

# Sense of Connection Workshop 2 - The Remote'ability

Using the Circuit Playground for a remote sense of connection. 2020.10.04

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# References

This document

[https://github.com/paulmirel/telepresence\\_of\\_touch/archive/master.zip](https://github.com/paulmirel/telepresence_of_touch/archive/master.zip)

Workshop\_2\_Documents/Sense of Connection Workshop 2 - The Remote'ability.pdf

Our wiki

<http://ps.wdka.nl/digitalcraft/index.php/Unrvl2020>

Circuit Playground devices

<https://learn.adafruit.com/adafruit-circuit-playground-express>

<https://learn.adafruit.com/adafruit-circuit-playground-bluefruit>

The "cp" interface to the circuit-playground:

<https://circuitpython.readthedocs.io/projects/circuitplayground/en/latest/api.html>

The full library:

<https://circuitpython.readthedocs.io/en/latest/shared-bindings/index.html>

Processing documentation:

<https://processing.org/reference/>

MQTT

<http://mqtt.org>

# Prerequisites

1. Some kind of international English
2. Participation in Workshop 1, working Mu Editor, downloaded zip
3. Assignment to a 3 person group for Workshop 2
4. Logged into the UNRVL Discord. Introduce yourself to your workshop group.
  - a. Camera, and microphone that works with Zoom *and* Discord.
  - b. Use the introduction to check microphone/camera
5. Circuit Playground connected to your computer
6. (New) Download and install the Processing IDE, version 3
  - a. <https://processing.org/download/>
  - b. Check your version, we need version 3
  - c. Run at least one example
7. (New) Download the "github zip" again, because I probably had to update something since Paul's workshop.
  - a. [https://github.com/paulmirel/telepresence\\_of\\_touch/archive/master.zip](https://github.com/paulmirel/telepresence_of_touch/archive/master.zip)
8. Open this document (from the zip): Workshop\_2\_Documents/Sense of Connection Workshop 2 - The Remote'ability.pdf

# Orientation

The workshop will be presented in an American Mid-Western English, with an interlude in whatever they call the English they teach in Belgium. Vic speaks an American East-Coast English.

Zoom is where I'll be presenting the workshop. Use the "raise my hand" feature to interrupt and ask for clarifications. If something doesn't seem clear to you, it will probably help others to hear you ask about it. For example, I'm too familiar with terminology in programming, ask what words mean!

We'll be using Discord when you need help with each exercise. You should try asking your group members for help first. Then use the general channel on the UNRVL discord to ask for help. Vic, Frederik, (others?), and I will try to get to you.

I'm tired of typing out "circuit playground", I'll just use "CPX" or "CP".

## Interlude, The Metaphysics of Engineers

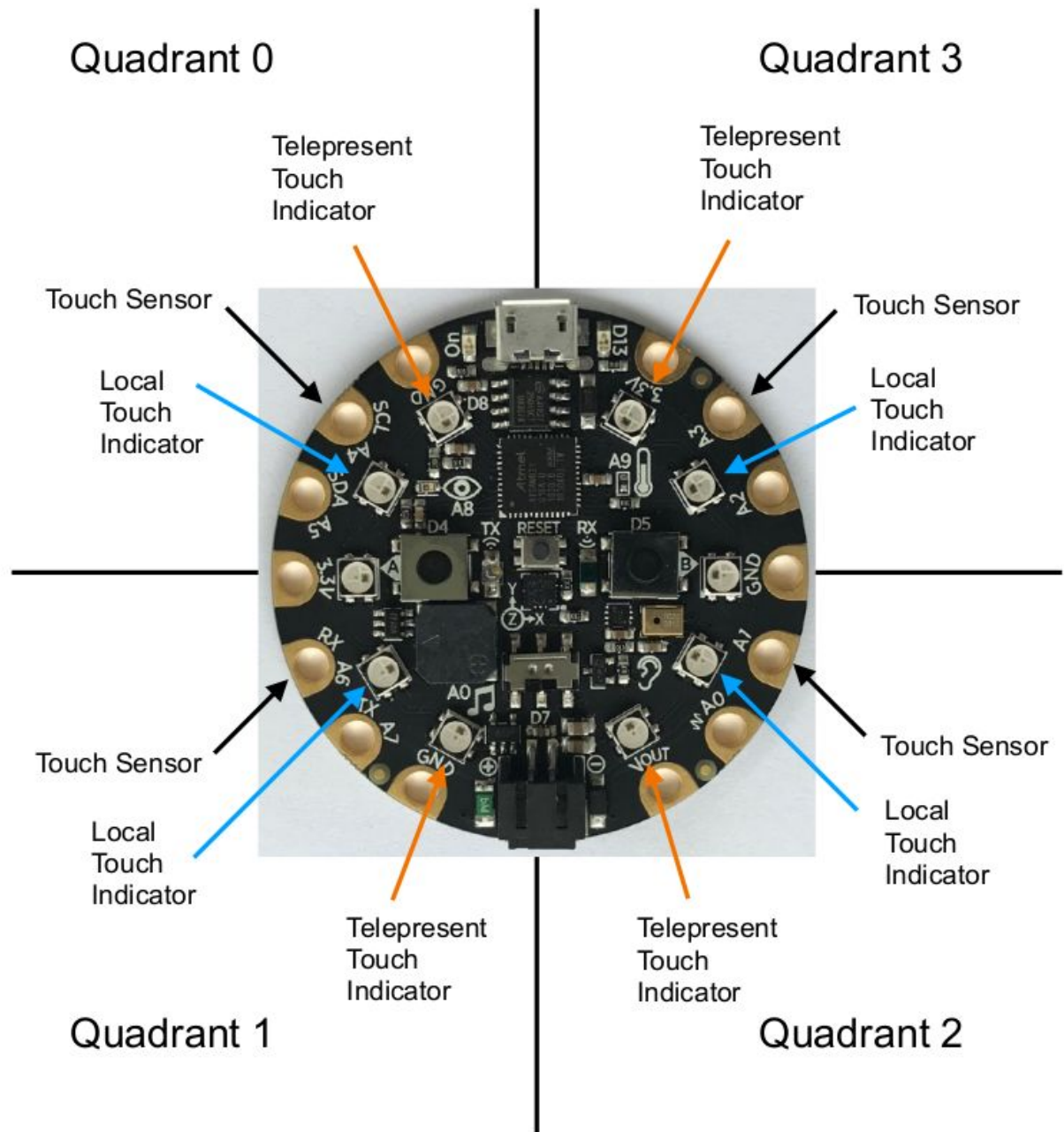
My favorite phrase, "Noooooooo...".

"No" means "wait a minute while I think about that." (compare with "niet mogelijk") . Focus vs. divergence. Some do have a sense of humour.

# Recapitulation

Using Paul's Step xxx code, Mu Editor, is your CPX working? Touch -> LED.

Workshop\_1\_Documents/Telepresence\_of\_Touch\_W1\_Local.pdf, page 1..2.



- Raise hand in zoom to clarify presentation
- On Discord, ask your group, and general, for help doing the exercise

# Elaboration

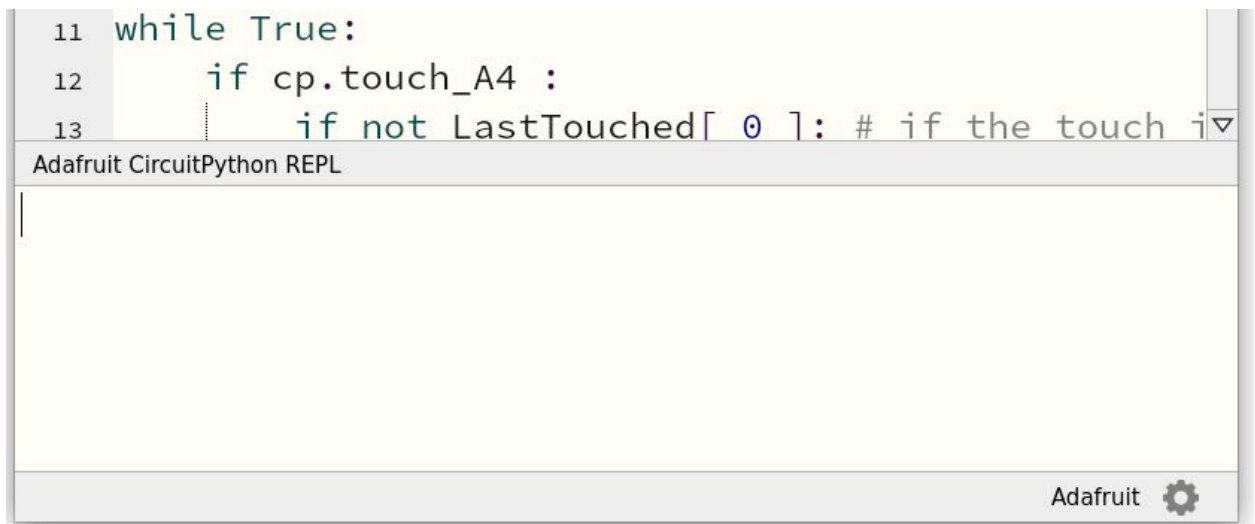
More complex software!

Concepts: touch pads, neopixels (LEDs), serial pane, heartbeat.

- The Circuit Playground Bluefruit requires some extra files in `your-computer/CIRCUITPY/lib`, so leave them (from Paul's workshop)
- Copy contents of `telepresence_of_touch/circuit-playground/telepresence_of_touch_code_remote/lib` to `your-computer/CIRCUITPY/lib`
  - That's `lib/mqtt_serial.py`  
`every.py`
- Using Mu Editor, open `your-computer/CIRCUITPY/lib/code.py`
  - Looks different, more tabs...
- Do the "control-c", "control-d" thing in the "serial" pane:



Should show a "serial" pane at the bottom of the Mu Editor (note the "Adafruit CircuitPython REPL"):



- More output in serial:

Adafruit CircuitPython REPL

```
Auto-reload is on. Simply save files over USB to run them or enter REPL to disable.  
code.py output:  
My color is (209, 46, 0)  
mqtt: connect mqtt://localhost:1883  
debugmqtt: will retry connect every 3 seconds  
Free memory before loop 7376  
debugmqtt not connected tried to publish unrvl2020/touch-everyone {'touch': {4: (0, 0, 0)}}
```

- On the CP, the LED near the USB connector should light up in some color.
- The tiny red LED on the other side of the USB connector should blink slowly. This is the "heartbeat".
- Touch the pads should light up LEDs.

# Pick a Color, and a "Me"

We'll want some way of identifying your CP when we communicate remotely. Something like your initials, and a color.

## 1. Edit "Me".

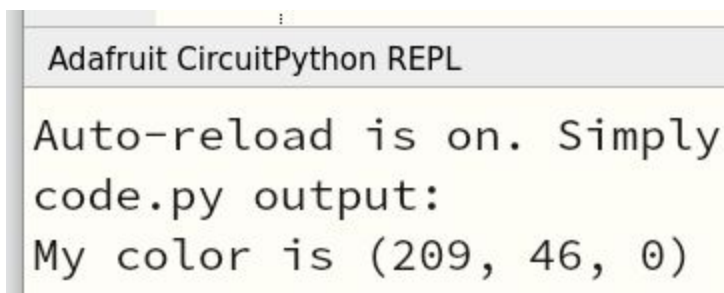
Pick some short nickname for yourself, like your initials (I'm "awg"). Let's stick with Latin characters (specifically, ASCII) for now (it will accept unicode, like hanzi, but won't display them usefully in Mu Edit's serial pane).

```
27 # your initials
28 Me='ANON' # EDIT ME with your initials c
29
30 MyColor = (40,5,10) # random, or edit th
```

- Edit and save.
- It should show in the serial console
- Use Discord to help each other, and to discuss discoveries.
- Tell your group what your "initials" are.

## 2. Edit "MyColor"

Everytime you save the code.py, or push the CP reset button, or reconnect the CP, you'll get a random color.



Adafruit CircuitPython REPL

Auto-reload is on. Simply  
code.py output:  
My color is (209, 46, 0)

It is a "RGB" color, but won't look quite like a screen RGB.

- Keep hitting control-d till you get a color you like, or just start experimenting/guessing:
- Edit code.py, change `MyColor` till you like it (you only need to edit `MyColor`

```
29
30 MyColor = None # random, or edit this
31 LocalColor = None # will be MyColor ur
32 RemoteColor = None # will be MyColor u
33
```

like:

```
30 MyColor = (40,5,10) # r
```

- Save, and it should run it, and change to your color.
- Write down your color!
- Tell your group your color!



# Interlude, The Metaphysics of Programming

Programs are for people, not computers. It's a craft.

Every bit of a program is a hypothesis: "Like this? Is this what I mean?". A program is contingent.

Evil is a technical term in programming, it means you will cause pain and suffering to yourself and others if you do that.

`sleep()` is evil. It's like stealing toys in kindergarten: it makes the other kids cry, and nobody can have any fun. "Every", aka non-blocking.

Talk to your cat. The mental-mode change of explaining will show you what you did wrong. Really. I suspect this will work for every craft.

Chunking makes programming manageable.

# An Overview Of The Code

- Intro comment
- "import"
- Constants & Globals
- `def setup()`
- `def loop()`
- `def update_touch(mqtt_message):`
  - Looks almost like Paul's code
- `def handle_mqtt_message(topic, mqtt_message):`
- `lib/every.py`
- `lib/mqtt_serial.py`
- 

## "Every", in other words, "non-blocking" sleep

Remember "evil"? `sleep()` is evil. It stops everybody. What we need is a something like "every 3 seconds, do this...".

So, I wrote "every", though other people have had the same idea.

- Import

```
19 from every import Every
```

- \* Globals/Constant

```
44 ## HeartBeat
45 # We're using "Every":
46 # will be true "every n seconds", non-blocking time.sleep()
47 # to "flash" the built-in LED
48 HeartBeat = Every(3)
```

- Loop

```
84 def loop():
85     global FirstTime
86
87     # blink the plain LED (next to usb) slowly to indicate that we are running
88     if HeartBeat():
89         #print("HeartBeat free mermory", gc.mem_free(), time.monotonic())
90         cp.red_led = not cp.red_led # clever "toggle", aka "blink"
```

"Every Heartbeat..."

Look for other uses of "Every" in this code.

# Interlude, Losing

<https://dwarffortresswiki.org/index.php?title=DF2014:Fun&redirect=no> I didn't say it was a good sense of humor.

AKA, Serial Port Contention

## Processing (running) and Mu-Editor (serial)

**There shall be only one.**

The processing code I wrote uses the CP serial usb port. So does the Mu-Editor serial pane.

Apparently this is far too difficult of a concept for computers in 2020. So:

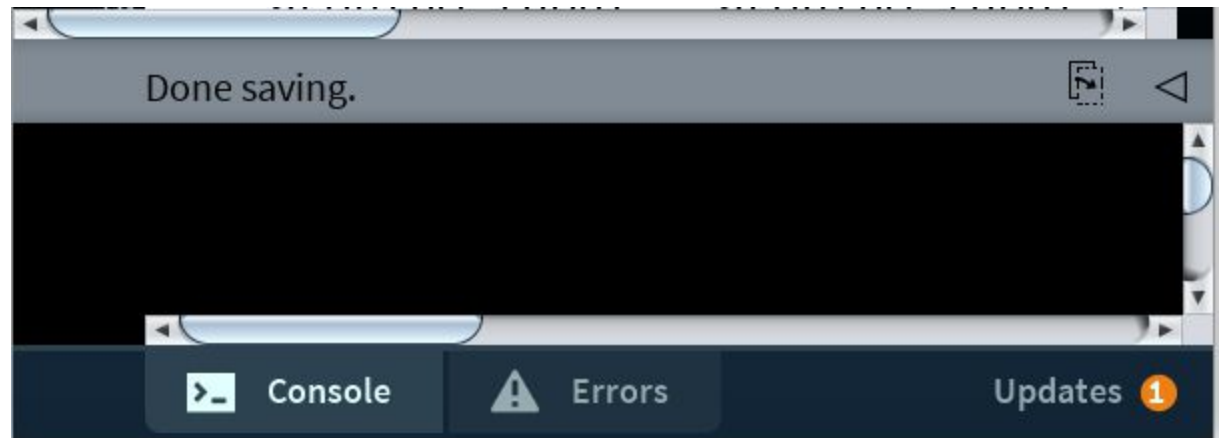
- Close the Mu-Editor serial pane



- Open Processing
  - Open the "console" pane



click the triangle to open:



- Load  
telepresence\_of\_touch/processing/serial\_mqtt\_gateway/serial\_mqtt\_gateway.pde
- Run
- Nice graphic-design, Alan.
- Stuff in Processing's Console (which is the "serial" output).

- When you save in Mu-Editor, switch to Processing and look at *its* serial console.
  - The Processing sketch has to be running.

# Touch Someone Else

Finally.

1. Run the Processing sketch
2. Should see "connected" message
3. \*\*\*
4. Touch your CP
5. WOW LIGHTS. It's chaos.
6. Watch the Processing console
7. Watch the shiftr.io/ status

## MQTT

The "Internet Of Things" protocol. Protocol just means "the way of doing something". In programming, it is a very strict set of rules for the doing.

MQTT is like chat rooms for robots. It's called a publish/subscribe model. You "publish" a message to a topic, and you "subscribe" to a topic so you can get messages. But, MQTT does not say anything about the messages. Your "smart" lightbulb uses one kind of message, and your "smart" doorbell uses another. We have to define the message.

MQTT requires a server to host the topics (chat-rooms). Sounds like Discord. And, servers have rules.

We are using the servershiftr.io and the topic "unrvl2020/everyone". You can have "nested" topics, maybe "unrvl2020/remote/shake/fish-group".

Pick a topic name for your group. It has to start with "unrvl2020/". So, maybe "unrvl2020/instructors", or "unrvl2020/fast-fish".

## Interlude, Protocols with Frederik

# Touch Differently

Let's tame the chaos.

1. Remember your group's topic
2. Edit code.py, change "MQTTPublishTo" to your topic

```
36 # Send touch messages to topic:
37 MQTTPublishTo = 'unrvl2020/touch-everyone' # # "unrvl2020/shake-group1"
38 # Listen for touch messages in topic(s):
39 MQTTSubscribe = [
40     MQTTPublishTo,
41     # more than 1...
42 ]
```

3. Save.
4. Touch! Coordinate on Discord. Less chaos.
5. You can subscribe to more than one topic!
6. You can make a personal topic, and use that.

## Don't Touch

The CP code has to react to the message, and decide what to do. Remember Paul's touch->LED code ( `def update_touch(mqtt_message):` )?

There's something like that for "if mqtt message says 0, then light LED 2".

```
def handle_mqtt_message(topic, mqtt_message):
```

But, it's written like a more experienced programmer. Oh oh.

We can construct a message about shaking, temperature, sound, or other things. And then we can react to it.

Different kinds of messages could go to different topics. We could only react to certain messages if the "me" is one we choose.

LocalColor vs RemoteColor

`cp.pixels.brightness`

public mqtt servers/topics

# Inspiration

(aka Homework)

Our technologies:

- circuitpython programming language (a version of python)
- circuit playground express, and circuit playground bluefruit
- Mu Editor (python code editor and CP serial console)
- MQTT
- shiftr.io
- Neopixels, "capacitive touch"
- Processing IDE

Find 1 more tool for our technologies. iphone? android? programming?

Try out Frederik's examples:

`telepresence_of_touch/circuit-playground/telepresence_of_touch_extra/`