

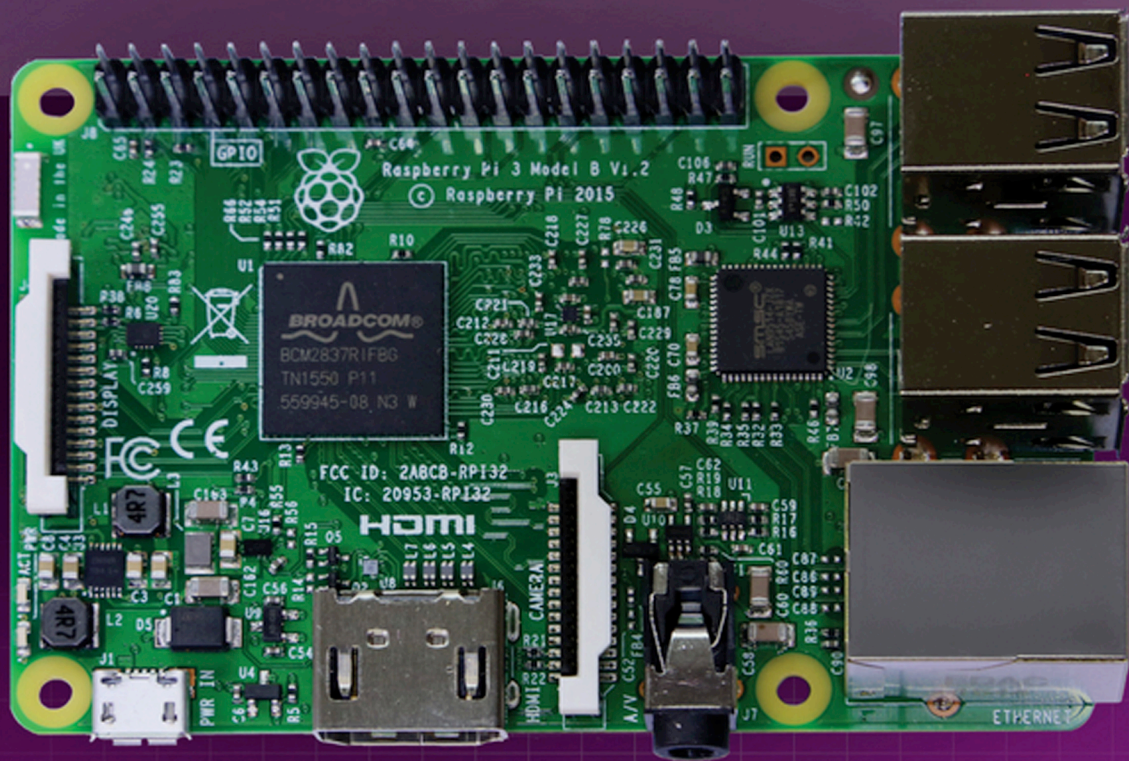
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—Eben Upton, Co-creator of the Raspberry Pi

DEREK MOLLOY

# EXPLORING RASPBERRY PI®

INTERFACING TO THE REAL WORLD WITH EMBEDDED LINUX®



WILEY





# **Exploring Raspberry Pi®**

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Interfacing to the Real World with  
Embedded Linux®

Derek Molloy

**WILEY**

## Exploring Raspberry Pi®

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*To Sally, Daragh, Eoghan, Aidan, and Sarah*

*(still in order of age, not preference!)*



## About the Author

**Dr. Derek Molloy** is a senior lecturer in the School of Electronic Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Computing, Dublin City University, Ireland. He lectures at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in object-oriented programming with embedded systems, digital and analog electronics, and the Internet of Things. His research contributions have largely been in the fields of computer and machine vision, 3D graphics/visualization, and e-Learning.

Derek produces a popular YouTube video series that has introduced millions of people to embedded Linux and digital electronics topics. In 2013, he launched a personal web/blog site that is visited by thousands of people every day, and which integrates his YouTube videos with support materials, source code, and user discussion. In 2015, he published a book on the BeagleBone platform, *Exploring BeagleBone: Tools and Techniques for Building with Embedded Linux*, which has been very well received.

Derek has received several awards for teaching and learning. He was the winner of the 2012 Irish Learning Technology Association (ILTA) national award for Innovation in Teaching and Learning. The award recognizes his learning-by-doing approach to undergraduate engineering education, which utilizes electronic kits and online video content. In 2012, as a result of fervent nominations from his students and peers, he was also awarded the Dublin City University President's Award for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

You can learn more about Derek, his work, and his other publications at his personal website: [www.derekmolloy.ie](http://www.derekmolloy.ie).



## About the Technical Editor

**Dr. Tom Betka** came to the world of embedded systems development by way of a previous career in the aviation industry, and then as a physician practicing clinical medicine for well over a decade. During this time his love of computers and software development evolved toward the field of embedded systems, and his training in computer science culminated in a second undergraduate-level degree. After leaving clinical medicine, Dr. Betka began working in the world of software development and has served as a subject-matter expert in both medicine and embedded systems for various companies in the industry. His recent work has included projects at the NASA Kennedy Space Center and the Sierra Nevada Corporation. Tom's first love is the C-family of programming languages and using these languages to program 8-bit microcontrollers. As a Linux user for the past decade, he has also been working with the BeagleBone, BeagleBone Black, and Raspberry Pi devices for the last several years as well. His hobbies include advanced mathematics, aviation, high-powered model rocketry, and robotics. Also, he can often be found building prototype devices in his home-based machine shop. In a previous life, Tom worked for several years as a professional drummer—and was one of the first in his area to embrace the use of electronic percussion devices in live music scenarios.



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# Contents at a Glance

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>xix</b>
<b>Part I      Raspberry Pi Basics</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1    Raspberry Pi Hardware</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter 2    Raspberry Pi Software</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Chapter 3    Exploring Embedded Linux Systems</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Chapter 4    Interfacing Electronics</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Chapter 5    Programming on the Raspberry Pi</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Part II      Interfacing, Controlling, and Communicating</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>Chapter 6    Interfacing to the Raspberry Pi Input/Outputs</b>	<b>219</b>
<b>Chapter 7    Cross-Compilation and the Eclipse IDE</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>Chapter 8    Interfacing to the Raspberry Pi Buses</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Chapter 9    Enhancing the Input/Output Interfaces on the RPi</b>	<b>363</b>
<b>Chapter 10   Interacting with the Physical Environment</b>	<b>405</b>
<b>Chapter 11   Real-Time Interfacing Using the Arduino</b>	<b>453</b>
<b>Part III      Advanced Interfacing and Interaction</b>	<b>481</b>
<b>Chapter 12   The Internet of Things</b>	<b>483</b>
<b>Chapter 13   Wireless Communication and Control</b>	<b>535</b>

<b>Chapter 14</b>	<b>Raspberry Pi with a Rich User Interface</b>	<b>577</b>
<b>Chapter 15</b>	<b>Images, Video, and Audio</b>	<b>615</b>
<b>Chapter 16</b>	<b>Kernel Programming</b>	<b>647</b>
<b>Index</b>		<b>677</b>



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>xix</b>
<b>Part I      Raspberry Pi Basics</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1    Raspberry Pi Hardware</b>	<b>3</b>
Introduction to the Platform	3
Who Should Use the RPi	5
When to Use the RPi	5
When to Not Use the RPi	6
RPi Documentation	7
The RPi Hardware	8
Raspberry Pi Versions	9
The Raspberry Pi Hardware	10
Raspberry Pi Accessories	12
Important Accessories	13
Recommended Accessories	14
Optional Accessories	16
HATs	19
How to Destroy Your RPi!	20
Summary	21
Support	21
<b>Chapter 2    Raspberry Pi Software</b>	<b>23</b>
Linux on the Raspberry Pi	24
Linux Distributions for the RPi	24
Create a Linux SD Card Image for the RPi	25
Connecting to a Network	26
Regular Ethernet	27
Ethernet Crossover Cable	29
Communicating with the RPi	31

Serial Connection with the USB-to-TTL 3.3V Cable	31
Connecting through Secure Shell (SSH)	33
Transferring Files Using PuTTY/psftp over SSH	35
Controlling the Raspberry Pi	36
Basic Linux Commands	36
Basic File Editing	41
What Time Is It?	43
Package Management	44
Configuring the Raspberry Pi	46
The Raspberry Pi Configuration Tool	46
Updating the RPi Software	48
Video Output	49
Interacting with the Onboard LEDs	50
Shutdown and Reboot	53
Summary	54
<b>Chapter 3    Exploring Embedded Linux Systems</b>	<b>55</b>
Introducing Embedded Linux	56
Advantages and Disadvantages of Embedded Linux	57
Is Linux Open Source and Free?	58
Booting the Raspberry Pi	58
Managing Linux Systems	69
The Super User	69
System Administration	70
Linux Commands	89
Linux Processes	96
Other Linux Topics	99
Using Git for Version Control	99
A Practice-Based Introduction	101
Git Branching	105
Common Git Commands	107
Using Desktop Virtualization	108
Code for This Book	110
Summary	111
Further Reading	111
Bibliography	111
<b>Chapter 4    Interfacing Electronics</b>	<b>113</b>
Analyzing Your Circuits	114
Digital Multimeter	114
Oscilloscopes	115
Basic Circuit Principles	117
Voltage, Current, Resistance, and Ohm's Law	117
Voltage Division	119
Current Division	120
Implementing RPi Circuits on a Breadboard	121

Digital Multimeters (DMMs) and Breadboards	123
Example Circuit: Voltage Regulation	124
Discrete Components	126
Diodes	126
Light-Emitting Diodes (LEDs)	128
Smoothing and Decoupling Capacitors	130
Transistors	132
Optocouplers/Opto-isolators	138
Switches and Buttons	140
Logic Gates	143
Analog-to-Digital Conversion	150
Sampling Rate	151
Quantization	151
Operational Amplifiers	152
Concluding Advice	155
Summary	156
Further Reading	157
<b>Chapter 5    Programming on the Raspberry Pi</b>	<b>159</b>
Introduction	160
Performance of Languages on the RPi	160
Setting the RPi CPU Frequency	165
A First Circuit for Physical Computing	166
Scripting Languages	168
Scripting Language Options	168
Bash	169
Lua	171
Perl	173
Python	173
Dynamically Compiled Languages	176
JavaScript and Node.js on the RPi	176
Java on the RPi	178
C and C++ on the RPi	180
C and C++ Language Overview	182
LED Control in C	194
The C of C++	196
Overview of Object-Oriented Programming	199
Object-Oriented LED Control in C++	203
Interfacing to the Linux OS	206
Glibc and Syscall	206
Improving the Performance of Python	208
Cython	208
Extending Python with C/C++	211
Summary	215
Further Reading	216
Bibliography	216

<b>Part II</b>	<b>Interfacing, Controlling, and Communicating</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Interfacing to the Raspberry Pi Input/Outputs</b>	<b>219</b>
	Introduction	220
	General-Purpose Input/Outputs	221
	GPIO Digital Output	222
	GPIO Digital Input	225
	Internal Pull-Up and Pull-Down Resistors	226
	Interfacing to Powered DC Circuits	227
	C++ Control of GPIOs Using sysfs	229
	More C++ Programming	237
	An Enhanced GPIO Class	242
	Memory-Based GPIO Control	245
	GPIO Control Using devmem2	246
	GPIO Control Using C and /dev/mem	248
	Changing the Internal Resistor Configuration	250
	WiringPi	252
	Installing wiringPi	252
	The gpio Command	253
	Programming with wiringPi	254
	Toggling an LED Using wiringPi	255
	Button Press—LED Response	257
	Communicating to One-Wire Sensors	260
	PWM and General-Purpose Clocks	263
	GPIOs and Permissions	270
	Writing udev Rules	270
	Permissions and wiringPi	272
	Summary	273
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>Cross-Compilation and the Eclipse IDE</b>	<b>275</b>
	Setting Up a Cross-Compilation Toolchain	276
	The Linaro Toolchain for Raspbian	277
	Debian Cross-Toolchains	279
	Cross-Compilation Using Eclipse	282
	Installing Eclipse on Desktop Linux	282
	Configuring Eclipse for Cross-Compilation	283
	Remote System Explorer	286
	Integrating GitHub into Eclipse	289
	Remote Debugging	289
	Automatic Documentation (Doxygen)	294
	Building Linux	297
	Downloading the Kernel Source	298
	Building the Linux Kernel	299
	Deploying the Linux Kernel	303
	Building a Linux Distribution (Advanced)	305
	Summary	307
	Further Reading	308



<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>Interfacing to the Raspberry Pi Buses</b>	<b>309</b>
	Introduction to Bus Communication	310
	I <sup>2</sup> C	310
	I <sup>2</sup> C Hardware	311
	An I <sup>2</sup> C Test Circuit	315
	Using Linux I2C-Tools	318
	I <sup>2</sup> C Communication in C	325
	Wrapping I <sup>2</sup> C Devices with C++ Classes	328
	SPI	330
	SPI Hardware	330
	SPI on the RPi	332
	A First SPI Application (74HC595)	334
	Bidirectional SPI Communication in C/C++	339
	Multiple SPI Slave Devices on the RPi	346
	UART	347
	The RPi UART	348
	UART Examples in C	352
	UART Applications - GPS	357
	Logic-Level Translation	359
	Summary	361
	Further Reading	361
<b>Chapter 9</b>	<b>Enhancing the Input/Output Interfaces on the RPi</b>	<b>363</b>
	Introduction	364
	Analog-to-Digital Conversion	364
	SPI Analog-to-Digital Converters (ADCs)	365
	ADC Application: An Analog Light Meter	368
	Testing the SPI ADC Performance	370
	The C Library for BCM2835 (Advanced)	373
	Digital-to-Analog Conversion	376
	An I <sup>2</sup> C Digital-to-Analog Converter	376
	An SPI Digital-to-Analog Converter	379
	Adding PWM Outputs to the RPi	381
	Extending the RPi GPIOs	387
	The MCP23017 and the I <sup>2</sup> C Bus	389
	The MCP23S17 and the SPI Bus	393
	A C++ Class for the MCP23x17 Devices	394
	Adding UARTs to the RPi	397
	Summary	403
<b>Chapter 10</b>	<b>Interacting with the Physical Environment</b>	<b>405</b>
	Interfacing to Actuators	406
	DC Motors	407
	Stepper Motors	414
	Relays	418
	Interfacing to Analog Sensors	420
	Linear Analog Sensors	422

	Nonlinear Analog Sensors	423
	Analog Sensor Signal Conditioning	428
	Interfacing to an Analog Accelerometer	431
	Interfacing to Local Displays	433
	MAX7219 Display Modules	433
	Character LCD Modules	436
	OLED Dot-Matrix Display	440
	Building C/C++ Libraries	444
	Makefiles	444
	CMake	446
	Summary	452
<b>Chapter 11</b>	<b>Real-Time Interfacing Using the Arduino</b>	<b>453</b>
	The Arduino	454
	An Arduino Serial Slave	457
	A UART Echo Test Example	457
	UART Command Control of an Arduino	461
	An Arduino I <sup>2</sup> C Slave	464
	An I <sup>2</sup> C Test Circuit	464
	I <sup>2</sup> C Register Echo Example	465
	I <sup>2</sup> C Temperature Sensor Example	467
	I <sup>2</sup> C Temperature Sensor with a Warning LED	469
	Arduino Slave Communication Using C/C++	471
	An I <sup>2</sup> C Ultrasonic Sensor Application	473
	An Arduino SPI Slave	476
	Programming the Arduino from the RPi Command Line	478
	Summary	480
<b>Part III</b>	<b>Advanced Interfacing and Interaction</b>	<b>481</b>
<b>Chapter 12</b>	<b>The Internet of Things</b>	<b>483</b>
	The Internet of Things (IoT)	484
	The RPi as an IoT Sensor	485
	The RPi as a Sensor Web Server	487
	Nginx	488
	GNU Cgicc Applications (Advanced)	494
	A C/C++ Web Client	498
	Network Communications Primer	499
	A C/C++ Web Client	500
	Secure Communication Using OpenSSL	502
	The RPi as a “Thing”	503
	ThingSpeak	504
	The Linux Cron Scheduler	506
	Sending E-mail from the RPi	510
	If This Then That (IFTTT)	512
	Large-Scale IoT Frameworks	513
	MQ Telemetry Transport (MQTT)	514
	IBM Bluemix Internet of Things	515

An IBM IoT MQTT Node.js Publish Example	518
An IBM IoT MQTT C++ Publish Example	520
Visualize Data Using IBM Quickstart	521
The C++ Client/Server	523
IoT Device Management	526
Remote Monitoring of the RPi	527
RPi Watchdog Timers	528
Static IP Addresses	529
Power over Ethernet (PoE)	530
Summary	533
<b>Chapter 13    Wireless Communication and Control</b>	<b>535</b>
Introduction to Wireless Communications	536
Bluetooth Communications	537
Installing a Bluetooth Adapter	537
Android App Development with Bluetooth	543
Wi-Fi Communications	544
Installing a Wi-Fi Adapter	544
The NodeMCU Wi-Fi Slave Processor	547
ZigBee Communications	559
Introduction to XBee Devices	559
XBee Configuration	561
An XBee AT Mode Example	563
An XBee API Mode Example	568
Near Field Communication	572
Summary	575
<b>Chapter 14    Raspberry Pi with a Rich User Interface</b>	<b>577</b>
Rich UI RPi Architectures	578
The RPi as a General-Purpose Computer	579
RPi with an LCD Touchscreen	582
Virtual Network Computing (VNC)	583
Fat-Client Applications	585
Rich UI Application Development	586
Introduction to GTK+ on the RPi	586
Introduction to Qt on the RPi	590
Qt Primer	592
Qt Concepts	592
Qt Development Tools	596
A First Qt Creator Example	597
A Qt Weather GUI Application	598
Remote UI Application Development	602
Fat-Client Qt GUI Application	603
Multithreaded Server Applications	606
The Multithreaded Weather Server	609
Summary	612
Further Reading	613

<b>Chapter 15</b>	<b>Images, Video, and Audio</b>	<b>615</b>
	Capturing Images and Video	616
	The RPi Camera	616
	USB Webcams	619
	Video4Linux2 (V4L2)	621
	Streaming Video	627
	Image Processing and Computer Vision	628
	Image Processing with OpenCV	628
	Computer Vision with OpenCV	631
	Boost	633
	Raspberry Pi Audio	634
	Core Audio Software Tools	635
	Audio Devices for the RPi	635
	Text-to-Speech	643
	Summary	644
	Further Reading	645
<b>Chapter 16</b>	<b>Kernel Programming</b>	<b>647</b>
	Introduction	648
	Why Write Kernel Modules?	648
	Loadable Kernel Module (LKM) Basics	649
	A First LKM Example	650
	The LKM Makefile	652
	Building the LKM on a Linux Desktop Machine	653
	Building the LKM on the RPi	654
	Testing the First LKM Example	657
	An Embedded LKM Example	659
	Interrupt Service Routines (ISRs)	661
	Performance	665
	Enhanced Button GPIO Driver LKM	665
	The kobject Interface	666
	Enhanced LED GPIO Driver LKM	673
	Kernel Threads	674
	Conclusions	675
	Summary	676
<b>Index</b>		<b>677</b>



# Introduction

The core idea behind the Raspberry Pi (RPi) project was the development of a small and affordable computing platform that could be used to stimulate the interest of children in core information and communications technology (ICT) education. The rapid evolution of low-cost system on a chip (SoC) devices for mobile applications made it possible to widely deliver the affordable RPi platform in early 2012. The impact was immediate; by February 2015, more than five million Raspberry Pi boards were sold. Given the proliferation of smartphones, the idea of holding in one hand computers that are capable of performing billions of instructions per second is easy to take for granted, but the fact that you can modify the hardware and software of such small yet powerful devices and adapt them to suit your own needs and create your own inventions is nothing short of amazing. Even better, you can now purchase a Raspberry Pi Zero for as little as \$5 (the price of a large cup of coffee)!

The Raspberry Pi boards on their own are too complex to be used by a general audience; it is the ability of the boards to run embedded Linux in particular that makes the resulting platform accessible, adaptable, and powerful. Together, Linux and embedded systems enable ease of development for devices that can meet future challenges in smart buildings, the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, smart energy, smart cities, human-computer interaction (HCI), cyber-physical systems, 3D printing, advanced vehicular systems, and many, many more applications.

The integration of high-level Linux software and low-level electronics represents a paradigm shift in embedded systems development. It is revolutionary that you can build a low-level electronics circuit and then install a Linux web server, using only a few short commands, so that the circuit can be controlled over the Internet. You can easily use the Raspberry Pi as a general-purpose Linux computer, but it is vastly more challenging and interesting to get underneath

the hood and fully interface it to electronic circuits of your own design—and that is where this book comes in!

This book should have widespread appeal for inventors, makers, students, entrepreneurs, hackers, artists, dreamers—in short, anybody who wants to bring the power of embedded Linux to their products, inventions, creations, or projects and truly understand the RPi platform in detail. This is not a recipe book; with few exceptions, everything demonstrated here is explained at a level that will enable you to design, build, and debug your own extensions of the concepts presented. Nor does this book include any grand design project for which you must purchase a prescribed set of components and peripherals to achieve a very specific outcome. Rather, this book is about providing you with enough background knowledge and “under-the-hood” technical details to enable and motivate your own explorations.

I strongly believe in learning by doing, so I present low-cost, widely available hardware examples so that you can follow along. Using these hands-on examples, I describe what each step means in detail, so that when you substitute your own hardware components, modules, and peripherals you will be able to adapt the content in this book to suit your needs. As for that grand design project, that is up to you and your imagination!

In late 2014, I released a well-received book on the BeagleBone platform titled *Exploring BeagleBone: Tools and Techniques for Building with Embedded Linux*. Given the focus of this book on embedded Linux and the emphasis on introducing the core principles, there are some similarities between the introductory content in that book and this book. However, this book has been written from first principles purely for the RPi platform, focusing on its strengths and addressing several of its weaknesses. I also took the opportunity to extend the coverage of the material to cover topics such as Linux kernel development, the Arduino as a service processor, Wi-Fi sensor nodes, XBee communication, MQTT messaging, the Internet of Things (IoT), platform as a service (PaaS), and much more. If you have a copy of *Exploring BeagleBone*, you should visit this book’s website ([www.exploringrpi.com](http://www.exploringrpi.com)) to compare the content in both books before you make your purchasing decision.

When writing this book, I had the following aims and objectives:

- To explain embedded Linux and its interaction with electronic circuits—taking you through the topics and challenges on the popular RPi platform.
- To provide in-depth information and instruction on the Linux, electronics, and programming skills that are required to master a pretty wide and comprehensive variety of topics in this domain.
- To create a collection of practical Hello World hardware and software examples on each and every topic in the book, from low-level interfacing, general-purpose input/outputs (GPIOs), buses, bus-attached analog-to-digital converters (ADCs), and universal asynchronous receiver/transmitters (UARTs) to high-level libraries such as OpenCV and the Qt Framework.

The book also covers more advanced topics such as low-level register manipulation and Linux loadable kernel module (LKM) development.

- To enhance and extend the interfacing capability of the RPi platform by developing frameworks for connecting it to circuits (e.g., SPI-based ADCs), to service processors (e.g., Arduino and NodeMCU), and to cloud-based IoT platforms and services.
- To ensure that each circuit and segment of code has a broad pedagogical reach and is specifically designed to work on the Raspberry Pi. Every single circuit and code example in this book was built and tested on the RPi platform (most on multiple board versions).
- To use the Hello World examples to build a library of code that you can use and adapt for your own Raspberry Pi projects.
- To make all the code available on GitHub in an easy-to-use form.
- To support this book with strong digital content, such as the videos on the DerekMolloyDCU YouTube channel, and the [www.exploringrpi.com](http://www.exploringrpi.com) custom website that was developed specifically to support this book.
- To ensure that by the end of this book you have everything you need to imagine, create, and build *advanced* Raspberry Pi projects.

## How This Book Is Structured

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There is no doubt that some of the topics in this book are quite complex. After all, Raspberry Pi boards are complex devices! However, everything that you need to master them is present in this book within three major parts:

- Part I: Raspberry Pi Basics
- Part II: Interfacing, Controlling, and Communicating
- Part III: Advanced Interfacing and Interaction

In the first part of the book, I introduce the hardware and software of the RPi platforms in Chapters 1 and 2, and subsequently provide three primer chapters:

- Chapter 3, “Exploring Embedded Linux Systems”
- Chapter 4, “Interfacing Electronics”
- Chapter 5, “Programming on the Raspberry Pi”

If you are a Linux expert, electronics wizard, and/or software guru, feel free to skip these primers. However, for everyone else, I have put in place a concise but detailed set of materials to ensure that you gain all the knowledge required to effectively and safely interface to the Raspberry Pi. The remaining chapters refer to these primers often.

The second part of the book, Chapters 6–11, provides detailed information on interfacing to the Raspberry Pi GPIOs, buses (I<sup>2</sup>C, SPI), UART devices, and USB peripherals. You learn how to configure a cross-compilation environment so that you can build large-scale software applications for the Raspberry Pi. Part II also describes how to combine hardware and software to provide the Raspberry Pi with the capability to interact effectively with its physical environment. In addition, Chapter 11, “Real-Time Interfacing Using the Arduino,” shows you how to use the Arduino as a slave processor with the Raspberry Pi, which helps you to overcome some of the real-time constraints of working with embedded Linux.

The third and final part of the book, Chapters 12–16, describes how to use the Raspberry Pi for advanced interfacing and interaction applications such as IoT; wireless communication and control, rich user interfaces; images, video, and audio; and Linux kernel programming. Along the way, you encounter many technologies, including TCP/IP, ThingSpeak, IBM Bluemix, MQTT, Cgicc, Power over Ethernet (PoE), Wi-Fi, NodeMCUs, Bluetooth, NFC/RFID, ZigBee, XBee, cron, Nginx, PHP, e-mail, IFTTT, GPS, VNC, GTK+, Qt, XML, JSON, multithreading, client/server programming, V4L2, video streaming, OpenCV, Boost, USB audio, Bluetooth A2DP, text-to-speech, LKMs, kobjects, and kthreads!

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## Conventions Used in This Book

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This book is filled with source code examples and snippets that you can use to build your own applications. Code and commands are shown as follows:

This is what source code looks like.

When presenting work performed in a Linux terminal, it is often necessary to display both input and output in a single example. A bold type is used to distinguish the user input from the output. For example:

```
pi@erpi ~ $ ping www.raspberrypi.org
PING lb.raspberrypi.org (93.93.128.211) 56(84) bytes of data.
64 bytes from 93.93.128.211: icmp_seq=1 ttl=53 time=23.1 ms
64 bytes from 93.93.128.211: icmp_seq=2 ttl=53 time=22.6 ms
...
```

The \$ prompt indicates that a regular Linux user is executing a command, and a # prompt indicates that a Linux superuser is executing a command. The ellipsis symbol ( . . . ) is used whenever code or output not vital to understanding a topic has been cut. Editing the output like this enables you to focus on only the most useful information. In addition, an arrow symbol on a line entry indicates that the command spans multiple lines in the book but should be entered on a single line. For example:

```
pi@erpi /tmp $ echo "this is a long command that spans two lines in the →  
book but must be entered on a single line" >> test.txt
```



You are encouraged to repeat the steps in this book yourself, whereupon you will see the full output. In addition, the full source code for all examples is provided along with the book using a GitHub repository.

You'll also find some additional styles in the text. For example:

- New terms and important words appear in *italics* when introduced.
- Keyboard strokes appear like this: Ctrl+C.
- All URLs in the book refer to HTTP/S addresses and appear like this:  
`www.exploringrpi.com`.
- A URL shortening service is used to create aliases for long URLs that are presented in the book. These aliases have the form `tiny.cc/erpi102` (e.g., link two in Chapter 1). Should the link address change after this book is published, the alias will be updated.

There are several features used in this book to identify when content is of particular importance or when additional information is available:

**WARNING** This type of feature contains important information that can help you avoid damaging your Raspberry Pi board.

**NOTE** This type of feature contains useful additional information, such as links to digital resources and useful tips, which can make it easier to understand the task at hand.

#### FEATURE TITLE

This type of feature goes into detail about the current topic or a related topic.

#### EXAMPLE: EXAMPLE TITLE

This type of feature typically provides an example use case, or an important task that you may need to refer to in the future.

## What You'll Need

Ideally, you should have a Raspberry Pi board before you begin reading this book so that you can follow along with the numerous examples. If you have not already purchased a Raspberry Pi board, I recommend the Raspberry Pi 3 Model B. Although it is presently the most expensive board (\$35–\$40), it is also the most powerful. This board has a 64-bit quad-core processor, a wired network adapter, wireless Ethernet, and onboard Bluetooth; therefore, it has all the features required to run any example in this book. You can purchase a Raspberry

Pi board in the United States from online stores such as Adafruit Industries, Digi-Key, SparkFun, and Jameco Electronics. They are available internationally from stores such as Farnell, Radionics, and Watterott.

A full list of recommended and optional accessories for the Raspberry Pi is provided in Chapter 1. If you do not yet have a Raspberry Pi, you should read that chapter before purchasing one. In addition, the first page of each chapter contains a list of the electronics components and modules required if you want to follow along. The book website ([www.exploringrpi.com](http://www.exploringrpi.com)) provides details about how to acquire these components.

I purposefully focus the examples in this book on the lowest-cost and most widely available components, breakout boards, and modules that I could identify that meet the needs of the examples. This should help you follow along with many examples, rather than focusing your budget on a small few. Indicative prices are listed throughout the book to give you a feel for the price of the components before you embark on a project. They are the actual prices for which I purchased the items on websites such as [ebay.com](http://ebay.com), [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), and [aliexpress.com](http://aliexpress.com).

**NOTE** No products, vendors, or manufacturers listed in this book are the result of any type of placement deal. I have chosen and purchased all the products myself based on their price, functionality, and worldwide availability. Listed prices are indicative only and are subject to change. Please do your own research before purchasing any item that is listed in this book to ensure that it truly meets your needs.

## Errata

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We have worked really hard to ensure that this book is error free; however, it is always possible that some were overlooked. A full list of errata is available on each chapter's web page at the companion website ([www.exploringrpi.com](http://www.exploringrpi.com)). If you find any errors in the text or in the source code examples, I would be grateful if you could please use the companion website to send them to me so that I can update the web page errata list and the source code examples in the code repository.

## Digital Content and Source Code

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The primary companion site for this book is [www.exploringrpi.com](http://www.exploringrpi.com). It is maintained by the book's author and contains videos, source code examples, and links to further reading. Each chapter has its own web page. In the unlikely event that the website is unavailable, you can find the code at [www.wiley.com/go/exploringrpi](http://www.wiley.com/go/exploringrpi).

I have provided all the source code through GitHub, which allows you to download the code to your Raspberry Pi with one command. You can also easily view the code online at [tiny.cc/erpi001](https://tiny.cc/erpi001). Downloading the source code to your Raspberry Pi is as straightforward as typing the following at the Linux shell prompt:

```
pi@erpi ~ $ git clone https://github.com/derekmolloy/exploringrpi.git
```

If you have never used Git before, don't worry; it is explained in detail in Chapter 3.

Now, on with even more adventures!



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# Raspberry Pi Basics

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## In This Part

- Chapter 1:** Raspberry Pi Hardware
- Chapter 2:** Raspberry Pi Software
- Chapter 3:** Exploring Embedded Linux Systems
- Chapter 4:** Interfacing Electronics
- Chapter 5:** Programming on the Raspberry Pi

