics.

Arduino boards are superficially a little like a Raspberry Pi in that they are small and essentially a computer. However, Arduino boards are very different from the Raspberry Pi in a number of respects:

- They do not have any interface to keyboard, mouse, or screen.
- They have just 2 KB of RAM and 32 KB of flash for storing programs.
- Their processor runs at just 16 MHz compared with the Raspberry Pi's 700 MHz.

This might lead you to wonder why you would use such an apparently feeble board rather than the Raspberry Pi directly.

The answer is that Arduino boards, the most common being the Arduino Uno, are better than the Raspberry Pi at interfacing with external electronics in several ways. For example, Arduino boards have:

- 14 digital inputs/outputs, like the Raspberry Pi's GPIO pins, but each pin can provide up to 40 mA compared with the original Raspberry Pi's 3 mA. This enables them to power more devices without the need for extra electronics.
- 6 analog inputs. This makes connecting analog sensors much easier (see [Recipe 16.7](#)).

- 6 PWM outputs. These outputs are hardware-timed and produce a much more accurate PWM signal than can be achieved with the Raspberry Pi, making them a lot better for controlling servo motors.
- A huge range of plug-in shields for everything from motor control to LCD displays of various sorts.

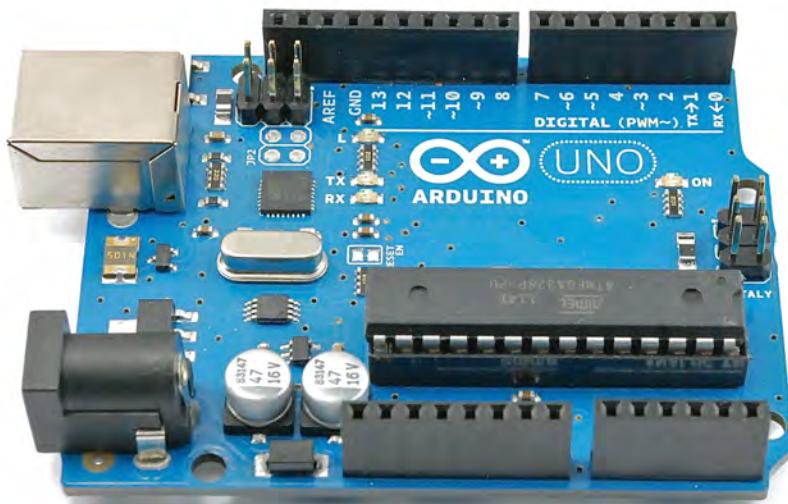


Figure 16-1. An Arduino Uno board

In many ways, using a Raspberry Pi with an Arduino to handle all the low-level stuff is a good combination, playing to the strengths of both boards. This is taken to its extreme with interface boards that have a GPIO connector and also include Arduino-compatible hardware such as the aLaMode ([Recipe 16.13](#)).

16.1 Programming an Arduino from Raspberry Pi



Be sure to check out the accompanying video for this recipe at
<http://razzpisampler.oreilly.com>.

Problem

You want to run the Arduino IDE on a Raspberry Pi so that you can write and upload programs onto an Arduino.

Solution

The Arduino IDE is available for the Raspberry Pi. It is a little bit slow, but usable. You will definitely want to use the superior speed of the Raspberry Pi 2 when using the Arduino IDE. Use these commands to install the Arduino IDE:

```
$ sudo apt-get update  
$ sudo apt-get install arduino
```

After installation, you will find an Electronics group in your Programs menu ([Figure 16-2](#)).

To program the Arduino IDE, connect it to the Raspberry Pi through its USB cable. The easiest way to set up your Pi to use the Arduino IDE is to run a script created by Kevin Osborn that configures the serial ports and Arduino profiles necessary to get things running. This has the advantage that it also sets up the aLaMode board to be ready for use ([Recipe 16.13](#)).

To download and run this script, follow these steps:

```
$ https://github.com/wyolum/alamode/raw/master/bundles/alamode-setup.tar.gz  
$ tar -xvf alamode-setup.tar.gz  
$ cd alamode-setup  
$ sudo ./setup
```

You can now connect your Arduino to your Raspberry Pi. From the Tools menu, select Board and set the board type to Arduino Uno. Then, from the Serial Port option, select */dev/ttyACM0*. To upload a test program that will make the LED on the Arduino blink, select the File menu and then click “Examples, Basic,” and finally click Blink. Click on the right arrow on the toolbar to begin the compile and upload process. If all is well, you should see a “Done Uploading” message in the status area at the bottom of the IDE window.



If you find that the device *ttyACM0* is not listed even though your Arduino is plugged in, try restarting the Arduino IDE. If that doesn’t work, then you may have to reboot your Raspberry Pi. Leave the Arduino connected while you reboot and restart the Arduino IDE.

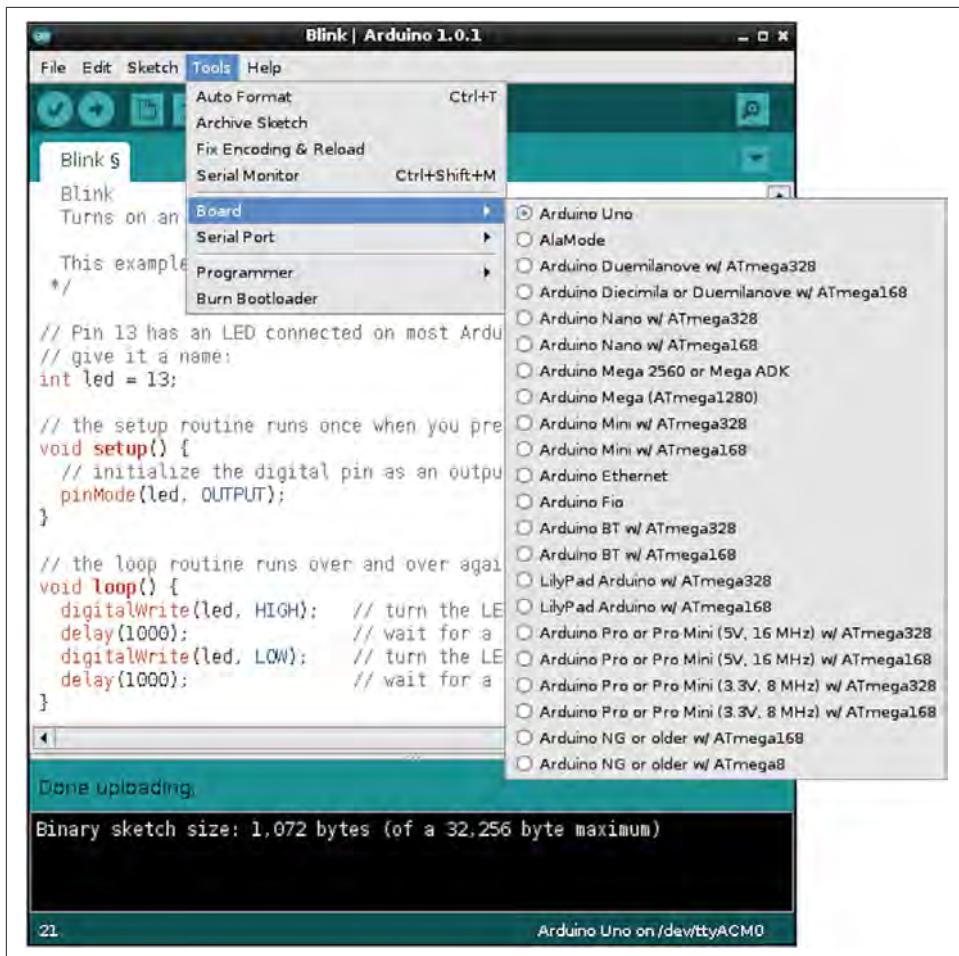


Figure 16-2. The Arduino IDE running on Raspberry Pi

Discussion

To get the most out of using Arduino with Raspberry Pi, you need to learn a little Arduino programming. You may find the book *Programming Arduino: Getting Started with Sketches* (McGraw-Hill/TAB Books), by yours truly, helpful.

You can, however, make use of an Arduino without needing to write any code on the Arduino side, using a project called PyFirmata. [Recipe 16.3](#) explains how to use PyFirmata.

See Also

The Arduino IDE setup script came from the blog [Bald Wisdom](#).

16.2 Communicating with the Arduino by Using the Serial Monitor

Problem

You want to display messages sent from an Arduino.

Solution

The Arduino IDE includes a feature called the *serial monitor*, which allows you to both send text messages to the Arduino and see messages from the Arduino over the USB cable.

To try this out, you first need to write a very short Arduino program (programs are called *sketches* in the Arduino world). This sketch will just repeat a message, sending it every second.

The Arduino sketch is listed here. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is contained in the folder *ArduinoHello*. Just follow the link to this book and then click Code.

Use File→New to create a new sketch, and paste the following text into it before uploading it to the Arduino.

```
void setup()
{
    Serial.begin(9600);
}

void loop()
{
    Serial.println("Hello Raspberry Pi");
    delay(1000);
}
```

As soon as the sketch is uploaded onto the Arduino, it will start sending the message “Hello Raspberry Pi” over serial. You won’t see this until you open the serial monitor ([Figure 16-3](#)) by clicking the icon that looks like a magnifying glass on the right of the toolbar.

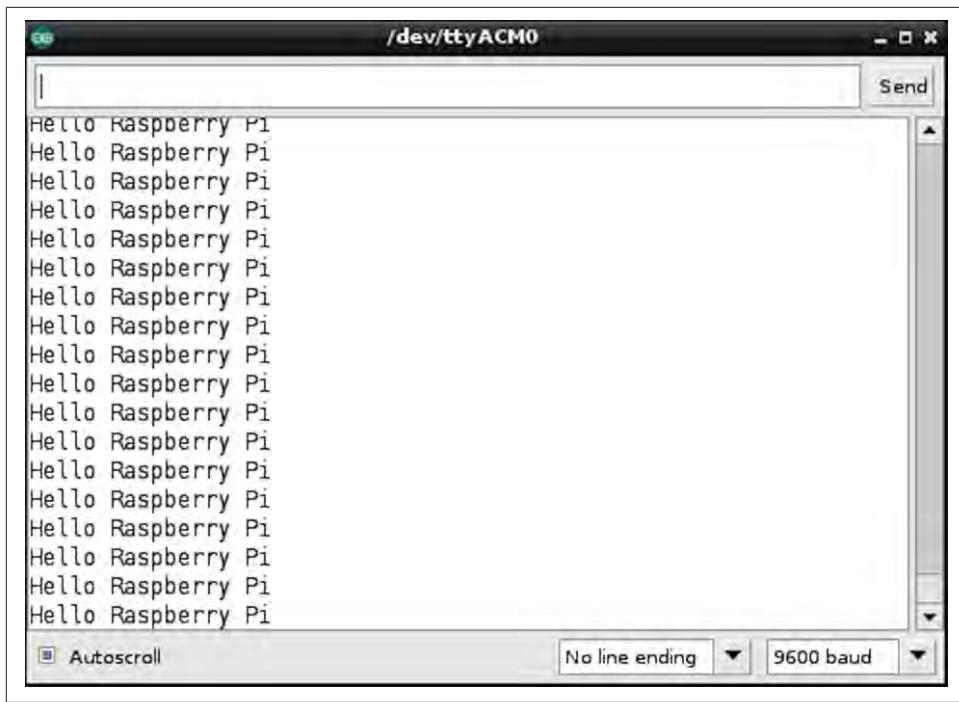


Figure 16-3. Viewing messages with the serial monitor

The serial monitor has a drop-down list in the bottom-right corner, where you can select the baud rate (speed of communication). If this isn't already set to 9600, change it to that value.

Discussion

In some of the later recipes in this chapter (Recipes 16.10 and 16.11), you look at writing your own custom code to communicate with Python programs running on the Raspberry Pi so that you don't need to have the Arduino IDE running.

A more generic approach is to use something called PyFirmata, which avoids the need for any programming on the Raspberry Pi. See [Recipe 16.3](#) for details.

See Also

Arduino is quite easy to learn; here are some links to books and online resources to get you started:

- [Programming Arduino: Getting Started with Sketches](#) (Tab Books) by Simon Monk
- [The official Arduino Getting Started Guide](#)

- The Adafruit Arduino lesson series
- *Arduino Cookbook* (O'Reilly) by Michael Margolis

16.3 Setting Up PyFirmata to Control an Arduino from a Raspberry Pi

Problem

You want to use an Arduino as an interface board for your Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Connect the Arduino to a USB socket of the Raspberry Pi so that the computer can communicate and send power to the Arduino.

Next, install the Firmata sketch onto the Arduino and the PyFirmata onto your Raspberry Pi. This entails installing the Arduino IDE, so if you haven't already done so, follow [Recipe 16.1](#).

The Arduino IDE includes Firmata, so all you have to do to install Firmata onto your Arduino board is to upload a sketch. You will find the sketch at File→Examples→Firmata→StandardFirmata.

Once Firmata is installed, the Arduino waits for communication from the Raspberry Pi.

Now you need to install PyFirmata, the other half of the link. This requires the use of the PySerial library, so follow [Recipe 9.6](#) to install this.

You can now download and install PyFirmata by using these commands:

```
$ git clone https://github.com/tino/pyFirmata.git  
$ cd pyFirmata  
$ sudo python setup.py install
```

You can try out the PyFirmata library from the Python console. Enter the following commands to turn on the built-in LED on Arduino pin 13 (marked with an *L*) and then turn it off again.

```
$ sudo python  
Python 2.7.3 (default, Jan 13 2013, 11:20:46)  
[GCC 4.6.3] on linux2  
Type "help", "copyright", "credits" or "license" for more information.  
  
>>> import pyfirmata  
>>> board = pyfirmata.Arduino('/dev/ttyACM0')  
>>> pin13 = board.get_pin('d:13:o')  
>>> pin13.write(1)
```

```
>>> pin13.write(0)
>>> board.exit()
```

Discussion

The preceding code first imports the PyFirmata library and then makes an instance of Arduino called `board`, using the USB interface (`/dev/ttyACM0`) as its parameter. You can then gain a reference to one of the Arduino pins (in this case, 13) and set it to be a digital output. The `d` is for digital, 13 is the pin number, and `o` is for output.

To set the output pin high, use `write(1)`, and to set it low, use `write(0)`. You can also use `True` and `False` in place of 1 and 0.

Figure 16-4 shows an Arduino with the rows of connections down both sides of the board.

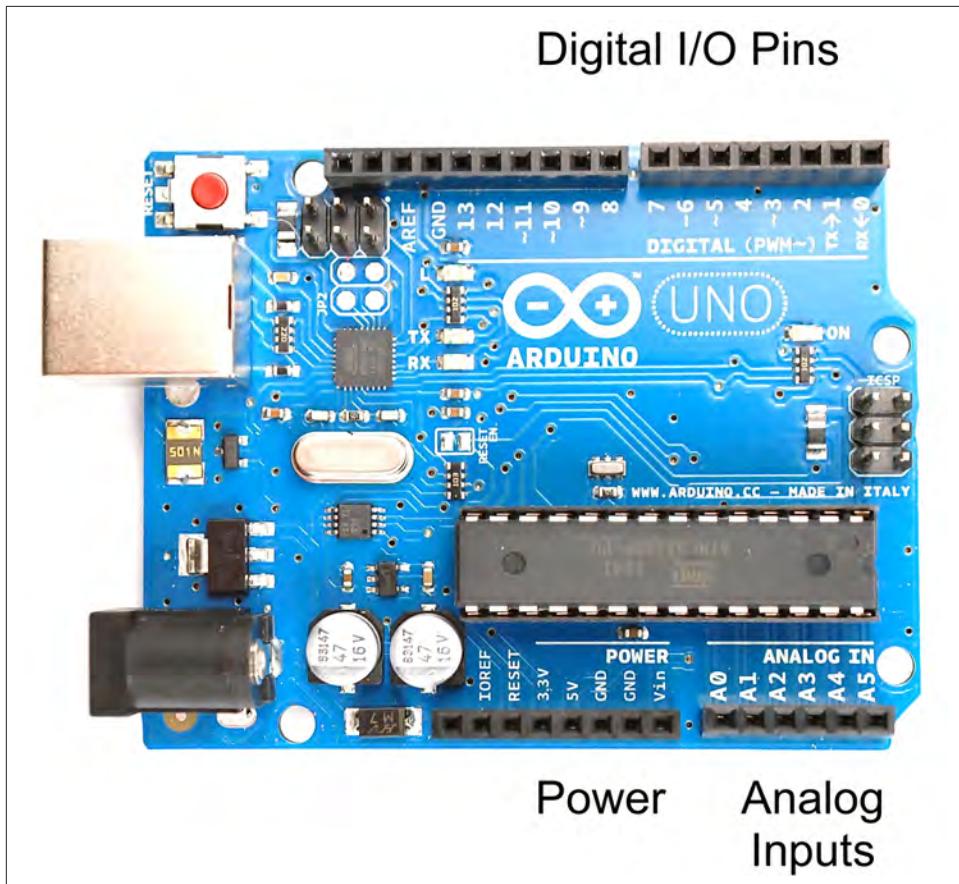


Figure 16-4. I/O pins on an Arduino Uno

The pins at the top marked 0 to 13 can be used as digital inputs or outputs. Some of these pins are also used for other things. Pins 0 and 1 are used as a serial interface, and are in use when the USB port is being used; and pin 13 is attached to the on-board LED marked with an *L*. The digital I/O pins 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11 have a ~ symbol next to them that indicates that they can be used for PWM output (see [Recipe 10.3](#)).

On the other side of the board, there is one set of connectors that supplies power at 5V and 3.3V, and six analog inputs marked A0 to A5.

An Arduino Uno on its own uses about 50 mA, which, given that the Raspberry Pi itself is probably using about 10 times that, makes it perfectly possible to power the Arduino from the USB connection of the Raspberry Pi. However, if you start attaching a lot of external electronics to the Arduino, and the current consumption increases, then you may want to power the Arduino from its own power adapter by using the DC barrel socket. This will accept 7V to 12V DC.

The only real downside of using Firmata is that because all instructions have to come from the Raspberry Pi, it doesn't make much use of Arduino's ability to run independently. For advanced projects, you will probably end up writing your own Arduino code that receives instructions from the Raspberry Pi and/or sends messages to the Raspberry Pi while it gets on with other tasks.

See Also

The following recipes look at using the full range of Arduino pin features with PyFirmata: [16.4](#), [16.5](#), [16.6](#), [16.7](#), and [16.8](#).

You can find the official pyFirmata documentation at [pyFirmata's GitHub page](#).

16.4 Writing Digital Outputs on an Arduino from a Raspberry Pi

Problem

You want to control Arduino digital outputs from Python on a Raspberry Pi.

Solution

In [Recipe 16.3](#), you flashed the built-in LED (labeled with an *L*) on the Arduino board. Here, you build on this to attach an external LED and write a short Python program to make it blink.

To make this recipe, you need:

- Arduino Uno (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)
- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- 270Ω resistor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)
- LED (see “[Opto-Electronics](#)” on page 476)

As an alternative to using a breadboard and an LED, you could plug in one color channel of a Squid RGB LED ([Recipe 9.10](#)).

Connect the breadboard, fastening the components to the Arduino as shown in [Figure 16-5](#).

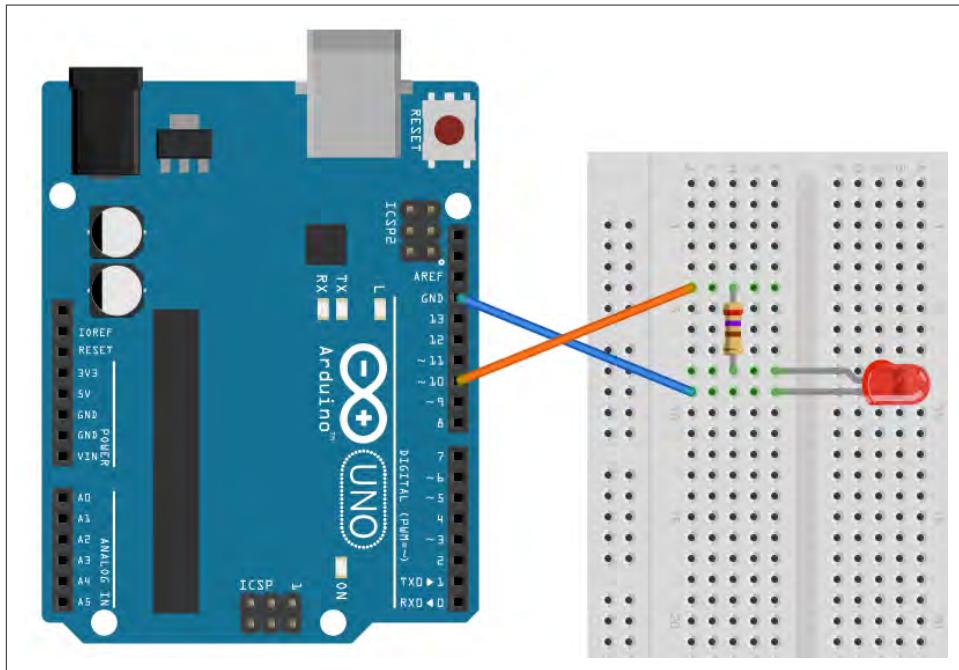


Figure 16-5. Wiring diagram for Arduino and LED

If you haven’t already done so, follow [Recipe 16.3](#) to set up PyFirmata.

The following Python script makes the LED blink at a rate of about 1 Hz. Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called *ardu_flash.py*.

```

import pyfirmata
import time

board = pyfirmata.Arduino('/dev/ttyACM0')
led_pin = board.get_pin('d:10:o')

while True:
    led_pin.write(1)
    time.sleep(0.5)
    led_pin.write(0)
    time.sleep(0.5)

```

Discussion

This is very similar to connecting an LED to a Raspberry Pi ([Recipe 10.1](#)). However, note that since Arduino outputs can supply a lot more current than Raspberry Pi outputs, you can use a smaller value resistor and make the LED a bit brighter. Arduino outputs are also 5V rather than 3.3V.

If you want the user interface to control the LED like you had in [Recipe 10.8](#) (and shown in [Figure 16-6](#)), it's pretty straightforward to modify the code. You can find the modified program, called *ardu_gui_switch.py*, on the book's website. Remember, this will not work from the SSH command line. You need to have access to the Raspberry Pi's graphical environment so that you can see the user interface.



Figure 16-6. A user interface for turning things on and off

See Also

See [Recipe 10.1](#) for controlling an LED directly from a Raspberry Pi.

16.5 Using PyFirmata with TTL Serial

Problem

You want to use PyFirmata, but over the serial connection (RXD and TXD on the GPIO connector) rather than by USB.

Solution

Use a level converter to connect the RXD pin of the Raspberry Pi to the Tx pin of the Arduino, and the TXD pin of the Raspberry Pi to the Rx pin of the Arduino.

To make this recipe, you need:

- Arduino Uno (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)
- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- 270Ω and 470Ω resistors (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474) or a four-way bidirectional level converter (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)

If you are using the level converter module, connect the breadboard as shown in [Figure 16-7](#).

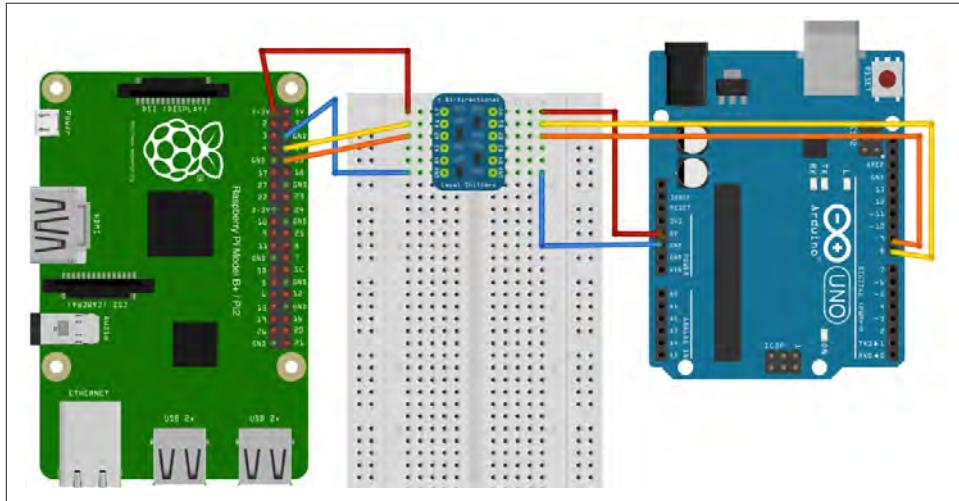


Figure 16-7. Wiring diagram, using a level converter module for serial communication with an Arduino

If, on the other hand, you are using the pair of resistors, then connect the breadboard as shown in [Figure 16-8](#).

The Arduino Rx input is fine with just 3.3V from the Raspberry Pi TXD pin; however, the 5V coming from the Arduino Tx pin must be dropped to the 3V expected by the Raspberry Pi.

You will need to set up PyFirmata—see [Recipe 16.3](#). The Arduino side of the project remains exactly the same as [Recipe 16.4](#), where USB is used instead of the serial connection. There is one change that you need to make to the Python program running on the Raspberry Pi—change the device name from `/dev/ttyACM0` to `/dev/ttyAMA0`, as the serial port has a different device name from the USB interface.

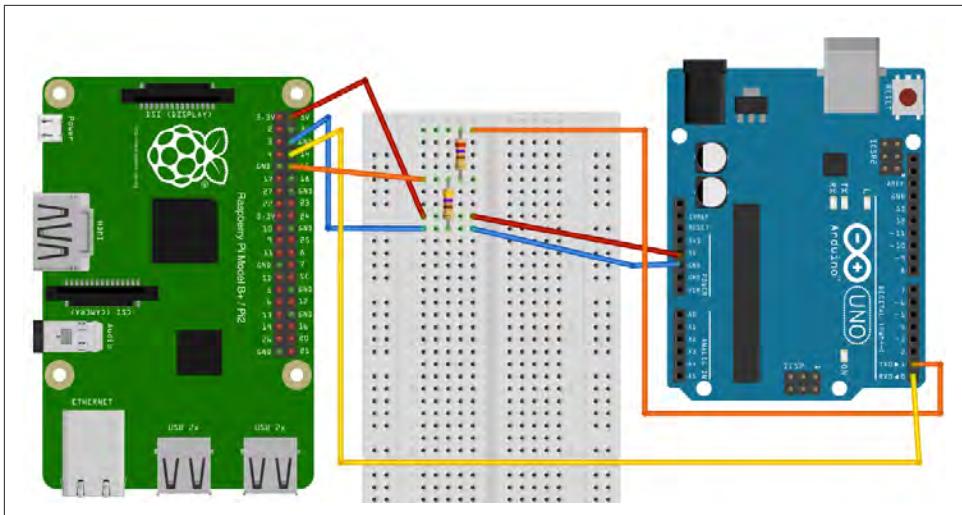


Figure 16-8. Wiring diagram, using a pair of resistors for serial communication with an Arduino

The following Python script makes the LED blink at a rate of about 1 Hz. Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called `ardu_flash_ser.py`.

```
import pyfirmata
import time

board = pyfirmata.Arduino('/dev/ttyAMA0')
led_pin = board.get_pin('d:13:o')

while True:
    led_pin.write(1)
    time.sleep(0.5)
    led_pin.write(0)
    time.sleep(0.5)
```

Discussion

The level conversion is necessary because the Raspberry Pi serial port connections, RXD and TXD, operate at 3.3V, whereas the Arduino Uno operates at 5V. While it is OK for the 5V Arduino to use a 3.3V signal, the reverse is not true and a 5V signal connected to the 3.3V RXD pin is likely to damage the Raspberry Pi.

See Also

You can also easily adapt the other examples that use PyFirmata (Recipes 16.5 through 16.8) to use a serial rather than USB connection, simply by changing the device name in the Python program.

16.6 Reading Arduino Digital Inputs Using PyFirmata

Problem

You want to read Arduino digital inputs from Python on a Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use PyFirmata to read a digital input on the Arduino.

To make this recipe, you need:

- Arduino Uno (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)
- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- $1k\Omega$ resistor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)
- Tactile push switch (see “[Miscellaneous](#)” on page 477)

Connect the breadboard, fastening the components to the Arduino as shown in [Figure 16-9](#).

If you haven’t already done so, follow [Recipe 16.3](#) to set up PyFirmata.

The following Python script prints out a message every time the switch is pressed. It’s very similar to the program in ([switch.py](#)). Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called *ardu_switch.py*. Just follow the link to this book and then click Code.

```
import pyfirmata
import time

board = pyfirmata.Arduino('/dev/ttyACM0')
switch_pin = board.get_pin('d:4:i')
it = pyfirmata.util.Iterator(board)
it.start()
switch_pin.enable_reporting()

while True:
    input_state = switch_pin.read()
    if input_state == False:
```

```
print('Button Pressed')
time.sleep(0.2)
```

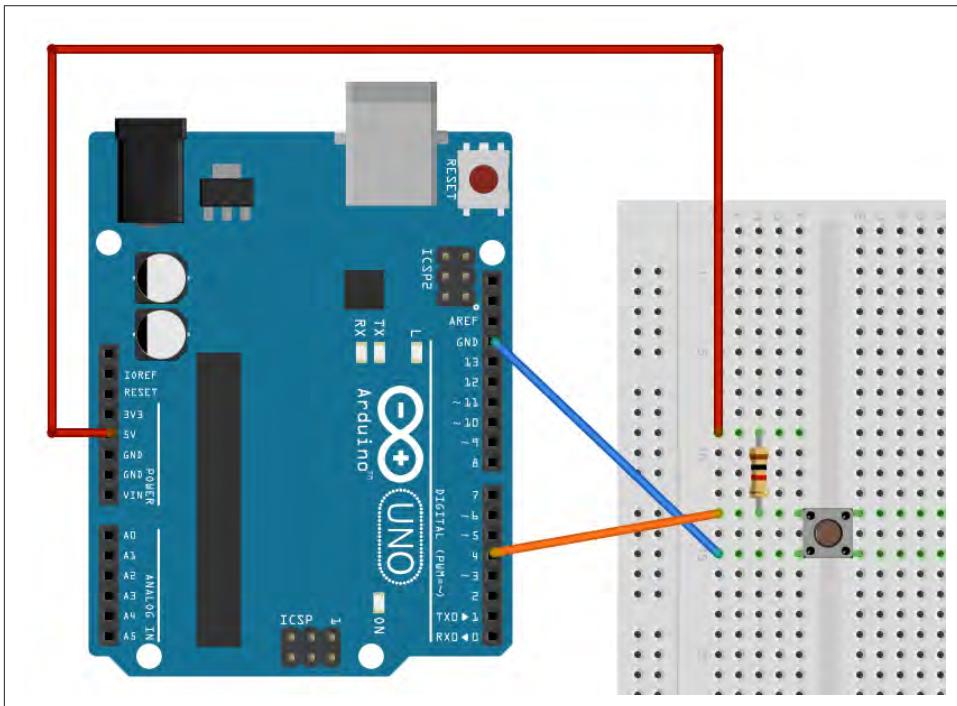


Figure 16-9. Wiring diagram for Arduino and push switch

When you run it, nothing will happen for a second or two, while the Firmata sketch starts and establishes communication with the Raspberry Pi. But, once it starts up, each time you press the button, a message will appear:

```
$ sudo python ardu_switch.py
Button Pressed
Button Pressed
Button Pressed
```

Discussion

PyFirmata uses the concept of an `Iterator` to monitor the Arduino input pin. The reasons for this are bound up in the implementation of Firmata. This means that you can't simply *read* the value of an Arduino input pin on demand; instead, you have to create a separate `Iterator` thread that manages the reading of the switch by using the commands:

```
it = pyfirmata.util.Iterator(board)
it.start()
```

You then also have to enable reporting for the pin you are interested in by using the command:

```
switch_pin.enable_reporting()
```

A side effect of this mechanism is that when you press Ctrl-C to exit the program, it won't exit properly. There is no nice way to kill the `Iterator` thread other than to open another Terminal window or SSH session and kill the process ([Recipe 3.26](#)).

If the only Python process running is this program, you can kill it with the command:

```
$ sudo killall python
```

Simply disconnecting the Arduino from the Raspberry Pi, which will break the communication link, will also cause the Python program to exit.

See Also

This is very similar to connecting a switch directly to a Raspberry Pi ([Recipe 12.1](#)), and if you just have one switch, there is no real benefit in using an Arduino like this.

16.7 Reading Arduino Analog Inputs Using PyFirmata

Problem

You want to read Arduino analog inputs from Python on a Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use PyFirmata to read an analog input on the Arduino.

To make this recipe, you need:

- Arduino Uno (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)
- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- 10kΩ trimpot (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)

Connect the breadboard, holding the components to the Arduino as shown in [Figure 16-10](#).

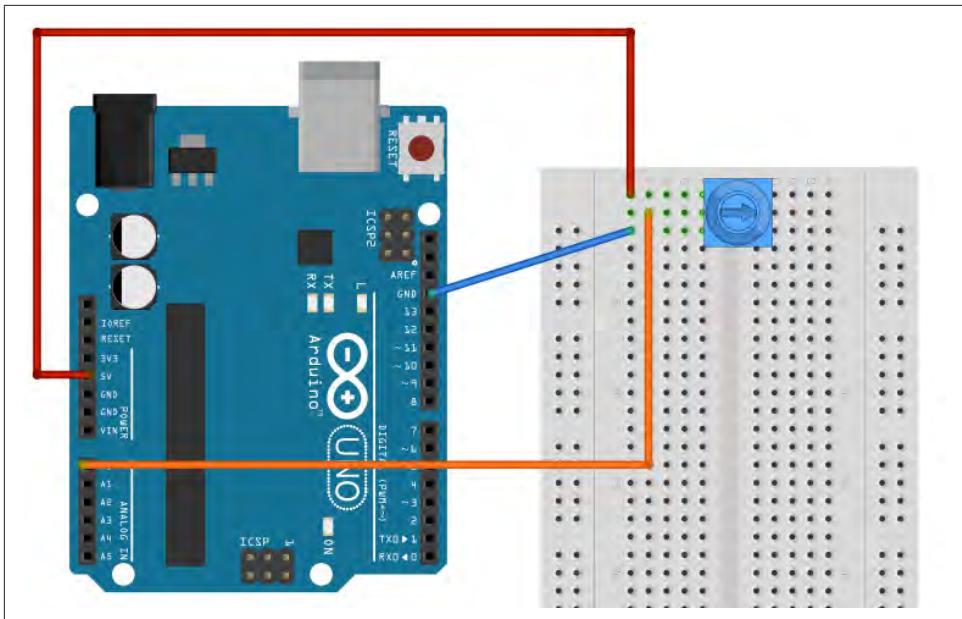


Figure 16-10. Wiring diagram for Arduino and trimpot

If you haven't already done so, follow [Recipe 16.3](#) to set up PyFirmata.

The following Python script (*ardu_adc.py*) will display both the raw reading from the analog input and the voltage at the analog input. It is very similar to the program in (*adc_test.py*).

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called *ardu_adc.py*.

```
import pyfirmata
import time

board = pyfirmata.Arduino('/dev/ttyACM0')
analog_pin = board.get_pin('a:0:i')
it = pyfirmata.util.Iterator(board)
it.start()
analog_pin.enable_reporting()

while True:
    reading = analog_pin.read()
    if reading != None:
        voltage = reading * 5.0
        print("Reading=%f\nVoltage=%f" % (reading, voltage))
    time.sleep(1)
```

The analog reading will be a value between 0.0 and 1.0:

```
$ sudo python ardu_adc.py
Reading=0.000000    Voltage=0.000000
Reading=0.165200    Voltage=0.826000
Reading=0.784000    Voltage=3.920000
Reading=1.000000    Voltage=5.000000
```

Discussion

The program is very similar to that of [Recipe 16.6](#). An `Iterator` must be used, and the same problems of stopping the program apply.

The `if` statement is needed, because if the first `read` is made before the actual reading from the analog input has happened, then the `read` will return `None` rather than a number. The `if` statement effectively causes the program to ignore any null readings.

See Also

To use digital inputs, see [Recipe 16.6](#).

16.8 Analog Outputs (PWM) with PyFirmata

Problem

You want to control the brightness of an LED by using PWM through an Arduino.

Solution

Use PyFirmata to send commands to an Arduino to generate a PWM signal on one of its outputs.

To make this recipe, you need:

- Arduino Uno (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)
- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)
- 270Ω resistor (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)
- LED (see “[Opto-Electronics](#)” on page 476)

Connect the breadboard, holding the components to the Arduino as shown in [Figure 16-11](#).

If you haven’t already done so, follow [Recipe 16.3](#) to set up PyFirmata.

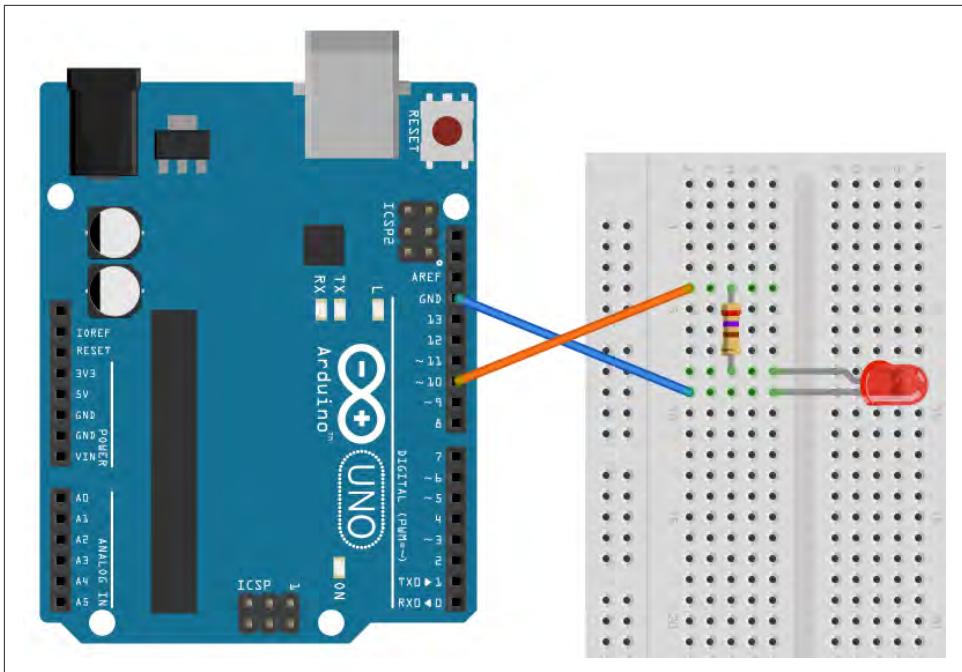


Figure 16-11. Wiring diagram for Arduino PWM control of an LED

The following Python script (*ardu_pwm.py*) will prompt you to enter a value for the PWM power and then set the LED brightness accordingly. Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called *ardu_pwm.py*.

```
import pyfirmata

board = pyfirmata.Arduino('/dev/ttyACM0')
led_pin = board.get_pin('d:10:p')

while True:
    duty_s = raw_input("Enter Brightness (0 to 100):")
    duty = int(duty_s)
    led_pin.write(duty / 100.0)
```

With the value entered as 100, the LED should be at full brightness. The brightness decreases as the number decreases:

```
$ sudo python ardu_pwm.py
Enter Brightness (0 to 100):100
Enter Brightness (0 to 100):50
Enter Brightness (0 to 100):10
Enter Brightness (0 to 100):5
Enter Brightness (0 to 100):
```

Discussion

The sketch for this is actually very straightforward. You define the output as PWM output using the command:

```
led_pin = board.get_pin('d:10:p')
```

The *p* is for PWM. But remember, this only works on Arduino pins marked with a ~ symbol.

We can also modify the slider control (Figure 16-12) so that it will operate through PyFirmata. You can download this sketch as *ardu_gui_slider*.

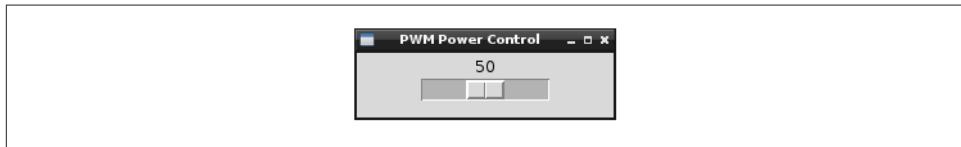


Figure 16-12. A user interface for controlling brightness

See Also

Although an Arduino can deliver 40 mA to an output—roughly 10 times the current available on a Raspberry Pi GPIO pin, it's still not enough to directly drive a motor or high-power LED module. For these, you would need to use the circuit described in Recipe 11.4, modified to use an Arduino output pin rather than a Raspberry Pi GPIO pin.

16.9 Controlling a Servo Using PyFirmata

Problem

You want to control the position of a servo motor by using an Arduino.

Solution

Use PyFirmata to send commands to an Arduino to generate the pulses necessary to control the position of a servo motor.

To make this recipe, you need:

- Arduino Uno (see “Modules” on page 476)
- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “Prototyping Equipment” on page 474)
- 1k Ω resistor (see “Resistors and Capacitors” on page 474)
- LED (see “Integrated Circuits” on page 475)

Connect the breadboard as shown in [Figure 16-13](#).

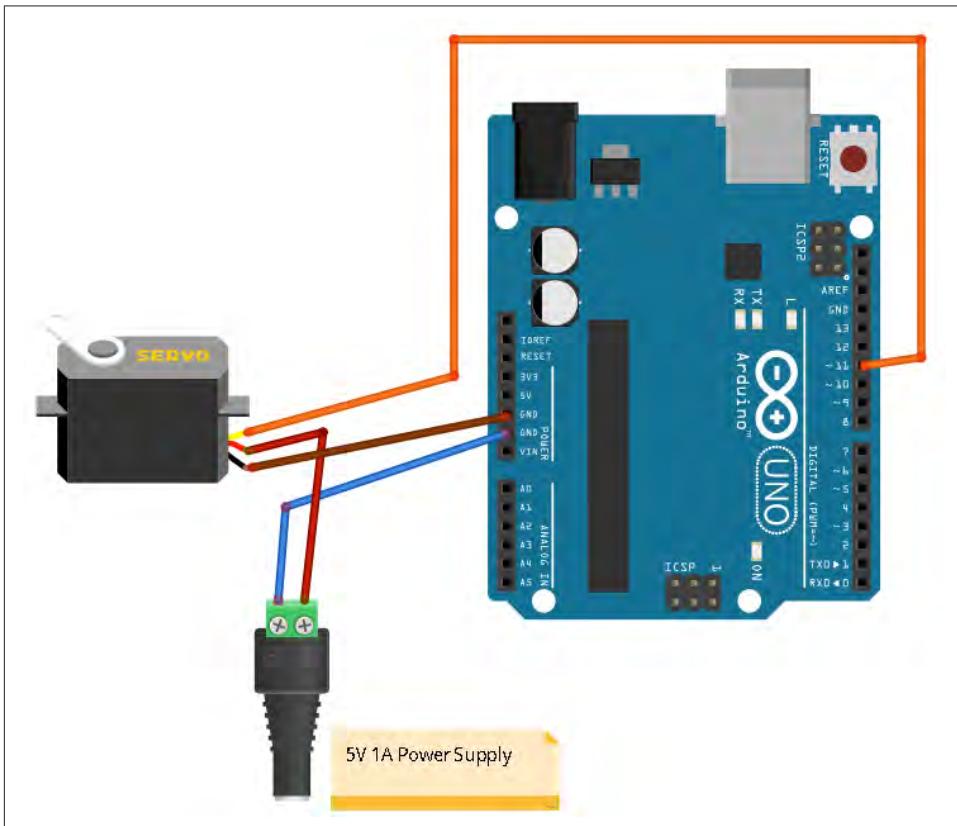


Figure 16-13. Wiring diagram for Arduino controlling a servo motor

If you have not already done so, follow [Recipe 16.3](#) to set up PyFirmata.

The following Python script (*ardu_servo.py*) will prompt you to enter a value for the servo's angle and then set the arm of the servo motor accordingly.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called *ardu_servo.py*.

```
import pyfirmata

board = pyfirmata.Arduino('/dev/ttyACM0')
servo_pin = board.get_pin('d:11:s')

while True:
    angle_s = raw_input("Enter Angle (0 to 180):")
```

```
angle = int(angle_s)
servo_pin.write(angle)
```

With the value entered as 0, the servo should be at one end of its travel. Changing this to 180 sends it to the other end, and 90 puts it somewhere in the middle:

```
$ sudo python ardu_servo.py
Enter Angle (0 to 180):0
Enter Angle (0 to 180):180
Enter Angle (0 to 180):90
```

Discussion

The sketch for this is actually very straightforward. You define the output as a servo output by using the command:

```
led_pin = board.get_pin('d:11:s')
```

The `s` is for servo. This can be used on any of the Arduino digital pins.

If you've built [Recipe 11.1](#), you will notice that, by comparison, there is no jitter of the servo when used with an Arduino in this way.

See Also

The straight Raspberry Pi-only solution to using a servo motor is described in Recipes [11.1](#), [11.2](#), and [11.3](#).

16.10 Custom Communication with an Arduino over TTL Serial

Problem

You want to exchange data with an Arduino by using the serial interfaces of both devices, without using PyFirmata.

Solution

Use a level converter or pair of resistors to connect the RXD pin of the Raspberry Pi to the Tx pin of the Arduino, and the TXD pin of the Raspberry Pi to the Rx pin of the Arduino.

To make this recipe, you will need:

- Arduino Uno (see “[Modules](#)” on page [476](#))
- Breadboard and jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page [474](#))

- 270Ω and 470Ω resistors (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474) or a four-way bidirectional level converter (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)
- $10k\Omega$ trimpot (see “[Resistors and Capacitors](#)” on page 474)

If you are using the level converter module, then connect the breadboard as shown in [Figure 16-14](#).

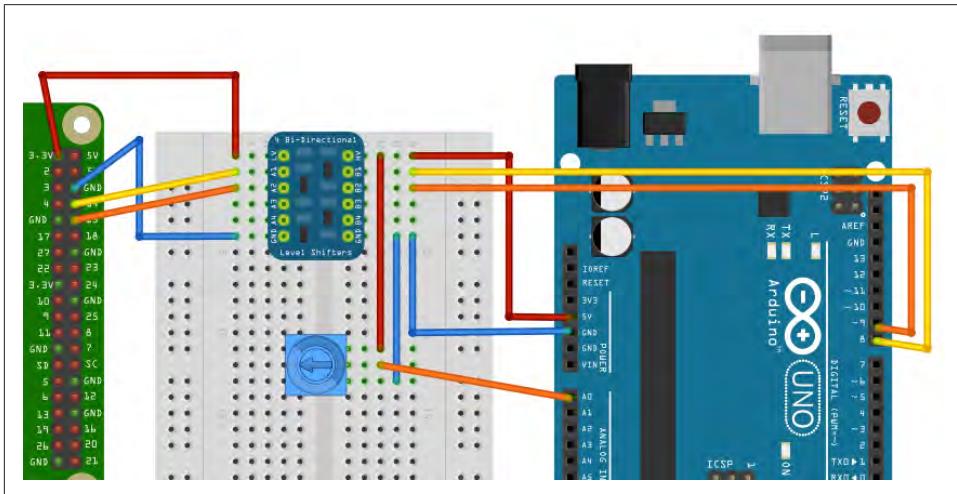


Figure 16-14. Wiring diagram for serial communication with an Arduino

If, on the other hand, you are using the pair of resistors, then connect the breadboard as shown in [Figure 16-15](#).

The Arduino Rx input is fine with just 3.3V from the Raspberry Pi TxD pin; however, the 5V coming from the Arduino Tx pin must be dropped to the 3V expected by the Raspberry Pi.

You will need to disable serial port logging and install PySerial by following [Recipe 9.6](#).

The following Python script (*ardu_pi_serial.py*) will prompt you to enter a command of either l or r. If you enter l, then the built-in Arduino LED will toggle on and off. If, on the other hand, you enter r, the Arduino will read the analog value from its analog input A0 and send back a number between 0 and 1023 as the reading.

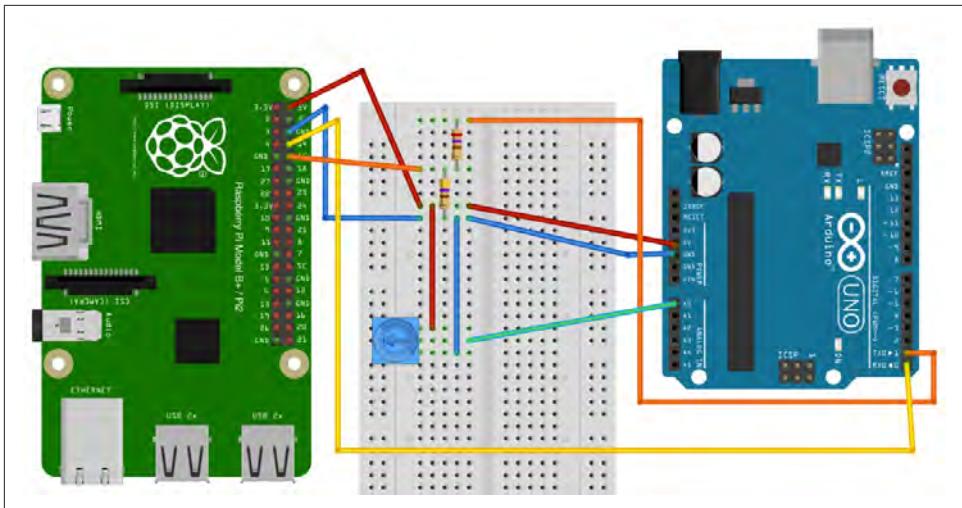


Figure 16-15. Wiring diagram for serial communication with an Arduino (using resistors)

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called *ardu_pi_serial.py*.

```
import serial

ser = serial.Serial('/dev/ttyAMA0', 9600)

while True:
    command = raw_input("Enter command: l - toggle LED, r - read A0 ")
    if command == 'l' :
        ser.write('l')
    elif command == 'r' :
        ser.write('r')
        print(ser.readline())
```

You also need to upload the following sketch, *ArduinoSerial*, onto your Arduino Uno. You can paste it into a new sketch window, and it is available with the rest of this book's programs for download.

```
#include "SoftwareSerial.h"

int ledPin = 13;
int analogPin = A0;

SoftwareSerial ser(8, 9); // RX, TX

boolean ledOn = false;

void setup()
```

```

{
  ser.begin(9600);
  pinMode(ledPin, OUTPUT);
}

void loop()
{
  if (ser.available())
  {
    char ch = ser.read();
    if (ch == 'l')
    {
      toggleLED();
    }
    if (ch == 'r')
    {
      sendAnalogReading();
    }
  }
}

void toggleLED()
{
  ledOn = ! ledOn;
  digitalWrite(ledPin, ledOn);
}

void sendAnalogReading()
{
  int reading = analogRead(analogPin);
  ser.println(reading);
}

```

Run the program and test that the built-in *L* LED on the Arduino toggles on and off using the *l* command. Then try setting the trimpot to different positions and take analog readings by sending the *r* command:

```

$ sudo python ardu_pi_serial.py
Enter command: l - toggle LED, r - read A0 l
Enter command: l - toggle LED, r - read A0 l
Enter command: l - toggle LED, r - read A0 r
0

Enter command: l - toggle LED, r - read A0 r
540

Enter command: l - toggle LED, r - read A0 r
1023

```

Discussion

The code in the Python program uses the PySerial library to open a connection onto the serial port. The main program loop then repeatedly asks for commands and processes them, in both cases by writing the single-character command to the serial port. In the case of the `r` command, it also reads a line from the serial connection and then prints it.

Note that, despite appearances, here the result of `serial.readline()` is a string. If you need to convert this into a number, you can use the function `int` to convert it. For example:

```
line = ser.readline()
value = int(line)
```

The Arduino sketch is a little more complicated. The example sketch provided can easily be modified to add more inputs or outputs and respond to more commands.

This sketch does not use the Arduino's hardware serial port, as this is generally used by its USB connection. Instead, an Arduino library called *SoftwareSerial* is used to allow pins 8 and 9 to be used as Rx and Tx, respectively.

As with all Arduino sketches, there must be a `setup` function that is called one time when the Arduino starts up and a `loop` function is called repeatedly.

The `setup` function begins serial communication and sets the pin for the built-in LED (on Arduino pin 13) to be an output.

The `loop` function first checks to see if any serial messages have arrived by using the `ser.available` function call. If there is a message to process, it reads the character, and the following `if` clauses call the appropriate helper function to process the command.

See Also

For more information about the SoftwareSerial library, see <http://arduino.cc/en/Reference/SoftwareSerial>.

The alternative to writing your own custom code for communication is to use PyFirmata ([Recipe 16.3](#)).

In addition to communicating over serial, you can communicate with the Arduino using I2C ([Recipe 16.11](#)).

16.11 Custom Communication with an Arduino over I2C

Problem

You want to exchange data with an Arduino, using the I2C interfaces of both devices.

Solution

The I2C bus has the concept of master and slave devices. The master device controls the bus and a number of slave devices can be connected to one master, with each slave having its own address.

You will install a sketch on the Arduino that makes it an I2C slave device and use the *SMBus* Python library to write an I2C program for the Raspberry Pi. The SDA, SCL, and ground connections of both devices need to be connected to each other, and the Arduino powered separately or from the 5V supply of the Raspberry Pi.

To make this recipe, you need:

- Arduino Uno (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)
- Male-to-female jumper wires (see “[Prototyping Equipment](#)” on page 474)

Connect the breadboard, holding the components to the Arduino as shown in [Figure 16-16](#).

The Arduino board used here is the latest Arduino Uno R3. If you have an older board that doesn’t have the two dedicated SCL and SDA pins, then you can connect the Raspberry Pi SDA and SCL pins to Arduino pins A4 and A5.

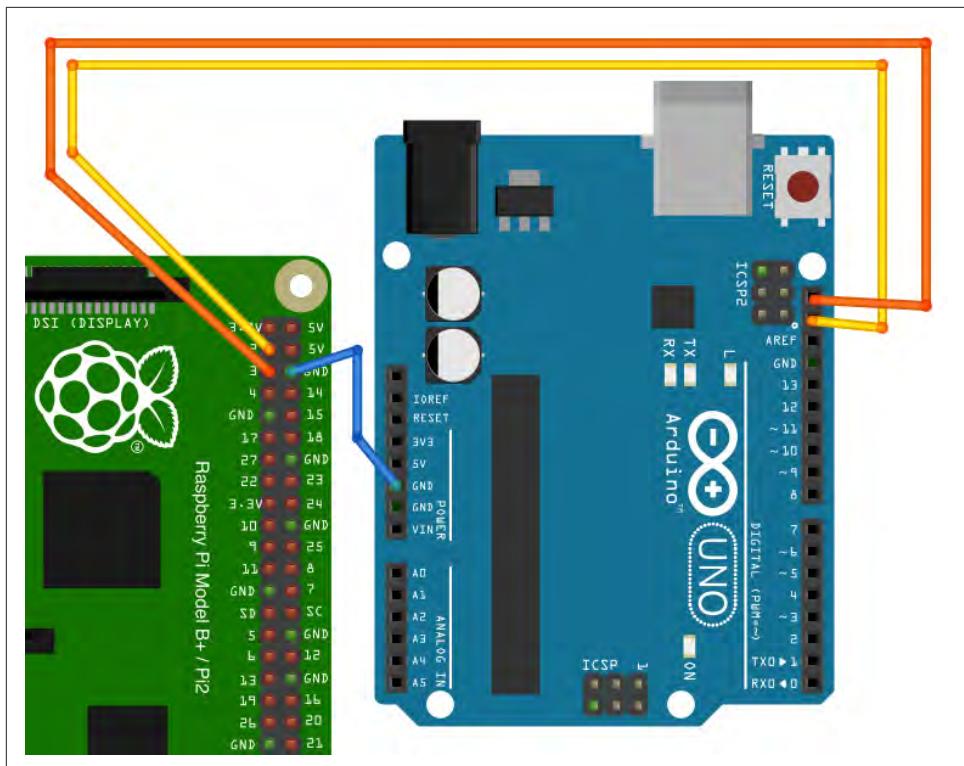


Figure 16-16. Wiring diagram for I2C communication with an Arduino

Install the following sketch onto the Arduino. You can find it, named *ArduinoI2C*, in the program downloads for this book at <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>.

```
#include <Wire.h>

int SLAVE_ADDRESS = 0x04;
int ledPin = 13;
int analogPin = A0;

boolean ledOn = false;

void setup()
{
    pinMode(ledPin, OUTPUT);
    Wire.begin(SLAVE_ADDRESS);
    Wire.onReceive(processMessage);
    Wire.onRequest(sendAnalogReading);
}

void loop()
{
```

```

}

void processMessage(int n)
{
    char ch = Wire.read();
    if (ch == 'l')
    {
        toggleLED();
    }
}

void toggleLED()
{
    ledOn = ! ledOn;
    digitalWrite(ledPin, ledOn);
}

void sendAnalogReading()
{
    int reading = analogRead(analogPin);
    Wire.write(reading >> 2);
}

```

You need to follow [Recipe 9.3](#) to set up Raspberry Pi for I2C communication.

Open an editor (nano or IDLE) and paste in the following code. As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download the program from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called *ardu_pi_i2c.py*.

```

import smbus
import time

# for RPI revision 1, use "bus = smbus.SMBus(0)"
bus = smbus.SMBus(1)

# This must match what's in the Arduino Sketch
SLAVE_ADDRESS = 0x04

def request_reading():
    reading = int(bus.read_byte(SLAVE_ADDRESS))
    print(reading)

while True:
    command = raw_input("Enter command: l - toggle LED, r - read A0 ")
    if command == 'l' :
        bus.write_byte(SLAVE_ADDRESS, ord('l'))
    elif command == 'r' :
        request_reading()

```

The test program is very similar to the one used to demonstrate serial communication in [Recipe 16.10](#). It's designed to show communication in both directions. Enter-

ing the `l` command toggles the Arduino's built-in LED on and off, and using the `r` command reports a reading from the Arduino's A0 analog input. You can use a male-to-male jumper wire to connect A0 to 3.3V, 5V, or GND on the Arduino to get different readings:

```
$ sudo python ardu_pi_i2c.py
Enter command: l - toggle LED, r - read A0 l
Enter command: l - toggle LED, r - read A0 l
Enter command: l - toggle LED, r - read A0 r
184
Enter command: l - toggle LED, r - read A0
```

Discussion

The Arduino acts as the I2C slave in this arrangement and must therefore be given an *address* so that the master running on the Raspberry Pi can identify it if there is more than one slave device connected. In this case, the address is set to 0x04 and held in the `SLAVE_ADDRESS` variable.

The `setup` function in the Arduino then sets up two callback functions that will be used. The function `processMessage` will be invoked whenever the `onReceive` event occurs. This will happen whenever a command is sent from the Raspberry Pi. The other callback function, `sendAnalogReading`, is associated with the `onRequest` event. This occurs when the Raspberry Pi requests data, and will read the analog value, divide it by four to make it fit into a single byte, and then send it back to the Raspberry Pi.

The Python counterpart to this sketch first creates a new instance of `SMBus` called `bus`. This takes a single argument of 1. This is the I2C port on the Raspberry Pi to be used. This will be 1 unless you are using the very first version of the Raspberry Pi (revision 1). These boards have a black audio connector rather than the light blue connector of the revision 2 boards. If you have one of these older boards, use 0 as the argument here. The I2C port available at the GPIO connector was swapped between these two revisions.

The program prompts the user for a command (`l` or `r`). If the command is `l`, it writes the character `l` to the Arduino, which in turn causes the `onReceive` handler (`processMessage`) to be run. This in turn will call `toggleLED`.

If, on the other hand, the user enters the `r` command, then the `request_reading` function will be called. This will call `read_byte` in the `SMBus` library, which will cause the `onRequest` event in the Arduino sketch to be invoked.

You may be wondering why it is OK to connect the 5V Arduino directly to the I2C connections of the Raspberry Pi, without the level converter module that you had to use for serial communications (see [Recipe 16.5](#)). The reason is that the I2C bus standard operates at whatever voltage the pull-up resistors connected to SDA and SCL use. In this case, the Arduino Uno has no pull-up resistors connected to the I2C lines. These are provided by the Raspberry Pi, which pulls them up to 3.3V.



Although the Arduino has no pull-up resistors on the I2C lines, this is not true of all I2C devices. If the I2C device operates at 5V, make sure that it has no pull-up resistors (but if it does, you can usually remove them relatively easily).

See Also

For the serial equivalent to this setup, see [Recipe 16.10](#).

16.12 Using Small Arduinos with a Raspberry Pi

Problem

You want to use an Arduino board with a Raspberry Pi, but would like something more compact.

Solution

Use one of the small breadboard-friendly Arduino boards.

[Figure 16-17](#) shows an Arduino Pro Mini board. Boards like this have the great advantage that they can be plugged directly into the breadboard along with other components needed for the project. The Pro Mini board is also available in a 3.3V version, which avoids any need for level conversion when you're using it with a Raspberry Pi.

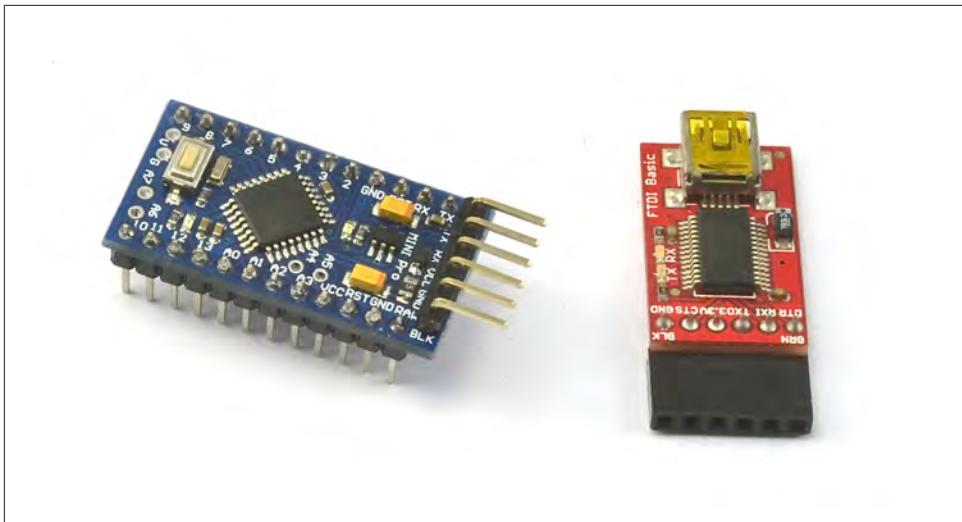


Figure 16-17. Arduino Pro Mini and programmer interface

Discussion

Some of these boards, such as the Pro Mini shown in [Figure 16-17](#), require a USB programming interface. You can program them from the Raspberry Pi, or another computer if that proves problematic.

In addition to official Arduino boards, you can also find many low-cost clones that can make a great companion to the Raspberry Pi.

See Also

Other boards to consider are:

- [Teensy](#)
- [Arduino Micro](#)
- [Arduino Nano](#)

16.13 Getting Started with an aLaMode Board and a Raspberry Pi

Problem

You want to use an aLaMode board to interface external electronics with the Raspberry Pi.

Solution

The aLaMode board (see [Table A-3](#)) shown in [Figure 16-18](#) is a wonderful board that is essentially an Arduino Uno with a Raspberry Pi GPIO socket in one corner. The aLaMode fits neatly onto the Raspberry Pi and allows you to use Arduino shields without the need for lots of extra wires. Although designed for the original Raspberry Pi, this board can also be used with the Raspberry Pi 2.

Note that the board in [Figure 16-18](#) is shown without the header sockets needed to attach Arduino shields.

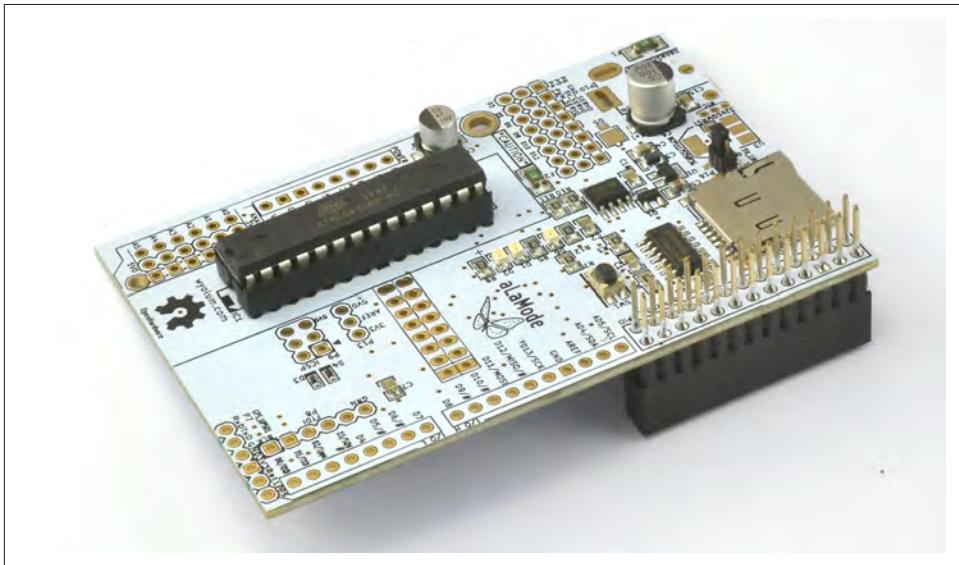


Figure 16-18. aLaMode interface board

The installation instructions in [Recipe 16.1](#) will also set up aLaMode in your Arduino environment. From the Tools menu of the Arduino IDE, choose Board and then ALaMode ([Figure 16-19](#)).

You also need to set the serial port to `/devttyS0` before programming the aLaMode, which takes place through the serial connection.

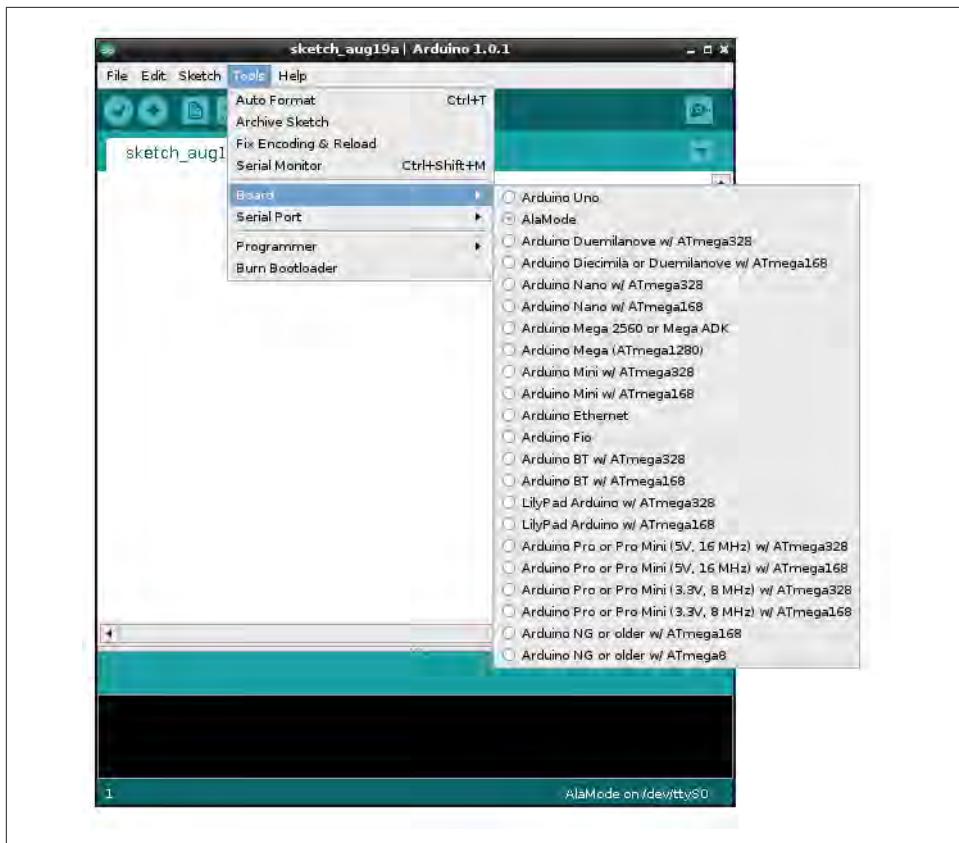


Figure 16-19. aLaMode board type on the Arduino IDE

Discussion

All the Firmata recipes in this chapter will work with the aLaMode, along with the custom serial communication example of [Recipe 16.10](#). The only modification necessary is in the Python programs communicating with the aLaMode, as they must use the serial port rather than the USB port.

The aLaMode is hardwired to the Arduino's Tx and Rx pins with built-in level conversion.

When using Firmata, you need to change the port from `/dev/ttyACM0` to `/dev/ttyAMA0`:

```
board = pyfirmata.Arduino('/dev/ttyAMA0')
```

Similarly, if you are writing your own custom code, you will need to change the line that opens the serial connection so that it looks like this:

```
ser = serial.Serial('/dev/ttyAMA0', 9600)
```

To try the aLaMode, just load the *Standard Firmata* sketch onto the aLaMode and then run the Python program `ardu_flash_ser.py` ([Recipe 16.5](#)).

Some of the interesting features of the aLaMode board are:

- It can be powered from the 5V line of the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector or a separate 5V power adapter connected to its micro-USB socket.
- The RTC is connected directly to the Raspberry Pi rather than the Arduino side of the board.
- Arduino shields can be attached, with a high degree of compatibility ([Recipe 16.14](#)).
- It can be an I2C slave. In addition to being linked by serial, the aLaMode's I2C connections are also connected to those of the Raspberry Pi ([Recipe 16.11](#)).
- It has a micro SD card reader.
- It has headers for direct connection to servo motors ([Recipe 16.9](#)).



The aLaMode does suffer from one minor design flaw—with the Arduino shield headers soldered in place, the analog inputs A0 to A5 can easily touch the bare metal of the RJ45 Ethernet socket of the Raspberry Pi. To avoid this, place a couple of layers of electrical insulating tape over the top surface of the Ethernet socket on the Raspberry Pi before attaching the aLaMode ([Figure 16-20](#)).

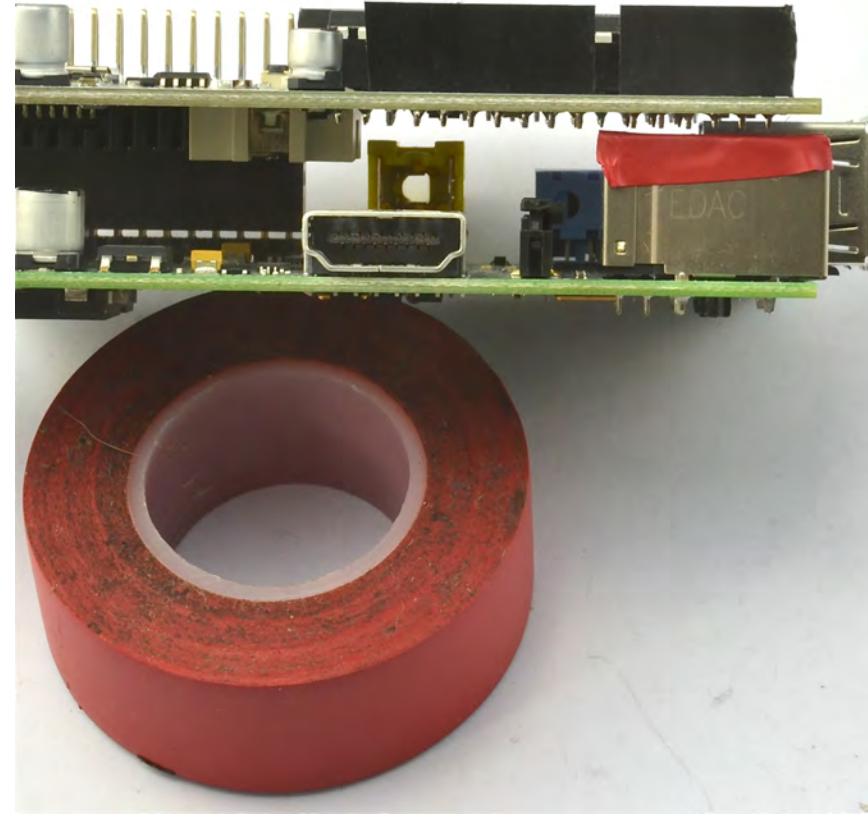


Figure 16-20. Insulating the RJ45 connector on a Raspberry Pi

See Also

The official aLaMode instructions can be found at <http://bit.ly/1d2YMxh>.

16.14 Using an Arduino Shield with an aLaMode Board and a Raspberry Pi

Problem

You want to use an Arduino shield with a Raspberry Pi.

Solution

Use an aLaMode interface board. You may find that the board requires the Arduino-style header sockets for shields to be soldered into place.

As an example, you'll connect an Arduino LCD shield to the aLaMode (Figure 16-21).

To make this recipe, you need:

- aLaMode Board (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)
- Freetronic (or other) Arduino LCD shield (see “[Modules](#)” on page 476)



Figure 16-21. Using an LCD Arduino shield with an aLaMode

As with all the program examples in this book, you can also download this sketch from the Code section of <http://www.raspberrypicookbook.com>, where it is called *AlaModeShield*.

```
#include <LiquidCrystal.h>

// pins for Freetronics LCD Shield

LiquidCrystal lcd(8, 9, 4, 5, 6, 7);

void setup()
```

```
{  
    lcd.begin(16, 2);  
    lcd.print("Counting!");  
}  
  
void loop()  
{  
    lcd.setCursor(0, 1);  
    lcd.print(millis() / s1000);  
}
```

Simply upload the sketch onto the aLaMode and you should see the message “Counting” appear on the top row of the display, while the bottom row should show a number that counts the seconds.

Discussion

This example used the Freetronics LCD shield. There are a number of other LCD display shields, and some have different pin allocations. If you use a different module, you’ll need to change the line:

```
LiquidCrystal lcd(8, 9, 4, 5, 6, 7);
```

The parameters are the Arduino pins to be used for the following LCD connections: rs, enable, d4, d5, d6, and d7, in that order.

See Also

The reference material for the Arduino LiquidCrystal library can be found at <http://arduino.cc/en/Reference/LiquidCrystal>.

APPENDIX A

Parts and Suppliers

Parts

The following tables will help you to find the parts used in this book. Where possible, I have listed product codes for a few suppliers.

There are now many electronic component suppliers that cater to the maker and electronics hobbyist. Some of the most popular are listed in [Table A-1](#).

Table A-1. Parts suppliers

Supplier	Website	Notes
Adafruit	http://www.adafruit.com	Good for modules
Digikey	http://www.digikey.com/	Wide range of components
MakerShed	http://www.makershed.com/	Good for modules, kits, and tools
MCM Electronics	http://www.mcmelectronics.com/	Wide range of components
Mouser	http://www.mouser.com	Wide range of components
SeeedStudio	http://www.seeedstudio.com/	Interesting low-cost modules
SparkFun	http://www.sparkfun.com	Good for modules
MonkMakes	http://www.monkmakes.com	Electronic Kits for Raspberry Pi, etc.
Pimoroni	https://shop.pimoroni.com	UK-based manufacturer of interesting HATs and retailer
Polulu	https://www.pololu.com/	Great for motor controllers and robots
CPC	http://cpc.farnell.com/	UK-based; wide range of components
Ciseco	http://shop.ciseco.co.uk/	Suppliers of PiLite, Humble Pi, etc.
Farnell	http://www.farnell.com/	International; wide range of components
Maplin	http://www.maplin.co.uk/	UK-based; bricks and mortar component and Pi store
Proto-pic	http://proto-pic.co.uk/	UK-based; stock SparkFun and Adafruit modules

The other great source of components is eBay.

Searching for components can be time-consuming and difficult. The [Octopart component search engine](#) can be very helpful in tracking down parts. MonkMakes, Adafruit, and Sparkfun all have packs of components to get you started.

Prototyping Equipment

Many of the hardware projects in this book use jumper wires of various sorts. Male-to-female leads (to connect the Raspberry Pi GPIO connector to a breadboard) and male-to-male (to make connections on the breadboard) are particularly useful. Female-to-female are occasionally useful for connecting modules directly to GPIO pins. You rarely need leads longer than 3 inches (75mm). [Table A-2](#) lists some jumper wire and breadboard specifications, along with their suppliers.

A handy way to get started with a breadboard, jumper wires, and some basic components is to buy a starter kit like the Electronics Starter Kit for Raspberry Pi by [Monk-Makes.com](#).

Table A-2. Prototyping equipment

Description	Suppliers
M-M jumper wires	SparkFun: PRT-08431; Adafruit: 759
M-F jumper wires	SparkFun: PRT-09140; Adafruit: 825
F-F jumper wires	SparkFun: PRT-08430; Adafruit: 794
Half-sized breadboard	SparkFun: PRT-09567; Adafruit: 64
Pi Cobbler	Adafruit: 1105
Raspberry Leaf (26 pin)	Adafruit: 1772
Raspberry Leaf (40 pin)	Adafruit: 2196
Electronics Starter Kit for Raspberry Pi	Amazon; monkmakes.com
Adafruit PermaProto for Pi (half breadboard)	Adafruit: 1148
Adafruit PermaProto for Pi (full breadboard)	Adafruit: 1135
Adafruit PermaProto HAT	Adafruit: 2314
DC barrel jack-to-screw terminal adapter (female)	Adafruit: 368

Resistors and Capacitors

[Table A-3](#) shows resistors and capacitors used in this cookbook and some suppliers.

Table A-3. Resistors and capacitors

Part	Suppliers
270Ω 0.25W resistor	Mouser: 293-270-RC
470Ω 0.25W resistor	Mouser: 293-470-RC
1kΩ 0.25W resistor	Mouser: 293-1k-RC
3.3kΩ 0.25W resistor	Mouser: 293-3.3k-RC
4.7kΩ 0.25W resistor	Mouser: 293-4.7k-RC
10 kΩ trimpot	Adafruit: 356; SparkFun: COM-09806; Mouser: 652-3362F-1-103LF
Photoresistor	Adafruit: 161; SparkFun: SEN-09088
330nF capacitor	Mouser: 80-C330C334K5R
Thermistor T0 of 1k Beta 3800 NTC	Mouser: 871-B57164K102J (Note: Beta is 3730)

Transistors and Diodes

Table A-4 lists transistors and diodes used in this cookbook and some suppliers.

Table A-4. Transistors and diodes

Part	Suppliers
FQP30N06L N-channel logic level MOSFET transistor	Mouser: 512-FQP30N06L; Sparkfun: COM-10213
2N3904 NPN bipolar transistor	SparkFun: COM-00521; Adafruit: 756
1N4001 diode	Mouser: 512-1N4001; SparkFun: COM-08589; Adafruit: 755
TIP120 Darlington transistor	Adafruit: 976; CPC: SC10999
2N7000 MOSFET transistor	Mouser: 512-2N7000; CPC: SC06951

Integrated Circuits

Table A-5 lists integrated circuits used throughout this cookbook and some suppliers.

Table A-5. Integrated circuits

Part	Suppliers
7805 voltage regulator	SparkFun: COM-00107; Adafruit: 2164; Mouser: 511-L7805CV, CPC: SC10586
L293D motor driver	SparkFun: COM-00315; Adafruit: 807; Mouser: 511-L293D; CPC: SC10241
ULN2803 Darlington driver IC	SparkFun: COM-00312; Adafruit: 970; Mouser: 511-ULN2803A; CPC: SC08607
DS18B20 temperature sensor	SparkFun: SEN-00245; Adafruit: 374; Mouser: 700-DS18B20; CPC: SC10426
MCP3008 eight-channel ADC IC	Adafruit: 856; Mouser: 579-MCP3008-I/P; CPC: SC12789
TMP36 temperature sensor	SparkFun: SEN-10988; Adafruit: 165; Mouser: 584-TMP36GT9Z; CPC: SC10437

Opto-Electronics

Table A-6 lists opto-electronic components used throughout this cookbook and some suppliers.

Table A-6. Opto-electronics

Part	Suppliers
5mm red LED	SparkFun: COM-09590; Adafruit: 299
RGB common cathode LED	SparkFun: COM-11120; eBay
TSOP38238 IR sensor	SparkFun: SEN-10266; Adafruit: 157

Modules

Table A-7 lists modules used in this cookbook and some suppliers.

Table A-7. Modules

Part	Suppliers
Raspberry Pi camera module	Adafruit: 1367; MCM: 28-17733; CPC: SC13023
Arduino Uno	SparkFun: DEV-11021; Adafruit: 50; CPC: A000066
Level converter, four-way	SparkFun: BOB-11978; Adafruit: 757
Level converter eight-way	Adafruit: 395
LiPo boost converter/charger	SparkFun: PRT-11231
PowerSwitch tail	Adafruit: 268
16-channel servo controller	Adafruit: 815
Motor driver 1A dual	SparkFun: ROB-09457
RasPiRobot board V3	Adafruit: 1940; Amazon
MonkMakes RasPiRobot Rover Kit	Amazon
Pi Plate	Adafruit: 801
PIR motion detector	Adafruit: 189
Venus GPS module	SparkFun: GPS-11058
Methane sensor	SparkFun: SEN-09404
Gas sensor breakout board	SparkFun: BOB-08891
ADXL335 triple-axis accelerometer	Adafruit: 163
4x7-segment LED with I2C backpack	Adafruit: 878
Bicolor LED square-pixel matrix with I2C backpack	Adafruit: 902
aLaMode interface board	Makershed: MKWY1; Seeedstudio: ARD10251P
Freetronics Arduino LCD shield	www.freetronics.com
RTC module	Adafruit: 264
16x2 HD44780 compatible LCD module	SparkFun: LCD-00255; Adafruit: 181

Part	Suppliers
Sense HAT	Adafruit: 2738
Adafruit Capacitative Touch HAT	Adafruit: 2340
Stepper Motor HAT	Adafruit: 2348
16 Channel PWM HAT	Adafruit: 2327
Pimoroni Explorer HAT Pro	pimoroni.com; Adafruit: 2427
Squid Button	monkmakes.com; Amazon
Raspberry Squid RGB LED	monkmakes.com; Amazon
I2C OLED display 128x64 pixels	eBay

Miscellaneous

Miscellaneous tools and components used in this cookbook and some suppliers are listed in [Table A-8](#).

Table A-8. Miscellaneous

Part	Suppliers
1200mAh LiPo battery	Adafruit: 258
5V relay	SparkFun: COM-00100
5V panel meter	SparkFun: TOL-10285
Standard servomotor	SparkFun: ROB-09065; Adafruit: 1449
9g mini servomotor	Adafruit: 169
5V 1A power supply	Adafruit: 276
Low power 6V DC motor	Adafruit: 711
0.1 inch header pins	SparkFun: PRT-00116; Adafruit: 392
5V 5-pin unipolar stepper motor	Adafruit: 858
12V, 4-pin bipolar stepper motor	Adafruit: 324
Magician chassis with gearmotors	SparkFun: ROB-10825
6×AA battery holder	Adafruit: 248
Tactile push switch	SparkFun: COM-00097; Adafruit: 504
Miniature slide switch	SparkFun: COM-09609; Adafruit: 805
Rotary encoder	Adafruit: 377
4×3 keypad	SparkFun: COM-08653
Piezo buzzer	SparkFun: COM-07950; Adafruit: 160
Reed switch	Adafruit: 375

APPENDIX B

Raspberry Pi Pinouts

Raspberry Pi 3/2 model B, B+, A+, Zero

Figure B-1 shows the pinout for the current 40-pin GPIO Raspberry Pi.

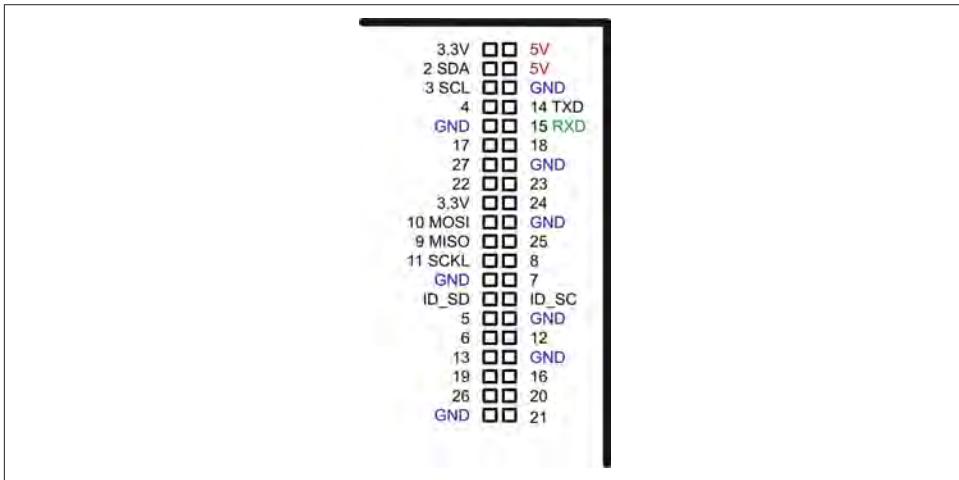


Figure B-1. 40-pin Raspberry Pi GPIO pinout

Raspberry Pi model B rev. 2, A

If you have a Raspberry Pi, it is most likely to be a model B rev. 2 board, as shown in [Figure B-2](#).

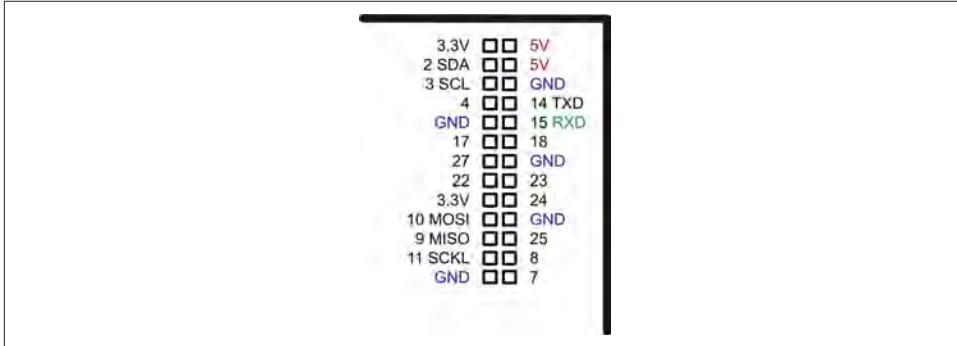


Figure B-2. Raspberry Pi model B rev 2 and model A GPIO pinout

Raspberry Pi model B rev. 1

The very first released version of the Raspberry Pi model B (rev. 1) has some minor pinout differences to the rev. 2 that followed. This is the only version of the Raspberry Pi that is not compatible with later pinouts. The incompatible pins that changed are highlighted in bold in [Figure B-3](#).

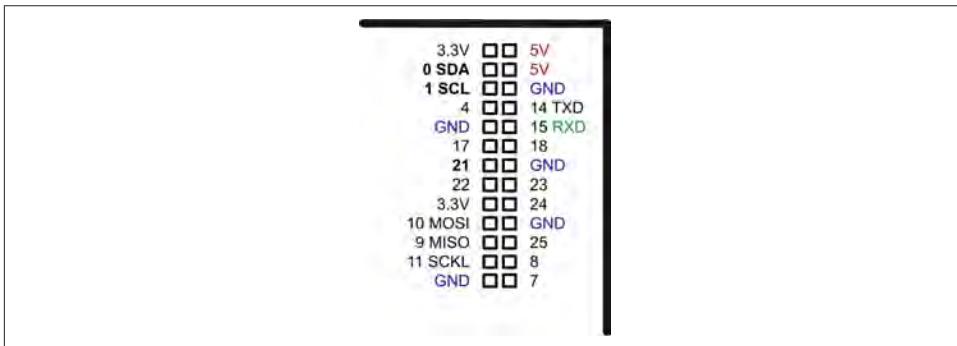


Figure B-3. Raspberry Pi model B rev 1 GPIO pinout

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About the Author

Dr. Simon Monk (Preston, UK) has a degree in Cybernetics and Computer Science and a PhD in Software Engineering. Simon spent several years as an academic before he returned to the industry, cofounding the mobile software company Momote Ltd. Simon is now a full-time author writing on many aspects of open source hardware, including Raspberry Pi and Arduino as well as a number of general electronics books. You can find out more about his books at <http://www.simonmonk.org> or follow him on Twitter @simonmonk2.

Colophon

The animal on the cover of *Raspberry Pi Cookbook* is the Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*), which also goes by the names northern sparrowhawk or simply sparrowhawk. This small bird of prey is found throughout the Old World. Adult males have bluish-gray upper plumage and orange-barred underparts; females and younger birds are all brown with brown-barred underparts. The female is up to 25% larger than the male.

The sparrowhawk specializes in preying on woodland birds, but can be found in any habitat hunting garden birds in towns or cities. Males favor hunting smaller birds—tits, finches, and sparrows; females tend to catch thrushes and starlings, and are capable of killing birds weighing up to 18 ounces (500 grams) or more.

Eurasian sparrowhawks breed in nests that can measure up to 60 cm (2 feet) across, built with twigs. Afterward, four or five pale blue, brown-spotted eggs are laid. Success of breeding relies on females maintaining a high weight; the male delivers food to its mate. After 33 days, the chicks hatch, and they fledge after 24 to 28 days.

A juvenile sparrowhawk has a 34% chance of surviving its first year. After that, its chance of survival more than doubles, with 69% of adults surviving from one year to the next. The typical lifespan of these birds is four years. Mortality is greater for young males than for young females. Despite a sharp population decline after WWII, the sparrowhawk is the most common bird of prey in Europe. The use of organochlorine insecticides to treat seeds before sowing has been known to incapacitate or kill sparrowhawks. Those affected lay fragile-shelled eggs that break during incubation. After the chemicals were banned, the sparrowhawk population recovered and remains common, classified as Least Concern by BirdLife International.

The cover image is from *Cassell's Natural History*. The cover fonts are URW Typewriter and Guardian Sans. The text font is Adobe Minion Pro; the heading font is Adobe Myriad Condensed; and the code font is Dalton Maag's Ubuntu Mono.