

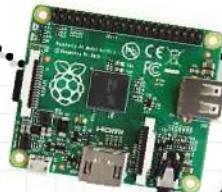
# Raspberry Pi for Kids

Updated for 2015

Your practical guide to the revolutionary £20 PC

**NEW**

Master the latest  
A+ and B+  
Raspberry Pi  
models



**GET  
STARTED!**  
Step-by-step  
guides to  
help you set  
up your Pi

**GET  
CREATIVE!**

Discover  
amazing projects  
you can do  
together

**MAKE  
YOUR OWN  
GAME!**

Fun ways to learn  
about computer  
programming



# From the Editor

---



**The Computeractive  
Ultimate Guide:  
Raspberry Pi for Kids**

**UPDATED FOR 2015**

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Jonathan Parkyn has over 15 years experience writing about computing and technology. He has edited books on many subjects, including Android, Windows, Office, online security and Linux. His most recent book is *How to Build a Robot*, which you can buy from Amazon at [www.snipca.com/1453](http://www.snipca.com/1453)

With computer coding and programming now part of the school curriculum, children as young as five will now be developing their computing skills alongside English and Maths. This might sound much too early to start educating kids in potentially complex technology, but learning to code and program is now surprisingly straightforward, thanks in no small part to the remarkable Raspberry Pi.

Launched in 2012, this revolutionary, credit-card sized computer has proved incredibly popular all over the world, and was specifically designed to get children interested in coding and programming. It's cheap, with the new A+ model available from just £20, and very easy to use, but offers the chance for people of all ages to re-engage with the true principles of computing and learn something of value, while having bags of fun in the process.

Now is a great time to jump on-board, too. Over the last couple of decades, Windows PCs, Apple Macs and tablets have changed the way we use computers altogether. With devices like these, you don't really need to understand much about how they work in order to use them. You certainly don't need to know anything about programming languages; this whole side of computing is carefully concealed behind colourful graphics and easy-to-use interfaces.

The Raspberry Pi might be small but its potential is enormous. The aim of this guide is to tap into that by helping parents and children get started with their Pi and work together on a wide range of fun projects that are both enjoyable and educational. We've updated the content for 2015 to include even more great tasks to try, and to introduce the latest additions to the Pi range.

The possibilities for the Pi are endless, but hopefully this guide will provide you and your family with plenty of ideas to get you started.

**Jonathan Parkyn**  
Editor





# Raspberry Pi for Kids

## EDITORIAL

**Editor:** Jonathan Parkyn  
**Art Editor:** Ian Jackson  
**Production Editor:** Nigel Whitfield  
**Consulting Editor:** Daniel Booth  
**Digital Production Manager:** Nicky Baker

**Contributors:** James Bennett, Darien Graham-Smith, Kevin Partner, Tim Smith, Kelvyn Taylor, Nigel Whitfield, Wayne Williams, Gareth Halfacree

## MANAGEMENT

**MagBook Publisher:** Dharmesh Mistry  
**Operations Director:** Robin Ryan  
**MD of Advertising:** Julian Lloyd-Evans  
**Newstrade Director:** David Barker  
**MD of Enterprise:** Martin Belson  
**Chief Operating Officer:** Brett Reynolds  
**Group Finance Director:** Ian Leggett  
**Chief Executive:** James Tye  
**Company Founder:** Felix Dennis

## MAGBOOK

**MAGBOOK** The MagBook brand is a trademark of Dennis Publishing Ltd, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD. Company registered in England. All material © Dennis Publishing Ltd, licensed by Felden 2014, and may not be reproduced in whole or part without the consent of the publishers.

**The Computeractive Ultimate Guide:** Raspberry Pi for Kids  
ISBN 1-78106-414-8

## LICENSING AND SYNDICATION

To license this product please contact Carlotta Serantoni on +44 (0) 20 7907 6550 or email [carlotta\\_serantoni@dennis.co.uk](mailto:carlotta_serantoni@dennis.co.uk)  
To syndicate content from this product please contact Anj Dosaj-Halai on +44 (0) 20 7907 6132 or email [anj\\_dosaj-halai@dennis.co.uk](mailto:anj_dosaj-halai@dennis.co.uk)

## LIABILITY

While every care was taken during the production of this MagBook, the publishers cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of the information or any consequence arising from it. Dennis Publishing takes no responsibility for the companies advertising in this MagBook.

The paper used within this MagBook is produced from sustainable fibre, manufactured by mills with a valid chain of custody.

Printed at Southernprint



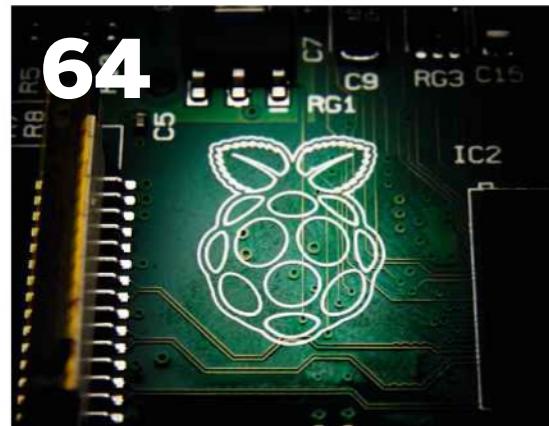
# Contents



8



74



64

## INTRODUCTION

### 8 Meet the Raspberry Pi

Introducing the credit card-sized computer

## SECTION 1

### First steps

#### 12 What is the Raspberry Pi?

We examine the Pi up close and look at the four different versions you can now buy

#### 18 What do I need?

We outline all your Pi requirements

## SECTION 2

### Fun family projects

#### 34 Turn an old TV into a Smart TV

View web video on the big screen

## 41 Use Scratch to program a quick game

Computer programming is easier than you think. Get coding with your kids

#### 44 Play retro games on your Pi

Rediscover gaming classics using emulation software

#### 50 Build your own games controller

Create a simple homemade gamepad for your Pi - no experience required

#### 54 Play Minecraft for free

Download and enjoy the popular and addictive game

#### 58 Create a web radio receiver

Tune into thousands of internet stations for free

## SECTION 3

### Get started with programming

#### 64 What is programming?

We explain how to get started with computer programming

#### 70 The programmer's toolkit

Find out what you'll need to start coding

#### 74 Programming from the inside out

We explain basic principles of programming

#### 80 Introducing Python

It's easy to learn a computer language

#### 81 Learn Python basics

Put all the theory into practice by writing your very first lines of code



## JARGON FREE!

You'll notice we've highlighted all the technical terms used throughout this guide and you'll find a full glossary on page 146

**124**



**136**



### 87 Variables, decisions and loops

Take your programming skills to the next level

### 91 Organising your code

Discover how to simplify your code

### 95 Object-oriented programming

Use advanced programming techniques to produce reliable, reusable code

### 99 Extending Python

Explore essential third-party modules

### SECTION 4

Program your own game

### 104 Design a game

Consider your options before you start

### 106 Create the basic game

Put together the first building blocks of your game

### 108 Add graphics to your game

Create the visuals for your game and define their behaviour, to make it look exactly the way you want it to

### 112 Setting up the game

Refine, edit and update your game code the easy way

### 116 Completing the game

Add the all-important finishing touches to your first game

### 122 Sharing your game

Find out how to share your finished game

with other people

### 124 Create a polished game

Take what you've learned and create a professional-looking game in our advanced tutorial

### SECTION 5

Going further

### 136 Expand, upgrade and mod your Raspberry Pi

Accessorise your Raspberry Pi with the ultimate selection of useful extras

### 142 Getting creative

Get inspiration from some of the amazing Raspberry Pi projects that other users have created and shared

# Meet the Raspberry Pi

Introducing the credit card-sized PC that has become a phenomenon

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » Find out exactly what the Raspberry Pi is
- » Discover why the Pi was invented
- » See what you can do with it

▼ Small but perfectly formed, the Raspberry Pi is a great way to learn programming

The Raspberry Pi is the sub-£30 computer that has proved more popular than anyone could have ever anticipated. In just over a year it has grown from being virtually unknown to becoming a product with enormous mass-market appeal. Demand has been so strong that, until recently, the Raspberry Pi Foundation ([www.raspberrypi.org](http://www.raspberrypi.org)) and its official suppliers had been struggling to keep up. However, the Pi is now in mass production and it's easy to get hold of one. There are two slightly different models available but in both cases the possibilities offered by this cheap, unassuming little circuit board are almost limitless.

So what exactly is the Raspberry Pi? Where did it come from and how can you harness the computer's extraordinary potential for helping you with your studies and for having fun? These questions and more are among those we aim to answer over the course of this Ultimate Guide.



## The Raspberry Pi story

Back in 2006, the Computer Laboratory at the University of Cambridge had a problem. Fewer and fewer students were applying to study computer science at the university, and the skill levels of those who did apply were declining year on year. Whereas, in the past, undergraduates had typically arrived at the university with some coding experience, by the mid-noughties most knew much more about PowerPoint than about programming.

This was partly due to a switch in emphasis at school towards teaching office applications and web design rather than how to program, but it was also because the earlier generation of home computers had been replaced by games consoles. Why did that matter? Because a ZX Spectrum, BBC Model B or Commodore 64 could be used both to play games and create software. The PlayStation 3 and Xbox, for all their technological superiority, are sealed units with no way for the average user to create their own games.

Perhaps the biggest problem, however, is caused by the way in which the internet has become part of everyday life. The average household now has at least one PC, often a laptop, which they use for everything from banking through online shopping to social networking and playing games. The idea of handing over this essential piece of kit to an inexperienced student of programming fills the rest of the family with fear – what if their experiments led to a problem with their internet banking or, worse, Facebook? What if the prospective programmer wanted to use it for hours at a time? What would they use for their Ocado shop?

There's another problem with modern laptops – they're simply over-the-top for learning to program on. Over-powered, distracting and complicated, today's operating systems are a million miles away from the blinking cursor of the classic home computer.

So, led by then-director of studies Eben Upton, the group that would one day become the Raspberry Pi Foundation set itself the target of encouraging 1,000 new computer science students across the UK. Since they couldn't re-write the syllabus taught in schools, they decided to focus on what they could do – so they began work on a new type of computer that would be easy to program and, critically, cheap to buy.

## Surprise hit

Fast-forward to February 2012 and component suppliers Farnell and RS Electronics opened their websites for pre-orders of the Raspberry Pi. Though the project had been started with the aim of producing 1,000 units per year, initial interest was such that 10,000 were planned for production in 2012. Within minutes of going live with their Raspberry Pi order pages, the initial allocation had disappeared in a wisp of smoke. A few days later, 100,000 pre-orders had been taken, with around a million units estimated to have shipped in 2012.

An education edition is due to be launched at a price that would allow a school to buy a dozen Raspberry Pis for the cost of one budget laptop and the foundation has also launched an even cheaper £24 version, called the Model A, with a lower specification. For the most part, this guide will focus on the more capable Model B, though our instructions can be used for either device.

## The perfect platform for learning programming

The Pi has been designed to provide the ideal environment for learning programming – whether that's simply for the fun of it or as the start of a career. It's cheap, compact and rugged, and it comes with most of the tools you need to create your own programs built in.

It may not be as fast as the family laptop, but think about this; the computer controlling the Mars Curiosity rover that's been trundling across the surface of the red planet is less powerful than a £20 Raspberry Pi. If NASA's chip can power a space probe, just imagine what you can do with your Pi. **ca**



▲ Just add LEGO, and sixty three helping of Raspberry Pi, to make a supercomputer



▼ Use your Kindle as a screen for the Raspberry Pi, with KindleBerry Pi

## THE POSSIBILITIES

Throughout this guide we will be demonstrating the many ways you can make use of your Raspberry Pi, from turning it into a security camera to spot trespassers in your bedroom to using it to program your own very first game. But it needn't stop there.

Here are just a few of the inspirational real-life projects that Raspberry Pi owners have carried out themselves.

### The LEGO supercomputer

The University of Southampton used 64 Raspberry Pi computers and LEGO bricks to create the most powerful Pi – the **1TB Pi** (the cumulative amount of memory provided by its **SD cards**). Iridis-Pi, as the computer is known, is named after the university's own supercomputer.

Find out how to make your own (or simply how it was done) at [www.snipca.com/9330](http://www.snipca.com/9330). Unfortunately, there is no bulk order discount for buying 64 Pi computers at once.

### The first Pi in space

Dave Akerman has launched four Raspberry Pi computers high into the skies ([www.snipca.com/9297](http://www.snipca.com/9297)). Fantastically, he uses a tiny Doctor Who Tardis to house the Pi and several hydrogen-filled weather balloons to transport the Pi into near space. The fourth launch, in March, sent the Pi 35km above Earth where a 3G link and onboard telemetry ensured plenty of stratospheric photos could be relayed back to 'mission control'.

Before the Pi travelled beyond 3G range, Pi fans were able to track the Pi Tardis via a live video stream. There's a video of the mission on the RasPi.TV website ([www.snipca.com/9270](http://www.snipca.com/9270)).

### Turning a Kindle into a mini Pi PC

If you're happy to 'jailbreak' your Kindle you can turn it into a mini computer. You'll need a powered **USB hub**, a small keyboard (for setup) and a terminal emulator for the Kindle. Details on setting up USB networking and how to enable multi-user screen mode are given on this blog post titled KindleBerry Pi ([www.snipca.com/9244](http://www.snipca.com/9244)).

### Adding Wi-Fi to a digital SLR camera

You can buy a camera to add directly to your Pi computer ([www.snipca.com/9296](http://www.snipca.com/9296)), but some people prefer to hack their existing cameras and marry them with their Pi.

Linux developer David Hunt installed a Raspberry Pi in a camera grip and used its USB port to add a Wi-Fi dongle. This lets him back up his digital photos as he goes. He also suggests controlling the camera remotely over Wi-Fi. Instructions and a summary of what he did are available at [www.snipca.com/9295](http://www.snipca.com/9295).

# SECTION 1

# First steps

The Raspberry Pi works differently to most computers but there's no need to panic – we're here to help you get started

Despite its diminutive size, the Raspberry Pi can feel like a daunting prospect to begin with. The fact that it comes as a naked circuit board makes it look very technical. And, since it doesn't run Windows, the idea of learning a whole new interface can seem off-putting. In fact, one of

the Pi's chief advantages is its simplicity. Anyone can learn how to use it, whatever your age and regardless of how much previous experience you've had. And in this section of our guide we explain all you need to know to get going, including what you'll need and how it all fits together.

## IN THIS SECTION

12

What is the Raspberry Pi?

We examine the Raspberry Pi up close and look at the different versions available

18

What do I need?

We explain everything you need to get started and outline all your options

20

Install an operating system on your Pi

**Workshop:** set up your Raspberry Pi's operating system the simple way

22

Set up your Raspberry Pi and switch it on

**Workshop:** put all the pieces of your Pi together and start it up for the first time

24

Configuring your Raspberry Pi

**Workshop:** explore configuration options and discover how to optimise your Pi

26

Find and install software

**Workshop:** find out where to get the best free programs and add them to your Pi

28

Set up Wi-Fi and print from your Pi

**Workshop:** set up your Raspberry Pi for wireless networking and connect a printer

30

Add USB storage to your Raspberry Pi

**Workshop:** expand your Pi's storage and make backups of valuable files



# What is the Raspberry Pi?

We examine the Pi up close to find out what makes it tick

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » Discover how the Pi works
- » Understand the difference between the Model A and the Model B
- » Find out the best place to buy one

Raspberry Pi computers were conceived to inspire young programmers to hone their coding talents and earn themselves a place on the computing degree course at Cambridge University. But when word got out about a tiny sub-£30 computer anyone could buy and write programs for, suddenly everyone wanted to get their hands on a slice of Pi.

When your Raspberry Pi arrives, the first thing you'll notice when you clap eyes on it is that it's very different to the type of computer you might be used to. For starters, it's tiny – the size of a credit card. It also has no case; it's simply a printed circuit board. Despite its diminutive size, low price and unglamorous appearance, however, the Pi is a fully functional computer. Let's take a closer look at the Pi's component parts and find out what types of tasks it's physically capable of.

### The brains

A single chip (1 on the diagram) contains **memory**, the **central processing unit** and graphics chip. The Raspberry Pi uses a chip designed by ARM – the same company that designs processors used in many smartphones and tablets. The version used in the Pi is slower than you'll find in an iPad, for example, but it's fast enough to do the job.



▲ Just like a PC, the Pi has a user-friendly, graphical interface

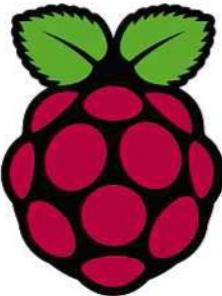
Unlike the relatively pedestrian **CPU**, the Graphics Processing Unit on the Pi is equivalent to a top-of-the-line mobile device. It can run 3D games and play **high-definition** video (indeed, one of the most common uses for the Pi is as a very cheap media centre). With the right software, a TV and a broadband link you can have iPlayer, YouTube and other internet video services at your fingertips.

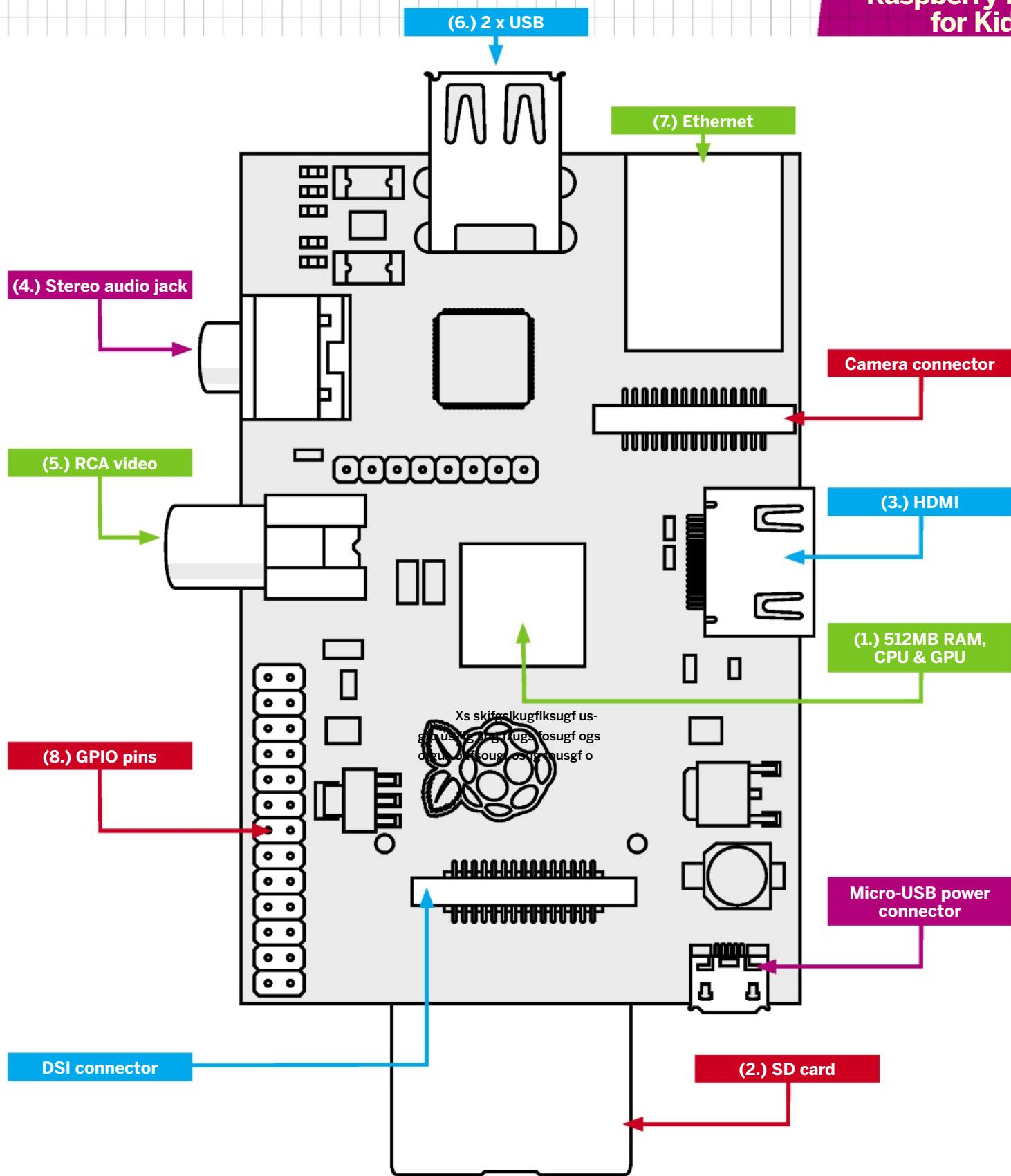
The Pi comes with **512MB** of Random Access Memory (**RAM**) – plenty for the uses we're going to put it to. It also comes with an **SD card** slot (2) – exactly the same as that used by many digital cameras – which takes the place of the hard disk found in most laptops. Programs are stored on the SD card and, once the Pi is powered on, these are copied into the much faster RAM until the computer is turned off,

when the RAM is cleared. One great convenience of the Pi is that you can turn it from a media player to a desktop computer simply by swapping out the SD card – much easier than removing a laptop's hard disk!

### Sound and vision

One of the design requirements for the Raspberry Pi was that it should be easy to hook up to existing equipment, so it includes an **HDMI** port (3) for connecting to a TV or computer monitor. HDMI





“The Raspberry Pi is designed to plug into your TV. Just add a keyboard, mouse and power supply.”

carries both picture and sound, so if you use a monitor without built-in speakers, you may need to plug a set of speakers into the stereo audio jack (4). If your monitor doesn't have an HDMI socket, you can buy a cheap adaptor to convert it to **DVI** – it's even possible to connect a **VGA**-only monitor with an adaptor and a bit of wrangling.

If you're really stuck, you can use the RCA video jack (5) to connect to the composite video input on an old-fashioned CRT TV. However, this was added mainly to allow the Pi to be used in the Third World where TVs are more common than monitors – the picture quality is poor.

### Connections

The Raspberry Pi Model B comes with two **USB** ports (6) that you can use to connect a keyboard, mouse, Wi-Fi dongle or any compatible peripheral. You'll probably want to buy a USB hub to allow you to plug in multiple devices at once – just make sure it has a separate power adaptor; the Pi's ports supply only a low voltage.

You can connect the Raspberry Pi Model B directly to your router or a wired network via the standard **Ethernet** port (7) – this gives the fastest and most reliable connection to the internet. Note that the cheaper Model A Pi has a slightly different selection of sockets – see the box below for more details.

▼ Farnell is one of the official suppliers of the Raspberry Pi in the United Kingdom

A screenshot of a web browser displaying the Farnell element14 website. The main heading is 'RaspberryPi'. Below it, there's a banner with the text 'FREE DELIVERY ON ALL ORDERS OVER £75.' and an image of a hand holding a Raspberry Pi board. To the right, there's a large image of the Raspberry Pi Model B board. The central part of the page shows the product details: '2191563 RASPBERRY-MODE-B-512MB' and 'RASPBERRY PI, MODEL B, 512MB'. It lists the price as '£28.07 Each' and has a 'GO TO PRODUCT' button. To the right of the product image is a 'Get Started!' section with text and icons. At the bottom, there are categories for 'Raspberry Pi Device', 'Raspberry Pi Accessory Kits', 'Raspberry Pi Enclosures', 'SD Memory Card', 'Keyboard and Mouse', 'Network Cables', 'Powered USB Hub', 'HDMI Cables and Adapters', 'Audio Cables', and 'Card Reader'.

### WHERE CAN I GET A PI?

If you haven't yet got a Raspberry Pi computer, head to Farnell ([uk.farnell.com](http://uk.farnell.com)) or RS ([uk.rs-online.com](http://uk.rs-online.com)) to buy one. These official distributors are most likely to have the hard-to-find, cheaper Model A. You need to spend at least £24 per order at Farnell to pay using a debit or credit card (rather than setting up a business account). You can also buy a Pi through Amazon. However, it currently costs £25.16 plus shipping,

compared to the £23.76 with free delivery that Farnell charges.

There isn't a big difference between the £24 256MB RAM Model A and the £34 512MB Model B. Both use a 700MHz Broadcom SoC (system on a chip) – the sort of processor that runs a smartphone and which includes a graphics chip as well as the main CPU. However, the Model A has a single USB port and doesn't have an Ethernet

port, so you'll need to plug in a USB Wi-Fi dongle to get online. If you can afford the extra cash required to buy the Model B, then we recommend doing so, simply because of the added built-in connectivity options.

There are also two new additions to the Raspberry Pi range - the A+ and the B+ - which we compare to the original models on the next two pages.

### Pi Pins

So far, everything we've described (apart from the SD card) is pretty standard to all computers. However, the Pi has some extra capabilities not found on your common or garden laptop. The most important of these are the General Purpose Input Output (GPIO) pins (8), which offer various ways to control devices and receive input from sensors and such like. However, misusing these pins can bake your Pi so it's best to use one of the many add-on boards that allow you to experiment safely. We cover some of these options later on.

The Pi also includes a connector for a camera module and a DSI connector for connecting the Pi to certain specialist displays such as mobile phone screens. We'll be looking at some of the ways to expand and upgrade the Pi from page 120.

### The software

There wouldn't be much point in a cheap computer if you had to install an expensive OS on it (such as Windows or Apple's OS X) to get it to work. This, and the fact that no version of Windows or OS X will work on the ARM chip in the Pi, means that the various OSes created for it are all based on the free and open-source **Linux**.

The foundation recommends Raspbian, a version of Debian that's a popular distribution of Linux. If this sounds like gobbledegook, don't worry – if you've used Windows, you'll find Raspbian pretty familiar.

You can even install Linux versions of many of the programs you're familiar with including LibreOffice for Microsoft-compatible word processing and spreadsheet work, and even the Chrome browser. We'll explain how to add software of all kinds from page 26. But before you do that you'll need to install Raspbian itself on your Pi first. Head to page 20 to find out how. ☕

F U Z E®

"The FUZE is what  
the Raspberry Pi  
was designed for"



# FUZE Type II The Ultimate Case for Raspberry Pi B & B+



... it's certainly the **best** we've **ever** tested.  
**micro mart EDITOR'S CHOICE**

...and then there's the FUZE, which takes Pi packaging to a whole new level of functionality" - [www.theregister.co.uk](http://www.theregister.co.uk)

**FUZE T2-C b/b+**  
**£69.99**  
**[fuze.co.uk](http://fuze.co.uk)**

Protect your Pi from physical & static damage



UK keyboard\* & 4 Extra USB ports



FUZE I/O Board with GPIO pass-thru



Clearly labeled input output ports



2 Amp power supply and on/off switch!



Adds analogue ports, 4 in & 1 out



\* USA & German keyboard layouts are also available.  
Prices include VAT but not shipping - see [fuze.co.uk](http://fuze.co.uk) for details.  
©2014 FUZE & the FUZE logo are trademarks of FUZE Technologies Ltd.  
Raspberry Pi and the Raspberry Logo are trademarks of the Raspberry Pi

FUZE Technology Ltd - [www.fuze.co.uk](http://www.fuze.co.uk)  
+44 (0) 1844 239 432 - [contact@fuze.co.uk](mailto:contact@fuze.co.uk)

# Choose the best Pi for you

This year has seen the release of two brand new Raspberry Pi models. We examine both and compare them to the original versions

**B**uilding on the massive success of the original models, two new variants have been added to the Raspberry Pi family – the Model A+ and the Model B+. These join the original A and the B models to create two distinct series. The A series models are cheaper and smaller, while the more expensive B series models offer more connectivity options. But what's different about the new Pi models and which one should you get?

## Models A and B

When the Raspberry Pi first launched in 2012, there were two different editions available – named Model A and Model B. The Model A was the cheaper of the two, originally costing less than £24. Model B was more expensive at around £30. And, while the core components – the CPU and graphics processing unit – were identical, the two models differed in a number of key ways. The pricier Model B came with 512MB of memory, compared to the 256MB of RAM included with the Model A. Additionally, the Model B featured a built-in Ethernet port for networking and two USB ports, while its cheaper sibling only had one USB port and no Ethernet.

### WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- ▶ Find out about the new Pi models
- ▶ See how they compare to earlier versions
- ▶ Discover which Pi is right for you

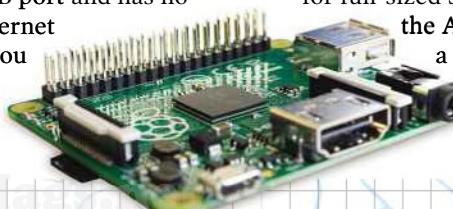
▶ The Model B+ is the same size as the Model B



Both of these models are still available, though the Model A has become increasingly hard to find since its original release. The new models don't replace the older ones – they simply provide alternative choices to consider.

## Model A+

The newest Pi in the range is also the smallest. At just 65mm wide, the mini-computer has been shrunk down even smaller than the originals' credit-card proportions, making it ideal for all kinds of projects where size and discretion are key – for building your own portable or mobile Pi-based devices, for example. Like its immediate forerunner – the Model A – it features just 256MB RAM, a single USB port and has no built-in Ethernet socket, so you



▶ The Model A+ is the smallest and cheapest Pi yet

may need to rely on accessories such as a USB hub and a wireless networking dongle to expand its connectivity.

The Model A+ shares most of its core hardware – including its processor and GPU – with the earlier models. However, the new unit brings with it a series of significant improvements too. The number of General Purpose input Output (GPIO) pins has increased from 26 on the original models to 40 on the A+. This is important, as it allows you to connect more external components – sensors, control devices and so on – when working on hardware projects. The memory card socket has been replaced too. While the original models included a hinged slot for full-sized SD/MMC cards,

the A+ instead features a microSD card slot – the push-push type that hold the cards in place



► The Model B+ comes with four USB sockets

more firmly.

Other changes include improvements to the audio circuitry and a neater video output system. The HDMI socket is still there for digital output, but the A+ drops the original's yellow composite video-out socket altogether. Instead, those who need analogue video output can now use the 3.5mm mini-jack, which now doubles up as an analogue audio/video socket. Amazingly, the A+ is available for even less than the original Model A. If you buy directly from the official distributor Farnell ([cpc.farnell.com](http://cpc.farnell.com)), you can pick it up for under £20, including VAT.

### Model B+

Released a couple of months prior to the smaller unit, the Model B+ is effectively a newer version of the Model B. It's exactly the same size as the original B (though many of the components and connections have moved around the board a little), and includes both 512MB of RAM and an on-board Ethernet socket. Instead of just two USB sockets, however, the B+ comes

with four, making a USB hub all but unnecessary.

All the major improvements made to the A+ are implemented here too, meaning that the B+ features 40 GPIO pins, a push-push microSD card slot, improved audio circuitry and a combi analogue audio/video output socket.

The B+ is more expensive than the A+ at £28, though this is roughly in line with the cost of the original Model B.

### Which Pi should I get?

Inevitably, your choice of model will be governed by a variety of factors – your budget, your requirements in terms of connectivity and size, and so on. If you can stretch to a B series model, however, we recommend doing so, if only for convenience sake. The extra on-board connections can make life a lot simpler in the long run. If power consumption is something you need to consider, then you may wish to favour the A series, as these models consume slightly less juice, making them more suited to battery-based projects.

Availability may also be a factor. The original Model A Pi, for

## Chapter XX Entertainment

example, is more or less extinct these days – it's so hard to find that it's probably not worth looking for in the first place. After all, the newer A+ is not only more readily available, but it's also cheaper, smaller and includes a number of important refinements.

Likewise, if you have £28 to spend, then there's little point in opting for a Model B over the B+. The newer B series Pi costs the same but adds even more USB and GPIO connectivity into the bargain.

One thing worth noting is that not all the accessories designed for the older models are guaranteed to work with the newer ones. The Pi camera, for example, works perfectly well with all models but, due to changes in the form factor, many cases built to house Models A or B won't accommodate the A+ or B+ units. So if you're an existing Pi user and you're considering buying a new Pi, you may want to stick to the non+-models if you want to ensure capacity with existing accessories. For a quick comparison of the cost, size and specifications of all four models, check out the comparison chart below **ca**

### Pi variations compared

Function	Model A	Model A+	Model B	Model B+
Launch date	Feb 2012	Nov 2014	Feb 2012	Jul 2014
Price (inc VAT)	£24	£20	£28	£28
Chip	Broadcom BCM2835	Broadcom BCM2835	Broadcom BCM2835	Broadcom BCM2835
CPU	700 MHz Low Power ARM1176JZ-F Applications Processor	700 MHz Low Power ARM1176JZ-F Applications Processor	700 MHz Low Power ARM1176JZ-F Applications Processor	700 MHz Low Power ARM1176JZ-F Applications Processor
GPU	Dual Core VideoCore IV Multimedia Co-Processor	Dual Core VideoCore IV Multimedia Co-Processor	Dual Core VideoCore IV Multimedia Co-Processor	Dual Core VideoCore IV Multimedia Co-Processor
Memory	256MB SDRAM	256MB SDRAM	512MB SDRAM	512MB SDRAM
Networking	None	None	Onboard 10/100 Ethernet RJ45 jack	Onboard 10/100 Ethernet RJ45 jack
USB 2.0	1x port	1x port	2x ports	4x ports
Video Output	HDMI (rev 1.3 & 1.4) Composite RCA (PAL and NTSC)	HDMI (rev 1.3 & 1.4) Composite RCA (PAL and NTSC) via 3.5 mm audio out jack	HDMI (rev 1.3 & 1.4) Composite RCA (PAL and NTSC)	HDMI (rev 1.3 & 1.4) Composite RCA (PAL and NTSC) via 3.5 mm audio out jack
Audio Output	3.5mm jack, HDMI	3.5mm jack, HDMI	3.5mm jack, HDMI	3.5mm jack, HDMI
GPIO	26 pins	40 pins	26 pins	40 pins
Onboard Storage	SD, MMC, SDIO card slot	MicroSD card push slot	SD, MMC, SDIO card slot	MicroSD card push slot
Dimensions (W x H x D)	86 x 56 x 15mm	65 x 56 x 12 mm	86 x 56 x 17mm	86 x 56 x 17mm

# What do I need?



► The Pi will accept SD cards of up to 32GB in size

To get your Pi working, a few essential accessories are required. We explain what's needed and what your options are

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » Find out what you'll need to get started
- » Discover how to get everything as cheaply as possible
- » Learn how to control your Pi remotely

▼ Many micro-USB phone chargers are suitable for powering the Pi



**A**lthough the Raspberry Pi is incredibly cheap considering what it can do, the barebones circuit board comes without many of the basic bits and pieces needed to turn it into a usable computer. While adding these can cost money, the good news is that in many cases you can use spare kit that you have lying around, or pick them up second-hand. Here we'll explain the must-have items, and also some optional accessories that can make the Raspberry Pi experience even more fun. Most accessories mentioned here are available from the official Pi partners, Farnell ([www.snipca.com/9715](http://www.snipca.com/9715)) and RS Components ([www.snipca.com/9716](http://www.snipca.com/9716)).

### Storage

As the Raspberry Pi has no built-in storage, the most important extra you will need is an **SD card**. This stores the **operating system** along with your own files and projects. It must be at least **4GB** in size and preferably a 'Class 4' speed grade or higher. The bigger the capacity the more room you'll have for your own stuff. Cards up to 32GB are supported - larger ones need some advanced tinkering to work. Cards are often bundled with the Pi itself for a couple of pounds extra, or a new 4GB SD card normally costs well under £7. Always buy branded cards from a reputable store to avoid fakes.

As the operating system is entirely contained on the SD

card, there's nothing to stop you putting it on several cards and swapping them as needed - for example, you could have one card for programming projects and another configured to use your Raspberry Pi as a media player (see page 32).

Experienced users can connect **USB** hard disks or USB keys to add more file storage later if needed, but these can't easily be used for the operating system itself - the Pi can only start from an SD card. We'll be looking further into USB storage on page 28.

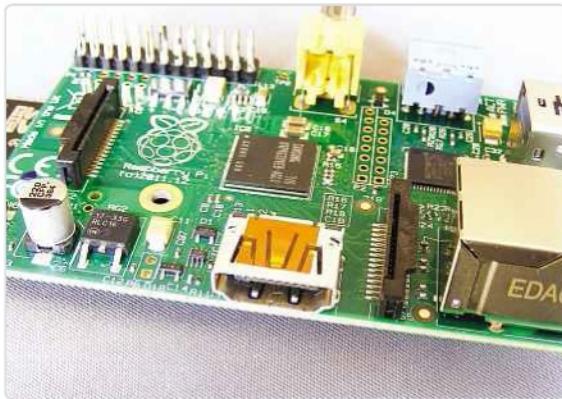
### Power supply

The Pi gets its power from a separate micro-USB power adapter, which can be bought very cheaply (CPC sells one for £3.54, [www.snipca.com/9717](http://www.snipca.com/9717)). However, if you have a mobile phone charger with a micro-USB connector you might be able to use that instead.

The only requirement is that it can supply 5 volts and least 700 milliamps (mA) of current. Check the label on the power supply and look for the 'Output' figures. It should say '5V' and the milliamp rating - it doesn't matter how large the milliamp number is, as long as it's over 700mA. The more power it has, the less likely you are to have problems with USB devices.

### Keyboard and mouse

To get up and running, a USB keyboard and mouse are essential. Any models are suitable, and no software or drivers are needed. Wireless sets are a good choice, as they only use one USB port. However, if the wireless adapter takes too much power, it can prevent the Pi from starting up. If this happens, it can be solved by using a powered USB hub instead (see opposite). CPC sells a basic wireless desktop set for £18.



► The Pi has HDMI (left) and composite (right) video connectors ►



## Display

The Pi offers two display connectors, **HDMI** and composite video. For best results use an HDMI cable (just over £1 on Amazon). Most HD TVs and some newer PC monitors have HDMI, but some older monitors only have **DVI** or **VGA** connectors. An HDMI to DVI cable costs around £5. If you already have an HDMI cable, a DVI adapter is a pound or so cheaper. HDMI to VGA converters are more expensive at around £18, but still cheaper than a new monitor. Composite video cables (less than a pound) can be used with older CRT TVs.

## Audio

The stereo minijack audio output on the Pi can be connected to headphones, powered speakers, or a standard hi-fi sound system. A 3.5mm minijack to dual-phono cable costing about a pound might be needed if the hi-fi has phono (also called RCA) connectors. If an HDMI cable is used to connect to a TV (or a monitor with built-in speakers), a separate audio cable isn't needed.

## Network

To connect the Pi to the internet, a wired or Wi-Fi network connection to your home **router** is needed. The Model B Pi has a wired network port that takes



► A USB Wi-Fi adapter is a handy way to network the Pi

a standard **Ethernet** network cable costing a couple of pounds. A USB Wi-Fi dongle can also be used, and CPC sells a compatible Dynamode 11n model for £7. If you already have a spare dongle it's worth trying, but not all work. No software is needed as the **drivers** are included in the operating system. For the Model A, you'll need a USB hub to connect dongle, keyboard and mouse at the same time. Head to page 26 to read more about using Wi-Fi.

## Optional extras

One of the most useful accessories is a powered USB hub. This connects to one of the Pi's USB ports and allows several devices to be connected at once without draining power from the Pi. Hubs typically have four or seven ports, and a seven-port model from CPC costs just £10. Don't use unpowered hubs, as they could overload the Pi's power supply. A great addition to any Pi is a case to protect components. A basic plastic case costs £5.39 from CPC and comes in several colours.

There are loads of exciting new accessories appearing all the time, including a very cool Raspberry Pi camera board. We'll be looking at this and other upgrades and add-ons later on in our guide (from page 120). 

## SAVE MONEY WITH REMOTE DESKTOP

Thanks to a technology called remote desktop protocol (RDP), it is very easy to control a Pi via another computer, using the Remote Desktop feature found in all Windows PCs. This means that your Raspbian desktop will appear on the screen of a Windows computer and you'll be able to control it using the Windows PC's

mouse and keyboard, rather than having to buy a dedicated keyboard, mouse or display. You'll still need to plug your Pi into a 'real' keyboard, mouse and display temporarily to get your Remote Desktop system up and running.

Remote Desktop isn't a suitable option for every purpose - for example if you want to use the Pi as a

media player - but it is very handy for getting started. Setting up remote desktop is very easy (it needs a network connection, of course), with just one bit of extra software (`xrdp`) to be installed on the Pi by typing the command `sudo apt-get xrdp` in a terminal window. There are instructions at [www.snipca.com/9719](http://www.snipca.com/9719) and on page 124



# Install an operating system on your Pi

Find out how to set up your Raspberry Pi's OS the simple way

Once the jiffy bag containing your tiny new computer lands on your doormat, you have a little work to do before you can connect it to a display and boot it up, including installing an **operating system** (OS) – the software that provides an interface for the Pi and allows you to run other programs. The Raspberry Pi uses a standard **SD card** instead of the **hard disk** you'll find in most laptops, and your first job is to prepare the SD card and transfer a suitable operating system to

it. Until recently, you had to use a special Windows program to 'burn' an OS image to your SD card; that option is still available should you wish to make use of it (see steps 5 and 6). However, the process of installing an operating system has been now been made a whole lot simpler thanks to something called NOOBS. It stands for New Out Of Box Software and makes setting up your Pi much simpler than before. Follow the steps to install the recommended operating system – Raspbian – on your Pi. [ca](#)



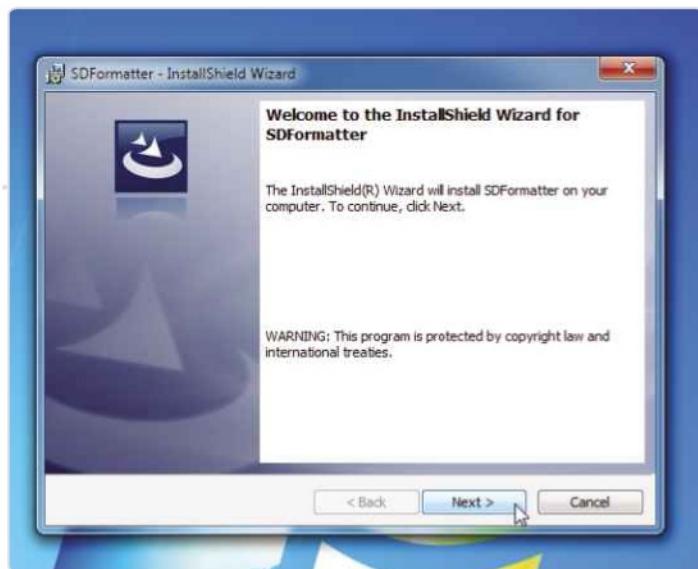
## STEP 2

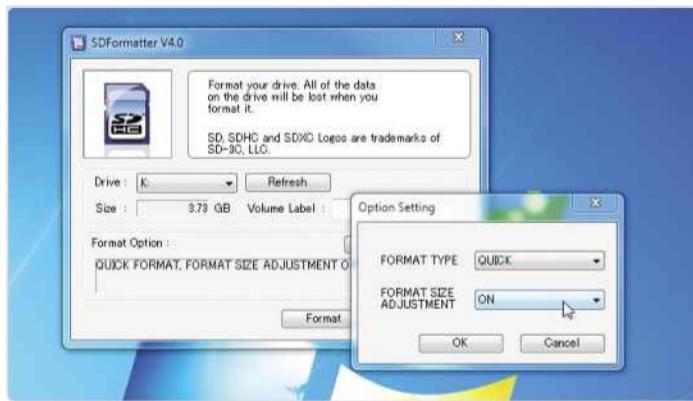
You'll need to format the SD card first. Formatting will wipe the card's contents, so make sure it doesn't have anything you need stored on it. Windows has a built-in formatting tool but the Raspberry Pi Foundation recommends using the official SD Card Association Formatting Tool instead, as this is capable of formatting the entire card. PC users can download this tool free of charge from [www.snipca.com/9721](http://www.snipca.com/9721) and if you're on a Mac, there's an OS X version of the tool (also free) at [www.snipca.com/9722](http://www.snipca.com/9722). We'll assume you're using Windows. Download the SDFormatter4 Zip file to your desktop, then right-click it and select Extract All, then Extract. Double-click the Setup.exe file in the extracted folder and follow the on-screen instructions to install the SD Formatter tool. ▼

## STEP 1

The Pi's Raspbian operating system runs from an SD card. Programs you install will also be stored and run from this card. You can use SD cards of up to 32GB, but a capacity of 4 or 8GB is plenty.

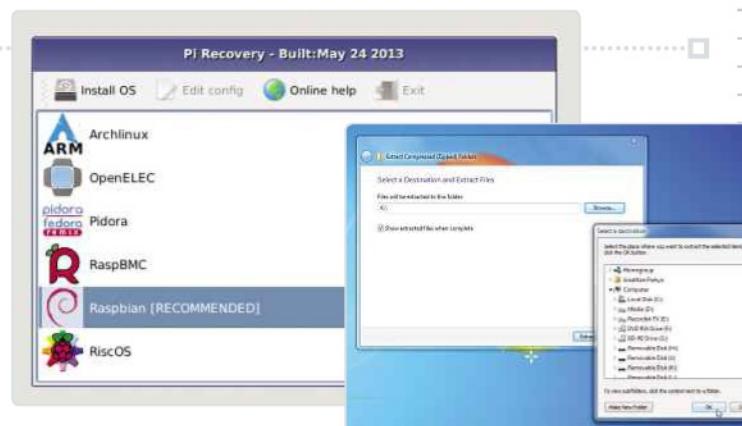
You can buy an SD card with the Raspbian operating system installed on it, such as the one for sale at [www.snipca.com/9314](http://www.snipca.com/9314). However, this Kingston-branded card is only a Class 4 SD card. We recommend buying a faster SD card (one with a higher class number), like the Class 10 card shown, and installing the free Raspbian OS yourself. You'll need a Windows-based computer (or a Mac) for this. If your computer doesn't have a built-in SD card slot you may need to attach a USB SD card reader. Many photo printers also have built-in SD card readers, so you could use this instead. ▼





## STEP 3

Insert your SD card into your PC, printer or card reader and launch SD Formatter. Under Drive, make absolutely sure that the drive letter selected is the one for your SD card; accidentally pick the wrong drive letter you could end up wiping another drive. Unplug any other external drives just to be safe and double-check by clicking on Start, then Computer that you have the correct drive selected. Now click Option and set Format Size Adjustment to On. Click OK then click Format and OK again twice. A summary will be displayed. Click OK and close the formatting tool. Now go to [www.snipca.com/9319](http://www.snipca.com/9319) and download the NOOBS Zip file, using the Direct Download option. It's quite big (about 1GB) so it might take a while to transfer to your PC. ▼



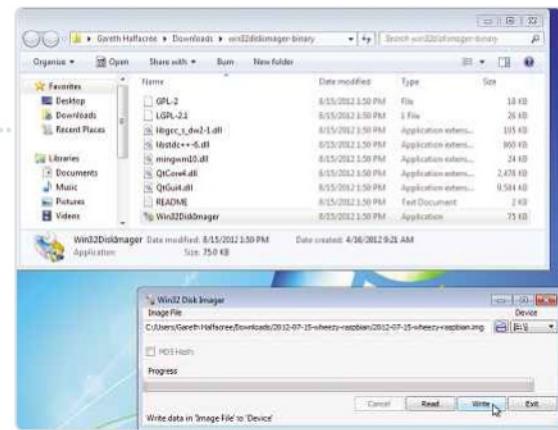
## STEP 4

Right-click the Zip file and select Extract All. In the dialogue box, click the Browse button, navigate to the SD card and click OK then Extract. Now use the Safely Remove Hardware tool (in the Windows Notification Area) to eject the SD card and insert it into the Raspberry Pi. Set up the Pi as (see page 20) and switch it on. Your Pi will now boot into NOOBS and should automatically display a list of operating systems that you can install. If your screen remains blank, however, you can try manually selecting the correct display mode using the number keys on your keyboard. Tap 1 for HDMI mode, 2 for HDMI safe mode, 3 for Composite PAL (UK) mode and 4 for Composite NTSC (US) mode. Once you see the NOOBS dialogue, select Raspbian and click Install OS. ▼



## STEP 5

Though it is recommended that new users employ the NOOBS method, as described above, there is an alternative way of writing the Raspbian OS image to an SD card. You can use a utility called Image Writer for Windows to do this. Format the SD card as described in steps 1 to 3. Then, on a Windows PC, go to [www.snipca.com/9723](http://www.snipca.com/9723) and download the most recent version of Image Writer. Make sure you get the Binary (win32diskimager-binary.zip), not the source version. Go to your Downloads folder, right-click on win32diskimager-binary.zip and select Extract All. You'll then be asked to pick a folder into which to copy the files it contains; do so then click Extract. ▼



## STEP 6

Now, go to the Raspberry Pi Foundation's download page at [www.raspberrypi.org/downloads](http://www.raspberrypi.org/downloads) and look under the Raw Images section to find the Raspbian links – The 'wheezy' version is recommended for Raspberry Pi newcomers. Click the Direct Download link. Again, go to your Downloads folder, right-click and extract it. There will be only one file (it has the extension IMG). Double-click the Win32DiskImage.exe file you extracted in step 5. Click the blue folder icon and use the 'File open' box to find the IMG file you just extracted. Under Device, select your SD card from the list – be very careful to choose the correct drive letter for the SD card. Once you've checked this, click Write to transfer the image onto the card. ●

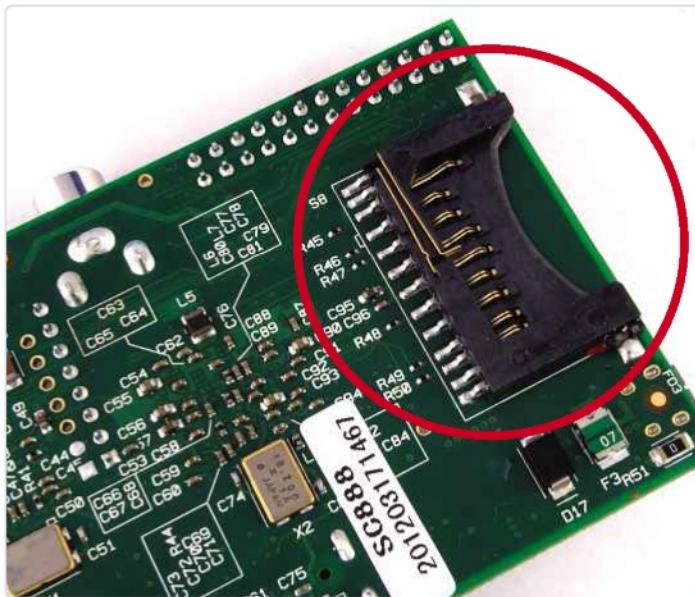


# Set up your Raspberry Pi and switch it on

Find out how to put all the pieces of your Pi together and start it up for the very first time

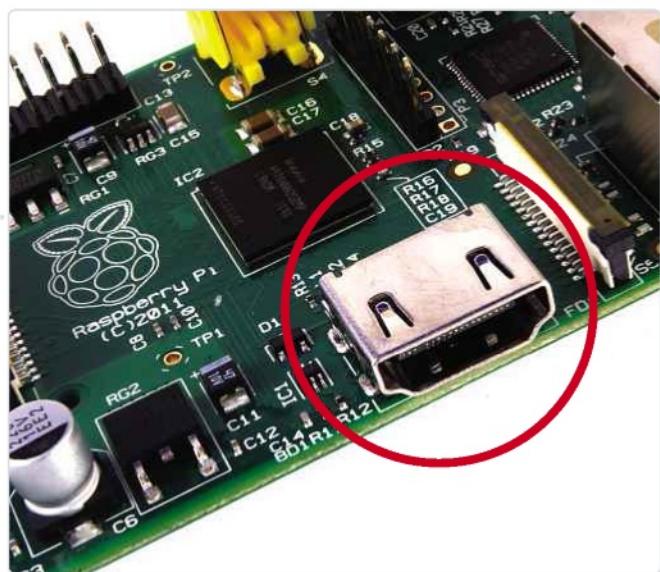
If you followed the workshop on page 20, you should have an **SD card** ready with your Raspberry Pi's **operating system** installed. Now it's time to look at the hardware side of things. Thankfully, this part is straightforward. In most cases, there is only a single place for each cable to go and little chance of confusion with regards to what goes where. Because the

Pi is supplied as a bare circuit board, care should be taken to discharge static electricity before handling it – so touch an earthed metal object (such as a radiator) or wear an anti-static wrist-strap. Here we're using a Model B, but we'll explain the differences for Model A owners. For more information on the cables and accessories required, refer back to page 18. [ca](#)



## STEP 1

The SD card you prepared on page 18 slides into a wide, black slot that lies flush with the underside of the Raspberry Pi. The card should be inserted with the label facing away from the circuit board. The easiest way to insert the SD card is to flip the Pi onto its front, revealing the SD card slot. Push the SD card into the Pi with firm finger pressure. When fully inserted, the top of the card will be flush with the back of the slot, and the card itself will protrude from the edge of the Pi – it might look a little odd but this is how it should be. Don't try to force the SD card into the slot any further, as this could damage the slot itself. ▼



## STEP 2

The Raspberry Pi is designed to be connected to either a television or a computer monitor. If connecting a Pi to a television, there are two methods; a digital connection via an **HDMI** cable (the same type of cable that the latest games consoles use) or analogue through a composite video cable (see step 3). For the best image quality, use the HDMI connection by connecting an HDMI lead from the port on the bottom of the Pi to your TV. You can connect to computer monitors that support HDMI in this way too. In both cases, the HDMI will also carry sound to the TV or monitor's built in speakers. If your monitor has a **DVI** input instead, buy an HDMI-to-DVI cable. Plug the DVI end into the monitor, and the HDMI end into the port on the bottom of the Pi. ▼



## STEP 3

If you're using an older TV that lacks HDMI, connect a composite video cable from the yellow port on the top of the Pi to the TV's yellow composite socket. If the TV lacks a composite input but does have a Scart socket – the wide, flat connector type used by older video recorders – then composite-to-Scart adapters can be purchased at most electrical shops. If you're not connecting from HDMI-to-HDMI directly and you want to hear sound through your TV speakers, you will also need an audio cable with a 3.5mm jack and a pair of phono plugs. This should be connected to the black or light blue audio port on the top of the Pi, with the two plugs on the other end going into the TV's audio inputs or the Scart adapter. ▶

## STEP 4

The Pi requires a keyboard and mouse that use **USB** connections; almost any modern devices will do. The Raspberry Pi Model B has two USB ports on its right-hand side. These sit proud of the other, Ethernet (network) port. Attach the keyboard and mouse, checking that the USB connectors are the right way up before pushing them in. Both the Pi's full-size USB ports will now be occupied. This doesn't matter in the short term but connecting additional USB devices later will require the purchase of a powered USB hub. Owners of Model A Raspberry Pi units will definitely need a hub, as this edition of the device only has a single USB port on it. See page 16 for more advice on USB hubs. ▶

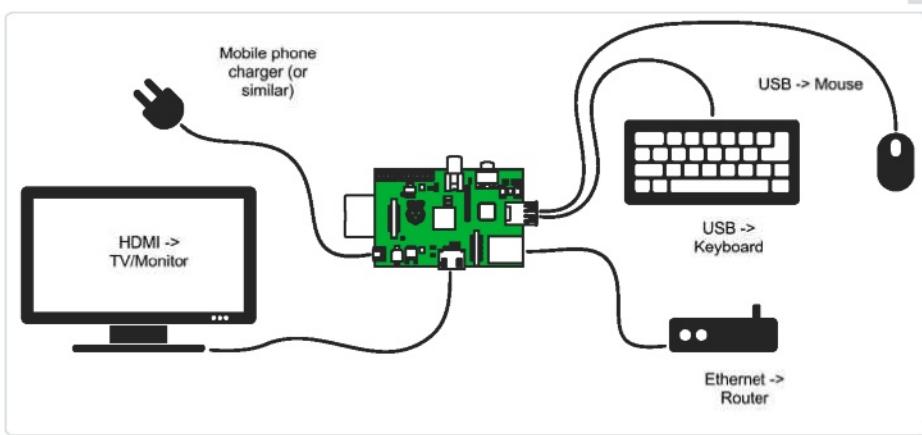


## STEP 5

The network connection needs to be made to the Pi in order to provide access to the internet. The Pi does not have built-in Wi-Fi connectivity, so this needs to be done using a traditional **Ethernet** network cable strung between the Pi and a **router** or modem. Push one end of the cable into the network port on the right-hand side of the Pi, making sure the small plastic lug is facing downwards. Once inserted far enough, the plug should make an audible click and resist being pulled out again. The other end of the cable should be connected to a router, **ADSL** modem or cable modem. It is also possible to add wireless network facilities; this is particularly useful for owners of the Model A Raspberry Pi, which doesn't have an Ethernet socket. Turn to page 28 for detailed instructions. ▶

## STEP 6

Finally, the Pi needs power, from a mains adapter using a micro-USB cable. With all the cables connected, your Pi should look as shown. As soon as the Pi is connected to the power, it will switch on. Lots of text will scroll up the screen. The Raspi-config menu will appear; for now, these settings can be safely ignored (see page 24 for more on these), so just press the Tab key on the keyboard until the Finish option is selected then press Enter to leave the menu. A text screen will appear asking for a username. For the Raspbian operating system we installed on page 20, this is simply 'pi' – so type in **pi**, press the Enter key, then type **raspberry** as the password and press Enter again. ●



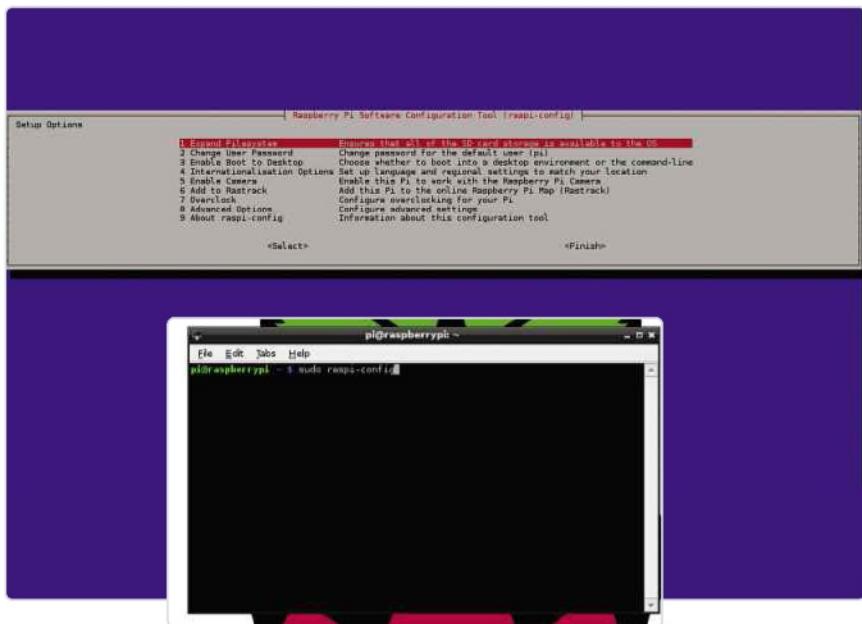


# Configuring your Raspberry Pi

Explore the various configuration options available and find out how to optimise your Pi

Once the Raspbian operating system is installed on the Pi (see page 20) and it boots up for the first time, the first thing it does is run a special program called raspi-config. This allows you to configure many aspects of the Raspberry Pi's software and hardware. For example you can set the time zone, choose the correct keyboard, and even make the Pi run faster.

It is a very easy program to use, but is essential for getting the best out of the Pi. Raspi-config can also be run at any time from the desktop or the command line. In this workshop we'll not only explain how to do this, but we'll also walk you through each of the main settings explaining what they do and how to make the right choices. [ca](#)



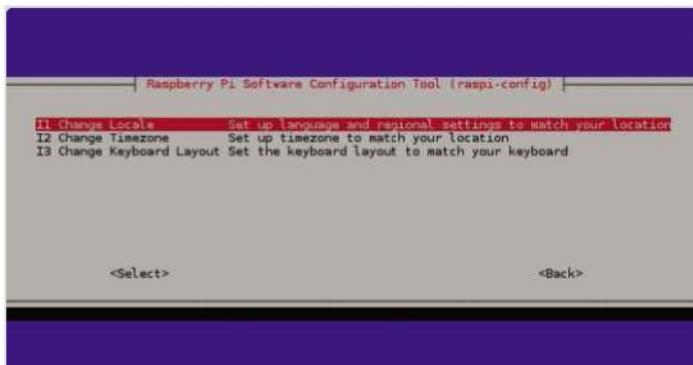
## STEP 1

After installing the Raspbian operating system (see page 20), the Pi will restart and after a few moments of text scrolling down the screen, the raspi-config program screen will appear. It only does this automatically the first time Raspbian is started, but raspi-config can be started at any time. From the command line, just type **sudo raspi-config**. From the desktop, open the LXTerminal program and type the same command. Raspi-config is a simple text menu with nine options. Use the up and down arrow keys and the Tab key to navigate around the screen - the mouse will not work in this program. The first option on the screen (Expand Filesystem) isn't needed if you used the official NOOBS package to install Raspbian, we as explained in the workshop on page 20. ▼

## STEP 2

The second option allows you to change the default password ('raspberry'), which is a good idea to help keep the Pi secure. Select this option, press Enter, then press Enter again. A command line appears asking for the new password. Type it, press Enter, type it again and press Enter again. When successful you will be returned to the main menu. The third option down is Enable Boot to Desktop, which saves you having to start the graphical desktop manually every time. Select this, press Enter, then choose Yes to go straight to the Desktop, or No if you prefer to start from the command line. Starting the Desktop from the command line is simply a matter of typing **startx** and pressing Enter. ▼

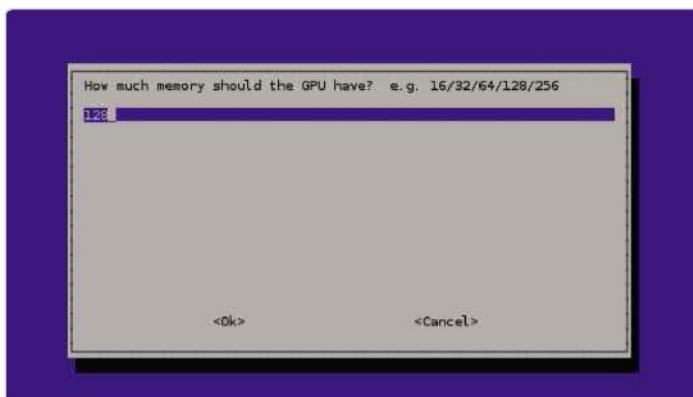
```
pi@raspberrypi ~ $ sudo raspi-config
Enter new UNIX password:
Retype new UNIX password:
passwd: password updated successfully
Enter new UNIX password:
```



## STEP 3

If a key on your keyboard produces the wrong letter, fix it with Internationalisation Options. Select this, press Enter, select Change Locale and press Enter. Choose 'All locales' from the list, select OK then press Enter. Select OK on the next screen, press Enter and wait until the main menu returns. Open the same menu again and choose Time Zone. Select Europe from the list, press Enter, select your nearest city and press Enter again. Finally, to set the keyboard layout, open Internationalisation Options again, choose Change Keyboard Layout then press Enter. Choose 'Generic 105-key (Intl) PC', press Enter, then 'English (UK)' and press Enter again. On the next three screens, we recommend keeping the default settings; press Enter until you return to the main menu. ▼

**STEP  
4** Option 5 on the main menu, Enable Camera, is only needed if you have the Raspberry Pi camera module (see page 120). We don't recommend using Option 6, Add to Rastrack, as it just adds the Pi's location to an online database. The Overclock option is of interest to those wanting to improve the Pi's performance. Open this, press Enter then choose an overclocking option. We recommend trying 'Modest' first to see if it causes any problems. Trying the faster options will make the Pi become hotter and may reduce its lifespan and cause crashes, so don't use them if you leave the Pi turned on all the time. The fastest options will give you a noticeable boost in the Pi's speed, though. The Pi needs to be restarted before the changes take effect. ▼



## STEP 5

The Advanced Options has several useful settings. Overscan is only needed if you are connecting to a TV via the composite video connector - it removes the black bars at the edges of the screen. Hostname lets you change the Pi's network name from the default of 'raspberrypi'. Open this, press Enter, then type the new name in the box. Only standard letters and numbers can be used. Memory Split lets you change the amount of memory used for graphics. In most cases you don't need to change this, but if using it as a media player or for games you can improve performance a little by increasing this to 256MB. If you're using your Pi without a display, you could reduce the figure to 16MB. ▼

**STEP  
6** The next option in the Advanced Options menu is SSH. This stands for 'secure shell' and is a way of accessing the Pi's command line remotely from another computer. It is enabled by default, but can be disabled if you don't want to use it. The final option is Update, which updates the raspi-config tool to the latest version. If your version doesn't look like the one described here, it is probably out of date. Select Update and press Enter. The tool will automatically update itself and restart. An internet connection is needed for this. When you are happy with all the changes you have made, from the main raspi-config menu select Finish then press Enter. The Pi will reboot if any of the changes require it. ●





# Find and install software

Discover where to get hold of the best free programs, as well as how to add them to your system

One of the major benefits of any **Linux**-based system is a huge library of free programs that are available. Finding and installing software for the Raspberry Pi is, however, very different to its Windows equivalent. Indeed, while the Raspberry Pi desktop looks superficially similar to Windows, underneath the surface there are many differences.

Rather than running a setup program, for example, with Linux you use a ‘package manager’ and in many cases this is done by typing in commands. Don’t panic, though – it’s easier than it sounds. And in this workshop we’ll show you how to use a package manager as well as how to install programs via the terminal, because most online examples use this approach. 



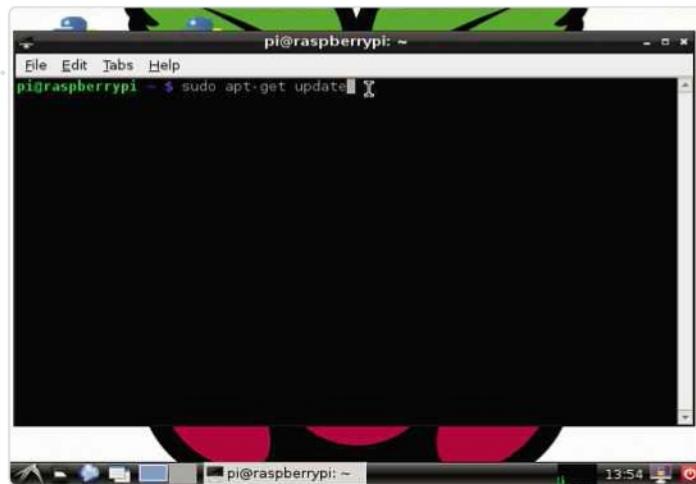
## STEP 1

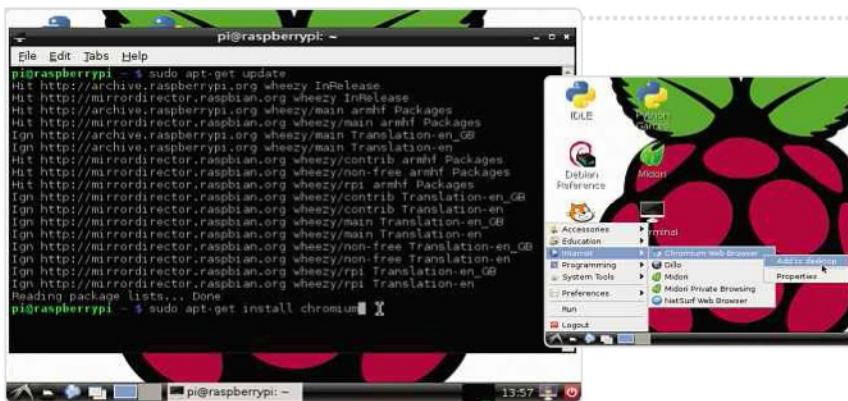
The Raspberry Pi comes with a basic range of software built-in. Similarly to Windows, there’s a button in the bottom, left-hand corner of the screen that you can click in order to see a launch menu of programs and tools that are installed. In addition, each distribution of Linux comes with a library of optional software, called Package Repositories. You can think of the initial setup as a starting point, to which you can then add software from the repositories to suit your purpose. For a general-purpose computer, you’d probably want to install an office suite such as LibreOffice (a version of OpenOffice), and the Chromium browser (the open-source version of Google Chrome). In this case, we’re going to install Chromium and then focus mainly on installing a programming editor. At various points throughout the book, we’ll add extra packages. ▼

## STEP 2

Let’s begin by installing Chromium. Double-click LXTerminal and type: **sudo apt-get update**, followed by the Enter key. This probably looks incomprehensible, so let’s take it step by step.

The first command, **sudo**, tells Linux that you want to run the rest of the commands as a ‘super-user’. This is similar to the Administrator user in Windows – it gives permission to change the system. This can be dangerous if not used properly, so we have to explicitly type **sudo** to confirm we want to do so. Next, **apt** is short for ‘Advanced Packaging Tool’ and this is the program that installs our software; **get** is the utility within apt that does this – it gets packages. Finally **update** tells apt-get to download the latest list of packages: you should always update apt-get before trying to install software. ▼



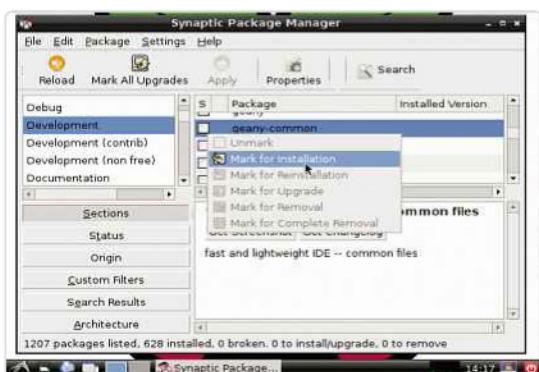


## STEP 3

Wait for the update to complete; the 'pi@raspberrypi' prompt will appear once it's done. Now, to install Chromium we can type: **sudo apt-get install chromium** and Enter. This time we tell apt-get to 'install' a named package. Your terminal window will now fill with lines of text explaining what it's doing as the software installs. You may be told how much disk space the program will use up and be prompted to confirm the installation. Type **Y** and then Enter to do so. When it's done, close the LXTerminal window. Chromium will be available from the Internet submenu of the Start button. To place an icon on the desktop, right-click it in the submenu and select 'Add to desktop' ▾

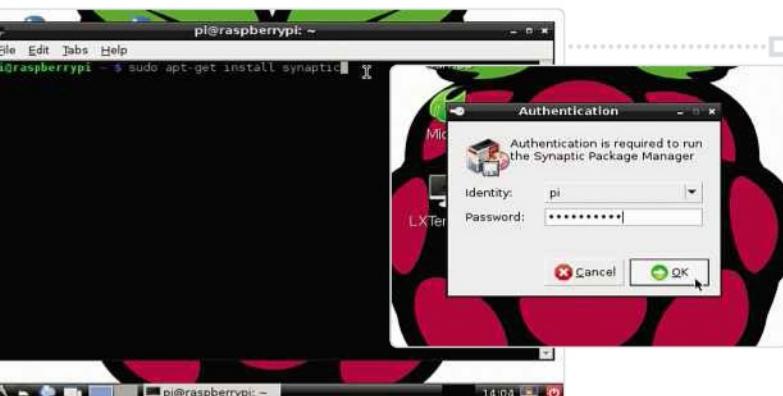
## STEP 4

This is all very well, but how do you know what to install and what the package name is? One way is to Google 'office software for Raspberry Pi', but another is to install a graphical package manager. In an LXTerminal window, type: **sudo apt-get install synaptic**. This will download and install the Synaptic Package Manager. Once this is done, you will find it by clicking the Start button and choosing the Other submenu. Click Synaptic and you'll be asked to type your password (which, unless you've changed it, will be 'raspberry'). You'll now see a window containing all the packages available to the Raspberry Pi, organised by type. ▾



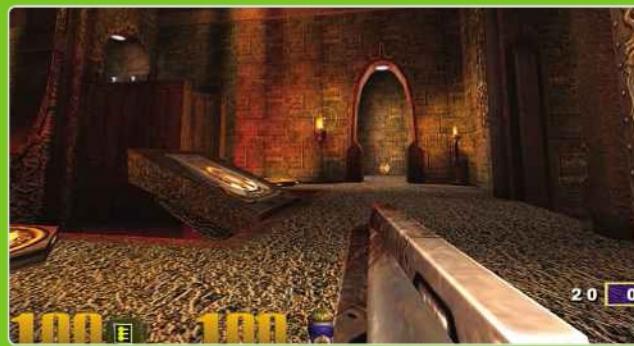
## STEP 5

We're going to use Synaptic to install a code editor called Geany. On the left side of the Synaptic window, scroll down to the Development category. Now scroll through the right-hand window until you find Geany. In fact, you need to click the package **geany-common** first, then select **Mark for Installation**, before doing the same with the **geany** package. Once you've done this, click the **Apply** button to install it. This is straightforward, but remember the equivalent command in the terminal would be **sudo apt-get install geany**, which is clearly much quicker. So, if you know the package name, you should use the command line approach; if you want to browse, choose Synaptic. Why not give it a go and install LibreOffice? ●



## THE FLIP SIDE

Comparatively speaking, the Raspberry Pi is a little slow. If you're used to the snappiness of a modern computer, using heavyweight software such as LibreOffice on your Pi will feel like wading through treacle. You'll notice a delay of a couple of seconds after you double-click an icon before the program launches, for example. This is partly because an **SD card** isn't as fast as a modern hard disk when it comes to reading files, as well as reflecting the speed of the processor. Once your word processor has fully loaded, you should find the performance perfectly acceptable. Some games will work well on the Pi too – 3D shoot-em-up Quake 3 was famously ported across very early on. However, the Pi is not designed for playing the latest high-end games, so don't imagine it will replace an Xbox for that purpose.



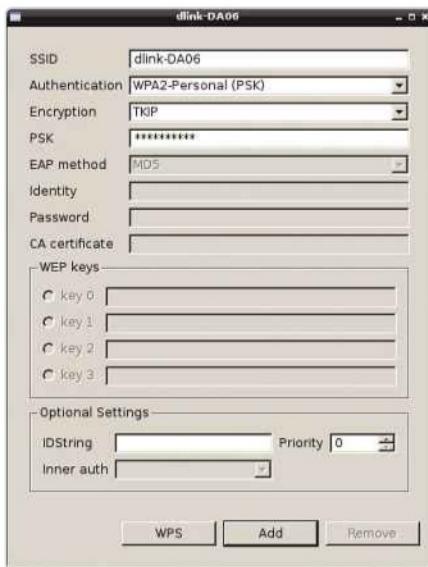


# Set up Wi-Fi and print from your Pi

Find out how to configure your Raspberry Pi for wireless networking and hook up to a printer

**A**lthough the Model B/B+ Raspberry Pi can connect to a network using a standard **Ethernet** cable, upgrading to Wi-Fi makes it much easier to position your Pi wherever you like. And if you own a Model A/A+, Wi-Fi is your only choice, as there's no network socket. Fortunately, the Pi supports a good selection of **USB** Wi-Fi adaptors (sometimes

called 'dongles') out of the box (the Edimax EW-7811UN is a good choice) and you can find a complete list at [www.snipca.com/9740](http://www.snipca.com/9740). In this guide we explain not only how to set up Wi-Fi, but also how to connect your Pi to a printer. We're connecting our printer via USB (you may need a USB hub) but these instructions will also work for printers on a home network. **ca**



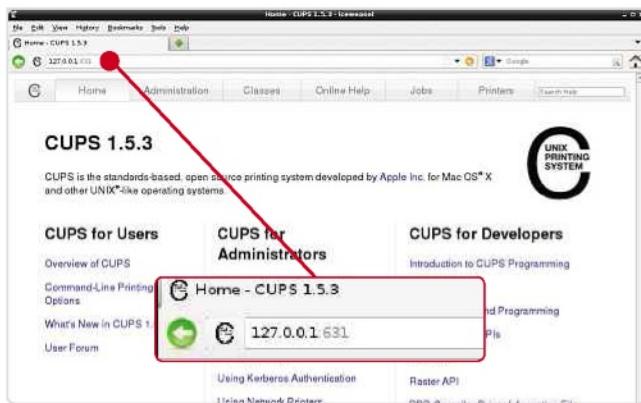
## STEP 1

To get started, turn off your Raspberry Pi and plug your Wi-Fi dongle into a spare USB socket – for the Model B this can be either one of the two built-in ports. The Model A has only one USB socket so you'll need to connect the dongle to a hub. Connect your **HDMI** cable, keyboard and mouse, insert your Raspbian **SD card** and boot up. Once the desktop has loaded, double click the Wi-Fi Config icon and choose Manage Networks. Click Scan to see a list of wireless networks. Double-click your network name to select it, then add your Wi-Fi password in the field called PSK and click Add to complete the setup. Your Raspberry Pi will now automatically use that network each time you boot up. ▼

## STEP 2

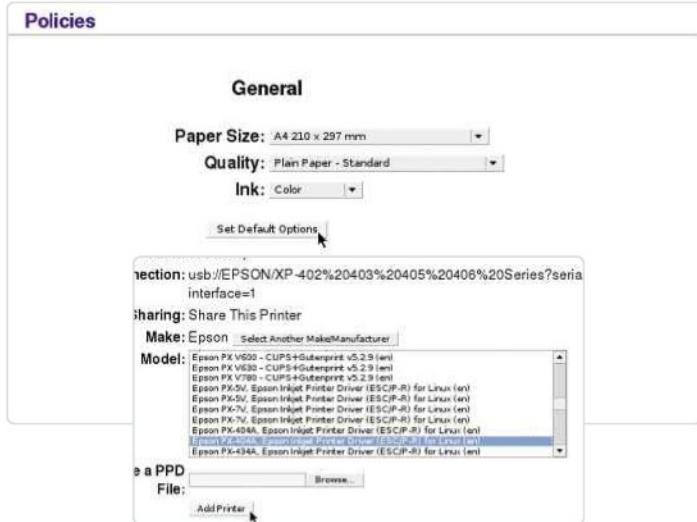
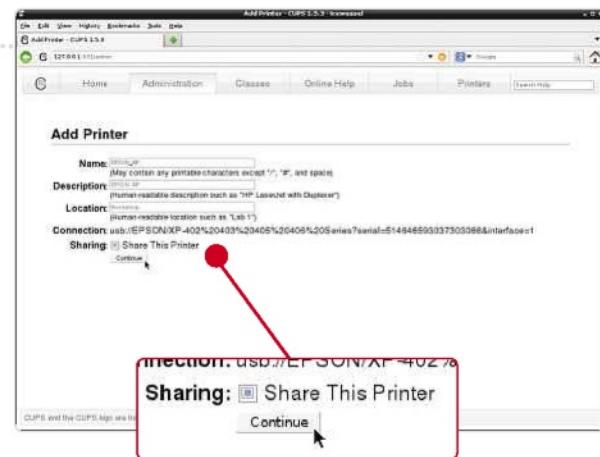
In order to print from your Pi you'll need to install CUPS (Common Unix Printing System). CUPS is software that allows a computer running a version of Linux, such as Raspbian, to support printers and also act as a print **server** for other computers. Before you install CUPS, however, check that your printer is supported by going to [www.openprinting.org/printers](http://www.openprinting.org/printers) and selecting your printer make and model, then clicking the 'show this printer' button. Assuming your model is on the list, this page will provide some information that might be useful later so keep it on screen. Connect your printer to your Raspberry Pi and switch them both on. Double-click LXTerminal on the desktop. LXTerminal is similar to the command prompt in Windows. Type **sudo apt-get update**, press enter, then type **sudo apt-get install cups**. The installation may take up to 30 minutes. ▼

```
pi@raspberrypi ~
Hit http://archive.raspberrypi.org wheezy Release.gpg
Get:2 http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org Wheezy Release [14.4 kB]
Hit http://archive.raspberrypi.org wheezy Release
Hit http://archive.raspberrypi.collabora.com wheezy/rpi armhf Packages
Hit http://archive.raspberrypi.org wheezy/main armhf Packages
Get:3 http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy/main armhf Packages [7.414 kB]
Ign http://raspberrypi.collabora.com wheezy/rpi Translation-en_GB
Ign http://archive.raspberrypi.org wheezy/main Translation-en_GB
Ign http://raspberrypi.collabora.com wheezy/rpi Translation-en
Ign http://archive.raspberrypi.org wheezy/main Translation-en
Hit http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy/contrib armhf Packages
Hit http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy/non-free armhf Packages
Get:4 http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy/rpi armhf Packages
Ign http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy/contrib Translation-en_GB
Ign http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy/non-free Translation-en_GB
Ign http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy/main Translation-en_GB
Ign http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy/non-free Translation-en
Ign http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy/rpi Translation-en_GB
Ign http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org wheezy/rpi Translation-en
Fetched 7,429 kB in 1min 3s (118 kB/s)
Reading package lists... Done
pi@raspberrypi ~ $ sudo apt-get install cups
```



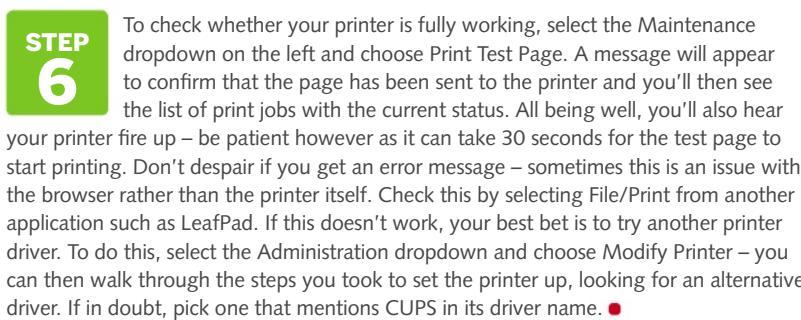
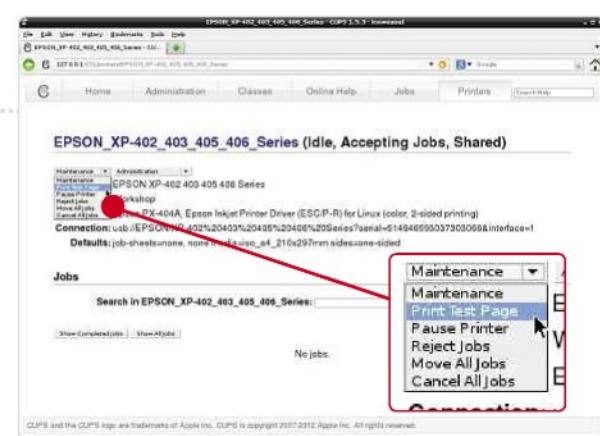
## STEP 3

Once CUPS is installed, add the user pi (that's you) to the group allowed to access the printer. To do this, type `sudo usermod -a -G lpadmin pi` and press Enter. With CUPS all printer management is done via web pages, but none of the built-in browsers works well with CUPS, so we're going to install Iceweasel, the Raspbian version of Firefox. Do this by typing `sudo apt-get install iceweasel` into LXTerminal and pressing Enter. After installation, start Iceweasel by clicking the start button at the bottom left and selecting Internet. Bring up the CUPS pages by typing `127.0.0.1:631` into the address bar – that address is pointing at your Raspberry Pi. Now, click the 'Adding Printers and Classes' link, type the username 'pi' and password 'raspberry' into the pop-up box and click the Login button. On the next screen, click Add Printer. ▼



## STEP 5

With any luck, the correct model name will now show next to 'model' on the Add Printer page. If it isn't, as in our case, then you may have to do a little searching on Google to find the nearest equivalent – the older your printer, the more likely it is to be on this list already. Click Add Printer and, on the next page, click Set Default Options and Continue. After a brief message confirming that the default options have been set, the printer summary screen will appear, confirming that the printer is ready. ▼



## STEP 6

To check whether your printer is fully working, select the Maintenance dropdown on the left and choose Print Test Page. A message will appear to confirm that the page has been sent to the printer and you'll then see the list of print jobs with the current status. All being well, you'll also hear your printer fire up – be patient however as it can take 30 seconds for the test page to start printing. Don't despair if you get an error message – sometimes this is an issue with the browser rather than the printer itself. Check this by selecting File/Print from another application such as LeafPad. If this doesn't work, your best bet is to try another printer driver. To do this, select the Administration dropdown and choose Modify Printer – you can then walk through the steps you took to set the printer up, looking for an alternative driver. If in doubt, pick one that mentions CUPS in its driver name. ■



# Add USB Storage to your Raspberry Pi

Expand your Pi's storage space beyond its SD card and make backups of valuable files

**A**lthough the Raspberry Pi boots from an **SD** memory card, it's not a good idea to store documents, photos, videos and music on it, as it's relatively slow and only has limited space. Fortunately, it's easy to add **USB** storage and whether that's by using a flash **memory stick** or an external **USB hard disk** the process is exactly the same. However, whilst you

can power **flash drives** from the Raspberry Pi, if you want to add an external hard disk, you'll need to use a powered hub, or a hard drive with a separate power supply. You can also attach **USB DVD** drives to your Pi, though this is a slightly different process and we will be covering it in more detail later on in this guide (see page 124) ▶



## STEP 1

We're using a USB flash drive like the one shown but the principals are the same for adding an external USB hard disk too. Most USB flash drives come preformatted using the Windows **FAT32** file system. This will work with the Raspberry Pi but it's inefficient and easily corrupted, so the first step is to reformat the drive using the Pi's native **EXT4** system. Begin by turning on your Raspberry Pi, then wait for the Raspbian desktop to load and plug in the USB drive. On a PC, Windows assigns the drive a letter such as E: or F: but a Linux system, such as the Raspberry Pi, uses 'mount points'. These are full paths such as '/dev/sda1' rather than letters to indicate where a file is stored. ▼

## STEP 2

Double-click LXTerminal, type **sudo blkid** and press Enter. You should now see a list of all attached drives. The path name for your drive will start with /dev/sd so look for a line that begins with those letters – you'll also get a clue from the label and the type – usually this will be 'vfat'. Note the path name for your drive – in the screenshot the path is /dev/sdb1. Before you can format the USB drive you need to unmount it so that the system can't access it during formatting. Type **sudo umount** followed by the path you noted earlier. In our case, we'll use **sudo umount /dev/sdb1**. ▼

```
pi@raspberrypi ~ $ sudo blkid
/dev/mmcblk0p1: SEC_TYPE="msdos" LABEL="boot" UUID="5D2D-B09A" TYPE="vfat"
/dev/mmcblk0p2: UUID="41cd5baa-7a62-4706-b8e8-02c43cce8d9" TYPE="ext4"
/dev/sdb1: LABEL="BYTESTOR" UUID="8E32-410E" TYPE="vfat"
pi@raspberrypi ~ $
```

```
pi@raspberrypi ~ % sudo umount /dev/sdb1
pi@raspberrypi ~ % sudo mkfs.ext4 /dev/sdb1 -L usbflash
mke2fs 1.42.5 (29-Jul-2012)
Filesystem label=usbflash
OS type: Linux
Block size=4096 (log=2)
Fragment size=4096 (log=2)
Stride=0 blocks, Stripe width=0 blocks
244800 inodes, 977936 blocks
48896 blocks (5.00%) reserved for the super user
First data block=0
Maximum filesystem blocks=1002438656
30 block groups
32768 blocks per group, 32768 fragments per group
8160 inodes per group
Superblock backups stored on blocks:
    32768, 98304, 163840, 229376, 294912, 819200, 884736

Allocating group tables: done
Writing inode tables: done
Creating journal (16384 blocks): done
Writing superblocks and filesystem accounting information: done

pi@raspberrypi ~ %
```

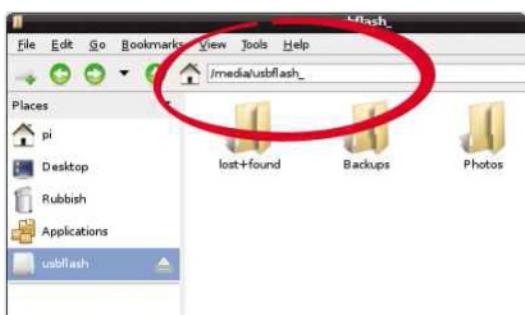
## STEP 3

We're now ready to format the card. To do this, type **`sudo mkfs.ext4 /dev/sdb1 -L usbflash`** (substituting the path if yours is different). This creates a new file system which will appear as 'usbflash' in the file explorer. We now need to create a folder to link with the flash drive – it's a good idea to use the same name as the label you've given the drive. Create a location for it by typing: **`sudo mkdir /media/usbflash`**. Press Enter and then type **`sudo mount /dev/sdb1 /media/usbflash`** to mount the drive – again substituting the path to your flash drive. ▼



## STEP 4

Now, to give permission to all users to save to the disk, type **`sudo chmod 777 /media/usbflash`** followed by Enter. Open File Manager and select Places from the dropdown box in the left pane of File Manager. You should see your flash drive appear beneath Applications. From now on, it will always be visible whenever it's plugged into your Pi. You can now create new folders on the USB drive – do this in File Manager by selecting it from the list of places. You'll probably see a 'lost+found' folder there; this is a system folder so don't interfere with it. Move your mouse over the white area and right-click to launch the contextual menu. Hover over Create New item, select Folder and give it a name before clicking OK. ▼



## STEP 5

Now that we have a working external disk, we can use it to backup files from the Pi's SD Card. This might be something you want to do so that you can restore the files on your Pi in case something goes wrong, or you might only backup when you're about to change files or install new software. Either way, we're going to use the simple command-line program called rsync which is built into Raspbian, so you don't need to install any new software. For a simple directory backup, we use the form `sudo rsync -av [source folder] [destination folder]`. Begin by checking the exact name of the USB disk you're backing up to – do this by looking again in the file manager under Places. Click your flash drive and you'll see the path appear at the top – this is the path you must use. Note that in the screenshot, the Raspberry Pi has added an underscore to the end of the path, which must be included. ▼

## STEP 6

In our example, we're copying a folder called 'python\_games' to a directory called 'Backups' on the flash drive. To do this, we type **`sudo rsync -av python_games /media/usbflash/_Backups`**. The '`a`' (archive) parameter tells rsync to preserve all the file information (such as which user it belongs to) and the '`v`' (verbose) parameter causes rsync to tell us exactly what's going on – you can leave this one out once you've got used to the process. Once you've pressed Enter, rsync will copy the files over. What's really clever is that rsync supports 'differential' copying – it only copies files that have changed. So, if you ran the exact same command again, it would check to see if any new files have been added to the source folder and only copy if it detects changes. So, if you use your Raspberry Pi for writing documents or editing photos, you can run rsync periodically to back up new files as you add them. ●

```
pi@raspberrypi ~ % sudo rsync -av python_games /media/usbflash/_Backups
sending incremental file list
python_games/
python_games/4row_arrow.png
python_games/4row_black.png
python_games/4row_board.png
python_games/4row_computerwinner.png
python_games/4row_humanwinner.png
python_games/4row_red.png
python_games/4row_tie.png
python_games/Grass_Block.png
python_games/Plain_Block.png
python_games/RedSelector.png
python_games/Rock.png
python_games/Selector.png
python_games/Star.png
python_games/Tree_Short.png
python_games/Tree_Tall.png
python_games/Tree_Ugly.png
python_games/Wall_Block_Tall.png
python_games/Wood_Block_Tall.png
python_games/badswap.wav
python_games/beep1.ogg
```

# SECTION 2

# Fun family projects

Parents and children can familiarise themselves with the Pi by working through these simple, fun projects together

Now you know the basics, it's time to get a taste of what your Raspberry Pi can really do. In this part of our guide, we've put together a selection of great Pi projects that are designed to ease you gently into the way the computer works and give you an idea of what the Pi can be used for. And

the best bit is that you'll be having plenty of fun while you're doing them, too. From watching BBC iPlayer shows to programming your very first game, these initial projects are an ideal way for children and parents (or grandparents) to learn about the Raspberry Pi together.

## IN THIS SECTION

**34**

Turn an old TV into a Smart TV

**38**

Take time-lapse photos with your Raspberry Pi

**41**

Use Scratch to program a quick game

**44**

Play retro games on your Pi

**50**

Build your own Pi games controller

**54**

Play Minecraft on your Pi

**58**

Create a web radio receiver

Add video services including BBC iPlayer to your current television

**Workshop:** take snapshots via a webcam and build them into a time-lapse movie

Computer programming is easier than you think. Get coding with your kids

Rediscover gaming classics using emulation software

Create a simple homemade gamepad for the Pi – no experience required

Learn how to download and play this popular, addictive game

Tune into thousands of internet radio stations using your Raspberry Pi



# Turn an old TV into a Smart tv

Adding a Raspberry Pi to an existing TV set will give you all the capabilities of your average Smart TV at a fraction of the cost. Find out how

The Smart TV, with its built-in access to services like iPlayer and YouTube, is a tempting proposition for many, but replacing an entire TV just to gain extra features isn't a great idea. Thankfully, the technology that goes into turning a TV into a Smart TV is almost identical to the technology on which the Pi was based. Its processor, in fact, was originally developed for multimedia set-top boxes.

► Give your TV a new lease of life and turn it into a Smart TV



Adding a Pi to an existing TV set gives it all the capabilities of your average Smart TV at a fraction of the cost, and with none of the environmental concerns of disposing of a perfectly good TV set. Better still, it can even be used to get a new lease of life from older CRT-based TV sets – great for adding to a bedroom or kitchen.

## Connecting the Pi

The Pi includes video and audio connectivity suitable for most TV sets. If you own a modern Full HD or HD Ready TV, or an AV receiver with HDMI inputs, you can simply connect a single HDMI cable to the Pi. This carries a digital video signal at resolutions as high as 1,920 × 1,080 – also known as 1080p or Full HD – as well as digital audio. The Pi can't, however, use the Ethernet functionality of

some HDMI systems; you'll still need a dedicated network cable, or a USB wireless adapter.

If you have an older TV, you can still use all the features of the Pi – just at a lower resolution. You'll need to see if your TV has round RCA connectors on its rear that look like the one on the top edge of the Pi. These will be coloured yellow for video, and white and red for audio on stereo sets, or just a single white or red connector for monaural sets. If you don't have RCA connectors on your TV, but you do have a rectangular SCART connection, you can buy a low-cost adapter that will accept the RCA cables from the Pi.

In either case, older TV sets need a separate cable for audio. While this is carried alongside video on HDMI, the composite video lead carries only images.

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

The majority of the features of a Smart TV, whether Pi-based or not, require internet access. As a result, users of Raspberry Pi Model A+ will need to add a USB network adapter to get the most out of this project. You'll also need a USB storage device for adding BBC iPlayer support.

You may need some additional cables: a standard HDMI cable (from 99p, ebay.co.uk) will connect the Pi to an HDTV for both audio and video, but using the Pi with an older CRT set will require a composite video cable and a 3.5mm-to-RCA audio cable (from 99p each, ebay.co.uk). You may also need an adapter that takes RCA connections and converts them to SCART if your TV doesn't have dedicated inputs (from 50p, ebay.co.uk).

Lastly, a case (from £2.50, ebay.co.uk) is a sound investment for a Pi that's going to spend its time sat in your living room. Without it, the Pi does look a little industrial for most tastes.



The Pi's analogue audio output is a 3.5mm jack, as used on the majority of portable audio devices. To connect this to a TV, SCART adapter or AV receiver, you'll need an extra cable: a 3.5mm to RCA adapter. This has a single 3.5mm connector at one end, which plugs into the Pi's audio output next to the composite video connector, and a pair of RCA connectors at the other.

When the Pi is connected to the TV, you'll also need to ensure it's connected to a network and power source. If you have a recent TV, it's possible that it has a USB socket on its rear or side. Don't be tempted to use this to power the Pi, as it's unlikely to provide enough current and will cause glitches or simply fail to work. Instead, use a dedicated power supply for the Pi.

▲ NOOBS wipes anything already stored on the SD card

▼ For most users, the defaults here should suffice



◀ The most popular Smart TV software for the Pi is OpenElec



### Installing OpenElec

The most popular Smart TV software for the Pi is a specialised Linux distribution called OpenElec. Also available on other platforms, and preinstalled on home theatre hardware, OpenElec is designed specifically for playing back video and audio files, either from local storage or across a network. It uses Xbmc as its front end, which started life as an unofficial media-centric add-on for Microsoft's original Xbox console, but has since grown into an impressive piece of cross-platform software.

The easiest way to install OpenElec is to do so using NOOBS. If you haven't already installed NOOBS on an SD card, flick back to the chapter on using NOOBS and do so. If you have, you can connect the Pi to power and

hold down the Shift key to enter NOOBS' recovery mode.

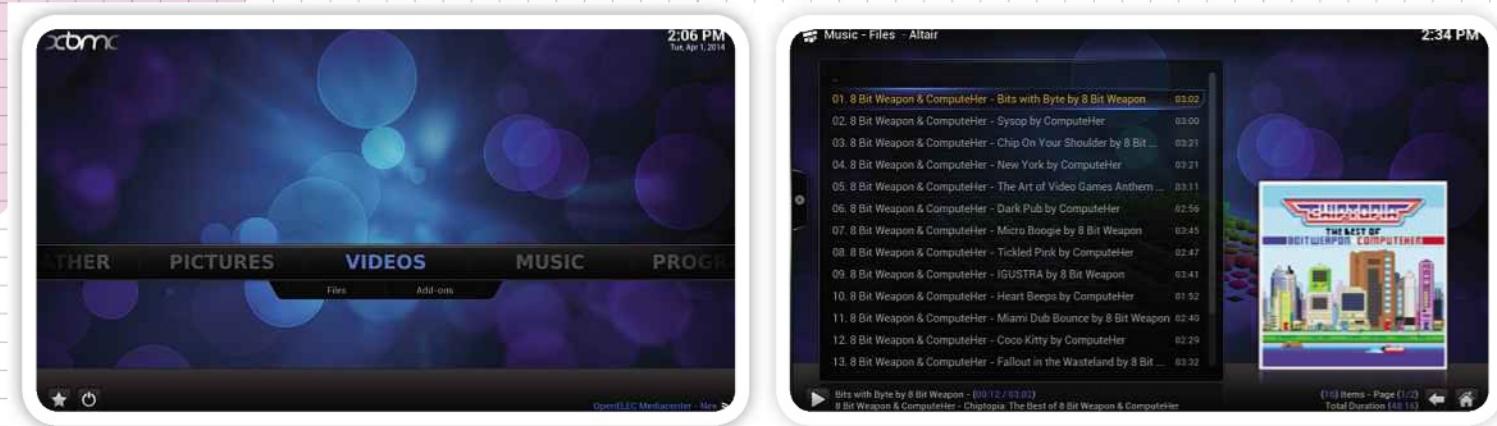
Installing a new operating system, or reinstalling an existing operating system, via NOOBS wipes anything that's already stored on the SD card. This is true even if you're choosing to install an operating system already present. Anything stored within that operating system, such as files you've saved or non-standard programs you've installed, will be lost. Before continuing, make sure you've taken a copy of anything you want to keep from your SD card or use a fresh SD card instead.

In the NOOBS screen, tick the box next to OpenElec to select it for installation. Confirm that you're happy for the SD card to be overwritten, and wait a few minutes for the software to install. When you see the message that OpenElec has installed successfully, click OK to reboot the Pi and load OpenElec.

When OpenElec loads into its homescreen, wait a minute or two and a setup wizard will appear. Choose your language on the first screen, and click Next. You'll be asked to give the OpenElec installation a name. If you're only planning on installing one Smart TV on your home network, you can leave the name as OpenElec; otherwise, give each Pi its own unique name and click Next again.

The next screen of the wizard will confirm that OpenElec can access your network. If you see an error here, check that the network cable is properly connected to the Pi and to the router or switch, and check it for damage along its length. When OpenElec confirms the network is ready, click Next.

Finally, OpenElec will give you two choices for remote administration services: SSH and Samba. The latter, enabled by default, lets you browse files on your Pi over the network. The former, disabled by default, allows you to



load a terminal and perform custom maintenance or install your own software. If you choose to enable SSH, remember to change the password – using the “passed” command – from the default of “openElec” to remain secure. Click Next twice to close the wizard.

### Configuring OpenElec

OpenElec is a user-friendly yet powerful package, and it needs a little bit of tweaking once installed. Your first port of call should be the System menu, accessible by moving your mouse to the right of the menu bar or by pressing the right arrow key on the keyboard until it appears. Click System, then click Settings to bring up the main configuration menu.

In the Video Output section of this menu, which opens by default, you can choose the resolution at which OpenElec should run. This is frequently set to  $1,920 \times 1,080$ i by

default, an interlaced mode that updates only half the screen at a time. When things move quickly, this is visible as the picture breaking up into visible bars running across the screen. Clicking the down arrow next to the resolution once will set OpenElec to  $1,920 \times 1,080$ p, a progressive mode that offers improved picture clarity. If you’re using the Pi’s composite output, however, you’ll be restricted in which modes you can choose; leaving the resolution menu alone is well advised here.

The Audio Output menu is your next port of call. For most users, the defaults here should suffice. If you’re using the Pi’s 3.5mm audio connector, however, you’ll want to click the down arrow next to HDMI on the Audio Output section or the Pi will default to sending all audio via the HDMI cable. Additional settings, including configuring the keyboard and mouse,

setting a proxy for OpenElec’s internet connectivity, or allowing the Pi to go into a power-saving mode when not in use, can be explored in the menu at the left-hand side. When you’re finished, click the Home icon at the bottom-right of the screen or press the Escape key on the keyboard to return to the main screen.

The main user interface of OpenElec, Xbmc, is controlled via the central bar. Here, you can choose the type of media you want to view: videos, pictures, music and so on. At the moment, however, you haven’t got anything to watch. You could, if you wanted, connect an external hard drive or a USB flash drive with media on it and play that. Alternatively, you can explore the network features of OpenElec.

To connect OpenElec to a network media source, such as a Universal Plug and Play (UPnP) server running on a NAS box, smartphone or tablet, click on the type of media – such as Music – and then Files. You’ll be given the option to Add Source; click this, then click Browse. OpenElec supports numerous different network protocols, including Windows SMB and Unix NFS. For UPnP, just click the UPnP Devices option followed by OK.

You’ll be given a list of active UPnP devices on your network. Choose one from the list and click OK to load it into the path box on the previous screen. Click OK again, and it will become a

▲ OpenElec supports numerous network protocols



► You’ll get a list of active UPnP devices on your network



◀ For iPlayer support, download the plug-in manually



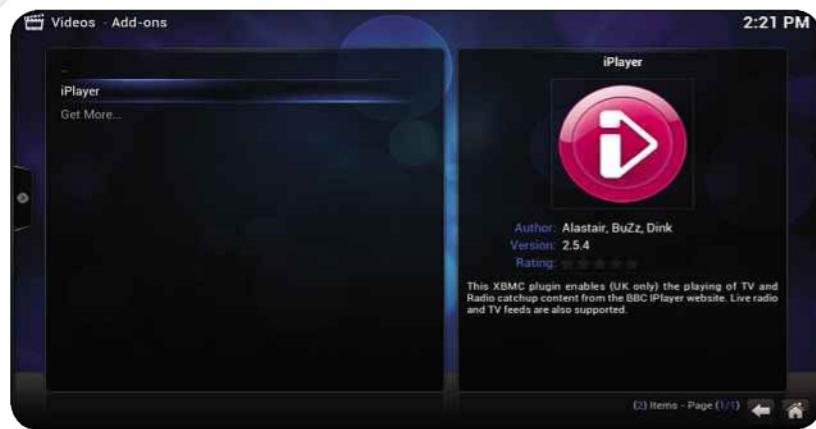
▲ Find the newest version of the iPlayer plugin.

permanent choice for loading media. Just click on the name of the server to browse its files and stream music, videos or pictures.

For non-local sources, click the Video option in the menu bar, then the Get More option. This will load a list of all the video-related add-on software that can be downloaded and installed in OpenElec. Browse the list, and click on any entries that take your fancy. Near the bottom, as an example, is YouTube. Clicking this and choosing Install will allow you to stream YouTube videos from the Add-Ons menu. Similar add-ons are available from the Music and Pictures menus, too.

### Installing iPlayer

Some add-ons don't appear in the main list, however, and need to be found separately. One such add-on is for the BBC's iPlayer catch-up TV service. To install iPlayer support, you need to download it manually. Load a web browser on



your PC, and visit the following site: [code.google.com/p/xbmciplayer2/downloads/list](http://code.google.com/p/xbmciplayer2/downloads/list)

Find the newest version of the iPlayer plugin – version 2.5.4 at the time of writing – and click on the filename. Click on the name of the file on the next screen, and choose Save when prompted to download the file. When the download has completed, click Open Folder and insert your USB storage device into the PC.

The iPlayer plugin is a ZIP archive, but you don't want to extract it; instead, drag the whole file across to the storage device. When the copy has finished, eject the drive and insert it into one of the Pi's USB ports. If you're using both ports for a keyboard and mouse, disconnect the keyboard temporarily to make room.

Go into any Add-Ons menu on the Pi, and click the “..” symbol at the top of the list. Keep doing so until you get to a screen that

includes the option to Install from ZIP File. Click this, then find your USB storage device in the list on the right-hand side of the screen. Click the drive, and click the iPlayer ZIP file you downloaded. Click the OK button to install the add-on from the drive. When a message appears in the bottom-right of the screen telling you the add-on has been installed, you can click the Home icon and remove the USB storage device.

If you go back into the Videos menu and choose Add-Ons, you should find an option for iPlayer. Click this, and you'll be able to choose from the various categories and channels on offer, or search for a programme you've missed. Click on an episode of any listed program, and it will begin streaming over the internet.

For more info about OpenElec, including how to use non-media add-on programs like the built-in browser, visit [wiki.openelec.tv](http://wiki.openelec.tv)



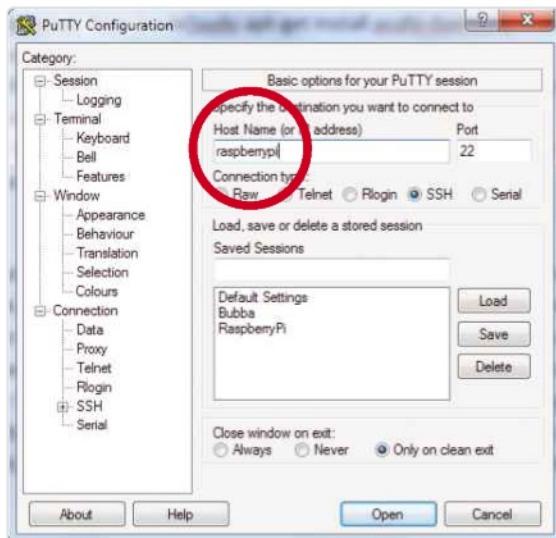
# Take time-lapse photos with your Raspberry Pi

Use your Pi to take automatic snapshots via a webcam and build the photos into a time-lapse movie

The tiny, low-power Raspberry Pi is ideal for taking time-lapse photography, where a device needs to be left alone for long periods of time and where there might not be space for a normal computer. The Pi will work with most standard webcams. Snapshots can be taken by a free program called Motion, either at timed intervals for things like a night

sky, or when your webcam detects movement.

We're using a Model B Pi. Since both **USB** sockets will be taken up by the webcam and Wi-Fi adapter, we're going to set up the Pi so it can be controlled remotely using a free program called PuTTY ([www.snipca.com/9770](http://www.snipca.com/9770)). PuTTY gives you command line control of your Pi from a Windows PC. **ca**



## STEP 1

To make it easier to locate and control your Pi remotely over a network, we'll be using a program called Avahi. Start your Raspberry Pi as normal and make sure it's connected to the internet. Open LXTerminal and type **sudo apt-get update**, press Enter, then type **sudo apt-get install avahi-daemon**, press Enter and then Y when asked to confirm. Now start PuTTY on your Windows PC. It should find the Pi on your network, listing it as either `raspberrypi.local` or `raspberrypi`. If not, you may need to install a free Apple utility called Bonjour (<http://support.apple.com/kb/DL999>) on your PC, or follow our instructions on page 124 to give your Pi a fixed **IP address**. ▼

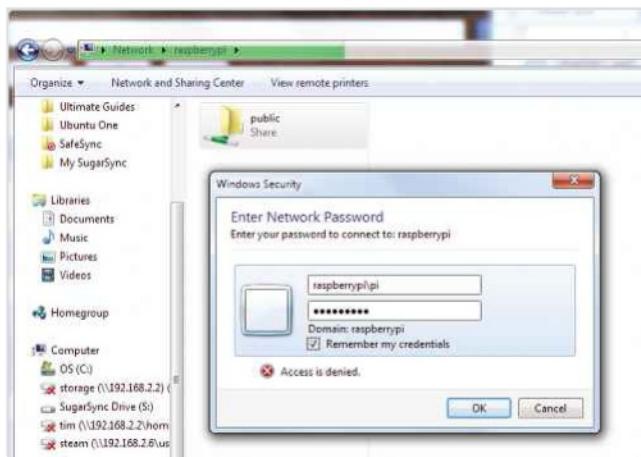
## STEP 2

Remotely controlling your Pi via PuTTY on your PC, type **sudo mkdir /public** at the command line and press Enter to create a public folder. To share the folder over your network type **sudo apt-get install samba** and press Enter. Next, type **sudo nano /etc/samba/smb.conf**, press Enter and then scroll to the bottom and enter the text from [public] onwards as it appears in the image to the right. Press Ctrl and X, Y and then Enter to save the changes and quit. Type **sudo chown -R root:users /public**, press enter, then **sudo chmod -R ug+rw /public/** and press Enter. Restart the Samba server by typing **sudo service samba restart**. Finally, type **mkdir /public/motion** and press Enter. See page 36 for more about Samba. ▼

```

[public]
comment = Public files
path = /public
valid users = @users
force group = @users
create group = 0660
directory mask = 0771
read only = no

```



## STEP 3

You must create a new user in order to be able to access this shared folder. Type **sudo pdbedit --create --user pi**. Enter the password 'raspberry' and press Enter. Test that the shared folder is working properly by switching to your Windows PC and pressing Win + E to open an Explorer window, then type **\raspberrypi\pi** in the Address Bar at the top and then enter the password raspberry in the bottom box. Select the option 'Remember my credentials' to avoid having to enter your username and password another time. You should now see not only the public folder but all of the folders and files in the Pi user's home folder. ▼

```
pi@raspberrypi ~ motion
GNU nano 2.2.6   File: /tmp/crontab.Ww0PHs/crontab  Modified

# minute (m), hour (h), day of month (dom), month (mon),
# and day of week (dow) or use '*' in these fields (for 'any').#
# Notice that tasks will be started based on the cron's system
# daemon's notion of time and timezone.
#
# Output of the crontab jobs (including errors) is sent through
# email to the user the crontab file belongs to (unless redirected).
#
# For example, you can run a backup of all your user accounts
# at 5 a.m. every week with:
# 0 5 * * 1 tar -zcf /var/backups/home.tgz /home/
#
# For more information see the manual pages of crontab(5) and cron(8)

# * * * * * command
reboot sudo motion
```

## STEP 4

Return to PuTTY. Install Motion on your Raspberry Pi by typing **sudo apt-get install motion** at the command line and pressing Enter. Press Y when asked to confirm the installation. When it has finished you should set Motion to run at startup by typing **crontab -e** at the command line and pressing Enter. Move down to the bottom of this file and enter the following text **@reboot sudo motion**. Press Ctrl and X and press Y when asked whether to 'Save modified buffer', then press Enter to confirm. ▼

```
pi@raspberrypi ~
GNU nano 2.2.6   File: /etc/motion/motion.conf

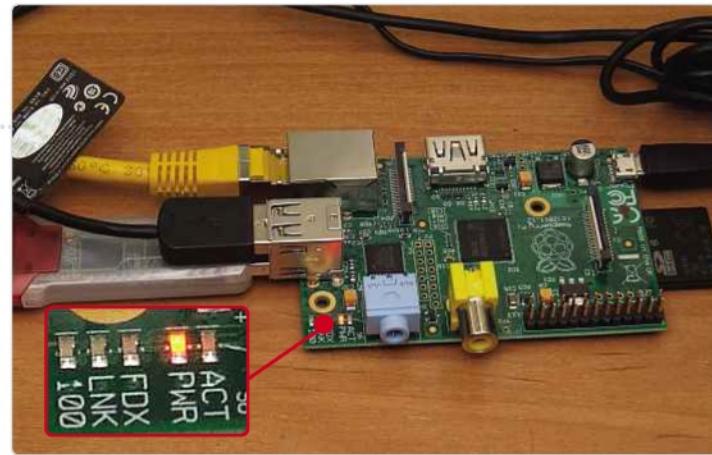
# Quotation marks round string are allowed.
#####
# Target base directory for pictures and films
# Recommended to use absolute path. (Default: current working directory)
target_dir /public/motion

# File path for snapshots (jpeg or ppm) relative to target_dir
# Default: %Y-%m-%d%H%M%S-snapshot
# Default value is equivalent to legacy oldlayout option
# For Motion 3.0 compatible mode choose: %Y/%m/%d/%H/%M/%S-snapshot
# File extension .jpg or .ppm is automatically added so do not include this.
# Note: A symbolic link called lastsnap.jpg created in the target dir will always
# point to the latest snapshot, unless snapshot_filename is exactly 'lastsnap'
snapshot_filename %Y-%m-%d%H%M%S-snapshot

# File path for motion triggered images (jpeg or ppm) relative to target_dir
# Default: %Y-%m-%d%H%M%S-%q
# Default value is equivalent to legacy oldlayout option
# For Motion 3.0 compatible mode choose: %Y/%m/%d/%H/%M/%S-%q
Search: target_dir
G Get Help F First Line I Go To Line P Beg of Par J Full J S t i n g S Backwards
C Cancel L Last Line R Replace E End of Par C Case Sensi Y Regexp
```

## STEP 5

You can set exactly how Motion will work by editing a single text file. Type **sudo nano /etc/motion/motion.conf** and press Enter. The text document is rather long so to find the setting we want, press Ctrl and W, type **target\_dir** in the Search section that appears at the bottom of the screen and press Enter. The cursor will jump to this setting. Replace the text after **target\_dir** with **/public/motion**. Press Ctrl and W again, type **snapshot\_interval** and press Enter. Delete 0 and replace with the number of seconds you want between each time-lapse shot. ▼



## STEP 6

You can improve image quality by increasing the **resolution** of the captured snapshots. Press Ctrl + W, type 320 and press Enter to find these settings in the settings file. Change the image width and height settings to your webcam's upper limit. Our Microsoft LifeCam HD-5000 can manage 1280x720. Press Ctrl + X, then Y when prompted to save, and then Enter. Shutdown the Pi by typing **sudo shutdown -h now**. When all the LEDs apart from the red PWR one have gone off, it's safe to unplug the Pi, remove the keyboard and mouse from the USB ports, then plug in the webcam (and Wi-Fi adapter for wireless network access) and position it where you want it. Now power it up again to start taking the time-lapse photos. ▼

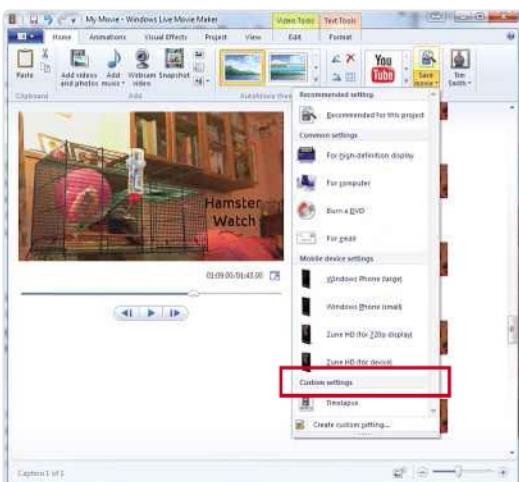


```
pi@raspberrypi: ~
pi@raspberrypi ~ $ pidof motion
2008
pi@raspberrypi ~ $ sudo kill 2008
pi@raspberrypi ~ $
```

### STEP 7

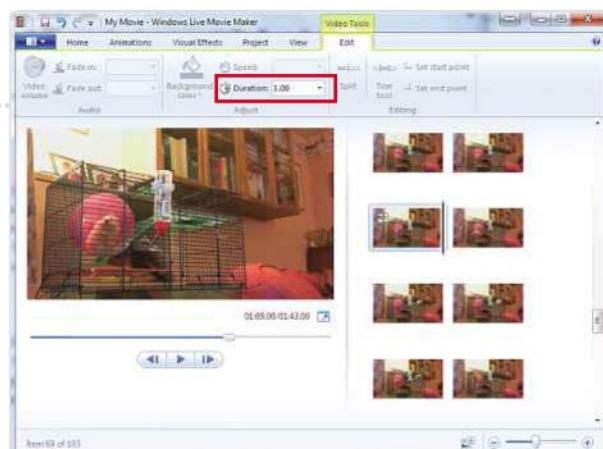
When you've finished capturing the time-lapse videos you need to stop the Motion app from taking any more images. To do this in PuTTY, type **pidof motion** at the command line then press Enter. Next, type **sudo kill** followed by the number that appeared after you typed the last command. Should you ever need to, you can stop Motion running whenever the Pi starts up by typing **crontab -e** and pressing Enter. Scroll down to the setting shown in Step 4 and add a **#** at the beginning of the line to make Raspbian ignore it. Press Ctrl + X, then Y and then Enter to save your changes and quit. ▶

**STEP  
8** To make a video from your time-lapse images, return to your Windows desktop and launch Windows Movie Maker. Click the 'Add videos and photos' button in the Ribbon. Navigate to your Pi's folder, press Ctrl + A to select all the photos, then click Open. By default, Movie Maker gives each picture seven seconds on screen, which is far too long. So, press Ctrl + A to select all the pictures, then click the Edit tab in the Ribbon, then type a smaller number in the Duration text box. To see what duration works best with your captured images, click the play button underneath the video preview. ▶



### STEP 9

Add a title to the video by clicking the Home tab, then the Title button. Use captions to describe moments of interest during the video. When you're happy with the video, click the 'Save movie' button in the Home tab of the Ribbon and then create a customised time-lapse setting. Name the setting 'Webcam Time-lapse' and set the resolution to that of your webcam. Click Save twice, then Close. Click the 'Save movie' button again and select the time-lapse setting you just created. Give the video a name and then click Save. ▶



**STEP  
10** You can also use the motion app to capture video when movement is detected on the webcam. Open the Motion.conf file for editing (see Step 5), press Ctrl + W, type **snapshot\_interval** and press Enter. Change the number to 0 to disable snapshots. Next, press Ctrl + W, type **threshold**, then press Enter. Change the number for the threshold setting to 1500. Motion capture is more complicated than time-lapse and you can find more detailed instructions at [www.snipca.com/9817](http://www.snipca.com/9817). This describes how to ignore portions of the view if cars passing by start the motion-capture and how long to keep recording after no more movement is detected. ●

```
pi@raspberrypi: ~
GNU nano 2.2.6   File: /etc/motion/motion.conf   Modified

# Try to filter out noise generated by roundrobin (default: off)
switchfilter off

#####
# Motion Detection Settings:
#####

# Threshold for number of changed pixels in an image that
# triggers motion detection (default: 1500)
threshold 1500

# Automatically tune the threshold down if possible (default: off)
threshold_tune off

# Noise threshold for the motion detection (default: 32)
noise_level 32

# Automatically tune the noise threshold (default: on)
noise_tune on

# Get Help  W WriteOut  R Read File  Y Prev Page  C Cut Text  O Our Pos
X Exit  J Justify  W Where Is  N Next Page  U Uncut Text  T To Spell
```

# Use Scratch to program a quick game

Computer programming is easier than you think. Get coding with your kids

The little Raspberry Pi computer has led to a resurgence of interest in the more technical aspects of computing, including programming. We'll explore coding in much more detail later on in this guide, demonstrating the theory behind it and helping you to learn how to create your own programs.

However, the challenge with many programming languages – even Python – is that they don't always offer the quick gratification needed to keep novices interested.

But a free tool called Scratch takes a different approach – one that offers an engaging experience from the start. Programs are created simply by dragging and dropping elements around on screen. A complete novice can create a working program quickly, and projects can be shared with other users on the Scratch website. So, to learn how to program a game in just 15 minutes, read on.

## Understanding the interface

Scratch comes built into the Raspberry Pi's Raspbian operating system. You'll find a shortcut for it on your Pi's desktop. A Windows version is also available to download free of charge from [http://scratch.mit.edu/scratch\\_1.4](http://scratch.mit.edu/scratch_1.4). We'd also suggest signing up for a Scratch account. This is free, and will allow you to share your work with other people. Visit <http://scratch.mit.edu> and click the Signup link at the top of the web page. Fill in the registration form and the blue 'sign up' button at the bottom. Your Scratch profile page will appear; we'll return here later.

Flip back to the Scratch program window. There



▲ Scratch is a great way to start learning about computer programming, on Raspberry Pi or Windows

are several panes; the window in the top-right corner, with the picture of a cat, is the 'stage' and this is where the results of the program will appear. It also controls the starting and stopping of programs, with the green flag and red dot respectively.

Objects on the stage, such as the cat, are known as 'sprites'; they are listed in the pane below the stage – the cat is named 'Sprite1'. This is where you can add new sprites and change their properties.

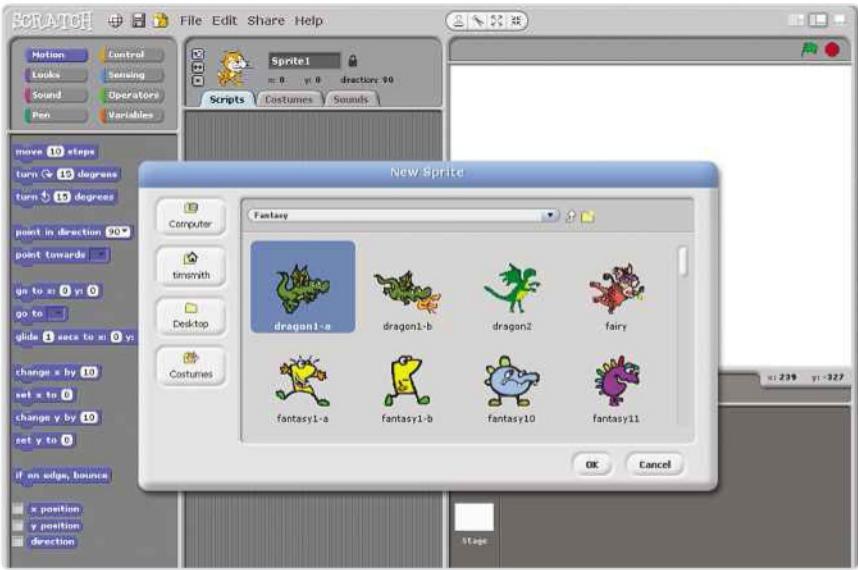
The tall pane to the left-hand side of the stage is known as the 'scripts area'; this is where the programming code is developed and shaped. Programming essentially involves creating a series of commands to control something – sprites on the stage, in this case. A complete series of commands is known as a 'script'.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

>Create a working game in just 15 minutes using a simple programming language

Encourage children to create games and interactive stories

Share and run your programs online at the Scratch website



Scratch's commands are arranged into eight different categories, which can be selected by clicking one of the eight labelled buttons in the top-left corner of the Scratch program window. Scripts are created by dragging items from the commands pane into the scripts area.

### Programming primer

Let's do that now. Click the Control button in the top left-hand corner and the commands pane will fill with command **icons**, coloured orange. To start, drag and drop the 'when [green flag icon] clicked' command into the scripts pane. Place it near the top-left corner but don't worry too much about its precise position.

Now click the Looks category button and find the 'say Hello! For 2 secs' command – drag the first (orange) command in the scripts pane. As you do, notice how a white line appears below the orange command; this indicates that the

▲ In Scratch, you can build up a program just by dragging and dropping

command being dragged can naturally follow the existing command. Now drop the new command below the existing one and the two will 'snap' together. Indeed, examine the command icons and you'll see they are shaped a bit like puzzle pieces – commands that fit together can work together.

Remarkably, you have already created some working computer code. To try it, click the green flag icon above the stage to start the program. A 'Hello!' speech bubble will appear above the cat for a couple of seconds, and then disappear. Now examine the fledgling script to consider what is going on. The two commands read 'when [green flag icon] clicked' and 'say Hello! For 2 secs' – and that's precisely what has just happened.

### Creating a game

Let's make a game of chase in Scratch. The player will control the cat sprite in an effort to try to reach a snowman, while avoiding a ball that moves across the stage. We'll create the program so that the two characters appear in opposing corners at the beginning of the game, and apply random movement to the ball.

Create a new script by selecting New from the File menu and click No when asked if you want to save your work. **Drag and drop** the 'when [green flag icon] clicked' command into the scripts pane. Now select the Motion category and drag the 'go to x:[X] y:[Y]' and the 'point in direction [X]' icons to join them to the first command. Click in the 'x:' box and type -182 as the new value, and set 'y:' to -112.

To make the cat react to the cursor (arrow) keys, return to the Control category and drag 'when [X] key pressed' to the scripts pane – this will not join up with the previous three commands. Click this command's down-pointing arrow and choose 'up arrow' for the [X] value. Return to the Motion category. Drag both the 'point in direction [X]' and the 'move [X] steps' commands to join up with the second orange command. Click the down-pointing arrow to ensure that the 'point in direction' [X] value is set to '0 (up)'. For 'move [X] steps', the [X] value should be '10'.

Click Control and drag another 'when [X] key pressed' command to the scripts pane, choosing 'down arrow' for [X]. Add 'point in direction [X]' and the 'move [X] steps' commands as before, changing the first [X] value to 180. Repeat twice more, for the left and right arrows, using '-90' for the left arrow [X] value and '90' for the right arrow.

Click the green flag icon to check your work – tapping the arrow keys should control the cat.

### Adding the snowman

To add a new sprite, click the middle star-shaped icon under the stage. In the New Sprite dialogue box, click the Costumes button on the left and then

## BEYOND SCRATCH

Scratch has the potential for creating some fairly sophisticated programs. For example, it makes it easy to perform several tasks simultaneously, which can be quite tricky with traditional coding methods. However, if you want to develop your skills then at some point it will become necessary to move to a more traditional

programming language. Small Basic (<http://smallbasic.com>) would be a good one to try. The next step up is Visual Studio. Microsoft produces a free version called Visual Studio Express ([www.snipca.com/9818](http://www.snipca.com/9818)). Although some handwritten code is required, it is also possible to design programs by dragging and dropping

commands in similar way to Scratch. Another good choice is Game Maker Studio ([www.yoyogames.com/gamemaker/studio](http://www.yoyogames.com/gamemaker/studio)). The best way, however, would be to turn to our section on Python (from page 50) where you'll find everything you need to learn this simple, free programming language using your Raspberry Pi.

double-click the Fantasy folder. Scroll down to find and double-click 'snowmanz' – he will appear in the stage. Double-click the snowman to make him the subject of scripts pane. As before, add a 'when [green flag icon] clicked' command. Then join a 'forever' command beneath it, followed by an 'if' command inside that. The 'forever' command grows to allow 'if' to fit inside.

We have created a 'loop'. Loops are used to repeat actions either endlessly, or based on a particular condition that will be checked by the 'if' command.

We need the 'if' command to check whether or not the cat has touched the snowman. Click to select the Sensing category and drag the diamond-shaped 'touching [X]?' command into the diamond-shaped depression inside the 'if' command. Click the down-pointing arrow to change the 'touching [X]?' command's [X] value to 'Sprite1' – this is the cat's sprite.

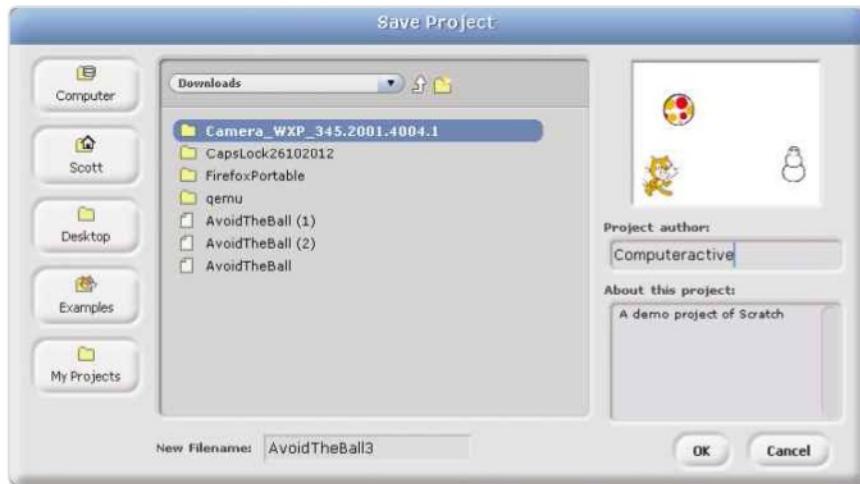
Select the Looks category and drag and drop the 'say Hello!' command inside the 'if' loop. Double-click on the 'Hello!' text, delete it and replace by typing 'You Win!'. Return to the Control category and drag and drop a 'stop all [red circle icon]' command (you may need to scroll down the commands list to find it) below the 'say' command. This will end the game when the cat sprite touches the snowman.

## Adding the ball

Click the middle star-shaped icon under the stage. Click Costumes then double-click Things followed by 'beachball'. Double-click the ball in the stage to make it the focus of the script area. Drag a 'when [green flag icon] clicked' Control command into the scripts area, followed by a 'go to x:[X] y:[X]' Motion command. Change 'x:' to '178' and 'y:' to '106'.

To make the snowman move, add a 'forever' loop and then a 'repeat' loop within that. From the Operators category, drag a 'pick random [X] to [X]' command into the number field in the 'repeat' command, and change the [X] values to '1' and '5' respectively. Below this, attach a 'move [X] steps' command (from the Motion category) and another 'pick random [X] to [X]' command in to the move command, setting the [X] values to '5' and '15'.

Drag a 'point towards [X]' Motion command so that it appears underneath the 'repeat' loop but still inside the 'forever' loop. Click on the down-pointing arrow and choose 'Sprite1'. Now insert a 'turn [X] degrees' command underneath this. Drag a 'pick random [X] to [X]' Operator command into 'turn [X] degree' command's number field and set the values to '-90' and '90'. This is to make the ball travel in the general direction of the cat but with some randomness, so the game isn't impossible.



▲ It won't take long before you've created a simple script using Scratch

Finally the ball needs to know whether or not it has touched the cat. Insert an 'if' command after the 'turn [X] degrees' command, but still within the forever loop. From the Sensing category, drag a 'touching [X]?' command into 'if' command's gap, choosing 'Sprite1' as the [X] value. Add a 'say' command from the Looks category and change the text to read 'Got You!'. Add a 'stop all [red circle icon]' after this 'say' command to end the game.

If you ran the program now (by clicking the green flag icon) you'd discover the ball moves too fast. This can be fixed by adding a 'wait' command (from the Control category) to the very end, but still within the 'forever' loop. Set it to 0.2 seconds.

Now run the program. The ball will move and the cat will respond to direction commands from the cursor (arrow) keys. Try to get to the snowman without being touched by the ball.

If something's wrong, check the code carefully or download the completed program from [www.snipca.com/7950](http://www.snipca.com/7950) – click the AvoidTheBall link.

## Save and share

Save your work often. Type a name at the bottom of the window. If planning to share, add your name in the Project author box and a description in the 'About this project' box. Click OK.

To share the program with other people using your Scratch account, click the orange icon. Enter your Scratch login details and some information about the program, then click OK.



**“ Even if you've never programmed before, Scratch makes it very simple. ”**

# Retro gaming emulation

Paired with a classic joystick, it's easy to transform your Pi into a retro gaming system. Here we show you how to get to grips with emulation

**W**hile the games of today are multimillion-pound affairs created by teams of hundreds, and with graphics designed to mimic the real world as closely as possible, that wasn't always the case. In the early days of computing, games couldn't rely on special effects and orchestral scores to impress. Instead, they used simple yet effective gameplay techniques to lure users in, often

with great success.

It should be no surprise, then, that vintage gaming is a popular hobby. Whether it's driven by nostalgia or curiosity, people spend thousands filling entire rooms with the computers, consoles and peripherals of yesteryear.

There is an alternative, however: emulation. The machines of the past – particularly those that were around in the 1970s and 1980s – were so simple compared to modern computers that even the humble Raspberry Pi dwarfs their capabilities. As a result, it becomes possible to turn a Pi into wide range of classic gaming machines – functionally, if not aesthetically – without having to dedicate storage space to the hobby.

## Installing RetroPie

The easiest way to start playing

vintage games on the Raspberry Pi is to install RetroPie, a bundle of emulators and supporting software coded specifically for the Pi's hardware. As with any Raspberry Pi project, the first step is always to make sure that you're running the most recent versions of all software packages by typing the following commands at the terminal:

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

When the upgrade process is complete, you'll need to install some supporting software followed by the script that actually downloads and installs RetroPie itself using the following commands:

```
sudo apt-get install dialog  
git clone git://github.com/  
petrockblog/RetroPie-Setup.  
git
```

The second command uses a tool called Git, which is designed for collaborative programming and version control. It lets users store multiple versions of source code files in a central repository, and download any version at any given time, allowing mistakes to be quickly reverted. It's a very powerful utility, but here it's used simply to download the latest RetroPie setup script created by PetRockBlog.com. The installation process can then be kicked off with the following two commands:

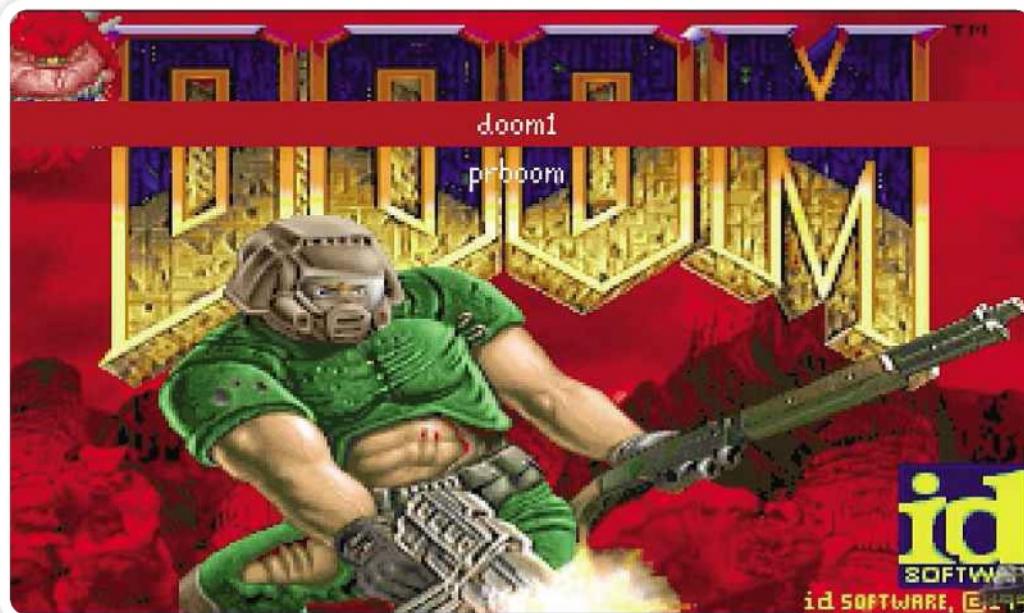
## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

The main attraction of emulation is that you don't need any of the original hardware in order to do it – simply a computer sufficiently powerful enough to translate the instructions expected of the classic code into those used by modern machines. As a result, any Raspberry Pi – Model A/A+ or Model B/B+ – with a keyboard and mouse is more than enough to get started, although installing the software itself will require an active internet connection, and you'll need a large SD card – 8GB or more – to store all the files.

The experience does become more enjoyable when paired with some classic control systems,

however. A USB adapter (from £20, ebay.co.uk) that converts the nine-pin plug of most joysticks from the eight-bit era – including those used by Commodore and Atari – into a connection suitable for the Raspberry Pi is a sound investment.

Alternatively, most PC USB joysticks and gamepads will be detected by the Pi and work just fine for gaming. Avoid those with rumble or force feedback features, as these require more power and typically work only when connected to Windows. The same applies to any joysticks that boast programmability, which again largely rely on Windows-only drivers to operate.



```
cd RetroPie-Setup  
sudo bash retropie-setup.sh
```

The script will present you with a menu, of which the top two choices are of interest at present. The first option downloads and installs precompiled binaries of all the software used to make RetroPie. The second downloads the source code for the software and compiles it on the Pi itself. The advantage to the second approach is that you're always guaranteed to receive the latest versions of all software, which may include performance improvements and better stability, but installation will take upwards of 20 hours to complete. The more common first option downloads precompiled binaries, which may not represent the latest version of each package, but that does take a lot less time to install.

Choose one of the first two options with the cursor keys and confirm with Enter. When you've made your choice, regardless of which option you pick, be prepared for a wait. RetroPie is a comprehensive collection of all the most popular emulators for the Raspberry Pi. This makes it supremely flexible: using just one tool, you can have your Pi emulate

▲ A shareware version of Doom is available to test

everything from a Commodore VIC-20 to a 1990s arcade cabinet. Sadly, it also means that there's a considerable amount of data to download and install. It's not uncommon for the binary installation process to take upwards of an hour on even a fast SD card and overclocked Pi.

When the installation has completed, a message will appear onscreen telling you where you can find the installation logs. You only need to look at these in the event that something has gone wrong. Press Enter to confirm the message, then after a few moments you'll be returned to the main

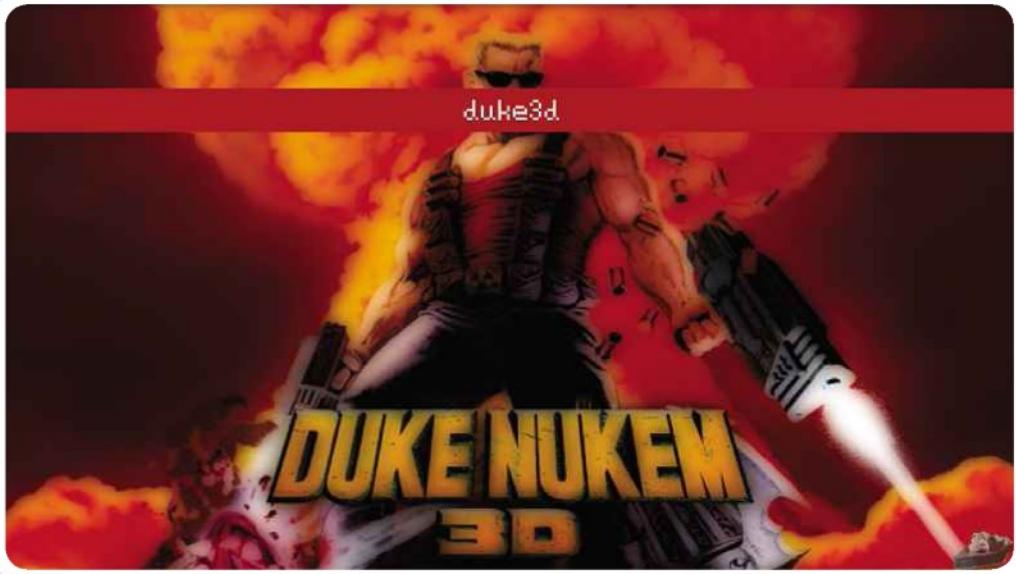
► Most PC USB joysticks and gamepads will be detected by the Pi



installation menu. Scroll down to the Perform Reboot option with the cursor keys, and press Enter to restart the Pi and complete the installation.

### Obtaining ROM Files

The emulation scene has always had an air of illegitimacy about it. So-called ROMs, named after the read-only memory chips used to store the games on cartridge-based consoles, are often found being traded on underground sites with little regard to copyright. Unlike film and music piracy, however, there's a generally held belief that there's nothing morally wrong with sharing, copying and downloading ROM files for systems and games that are long



◀ A shareware version of Duke Nukem 3D is included with RetroPie

▼ The easiest way to play vintage games on the Pi is to install RetroPie

Choose installation either based on binaries or on sources.

- 1 Binaries-based INSTALLATION (faster, but possibly not up-to-date)
- 2 Source-based INSTALLATION (16-20 hours !?), but up-to-date versions
- 3 SETUP (only if you already have run one of the installations above)
- 4 UPDATE RetroPie Setup script
- 5 UPDATE RetroPie Binaries
- 6 UNINSTALL RetroPie Installation
- 7 Perform REBOOT

< OK >      <Cancel>

▲ The more common first option takes less time to install.

out of production, frequently from companies that no longer exist.

The law, however, is clear: copying commercial software is a crime, with no exceptions for so-called "abandonware". This leaves the emulation enthusiast in a bit of a sticky situation when it comes to finding things to actually emulate. Some believe that owning an original copy of the software in question - a cartridge for a Nintendo Entertainment System,

“Even today, coders are creating games for systems the mainstream market had long since abandoned.”

for example, or a board from an arcade cabinet – is grounds enough to be able to download ROM files for personal use. Others believe that as long as the company behind the software isn't attempting to still profit from its sale, the seemingly abandoned software is now fair game – a perilous assumption, given the current trend for classic titles to be dusted off, given touch-screen-friendly controls and re-released on tablets and smartphones.

There are perfectly legitimate ways to use the emulation capabilities of your Pi that don't come with an implied threat of legal action from a company that may have quietly bought the rights to software you thought was abandoned: the homebrew scene. Even today, coders are creating games for systems the mainstream market had long since abandoned, like the Sinclair ZX81 with its tiny 1KB of memory – less than a 500,000th the RAM available to a Raspberry Pi Model B Revision 2 board. Better still, manufacturers of classic systems have sometimes given their permission for the software that drove their computers and consoles to be distributed publicly so long as no attempt is made to profit from that distribution.

One such platform is the Sinclair ZX Spectrum, a low-cost

colour computer built for the home market by Sinclair Computers in 1982. The follow-up to the well-received Sinclair ZX81, the Spectrum introduced sound, colour graphics and a choice of 16KB or 48KB of RAM. It proved a popular choice in the UK, but lost out internationally to the more powerful – but significantly more expensive – Commodore 64.

When Amstrad bought the rights to the Sinclair ZX Spectrum, it obtained all copyrights on the ROM-based operating system that drove the machine. Following the demise of the Spectrum and the growth of emulation, the company was contacted to confirm whether or not it was happy for emulator writers to include ROM images for the Spectrum for public use. "Amstrad are happy for emulator writers to include images of our copyrighted code as long as the copyright messages are not altered," Amstrad's Cliff Lawson explained in a public message to the comp.sys.sinclair newsgroup in



◀ RetroPie also includes a freeware version of Cave Story

1999, "and we appreciate it if the program/manual includes a note to the effect that 'Amstrad have kindly given their permission for the redistribution of their copyrighted material but retain that copyright'."

Since that release, the Spectrum copyright has changed hands once again and now resides with satellite broadcaster Sky. Thus far, the company has shown no interest in rescinding the rights for the ROM files to be distributed with emulation software, so long as no charge is levied for said software. While the copyright status of other systems of a similar vintage may be vague, Spectrum fans can rejoice in knowing they can emulate their system with a clear conscience.

RetroPie comes with system ROMs for each of the systems it can emulate preinstalled. In the case of the Spectrum and selected other systems, this is with the permission of the original copyright holder; in other cases, it is not. It also comes with a small selection of free and shareware games to test the emulation with, including an Apple II emulator, the shareware versions of Doom and Duke Nukem 3D, and the freeware version of Cave Story.

If you want to install your own games, the ROM, disk or tape images are kept in a subfolder called "roms". List the contents of the folder at the terminal with this command:

Is ~/RetroPie/roms/

This will provide an overview of the machines that RetroPie is capable of emulating. Games for each system should be placed into their respective directories. If you already own the original cassettes, disks or cartridges for a given game, it's generally considered acceptable – morally, if not strictly speaking legally – to download a ROM from the web; these are readily accessible to most search engines. There also exists a thriving community of homebrew coders who create modern games for vintage systems. Their titles are typically available to download free of charge, and are a great way to play some classic games without falling foul of copyright law.

To get started, try downloading the free platformer Dogmole Tupowski for the ZX Spectrum 128K using the following commands:

```
cd ~/RetroPie/roms/  
zxspectrum  
wget http://www.mojontwins.
```

[com/colegas/jarlaxe--  
dogmole-  
tuppowski-the-new-  
adventures.](http://com/colegas/jarlaxe--dogmole-tuppowski-the-new-adventures)

```
zip  
unzip jarlaxe--dogmole-  
tuppowski-the-new-  
adventures.  
zip  
rm jarlaxe--dogmole-  
tuppowski-the-new-  
adventures.  
zip
```

Fixing Spectrum Emulation

Sadly, while RetroPie is by far the easiest way to set up the Pi for emulation duties, it's far from perfect. The Spectrum emulation, in particular, is rather broken, but it can be fixed with only a few short commands.

RetroPie comes with the Fuse Spectrum emulator configured for use in the X Windows graphical environment. As the user interface used by RetroPie works only when the X Windows layer is not loaded, this causes a conflict. Thankfully, there's an alternative: a version of the same emulator that works fine without X Windows loaded. Install it with this command:

▲ The binary installation process can take over an hour



◀ Free platformer Dogmole Tuppowski for the ZX Spectrum 128K

```
sudo apt-get install fuse-emulator-sdl
```

Now you need to tell EmulationStation, the graphical front-end that ships with RetroPie, about the new emulator or it will attempt to use the original, glitchy emulator by default. Edit the EmulationStation configuration file with the following command:

```
nano ~/.emulationstation/es_systems.cfg
```

Scroll down to the bottom of the file until you find the entry for the ZX Spectrum. Find the line that starts "COMMAND=" and delete everything on that line following the equals symbol. Then replace it so the line reads as below:

```
COMMAND=fuse-sdl %ROM%
```

Before you leave the file, go up to the line immediately above, which begins "EXTENSION=".

This is a list of file extensions that EmulationStation will know are compatible with the Spectrum emulator, but it's incomplete. Go to the end of the line, and edit it to read as follows:

```
EXTENSION=.z80 .Z80 .tap .TAP
```

This adds support for tape image format files, a very common format for the distribution of Spectrum software – the format, in fact, used by the Dogmole Tuppowski game you downloaded earlier. Save the file with Ctrl+O, then exit Nano with Ctrl+X.

### Running the Emulator

Rather than forcing you to run each emulator individually, RetroPie comes with a graphical front-end called EmulationStation. This is designed in such a way that it can be operated without a keyboard or mouse, which is good news if you're looking to use a joypad, joystick or adapter cable



for your gaming. Load the front-end with the following command:

```
emulationstation
```

After few seconds, a configuration screen will appear. This allows you to set up the control method – keyboard, joypad, joystick or anything else you can connect to the Pi – for use in the menu system. Start by pressing any button or key on your chosen control device. If you have more than one connected, for multiplayer games, use the controller for the first player. You'll then be prompted to press a series of buttons in turn, configuring the directions and the control buttons. Follow the onscreen instructions to complete the process.

If you're using an Atari-style

▲ The emulator can load and run the game automatically.



► Resize the emulator to take up the entire screen

© 1986 Sinclair Research Ltd



▼ Reset the emulator to run as a ZX Spectrum 128K

joystick through an adapter, you may run into difficulties partway through the process: following the setting of up, down, left, right and accept, you'll have run out of buttons. To solve this, temporarily insert a keyboard and set some of its keys for the remaining

controls. These are rarely used, and it shouldn't cause a problem in everyday usage.

When you've completed the configuration, the main EmulationStation screen will appear. This provides access to all emulators that have games available, sorted alphabetically. Initially, you'll be presented with an Apple II emulator. Press whatever button or key you assigned to the Right direction in EmulationStation, and you'll move onto the next emulator, a freeware copy of the game Cave Story. Press Right again, and you'll find a copy of id Software's Doom; right again and you can find 3D Realms' Duke Nukem 3D. Keep scrolling, and eventually you'll reach the screen for the ZX Spectrum emulator.

Emulators that don't have any games installed in their "roms" directory won't be visible in this menu. Because you downloaded and installed a game earlier, the ZX Spectrum option will appear. At the

moment, there will only be a single game available; you can launch this game by pressing the Accept button you configured earlier.

If you're playing Dogmole Tuppowski, you'll find that the emulator boots into a black screen. This is because the version you downloaded is an enhanced edition designed for the ZX Spectrum 128K, while the emulator defaults to acting as a ZX Spectrum 48K. To fix this, bring up the Fuse menu with the F1 key on the keyboard; scroll to Machine with the cursor keys and press Enter. In the menu that appears, scroll to Select and press Enter; find the entry for Spectrum 128K in the list, and confirm with Enter. The emulator will then reset.

When the emulator restarts, it doesn't try to automatically load the game. To do so, press the Enter key while the option Tape Loader is highlighted. The game will load and run automatically and, compared to the speed at which a traditional Spectrum game used to load from tape, near instantaneously. It will do so, however, in a small box at the centre of the screen. To fix that, press F1 again and scroll to the Options menu. There you'll find the Full Screen option; press Enter on this and the emulator will be resized to take up the entire screen.

To quit the emulator, press the F1 key again and scroll to Exit. To quit EmulationStation altogether, press Alt+F4, and you'll be returned to the terminal. [ca](#)



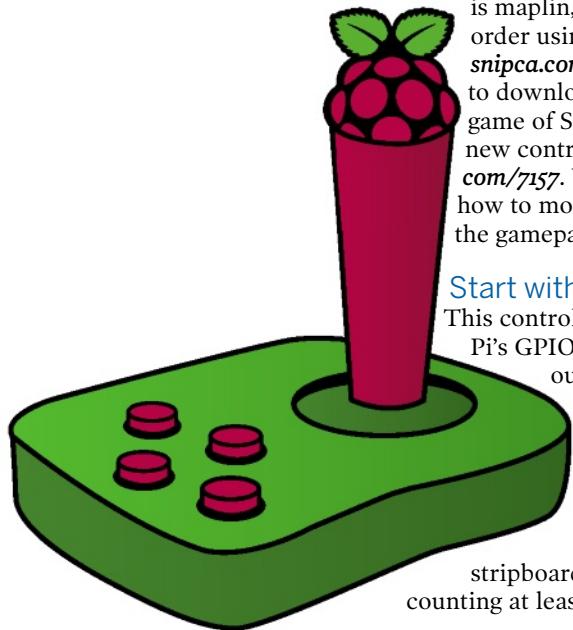
Dogmole Tuppowski – The New Adventures (128k by Jarlaxe)

# Build your own games controller

Learn simple electronics skills to create a homemade gamepad for your Pi

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » How to build a gamepad from scratch
- » Create a device without previous electronics experience
- » Modify your existing programs to add controller support



### Start with the stripboard

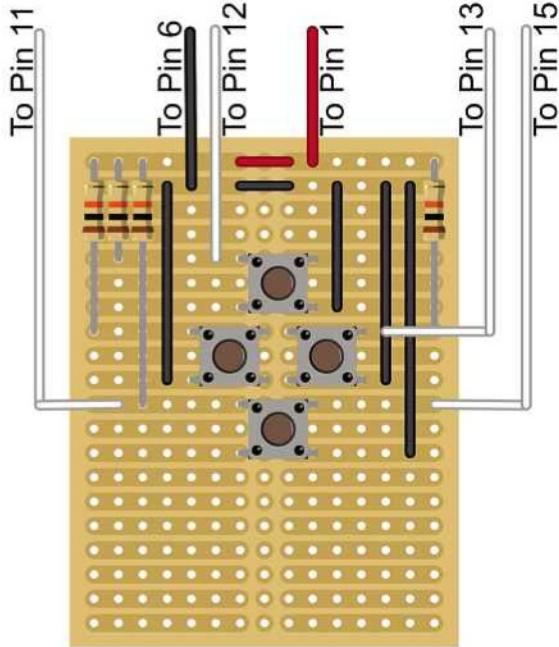
This controller will connect to the Pi's GPIO (general-purpose input/output) port at the top-left of the Pi. This might sound complicated but it is very easy to build and an excellent way to practise soldering.

First, get a piece of stripboard and snap it to length by counting at least 15 holes from one end

**B**uilding custom hardware is not as difficult as it may sound, but it does require some equipment and supplies not usually found in the average household. These do not have to cost a fortune and are easily available.

The equipment needed includes a basic soldering kit (around £10, [www.snipca.com/7225](http://www.snipca.com/7225)), a wire-cutter tool (£5, [www.snipca.com/7226](http://www.snipca.com/7226)), a wire stripper (£5, [www.snipca.com/7227](http://www.snipca.com/7227)), some lengths of wire (£3, [www.snipca.com/7228](http://www.snipca.com/7228)), some button-type switches with matching resistors (£3, [www.snipca.com/7229](http://www.snipca.com/7229)) and some female-to-female jumper wires (£4, [www.snipca.com/7266](http://www.snipca.com/7266)) to connect the finished device to the Raspberry Pi.

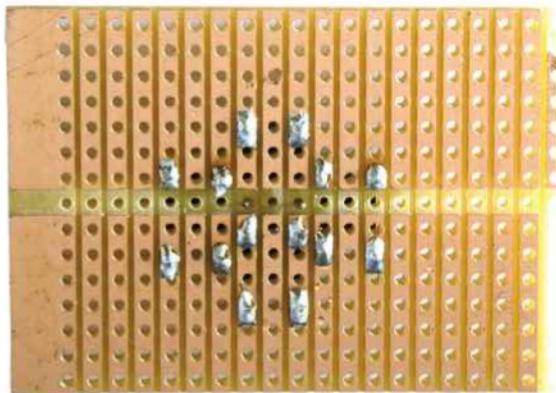
The only additional piece of equipment required is a length of stripboard – a type of circuit board suitable for creating prototype devices by soldering components through a grid of holes. A good source is maplin, where it is available to order using code FL17T (£6, [www.snipca.com/7230](http://www.snipca.com/7230).) You will also need to download the code for a basic game of Snake to play with your new controller from [www.snipca.com/7157](http://www.snipca.com/7157). We will be showing you how to modify this code for use with the gamepad.



▲ Wire up your gamepad following our diagram and you'll have a cool accessory for your Raspberry Pi

along the length, not the width. Place some pliers or side-cutters alongside the required break line and twist, but be careful – the snapped edges of the stripboard can be sharp. Trim them with side-cutters or file them down.

Look at the stripboard's underside: copper strips run across the board with a break in the middle. These strips connect the holes in each row together electrically so be sure to position components carefully in the correct holes before soldering. Choose an end of the stripboard to be the 'top', ensuring the strips run side-to-side, not up-and-down.



▲ Make sure all the components are in the correct positions on the board before starting to solder

## Adding the switches

Four switches will be used to represent the snake's four directions. Each switch has four legs, set in pairs. When inserting the switches into the stripboard, they should be turned so that the legs are sticking out from the sides, not the top. Check the photograph at the bottom right if you're not entirely sure what things should look like.

Count five holes down from the top of the stripboard and six holes in from the right-hand side, and place the top-right leg of one of the switches into the hole. The top-left leg should be on the same row seven holes in from the left, and the bottom two legs in the same column two holes down from the top legs. If necessary, bend the legs slightly to fit.

The next two switches should go immediately beneath the first switch, with the top-right leg of the right-hand switch sitting four holes in from the right and the top-left leg of the left switch five holes from the left. There should be no holes showing between the tops of these switches and the bottom of the first switch.

The final switch goes directly beneath the last two switches, lining up with the first switch. The top-right leg should be six holes from the right-hand side of the board, and 11 holes from the top of the board. Check your work against the diagram on page 44.

Now turn the board over and solder the legs of the switches into place. Do this by pushing the hot tip of the soldering iron against both a leg of a switch and the copper track, then wait for a few seconds and push a length of solder against both. When the solder melts to cover the hole, retract the solder, then the iron.

Repeat the process for each of the legs, except the two legs which are poking through holes in the middle of the board, where there is no copper track; these legs should be left unsoldered.

**“ Building a simple gamepad shows just how easy it is to make your Raspberry Pi talk to the real world. ”**

## Connecting the resistors

For the Pi to detect the switches, the controller needs some resistors on each switch. These will connect to the Pi in such a way as to provide power to pins on the GPIO port until the switch is pressed. Insert the resistors into the stripboard so that one end of each is pushed through holes at the very top of the board. Three resistors should be pushed into the top-left-most holes, and one into the top-right-most hole (again, check our diagram).

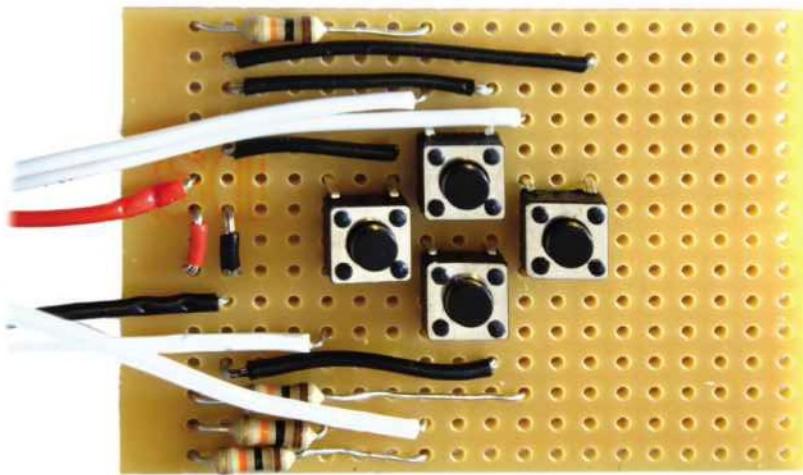
The opposing end of the far-left resistor should poke through a hole eight down from the top of the board, in-line with the top-left pin of the left-most switch. The next resistor on the right should have its end pushed through the hole five down from the top, and the next resistor 11 down from the top. The right-hand resistor should be pushed through the hole eight down from the top.

To recap, each resistor should be connected to the top row of holes and to one of the two top legs of a switch. Now turn the board over and solder the components into place as before. The resistors have long legs, so there will be some excess left over when the soldering is finished; snip this off with the side-cutters.

▼ Our gamepad is simple to wire up, and you don't need experience with electronics

## Wiring up

Jumper wires are needed to connect copper rows on the stripboard to other rows, forming an

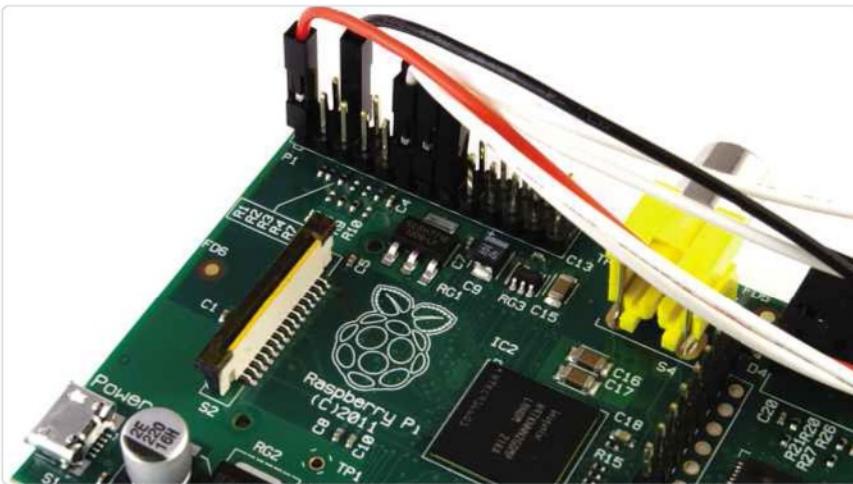


### BEYOND PI

The Raspberry Pi's GPIO port gives it impressive capabilities for controlling external hardware, but there are more flexible devices on the market. The £20 Arduino, for example, uses a special processor known as a microcontroller. This isn't

powerful enough to run an **operating system** like Raspbian but it is specifically optimised for controlling external hardware. As a result, it's possible to create projects requiring more pins than offered on the Pi or analogue-to-digital conversion facilities

– for example, to read a temperature sensor. The Arduino can even connect to a Raspberry Pi, either through GPIO or via a USB port, offering users the best of both worlds in a remarkably compact package. To find out more, visit <http://arduino.cc>.



electrical circuit. These are just normal wires cut to length with the ends stripped of insulation.

Measure each jumper wire against its position on the stripboard, and add on a couple of centimetres for pushing through the holes. Use wire strippers to remove a centimetre of insulation from the end and bend the exposed wire at a 90-degree angle, to push into the stripboard.

The first jumper wire should connect the fourth hole from the left on the second row from the top to the same hole on the tenth row from the top, inline with the bottom-left leg of one of the switches. The next should connect the fifth hole from the right on the second row from the top to the same hole on the seventh row.

Next, a wire should connect the third hole from the right on the second row from the top to the same hole on the tenth row, and the final wire from the second hole on the right on the second row from the top to the same hole on the 13th row.

Finally, two small jumper wires are needed to bridge the gap in the middle of the top two rows. Place a wire through the holes next to the very middle hole on both rows, jumping over the empty middle hole. Turn the board over, solder each wire into place and trim off any excess from the bottom.

### Finishing the job

Take six female-to-female jumper wires, cut off one of the female ends and strip the insulation back by a centimetre. The female end will be left free to connect to the Pi in the next step.

The first wire should go into the hole on the second pin in from the left on the 11th row from the top, and the second wire into the fifth hole from the left on the second row. The next wire goes through the sixth hole from the left on the fifth row, and the next through the sixth hole from the right on the first row. Place the next wire through the third hole from the right on the eighth row from the top, and the final wire through the right-most hole on the 11th row. Solder these final wires into place to complete the controller.

Check all the positions against the diagram: a mistake could damage the Raspberry Pi by causing a short-circuit. Switch off the Pi. From the left-most wire on the stripboard, connect the free ends to the Pi's GPIO port by pushing the male headers down onto the pins in the following order: pin 11, pin 12, pin 6, pin 1, pin 13, pin 15. The pins are numbered from pin 1 (marked 'p1' on the Pi) at the bottom-left and are counted in pairs: the bottom-left pin is pin 1, the top-left pin pin 2 and so on. Again, check your work against our diagram.

### Updating the software

The snake game you downloaded needs some alterations to work with the controller rather than the keyboard, which includes installing an add-on piece of software known as a 'module'.

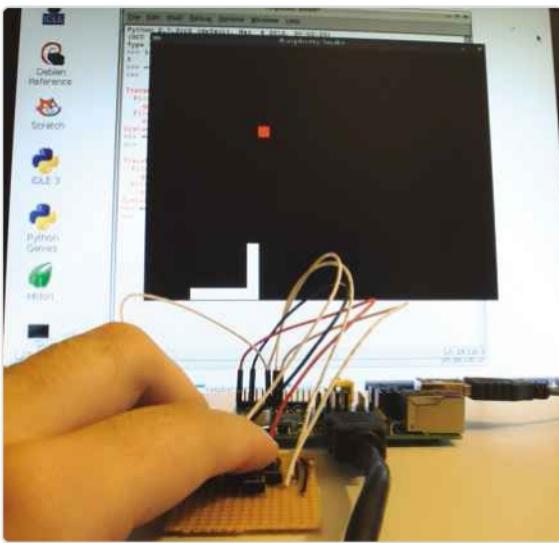
If the Pi is already switched on and with the Raspbian graphical user interface running, click the menu button at the bottom left, choose accessories and then LXTerminal to open a command line. If

```

#pi@raspberrypi: ~
pi$ cd /home/pi/raspberrySnake
pi$ ./raspberrySnake.py
[...]

```

It's very easy to adapt the snake game to work with our home-made gamepad for the Raspberry Pi



the Pi has only just been switched on, log in and type 'startx' to launch the graphical user interface first.

To install the required software, type the following instructions into the command line. Pay close attention to capitalisation, as each instruction is case-sensitive, and remember to press the Enter key after each line:

```
wget http://raspberry-gpio-python.googlecode.com/files/RPi.GPIO-0.2.0.tar.gz
tar xvzf RPi.GPIO-0.2.0.tar.gz
cd RPi.GPIO-0.2.0
sudo python setup.py install
```

Note that there are only four commands to type here, not five – the first line has been wrapped just after the '»' symbol to fit our column width. Now double-click the idle icon on the Pi desktop, then click the file menu and choose open. Find the raspberrysnake.py file and click open to view it in the idle editor. The first modification is to load and configure the GPIO module installed earlier. Click at the end of the second line and press enter to insert a new line, then type:

```
importRPi.GPIO as GPIO
GPIO.setup(11, GPIO.IN)
GPIO.setup(12, GPIO.IN)
GPIO.setup(13, GPIO.IN)
GPIO.setup(15, GPIO.IN)
```

These lines tell the program to use certain pins on the GPIO port as inputs for the switches, but the program still doesn't know what to do when each switch is pressed. Scroll down to the line 'while true:', click on the end of the line and press enter to insert a new line, then type:

**“Once you've built your pad, you can use it to control many more programs on your Pi, with a few lines of code.”**

Once connected up, you can use your home-made pad to play lots of games

```
button1=GPIO.input(11)
button2=GPIO.input(12)
button3=GPIO.input(13)
button4=GPIO.input(15)
if button1 == False:
    changeDirection = 'left'
if button2 == False:
    changeDirection = 'up'
if button3 == False:
    changeDirection = 'down'
if button4 == False:
    changeDirection = 'right'
```

Pay attention to the indentation; each line should have four spaces at the start, except the 'changedirection' lines – those require eight spaces.

Click on the file menu and click save to save these changes to the file.

### Playing the game

Because the game now uses the GPIO port, it's not possible to run it the usual way through Idle's run menu.

Instead, go back to the command line by clicking on the window's entry along the bottom or by clicking the bottom-left menu button, then accessories and LXterminal. With the terminal open, type **sudo python raspberrysnake.py**. The sudo command, used earlier to install some software, tells the Raspbian operating system to run a command as the 'root user', which has unrestricted access to the system. If the code fails, check your work or download the finished program from [www.snipca.com/7439](http://www.snipca.com/7439).

The controller can now be used to play the game, turning the snake to face left, right, up or down.

The same python code can be used for other programs and not just games. For example, it would be possible to have the Pi execute certain commands on each button press, to shut itself down or provide quick access to commonly-used programs.

For more information on interfacing hardware with the pi, try the Raspberry Pi user guide ([www.snipca.com/7233](http://www.snipca.com/7233)) or browse the official forums, at [www.snipca.com/7231](http://www.snipca.com/7231).

# Play Minecraft on your Pi

Minecraft: Pi Edition is a cut-down version of the game for the Pi with a hidden feature: an API that players can access to alter the game world

Mojang's Minecraft, a game in which the player is given the task of building whatever he or she wants from blocks of varying materials, is little short of a cultural phenomenon. From its origins as a virtually unknown indie game to its present status as one of the world's best-selling titles – nearly 15 million copies at the time of writing – Minecraft has been ported from the PC to smartphones, tablets, consoles and even inspired a LEGO kit. It was inevitable, really, that it would come to the Pi.

Minecraft: Pi Edition was

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Minecraft: Pi Edition is designed to work on any Raspberry Pi, and once the files are downloaded – which you can do on a desktop PC, transferring them via USB storage – it doesn't require an internet connection. As a result, it's well-suited to use on a low-cost Model A, although the extra memory available to Model B users can help performance, especially if you're writing complex programs that interact with the API.

Gameplay is controlled via keyboard and mouse, so if you're running Minecraft: Pi Edition on a Model A you'll need either a USB hub or a combination keyboard and pointing device that takes up a single USB port.

developed by Aron Nieminen and Daniel Frisk. A cut-down version of the game designed specifically for the Pi, based on the work already carried out on the mobile release, the Pi release works perfectly as an introduction to the game. Players can explore randomly generated worlds, digging and using construction mode to build their own creations.

There's a hidden feature of Minecraft: Pi Edition, however: an application programming interface (API) that can be accessed using Python, the programming language of choice for the Raspberry Pi Foundation. Using the API, players can alter the game world in a variety of ways: they can teleport the player miles into the air, or deep underground; they can receive in-game alerts when an email comes in or a certain amount of play time has elapsed; they can even create interactive sculptures such as working clocks or automatic bridges. Some intrepid coders have even linked Minecraft: Pi Edition to the real world, creating a physical door lock that only releases when a certain pattern of blocks is placed in the game.

As well as being an amusing diversion in its own right, Minecraft: Pi Edition is a great way to get kids learning the art of programming, without them even realising.

## Installing Minecraft

Minecraft: Pi Edition isn't supplied with any of the operating systems available on the Pi as standard software, and nor is it available

through the Apt package manager of Raspbian. To install it, you'll need to download the archive manually. Load the graphical user interface on your Pi, if it isn't already loaded, with the following terminal command:

**startx**

When the GUI has loaded, double-click the Midori icon on the desktop to load a web browser. Visit [pi.minecraft.net](http://pi.minecraft.net), and find the word "download" in blue; this is the link to download the software archive. Click it and, when Midori prompts for what it should do with the file, choose Open.

The archive will open in a separate window, with a single folder visible: "mcpi". Click the Extract icon at the top of the window, or choose Extract from the Actions menu, and type this path into the Extract To box:

**/home/pi/**

Click Extract, and the contents of the archive will be placed in a folder within the user Pi's home directory called "mcpi". You can then click the cross at the top-right of the archive and browser windows to close them; you won't need them, or an internet connection, from this point on.

## Running Minecraft

Installing Minecraft: Pi Edition doesn't create a shortcut on the desktop or in the Applications menu. To run it, you need to



► You have an unlimited supply of all the block types



► To install, you need to download the archive manually

browse to the directory where it was extracted. Click on the software menu at the bottom-left of the screen, and scroll to Accessories. Click on File Manager to browse the files stored on the Pi's SD card, then double-click on the "mcpi" directory. Find the file called "minecraft-pi" in this folder and double-click it. In the pop-up dialog, choose Execute to run the game.

Minecraft loads on the Pi in a window at the centre of the screen. Although it's possible to maximise the window in order to run full-screen, it's not advised. Doing so makes the mouse difficult to control, due to bugs in the low-level way Minecraft: Pi Edition accesses the Pi's hardware. To begin exploring the world of Minecraft, click Start Game.

This will take you to the world selection screen. At the moment, it's blank, as this is the first time you've run the game. Click Create New to start a new world.

Each world in Minecraft: Pi Edition is generated at random; the world you generate now is statistically unlikely to have the same layout as a world you generate tomorrow. When you next run the game, you'll be able to choose your existing world, create a brand-new world, or delete an existing one. Minecraft worlds retain whatever you create in them; if you build a house in Minecraft: Pi Edition and delete that world, you'll lose the house, too.

The world generation process takes a while on the Pi due to its relatively slow processor compared to the platforms for which

Minecraft was originally written. Don't worry if the progress bar on the world generation screen appears to pause; you'll soon be placed into your unique world.

### Playing Minecraft

Minecraft is controlled using the keyboard and mouse, in a way that will be familiar to players of first-person shooters. The player character can be moved using the W, A, S and D keys, while the viewpoint is shifted using the mouse. One peculiarity of the Minecraft controls is the ability to fly: a single press of Space will jump, as in any other game, but a double-tap will begin flight. While flying, pressing Space will increase your altitude, and pressing Shift will decrease your altitude.

In Minecraft: Pi Edition, the

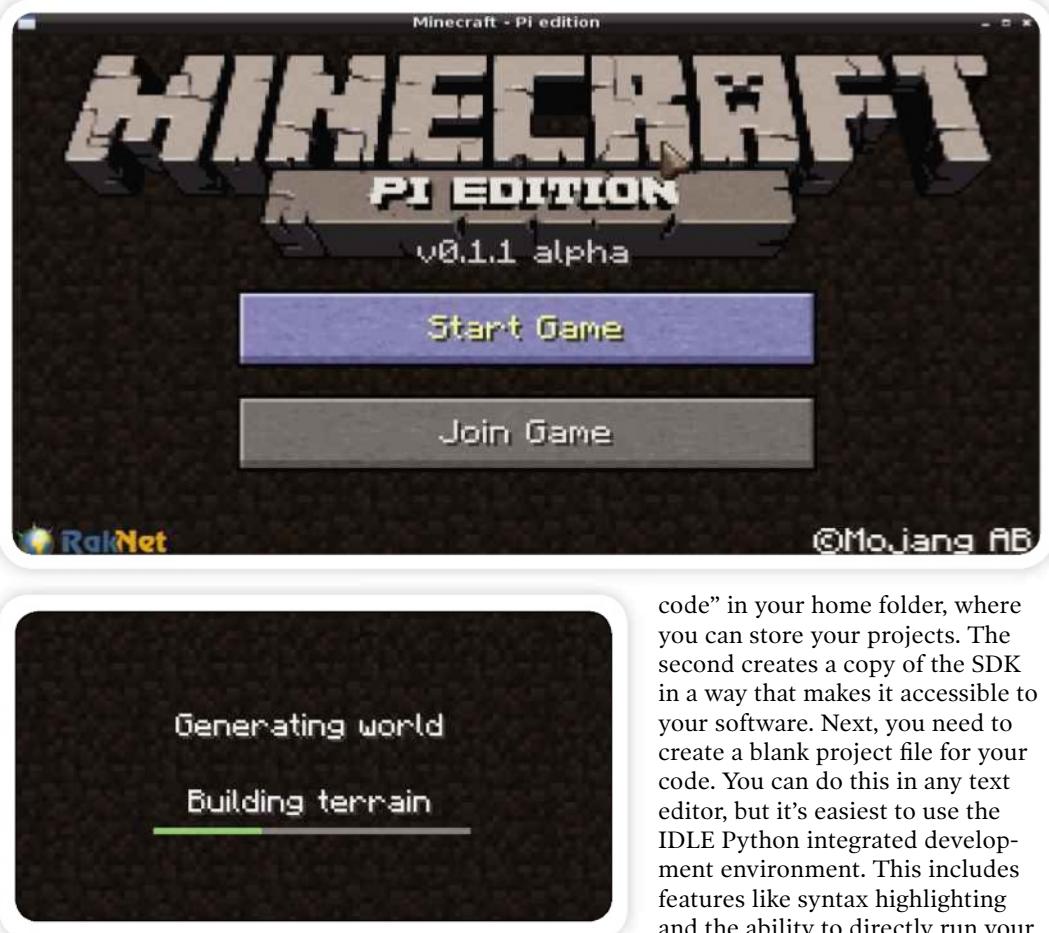
need to mine is removed; you have an unlimited supply of all the block types available in the game. This makes it a great way to experiment with building structures, free from the constraints of what in the main game is known as “Survival Mode”. The blocks available are displayed along the bottom of the window; the block you have currently active can be altered using the mouse wheel or keys 1 to 8. Pressing the E key will bring up a list of all the blocks available in the game; you can then swap these for the ones currently in your inventory.

Although Minecraft is far from a simulation, different blocks have different effects. A block of wood placed near a hot block of lava will set the wood on fire, for example. Using these interactions, it's possible to build complex interactive creations. The main fun of Minecraft is in experimentation, however, so you'll have to learn about all the ways the blocks can be combined yourself!

You can destroy blocks – including those that make up trees – by centring them in your view and pressing the left mouse button. This works even if you aren't holding one of the “tool” objects, like the iron sword. You can also hold the mouse button and swipe the mouse to delete a swathe of blocks. New blocks are placed with the right mouse button in a similar manner. The Escape key takes you back to the menu, and allows you to return to the main menu, where you can quit altogether by clicking the X at the top-right or pressing Alt+F4.

### Hacking Minecraft

There's plenty to keep you amused in the main game of Minecraft, but the true flexibility of the Pi Edition comes from its API. A unique feature of the Pi release, the API was designed to make it easy to control the game world from external programs, encouraging kids to learn coding through play.



▲ Each world in Minecraft is generated at random

The API can be accessed from a variety of languages, but the most common is Python. This is a popular language for beginners, and the language chosen by the Raspberry Pi Foundation to support its educational aims. To begin writing a Minecraft-linked program, you'll first have to access the software development kit (SDK). It's best to create a copy outside the main Minecraft directory to do this. That way, any changes you make in the name of experimentation won't harm the main game. Double-click the LXTerminal icon on the desktop and type the following commands:

```
mkdir ~/minecraftcode  
cp -r ~/mcpi/api/python/mcpi  
~/minecraftcode/minecraft
```

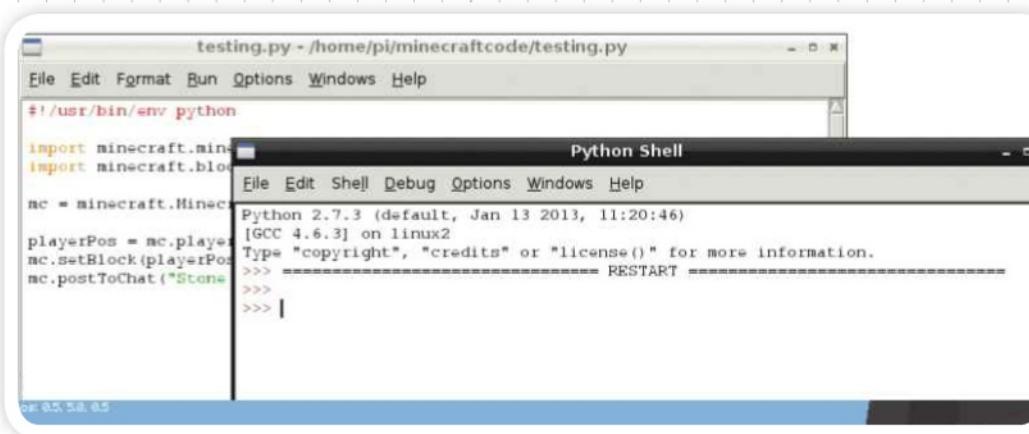
The first command makes a new directory called “minecraft

code” in your home folder, where you can store your projects. The second creates a copy of the SDK in a way that makes it accessible to your software. Next, you need to create a blank project file for your code. You can do this in any text editor, but it's easiest to use the IDLE Python integrated development environment. This includes features like syntax highlighting and the ability to directly run your code, which are missing from most text editors. To load it, double-click the IDLE icon on the desktop. Make sure it's IDLE and not IDLE 3; the latter uses a subtly different version of the Python language, which is, as yet, incompatible with the Minecraft SDK.

In the Python Shell window that appears, click the File menu and choose New Window. Before you begin any work, click the File menu and again, and choose Save As. Browse to your “minecraftcode” directory and save the file as “testing.py”. Make sure you save the file in “minecraftcode” and not the “minecraft” sub-directory, or your program won't work.

The IDLE IDE works much like a normal text editor, except that it understands how Python programs should appear. As a result, it colours in sections according to their use, shows which brackets are matched, and even automatically

## Chapter 3 Entertainment



indents certain lines – a key part of Python syntax. To start your program, you need to type the following line:

```
#!/usr/bin/env python
```

This is known as the “shebang line” – so named for the hash and exclamation mark, or “bang”, at the start – and lets the Pi know that the program you’re writing should be run through the Python interpreter. This line isn’t strictly necessary for writing code in IDLE, but if you later want to distribute your creation as a standalone file it will make life easier. Next, import two of the main functions from the Minecraft API:

```
import minecraft.minecraft
as minecraft
import minecraft.block as
block
```

These two instructions tell Python to load functions from libraries included with the Minecraft SDK. These libraries control how Python should communicate with Minecraft, and how to control the in-game environment through the creation and deletion of blocks. Libraries are code fragments that perform common tasks, and are frequently used in programming. There’s no point writing something like a way of tracking elapsed time from scratch every time you need it.

Next, you’ll need to set up the connection to Minecraft in a way

▲ Using Python to control Minecraft is very powerful

that minimises typing. Enter this line:

```
mc = minecraft.Minecraft.create()
```

This takes the instructions for controlling Minecraft from Python – the awkward statement to the right of the equals symbol – and converts it to the simple “mc”. Every time you need your program to do something in Minecraft, you can just start your command with “mc” instead of having to type out the whole thing.

As an example of what the Minecraft API allows you to do from Python, type in this simple program:

```
player.Pos = mc.player.getTilePos()
mc.setBlock(playerPos.x+1, playerPos.y+1, playerPos.z,
block.STONE)
mc.postToChat("Stone block created.")
```

The first instruction gets the player’s current position, accurate to the nearest block. The second creates a new stone block, at the position specified in the brackets. The positioning is relative to the player. The block will be placed on the player’s level as specified by the Z coordinate, but shifted one block along the X and Y coordinates. Creating a stone block at the exact same location as the player wouldn’t be good for his or her health, after all.

The final line uses the in-game chat functionality, originally designed for multiplayer gaming, to post a message confirming that the block has been created. It’s a convenient way of checking that the program is working correctly. Because the block might not be created in the direction the player is facing, it provides immediate feedback that the Python program can communicate with Minecraft correctly.

Save the file from the File-menu, and load Minecraft. Enter into a world, then press Alt+Tab to change your focus back to the IDLE window. You may need to drag the Minecraft window out of the way by clicking and holding on the title bar at the top to see what you’re doing. Because of the way Minecraft uses the Pi’s graphics hardware, it will always appear on top of any other windows.

In IDLE, click the Run menu and choose Run Module or press F5. A Python Shell window will appear, which will show you any error messages caused by missing libraries or mistyped commands, and after a few seconds you should see the message “Stone block created” printed in the Minecraft window. If you click on the title bar of the Minecraft window to return its focus, then click within Minecraft itself, you’ll regain control of the game. Look around, and you’ll see your stone block.

Using Python to control Minecraft is extremely powerful, with flexibility that puts it beyond the scope of this short project. The best way to learn is to experiment, and to investigate code that others have written. Try the following sites and tutorials to learn more:

 [www.themagpi.com/issue/issue-11/article/minecraft-pi-edition/](http://www.themagpi.com/issue/issue-11/article/minecraft-pi-edition/)

 [www.stuffaboutcode.com/2013/04/minecraft-pi-edition-api-tutorial.html](http://www.stuffaboutcode.com/2013/04/minecraft-pi-edition-api-tutorial.html)

 [mcpipy.wordpress.com](http://mcpipy.wordpress.com) 

# Create a web radio receiver

Coupled with an onboard display, the Raspberry Pi makes a great choice for an internet radio receiver. Follow our guide to start streaming radio

The radio, a remarkable invention, was all but supplanted as the centre of home entertainment by the television, and as a source of up-to-the-minute news by the internet. Its biggest drawback, aside from sometimes questionable audio quality, is its limited range. Even today, with the rise of digital radio, channels are typically national rather than international in their reach.

Internet radio is a different

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Streaming internet radio stations requires, naturally, an internet connection. Audio-only streams are typically low bandwidth and don't require particularly fast connections, so a Pi connected wirelessly should perform just as well as one connected to a wired network. As this project uses an add-on board for its input and display, the usual limitations surrounding a Raspberry Pi Model A and its single USB port don't apply here. It's perfectly possible to complete this project using a Model A with a wireless network adapter connected over USB (from £5.50, [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)).

You'll also need some way of listening to the

radio. You can connect a pair of headphones directly to the Pi's 3.5mm analogue audio output, but the result will be quiet. You're better off investing in a pair of powered, amplified speakers (from £3, [ebay.co.uk](http://ebay.co.uk)), or using a 3.5mm-to-RCA adapter (from 99p, [ebay.co.uk](http://ebay.co.uk)) to connect your Pi to an existing but internet-lacking stereo system or amplifier.

Finally, you'll need the PiFace Control & Display (£25.20, code SC13206 from [cpc.farnell.com](http://cpc.farnell.com)), an add-on board that provides the Pi with a small LCD screen and a series of buttons to enable interaction without a TV, monitor or connection from another computer.

beast. Streaming over a global network rather than the airwaves, a single station can reach almost anywhere on Earth if only the receiver has a device capable of decoding and playing the audio stream. A device, in fact, like the Pi.

The pi is a great choice for an internet radio receiver. It's small, unobtrusive and silent in operation, while its analogue audio output means it can be connected to powered speakers or an existing hi-fi setup to extend its capabilities. Coupled with an onboard display, you won't even need a TV or monitor to control the playback.

## Installing the Software

The software that drives the PiFace Control & Display is available through the Apt package management system in Raspbian. Log into the Pi, and type the following commands at the terminal to download and install the required software:

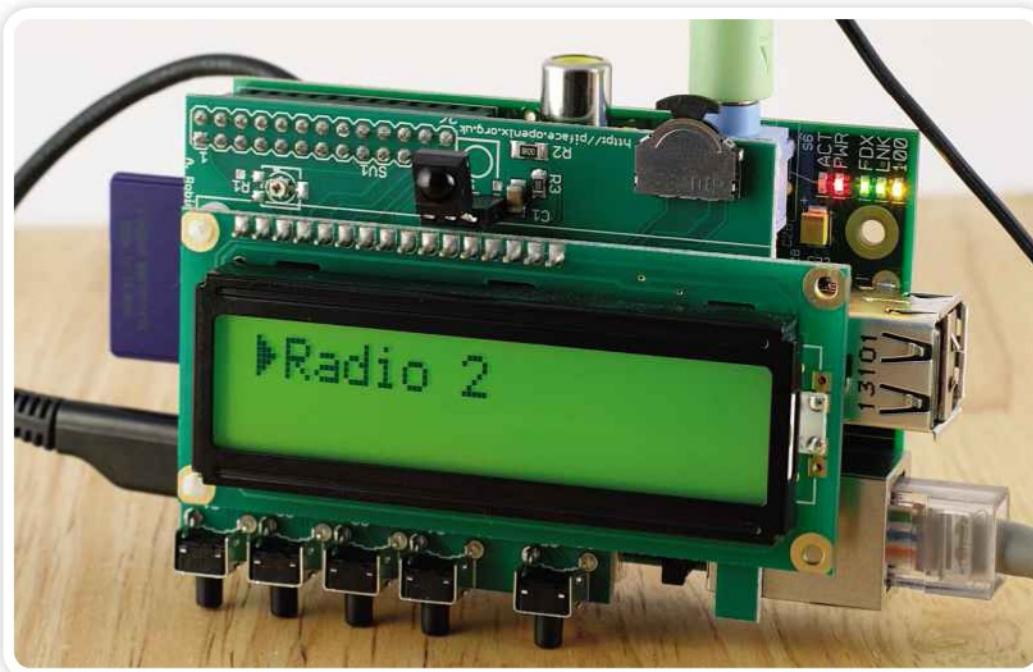
```
sudo apt-get update  
sudo apt-get upgrade  
sudo apt-get install python-pifacecad python3-pifacecad  
mplayer
```

This installs versions of the PiFace software for both Python 2 and Python 3, allowing you to make use of it regardless of which version of the language you prefer. Note, however, that the internet radio utility that comes with the PiFace works only with Python 3 and won't run at all under Python 2. This isn't a distinction you need to worry about if you just want to stream some music; both versions of Python are installed by default in Raspbian. The command-line music player Mplayer is also installed via the last command.

Before you can begin using its software, the PiFace requires a configuration change on the Pi: the enabling of the Serial Peripheral Interface, or SPI, feature of the general-purpose input-output (GPIO) header. To load the Raspberry Pi Software Configuration Tool, type the following at the terminal:

```
sudo raspi-config
```

At the menu, use the cursor keys to scroll to the Advanced Options choice and press Enter to confirm. At the next screen, scroll to the option labelled "A5 SPI" and press Enter again. A window will appear confirming the current status of SPI. Usually, this will be disabled and you can press Enter



to toggle the setting to Yes. If the setting is already enabled, be sure to move the cursor off the No option before pressing Enter. Confirm the change again with Enter, then exit the menus by pressing the Tab key until Finish is highlighted and pressing Enter.

If the Raspberry Pi Software Configuration Tool prompts you to reboot – it may not, depending on any other changes you've made – choose No and press Enter. As you're about to install the board itself, you should instead manually shut down the Pi with the following command before removing the micro-USB power and any other connected cables:

**sudo halt**

The shutdown process will take a short while to complete; check the Pi's status LEDs to see if it's finished before pulling the power. When the Pi has shut down, all LEDs except "PWR" should be switched off.

### Installing the PiFace

Although it's possible to stream internet radio on the Pi without any additional hardware, it's not

convenient. You need to have it connected to a TV or monitor at all times to see what you're doing, and you need a keyboard and mouse to perform even simple tasks like pausing the stream or skipping to a different station.

The PiFace Control & Display board, designed by a team led by honorary research fellow Dr Andrew Robinson specifically for use with the Pi, is an alternative to traditional control methods. The front of the board is dominated by a LCD panel offering two lines of up to 16 characters, while the edges feature five buttons and a three-way joystick. The board also includes an onboard infrared receiver designed to work with

▲ The PiFace is dominated by a two-line LCD panel

▼ The PiFace installs on top of the Pi as a piggy-back board



your existing remote controls with a little extra configuration.

The PiFace is designed to install on top of the Raspberry Pi as a piggy-back board, connecting to the GPIO header at the top-left of the board. Its lower board includes a supporting strut designed to sit on top of the Ethernet port to provide rigidity once installed. Although the board works perfectly well with the Ethernet-less Model A, it can wobble a little when held via that corner.

Whenever you're installing hardware onto the Pi's GPIO header, ensure you've shut down the Pi safely – using the "sudo halt" command at the terminal – and removed the micro-USB power connector. Plugging devices into the GPIO header while the Pi is powered on is ill-advised. The pins connect directly to various components of the Broadcom BCM2835 processor, and have no protection against shorts or spikes.

The Pi should be positioned face-up on a flat surface with the HDMI connector facing you. Take the PiFace, with the five buttons facing you and the joystick and infrared receiver furthest away, and carefully position the black connector on its underside over the Pi's GPIO header. Make sure it's aligned correctly and press it down gently but firmly with your fingers to either edge of the board on the top of the connector. It should slide into place easily; if it feels like you're having to apply excess pressure, remove the PiFace and check the Pi for bent pins before trying again.

The PiFace takes its power directly from the Pi, and needs no power adapter of its own. This can, however, put a strain on lower-specification power adapters. If after installing the PiFace you find that the Pi begins to respond erratically to the keyboard – especially by skipping letters or repeating them as though you've held down the key – this is a sign that the power supply can't cope. Try replacing it with one rated to

```
raspberrypi 3 sudo apt-get install python-pifacecad python3-pifacecad
Reading package lists... Done
Building dependency tree
Reading state information... Done
The following extra packages will be installed:
libftd1 libirc python-lirc python3-lirc
Suggested packages:
lirc-x setserial ir-keytable
The following NEW packages will be installed:
libftd1 libirc python-lirc python-pifacecad python3-lirc python3-pifacecad
0 upgraded, 6 newly installed, 0 to remove and 1 not upgraded.
Need to get 1,022 kB of archives.
After this operation, 3,403 kB of additional disk space will be used.
Do you want to continue [Y/n]? y
get:1 http://archive.raspberrypi.org/debian wheezy/main python-lirc armhf 1.2.1-1 [30.7 kB]
get:2 http://archive.raspberrypi.org/debian wheezy/main python-pifacecad all 2.0.5-1 [190 kB]
get:3 http://archive.raspberrypi.org/debian wheezy/main python3-lirc armhf 1.2.1-1 [21.1 kB]
get:4 http://archive.raspberrypi.org/debian wheezy/main python3-pifacecad all 2.0.5-1 [190 kB]
get:5 http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org/raspbian wheezy/main libftd1 armhf 0.20-1 [19.0 kB]
get:6 http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org/raspbian wheezy/main lirc armhf 0.9.0-pre1-1 [562 kB]
Fetched 1,022 kB in 0s (1,308 kB/s)
```



a higher amperage, removing any overclock you have set on the Pi, or both.

With the PiFace firmly installed, and its seating double-checked to ensure it hasn't missed any pins, you can reinsert the micro-USB cable and allow the Pi to boot back up again.

### Testing the PiFace

When the Pi has loaded up, you may notice that the PiFace has remained switched off; this is normal. The PiFace's display is controlled entirely from the Pi's GPIO header via software. Until it receives an instruction from the software, it won't do anything at all.

Before you start configuring the Pi to stream internet radio, it's worth testing that the PiFace is properly installed and working. The canonical way of doing this is by using the system status script supplied with the software. Log into the Pi, and type this command at the terminal:

```
python3 /usr/share/doc/
python3-pifacecad/examples/
sysinfo.py
```

After a few seconds, the display on the PiFace should light up and display a message regarding the Pi's IP address. A few more seconds later, and the screen will refresh to show the Pi's currently assigned IP address – a handy way of finding it on the network if you haven't assigned a static IP – and two statistics: the temperature of the Pi's BCM2835 processor, as

reported by its internal sensor, and the percentage of the Pi's memory that's currently in use.

You may notice that while this is running, your terminal remains in use. The Python script to drive the PiFace, as called using the above command, always runs in the foreground, meaning it ties up your terminal. To quit the script, now you've proven the PiFace is working as expected, press Ctrl+C. Later, you'll learn a trick for running scripts like this in the background, so you don't lose your terminal and can multitask.

### Configuring the Radio Script

Handily, the creators of the PiFace Control & Display have included an example Python script designed for streaming internet radio, which works out of the box and can be configured to stream almost any standards-compliant station. This script is compressed, along with some other example scripts, and must be uncompressed before use. Type the following commands at the terminal:

```
cd /usr/share/doc/python3-
pifacecad/examples
ls
```

The first command takes you to the directory where the PiFace example scripts are kept. The second lists the contents of that directory, showing you all the scripts provided as standard with the PiFace. As well as the system status script you've already used and the radio script you're looking for,

there will be a game of hangman, a tool for looking up train times, one for displaying Twitter messages, and a script for generating weather forecasts. They can all be extracted and used for experimentation by following the same instructions as for the radio script.

The majority of scripts are compressed to save space, using a tool called gzip. Before they can be easily used, the scripts must be uncompressed back into their plain-text formats. To uncompress just the radio script, type the following command at the terminal:

```
sudo gunzip radio.py.gz
```

Alternatively, if you'd prefer to extract all the compressed scripts at the same time, type:

```
sudo gunzip *gz
```

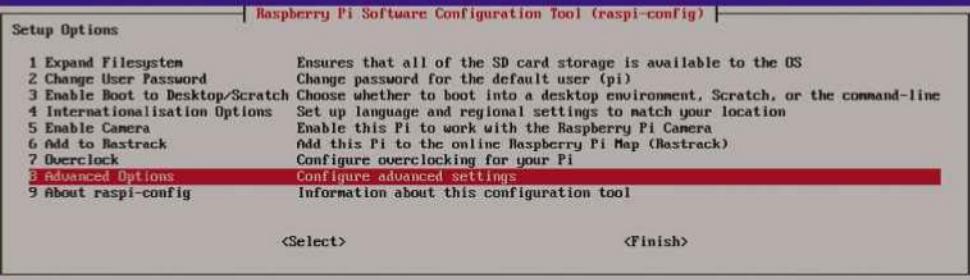
If you type "ls" again now, you'll see that the ".gz" extension has disappeared from all the files in the directory. This shows that they're uncompressed and ready for use.

It's possible to just run the radio script now and start streaming, but it's worth spending some time cus-

▲ The SPI feature of the GPIO header needs enabling

**"Before you start configuring the Pi to stream internet radio, it's worth testing that the PiFace is properly installed"**

## Chapter 3 Entertainment



### ▲ Load the Raspberry Pi Software Configuration Tool

tomising it to your tastes first. Run the following command to edit the file in Nano:

**sudo nano radio.py**

The Python code for streaming internet radio stations isn't well documented, but is thankfully very simple in its layout. Partway down the file, there's a list of radio stations that the script can access. These are specified in the following format:

```
{'name': "Friendly Station Name",
 'source': 'URL of stream playlist or file',
 'info': 'URL of information stream' or None},
```

Note that each station is enclosed in braces, and has spaces at the beginning. Python's syntax relies heavily on indentation to know which lines belong to which part of the program. To add your own choice of radio station to the list, you can simply copy these lines, making sure to place them before the "J" symbol that sits at the bottom of the list. Ensure you include the spaces, four on the first line and five on the remaining two, or the script won't be able to understand your formatting.

As an example, to add the station Champion Radio UK to the list, you'd write an entry as below:

```
{'name': "Champion Radio UK",
```

```
'source': 'http://uk2.internet-radio.com:31216/listen.pls',
 'info': None},
```

You can create as many custom entries as you like, and delete or edit the existing entries until the list is more to your taste. Compatible radio stations are easily found on a web search. Try [www.internet-radio.com](http://www.internet-radio.com) for a wide selection. Stations are played in the order in which they are listed; try putting your favourite stations closer to the top of the list, or sorting alphabetically. When creating a new entry, bear in mind that not all stations have an information URL as with the example above.

When you've completed the list, and double-checked it includes the right indentation, commas at the end and matching braces, save the file with Ctrl+O and exit Nano with Ctrl+X.

### Streaming Radio

To start the radio streaming script, simply type the following command at the terminal:

**python3 radio.py**

The PiFace display will clear, and after a few seconds display the name of the first radio station in the list, then status information about the stream will appear on the terminal. At the same time, you should be able to hear the station's stream coming out of your speakers. If you can't hear the stream, the Pi is most likely trying to

output it via the HDMI connection instead of the 3.5mm connection. Exit the radio script with XXXXX, then type this command at the terminal:

**amixer cset numid=31**

This tells the Pi to send all audio through the analogue output. Replacing the number 1 at the end of the command with 0 returns to the default of attempting to automatically detect the appropriate output, and using 2 forces the audio to output via the HDMI connector. Restart the script with the following command:

**python3 radio.py**

The radio script makes use of the buttons on the PiFace to control playback. The joystick at the top-right of the board can be moved left and right to skip between stations. Pressing the joystick inwards while at the centre position toggles between play and pause. To exit streaming altogether, press the right-most button at the bottom of the PiFace; this quits the script.

Having to plug in a display and keyboard to start up the script makes the PiFace a little redundant, however. To have the script automatically load in the background every time the Pi boots, load the "rc.local" file in Nano with the following command:

**sudo nano /etc/rc.local**

Add the following line above "exit 0", then save the file with Ctrl+O and exit with Ctrl+W.

```
nohup python3 /usr/share/doc/python3-pifacecad/examples/radio.py &
```

This will run the script in the background every time the Pi restarts. Test it by rebooting the Pi with the following command:

**sudo reboot**

# SECTION 3

# Get started with programming

---

With our beginner's course in computer programming you'll learn a valuable skill for the classroom – and have loads of fun too!

Have you ever dreamt of creating your very own video games? Fancy making your fortune designing mobile apps? If so, you'll need to learn about computer programming. The good news is that it isn't as hard as it sounds and your Raspberry Pi provides an ideal environment to

acquire all the skills you need. In this section we're going to show you how to understand the thinking behind programming, explain how to master the basics and demonstrate just how easy and how much fun programming can be. You'll even learn how to write your first simple programs.

**IN THIS SECTION**

**64**  
**What is programming?**

We explain how to get started with computer programming

**70**  
**The programmer's toolkit**

Find out which tools you'll need to start programming

**74**  
**Programming from the inside out**

We help you understand the central principles of programming

**78**  
**Introducing Python**

Find out how easy it is to learn a computer language

**82**  
**Learn Python basics**

Put all the theory into practice by writing your very first lines of code

**87**  
**Variables, decisions and loops**

Take your programming skills to the next level

**91**  
**Organising your code**

Discover ways to simplify your computer code and make it more manageable

**95**  
**Object-oriented programming**

Use advanced programming techniques to produce reliable, reusable code

**99**  
**Extending Python**

Explore some of the essential third-party modules available for Python



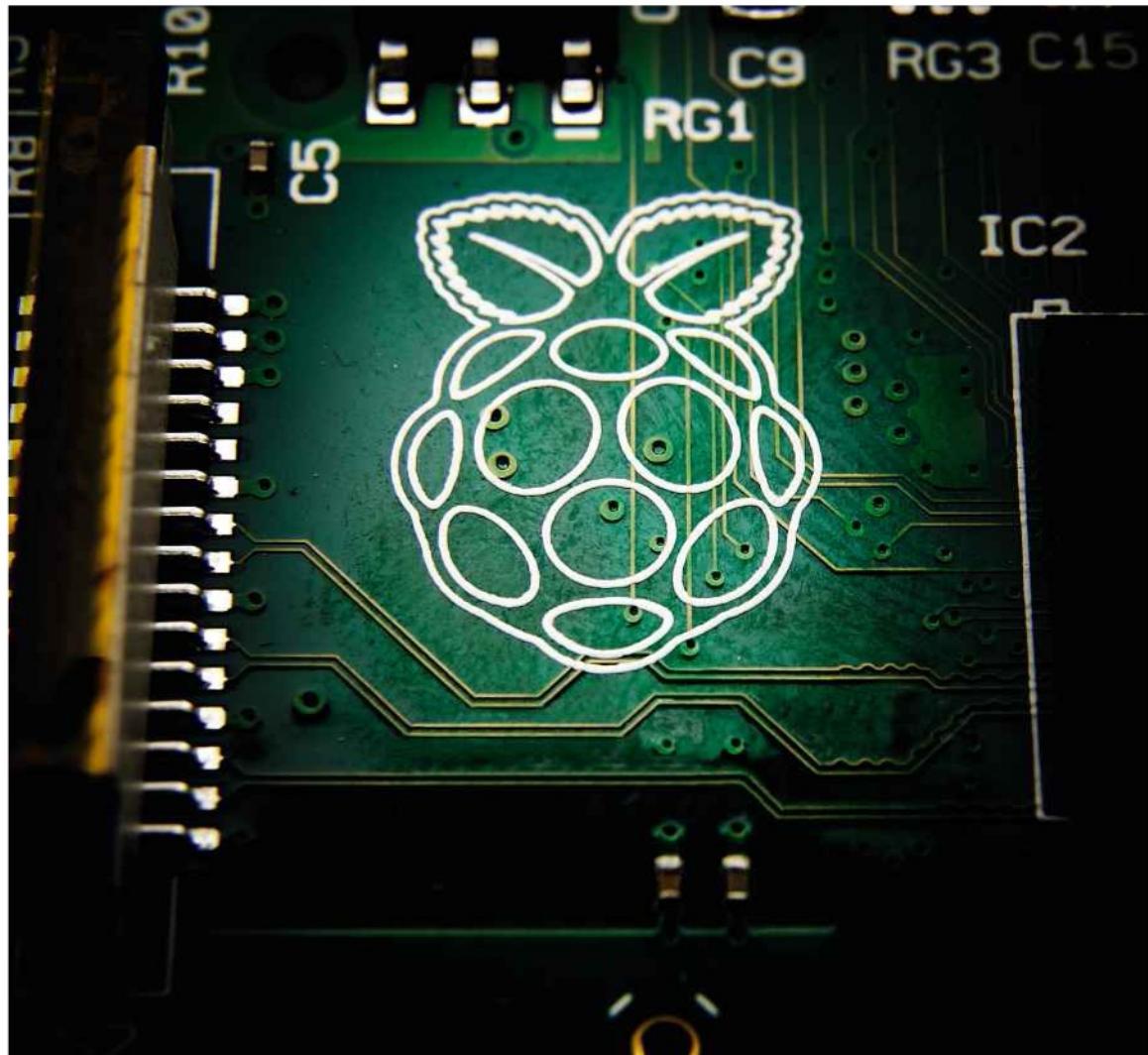
# What is programming?

---

Learning about computer programming is one of the best ways to use your Pi – we explain how to get started

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » Discover what programming is and why it's so useful to learn
- » Find out where and how programming is used in daily life
- » See how creative coding can be



**M**ention the word 'programming' to most people and one of two images will pop into their minds – the T-shirted hacker wreaking havoc with sensitive government **servers**, or lines of incomprehensible code streaming down a screen. Not surprisingly, real programming is nothing like either.

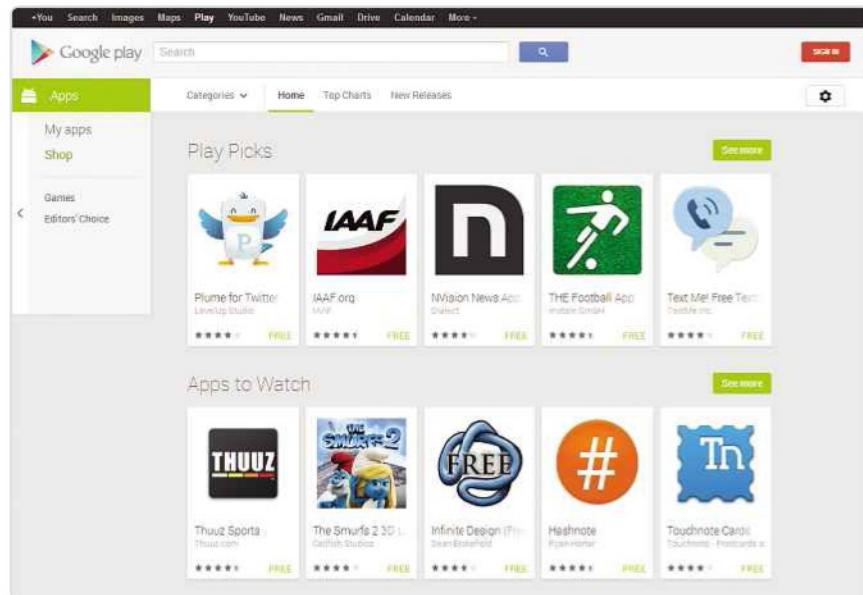
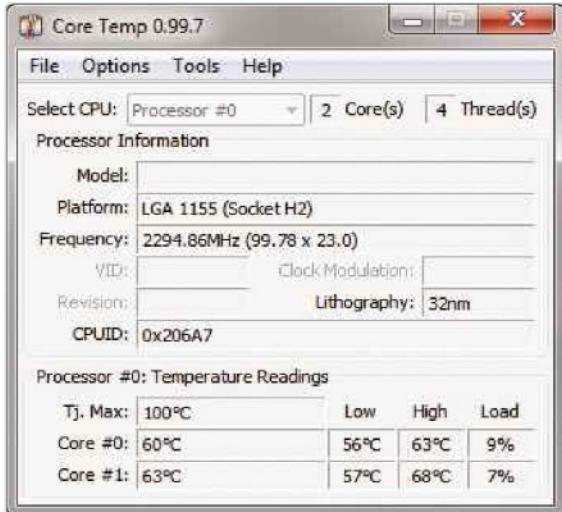
Wikipedia defines programming as “the process of designing, writing, testing, debugging, and maintaining the source code of computer programs”, which is a bit like saying that running is something you do when you run. Of course, programming means to write code – but what does that code do? What is the point of creating it?

The fact is that almost every single electronic device you might come across in your daily life is controlled by code that was written by a programmer. It's barely an exaggeration to say that programming is what makes the modern world go round. By learning how to code, then, you are equipping yourself with the knowledge and skills you need to take an active part in shaping the environment in which you and others live.

## Cracking the code

Whilst that might sound a little grand or abstract, just remember that a person, or a team of people, created the code that runs the microwave you use to make cheesy beans for supper, the fuel injection system that gets your family car from A to B, and the set-top box you use to watch your time-shifted TV programmes – as well as the more obvious code you encounter on your computer, games console or smartphone.

Someone must write the instructions that make these devices carry out their useful functions and, despite what you might imagine, you don't need to be a genius to code. Above all else, programming involves two main skills: creative imagination and



▲ It's easy to publish homemade apps for mobile platforms, thanks to their online stores

the ability to think in a logical, structured way. It certainly doesn't involve remembering every obscure command of every coding language (that's Google's job). Programming is a process in the same sense as planning a presentation, cooking a complex meal or coming up with next season's Fantasy Football strategy. It's like solving a puzzle and it's one of the most enjoyable and creative things you'll ever do.

Don't believe us? Just have a little patience and you'll soon discover the thrill of taking control of your computer rather than feeling a slave to it. This is at the heart of programming: having an impact in the real world whether that's on a PC screen, smartphone or a hacked-together robot trundling after the dog. This impact can be profound and, when the penny drops, you'll realise that programming frees you from being a passenger in this technological world and provides the toolkit to take hold of the wheel for yourself.

◀ Programming can be as simple as just displaying essential information about your PC

## Setting your sights

With such a wealth of possibilities it's important to think about what you want to achieve with your programming skills. Having a practical goal in mind will help make sense of what you're learning.

“From a microwave to a car's fuel system, programming is everywhere.”

as well as providing an opportunity to practise and get a sense of real achievement. The best advice is to follow your interests and choose a project you'll enjoy. Whether or not you want to become a professional programmer, by focusing on something that you'll enjoy for its own sake, you'll become better quicker. The people at the top of the industry, earning the significant pay cheques by creating the software that runs the banks and major businesses, for example, almost always began this way – and many continue to code for fun in their spare time.

So what is achievable for a keen beginner willing to invest some time, effort and brain power to learn programming skills?

### Making games

Most coders begin by creating games because most like playing games. Whether you realise it or not, when you play a game you're gaining an understanding of how games work. Crucially, this means you know what you're aiming for when developing your own game.

The games category covers everything from basic word-guessing puzzles through 2D platform adventures to immersive first-person extravaganzas such as the Call of Duty series. As a new programmer, you'll begin at the simple end before settling on your favourite form; many people choose arcade puzzlers or point-and-click adventures, for example, because these can be created in small teams or even by coders working alone. Whatever your ultimate ambition, games are a great way to learn programming.



The screenshot shows the official Arduino website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links to 'Main Site', 'Blog', 'Playground', 'Forum', 'Labs', 'Store', and 'Sign in or Register'. The main header features the Arduino logo (two interlocking circles) and the word 'ARDUINO'. Below the header, there's a search bar. A large central image shows a hand holding an Arduino Uno microcontroller board. To the right of the image, there's a block of text about Arduino's open-source nature and its use for prototyping interactive objects. Below the image, there's a caption 'Photo by the Arduino Team' and a link 'Arduino (more)'. Further down, there's another section with text about Arduino's sensing capabilities and a note about building boards yourself. At the bottom, there's a small note about Arduino receiving an Honorary Mention.

▲ Thanks to devices like Arduino, it's possible to control your home with your programming skills

▼ The latest web browsers can run complex apps

### Mobile apps

The market for smartphone and tablet apps has become hugely popular in the past few years, especially amongst 'indie' developers (that's you). One reason for this is that mobile devices represent the fastest growing category of internet-connected hardware. Even more importantly, each main platform (iOS, Android, BlackBerry and Windows) is served by marketplaces that make it easy for individual developers to publish their work. You don't need to sign a deal with a major distributor such as EA Games to get your masterpiece into the hands of your audience; you can create it and publish it yourself via Google or Apple's app store, at minimal cost.

That's not to say it's all plain-sailing. Despite what you might hear, mobile app development is no gravy train. But it is the leading modern platform and a good sector to learn in if you're looking for a career in programming.

### Web development

By creating applications that run on a web **server**, you potentially gain all the benefits of developing apps for mobile devices as well as having your software available to the billions of users of standard PCs. Whilst there are many situations where a 'native' app is a better choice (games being one), it's often most effective to put the code on the web and have people access it via a browser.

Much of this programming goes unnoticed, but it's there lurking in the background every time you order something from Amazon or post a status update on Facebook. Anything that happens on the web beyond serving up static web pages is programming. To see an example of just

### PYTHON SQUARED

There are two families of Python in common use: 2.x and 3.x. This may seem odd, as it's usually the case that when a new version of any software is released (Python 3 was released in 2008) users tend to upgrade. However, one of Python's great strengths is

the huge library of add-ons created by the community and some of these are written in version 2, making them incompatible with the latest version.

The differences between versions 2 and 3 aren't huge so, in this book, we're focusing on Python

2.7 – the version that comes installed by default in Raspbian at the time of writing this book. This means we can use just about every available Python library but still move interchangeably between it and version 3 when the time comes.

how stunning this can be, take a look at [www.movikantirevo.com](http://www.movikantirevo.com).

### PC applications

There's still a big market for software that users download and run on their computers. This can include utilities, games, educational software and creative programs such as music editors and art packages. In practice, this usually means that you spot a problem that needs solving and, if you can't find a good pre-existing solution to it, you write your own program. You'd be amazed at the tiny niches some of this software serves – there are, for example, several 'explosion generator' applications that satisfy the need for arcade game developers to blow up enemy spaceships in spectacular style.

Typically, the coder hacks together a solution to their own problem and then, if they think there would be an audience for it, spends time adding an effective user interface (windows, **dialogue boxes** and buttons) before releasing it for general use. It's also common to contribute the code to the open-source community, which means that anyone can amend and update it. Done in an organised way, this can result in a much better, more widely used program – for which you receive the main credit. all of which is very good for your CV!

### Controlling your home

With the Raspberry Pi and related technologies such as the Arduino ([www.arduino.cc](http://www.arduino.cc)), it's become much simpler to program real-world objects as well as traditional computers. There's nothing quite as cool as connecting with your environment, whether that's keeping tabs on your energy bills, watching a robot you've made from an old remote control toy make its way around the living room floor, or taking pictures from a weather balloon. The range of possibilities is infinite and it's in this area that the Raspberry Pi has a big advantage over, say, a laptop – its diminutive size, modest power requirements, robustness and, above all, low cost make it ideal for real-world projects.

And that's only the beginning. As you develop your programming skills, you'll notice more opportunities to put them to work. So, enough talk: now it's time to tool up and get cracking.

### What do you need?

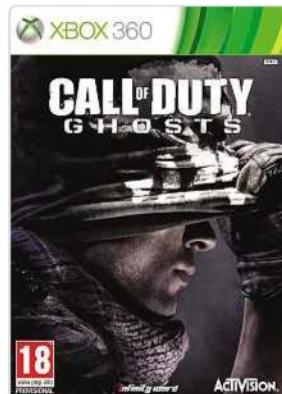
If you want to be a coder, you'll need both hardware and software to get started. The good news is that the hardware is cheap – and the software is free. By using a version of **Linux** as the **operating system**, you can learn to code on a low-cost computer such as the Raspberry Pi or a repurposed laptop or desktop that's now too slow to run Windows. Popular Linux variants such as Raspbian, Debian and Ubuntu are free, as is most of the software you can run on them – including many of the most popular programming languages.

### Parlez-vous Python?

The first decision you need to make is which programming language to learn. There are hundreds to choose from, but a good choice would be one that's widely used, easy to learn, applicable to lots of programming tasks, and similar enough to other languages to make it easy to spread your wings later. It should also be free to download and use. At [www.snipca.com/9764](http://www.snipca.com/9764) you'll find a table of languages in order of their popularity, in terms of jobs and online resources. The only candidate that meets all our criteria is Python. Why? Well, for starters it's very widely used. Python appears in the top ten of the TIOBE index (at the time of writing), which means that many skilled engineers use it and there are many jobs for Python programmers. Plus, there are plenty of resources to help learn it.

Python is also easy to learn. The Raspberry Pi Foundation chose Python as its recommended programming language for this reason. One way to describe a language is to say how 'high level' it is: broadly speaking, the more English-like it looks, the more high level it's considered. Take a look at the following code. It shows how to simply make the words "Hello World!" appear on-screen, and it's written in C, a very widely used but low-level language:

```
#include <stdio.h>
int main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
```



▲ Playing games like Call of Duty can help when it comes to creating your own

**“If you've got a problem, and no one else can help, why not create your own program to solve it?”**

Welcome to VirtualBox.org!

VirtualBox is a powerful x86 and AMD64/Intel64 virtualization product for enterprise as well as home use. Not only is VirtualBox an extremely feature rich, high performance product for enterprise customers, it is also the only professional solution that is freely available as Open Source Software under the terms of the GNU General Public License (GPL) version 2. See "About VirtualBox" for an introduction.

Presently, VirtualBox runs on Windows, Linux, Macintosh, and Solaris hosts and supports a large number of guest operating systems including but not limited to Windows (NT 4.0, 2000, XP, Server 2003, Vista, Windows 7), DOS/Windows 3.x, Linux (2.4 and 2.6), Solaris and OpenSolaris, OS/2, and OpenBSD.

VirtualBox is being actively developed with frequent releases and has an ever growing list of features, supported guest operating systems and platforms it runs on. VirtualBox is a community effort backed by a dedicated company: everyone is encouraged to contribute while Oracle ensures the product always meets professional quality criteria.

**Hot picks:**

- Pre-built virtual machines for developers over at [Oracle Tech Network](#)
- [phpVirtualBox](#) AJAX web interface [project site](#)
- [IQEmu](#) automated Windows VM creation, application integration [project site](#)

ORACLE  
Contact - Privacy policy - Terms of Use

```
printf("Hello world!\n");
return 0;
```

}

Don't worry if you didn't follow that – it's clear that there's a considerable learning curve involved in understanding C, let alone creating it for yourself. Now, for comparison, let's look at another section of code that does exactly the same thing, only this time written in Python:

```
print ("Hello World!")
```

Not only is this Python example much closer to English, and therefore easier to understand, it's also much shorter – in this case reducing six lines of low-level C into a single concise instruction. This is another characteristic feature of high-level languages.

Python's flexible. You've probably heard of BASIC, which is another well-known and easy-to-learn language. However, these days BASIC isn't as popular as it used to be. Visual Basic is the only

### PYTHON ON WINDOWS

Windows is the only major operating system that doesn't come with Python built in. If you have to work in Windows, you should

download the Windows installer at [www.python.org/getit](http://www.python.org/getit). Choose the latest version of Python 2.7. Don't choose a

64-bit version (you'll see the number '64' in the description) since this would make it incompatible with many important libraries.

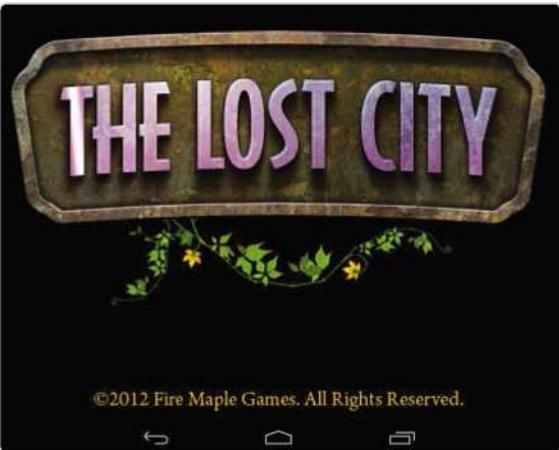
- Python 3.3.0 Windows x86 MSI Installer (Windows binary -- does not include source)
- Python 3.3.0 Windows X86-64 MSI Installer (Windows AMD64 / Intel 64 / X86-64 binary [1] -- does not include source)
- Python 3.3.0 Mac OS X 64-bit/32-bit x86-64/i386 Installer (for Mac OS X 10.6 and later [2])
- Python 3.3.0 Mac OS X 32-bit i386/PPC Installer (for Mac OS X 10.5 and later [2])
- Python 3.3.0 compressed source tarball (for Linux, Unix or Mac OS X)
- Python 3.3.0 bzipped source tarball (for Linux, Unix or Mac OS X, more compressed)

dialect that appears in the top ten and it's restricted to Windows computers; the commercial version is also relatively expensive. Python, on the other hand, can be used on Windows, Mac and Linux computers, as well as on many other platforms. It's also able to access libraries of code created in C and C++.

Python's a good first language. The concepts that underpin Python are similar to those found in other popular languages. So once you've learned to code in Python, you'll find it much easier to get to grips with almost any other mainstream language. And if you need any other reason... it's named after Monty Python!

### Tools of the trade

Even though you already own a Raspberry Pi, it's often more convenient to develop on another, more



▲ Games are a great way to learn programming - and they don't have to be fast-paced first-person shooters

powerful computer and then move the code across to the Pi. Even if you've set up the Pi in your living room, hidden it in a shed or built it into a toy robot, this can be a convenient way to work, since it's very easy to connect to the Pi across a network.

The good news is that an old laptop – or a modern PC or Mac – will do fine for Pi development. However, whilst Python is available for all the main operating systems, its natural home is Linux. If you're using Windows or OS X, it's a good idea to install a Linux distribution alongside your existing operating system – or, even better, set up a dedicated computer.

### Ubuntu

If you're using a Raspberry Pi, you should already be set up with Raspbian. What if you want to stick with your existing PC? You can install Python for Windows (see left), but we recommend using Linux as the basis of your programming environment,

The screenshot shows the Ubuntu download page with a focus on the Windows installer for Ubuntu Desktop. It features a large red icon of the Windows logo. Below it, text reads: "Windows installer for Ubuntu Desktop. With our officially supported Windows installer, you can install and uninstall Ubuntu easily and safely. Choose either the 12.10 release for all the latest software or 12.04.1 LTS for long-term support." A link "Read the installation instructions" is also present. To the right, there's a dropdown menu "Choose your release" set to "12.10" and a red button labeled "Get the installer".

since it's Python's natural environment and if you intend to do any serious coding you'll almost certainly encounter Linux at some point, especially if you develop for the internet.

On top of this, Linux is made for tinkering; it's a much more open OS than either Windows or OS X, and has an active community providing all the bits and pieces you need to create great programs. You can also find plenty of generous and enthusiastic advice.

For most people, Ubuntu is the best Linux distribution to choose. It's based on Debian (like Raspbian) but is more user friendly. It's the most widely used and most actively developed version of Linux. You can also install it in several ways, depending on your situation.

## 1. Wipe and replace

If you want to repurpose an old laptop that no-one's using anymore, then your best bet is probably to wipe whatever version of Windows is already on it and replace it with Ubuntu (having backed up any documents you want to keep). To do this, go to [www.ubuntu.com/download/desktop](http://www.ubuntu.com/download/desktop) and download the newest 32-bit version. The download is in the form of an ISO file, which you can either burn to DVD (double-click it and follow the prompts) or transfer to a **USB flash drive**. When you're ready to install it on the target computer, insert the DVD or flash drive and follow the prompts. Full instructions are on the Ubuntu downloads page.

## 2. Side by side

Another option is to install Ubuntu alongside Windows so you can use both. To do this, download the WUBI Windows installer from [www.ubuntu.com/download/desktop/windows-installer](http://www.ubuntu.com/download/desktop/windows-installer). This is a standard Windows program that downloads and runs the Ubuntu setup. As part of the process, your hard disk is divided up into sections so that Ubuntu and Windows can co-exist;

make sure you have backed up your PC before starting. Once Ubuntu is successfully installed, you'll choose which OS to use when you boot up your computer. It's also easy to uninstall Ubuntu from within Windows.

## 3. Virtual Ubuntu

Perhaps the most flexible option is to set up Ubuntu as a 'virtual machine' (VM) running in Windows. A VM is a software program that pretends it's a hardware computer running your chosen operating system (in this case, Ubuntu). The great benefit of this approach is that if something were to go wrong, you could very quickly wipe it and start again. To create a VM, you need software such as Oracle's VirtualBox ([www.virtualbox.org/wiki/Downloads](http://www.virtualbox.org/wiki/Downloads)). Once your virtualisation software is installed, you can set up a VM and then load the Ubuntu ISO file into it. In fact, you can create as many VMs for which you have space, allowing you to try out any number of different versions of Linux.

Of the three approaches, using WUBI to install alongside Windows is the simplest, whereas the VM option is the most flexible but requires more technical confidence. [ca](#)

▲ Ubuntu can be easily installed on a system that's already running Windows

▼ An old laptop is an ideal choice for installing Linux to learn programming



**“If you install Ubuntu, you can test your programs quickly and easily.”**

# The programmer's toolkit

There are a few tools you'll need before you start programming – luckily they're all available free of charge

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » Find out what you need to start programming
- » Discover where to get your tools for free
- » See how the Geany text editor works

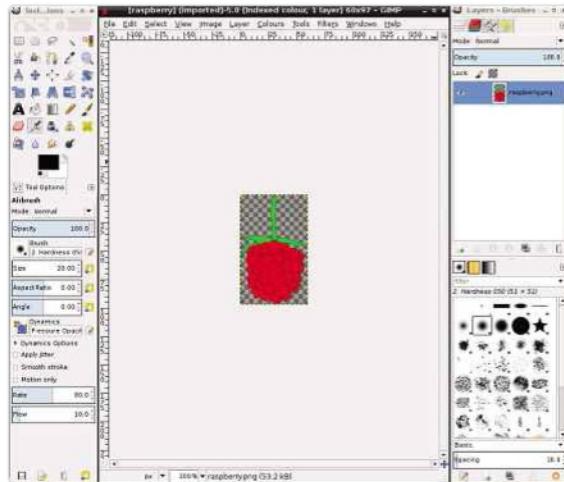
**S**o now you know what programming actually is, it's time to put together a suite of tools to help you get started. There are three things you'll need for most coding tasks: a programming language, an editor, and – if your project is going to make use of graphics and sound – a set of software tools for creating and editing these resources. And you'll be pleased to learn that you won't have to pay a single penny for any of these things. In this feature we will show you the best tools to use and where to find them.

### Programming language

The Raspberry Pi comes with Python 2.7 built in. This is the final version of the Python 2 family and the code examples in this book are aimed at version 2.7. When the educational version of the Raspberry Pi is released, it's possible that it will default to Python 3, but it will almost certainly also include version 2.7 – and this is the one we recommend you use. We'll cover how to make sure you're targeting the right version below.

### Editor

Computer programs are usually text files, which means you can edit them using any word processor or text editor. However, by using an IDE (Integrated Development Environment) rather than, for example, Leafpad (the Raspberry Pi's equivalent of Windows Notepad), you get access to all sorts of tools that help with your programming. Raspbian includes two versions of an editor

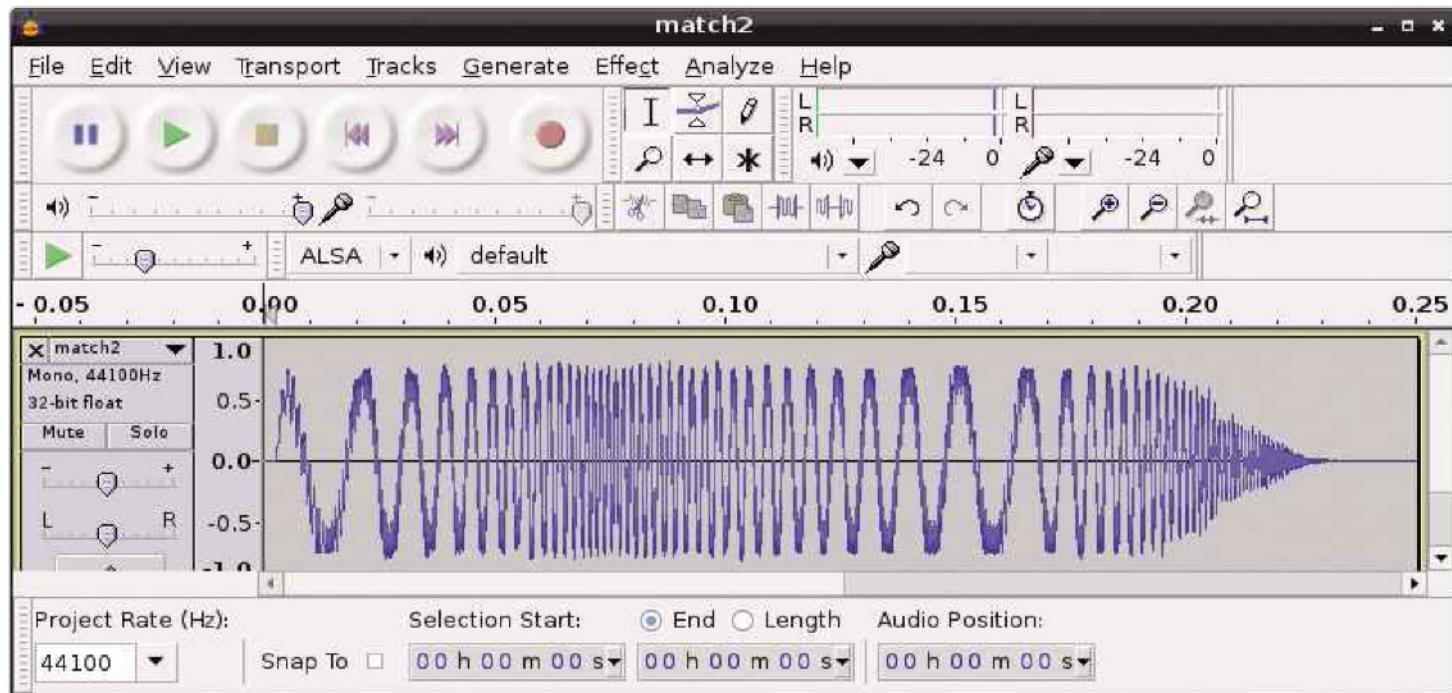


▲ The free GIMP program is great for creating and editing the images you'll need in your programs

called IDLE – one for Python 2.7 and one for Python 3 – but it's rather too basic for convenient programming. For that reason, we've created the examples in this book using a more advanced editor called Geany. You may have already installed Geany. If not, simply open up LXTerminal and type:

```
sudo apt-get update  
sudo apt-get install geany
```

...and press Enter. The first line ensures the list of packages on your Raspberry Pi is up to date, the



second line performs the actual install. Geany is available for Windows computers too. If you're using Windows, go to [www.geany.org/Download/Releases](http://www.geany.org/Download/Releases) and select the latest version of the Full Installer. Have a look at page 59 for a detailed explanation of the Geany interface.

## Media

Many projects require custom graphics, and for games you'll probably need to create or edit your own sound effects. As with text editors, there are many choices available to Linux users but the gloriously named 'GNU Image Manipulation Program', or GIMP to its adherents, is the most fully featured and best supported. For sound editing, the best choice is Audacity. We'll describe how to find and install them both.

## GIMP

To install GIMP on your Raspberry Pi, start up Synaptic Package Manager and find 'gimp' in the Graphics category. Select this and also 'gimp-data' then click Apply. Alternatively, from LXTerminal, enter the following lines:

```
sudo apt-get update
sudo apt-get install gimp
```

Once installed, you'll find an icon to run GIMP in the Graphics folder of your Start menu. Since GIMP is a processor-intensive application, it will

▲ Use Audacity to edit the sounds for your own programs

run fairly slowly on your Raspberry Pi, but it's perfectly usable. To get the best performance, shut down any other applications before running it. Windows users can download the installer from <http://gimp-win.sourceforge.net/stable.html>.

Whichever OS you're using, you'll find GIMP reasonably familiar if you've used any other photo-editing package, whether that's Windows Paint or Photoshop. You can find out more about GIMP at [www.gimp.org](http://www.gimp.org).

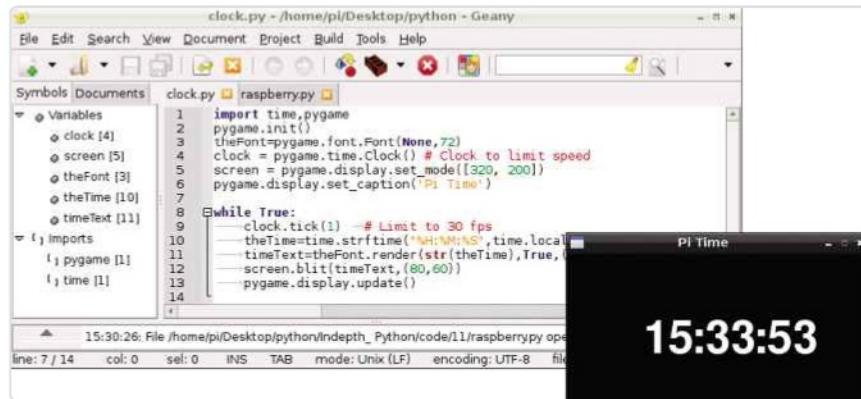
## Audacity

Most games include sound effects and, even if you use pre-existing resources, the chances are you'll need to edit them to fit your project sooner or later. Audacity is a basic sound-editing package that includes all the features most people require, and it's free. In Synaptic, you'll find Audacity in the Multimedia category; again, you need to make sure that both 'audacity' and 'audacity-data' are selected before you click Apply. To install via LXTerminal:

```
sudo apt-get update
```



**“Graphics and sound bring your programs to life - and there are great free tools to help you with both.”**



**sudo apt-get install audacity**

Bear in mind that if you've only just installed GIMP, you don't need to run the update command again, as apt-get will have the most up to date information.

Once installed, you'll find Audacity in the Sound & Video section of your Start menu. You can find more information and download links for Windows and Mac versions at <http://audacity.sourceforge.net>.

### Let's get cracking

The final step before we get into coding is to check that your Python environment is working as expected. Rather than bashing out the bog-standard "hello world" program, we're going to create a real-time clock for your desktop. This is not only more interesting and useful, it will also test whether you have two of the most important Python libraries installed and working, as well as Python itself.

Connect your Pi and load up the desktop. Open Geany by going to the Programming folder of the Start menu.

Click File, New and then immediately save it as 'clock.py'. The 'py' extension tells Geany you're creating a Python file and switches on its built-in help and syntax colouring. Now, go to the Edit menu in Geany and click Preferences. Pick the Editor tab on the left followed by the Display tab along the top, then click next to 'Show white space' to fill in the checkbox. This means that all spaces and tabs are marked in the editor window, which is helpful when typing and editing Python code.

Type the code from the listing below into Geany:

```
import time,pygame
pygame.init()
theFont=pygame.font.Font(None,72)
clock = pygame.time.Clock()
screen = pygame.display.set_mode([320, 200])
pygame.display.set_caption('Pi Time')
while True:
    clock.tick(1)
```

▲ This clock can be created with just a few lines of Python

```
theTime=time.»
strftime("%H:%M:%S",time.localtime())
timeText=theFont.render(str(theTime),»
True,(255,255,255),(0,0,0))
screen.blit(timeText,(80,60))
pygame.display.update()
```

Be careful to type the code exactly, including punctuation, and make sure you put line breaks in the correct places. The » symbol means a line continues, so just carry on typing. Use the tab key at the start of lines to indent your code exactly as it's shown in the listing. If you prefer, you can download the file from [www.snipca.com/9785](http://www.snipca.com/9785).

Although what you've just typed in probably looks mystifying at the moment, you can see how little code is needed to create an application. For now, we're just testing that your setup is working so, once you've typed in the code and checked it for errors, click the Cog icon on the Geany toolbar to run it. All being well, after a brief pause, your clock will start ticking away. If so, congratulations.

If the clock doesn't appear, don't despair – it's common for programs not to work first time. Take a look at the LXTerminal window, which will show a message that can help you fix the problem. More often than not, the cause will be a mistake in typing the code, but another possible problem could be Python complaining that it's missing the Pygame module. If it is, and you're using a Raspberry Pi, the chances are that your machine has been set to run Python 3 by default. This is an easy problem to fix: go to the Build menu in Geany and select 'Set build commands'. In the field next to Execute, remove the number 3 to set it to run the older version.

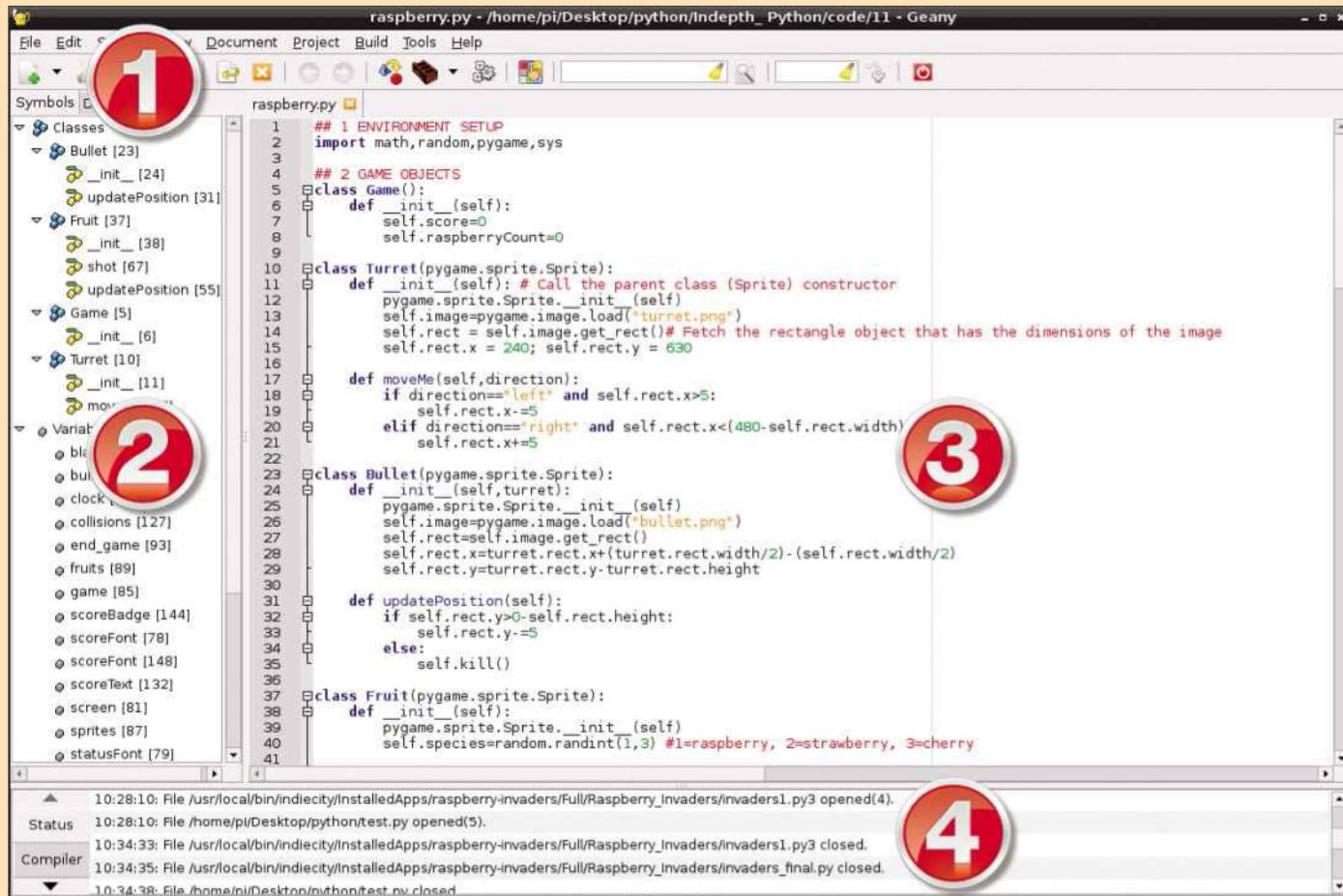
Once the clock is working, you know Python is correctly installed and working on your Raspberry Pi. Congratulations! You now have everything you need to begin your career as a programmer. ☕



► Geany can use colour to help make your code easier to follow



# GEANY'S INTERFACE EXPLAINED



## 1. Toolbar

The Geany toolbar contains shortcuts for moving quickly through your code, picking and inserting colours and letting you test-run your program with a single click.



## 2. Code Explorer

The left-hand pane displays information about the program you're currently working on, including easy access to its main parts.

## 3. Coding Window

This is where you'll be spending most of your time. Geany includes:

- Code suggestion – the editor guesses what you're typing and offers to finish for you
- In-built reference – when you type the name of a Python statement, it shows what that function expects to follow it and how it works
- Syntax colouring – 'syntax' refers to the words and numbers that make up your code, and by automatically applying different colours to different types of syntax, Geany makes code easy to read and debug

## 4. Message Window

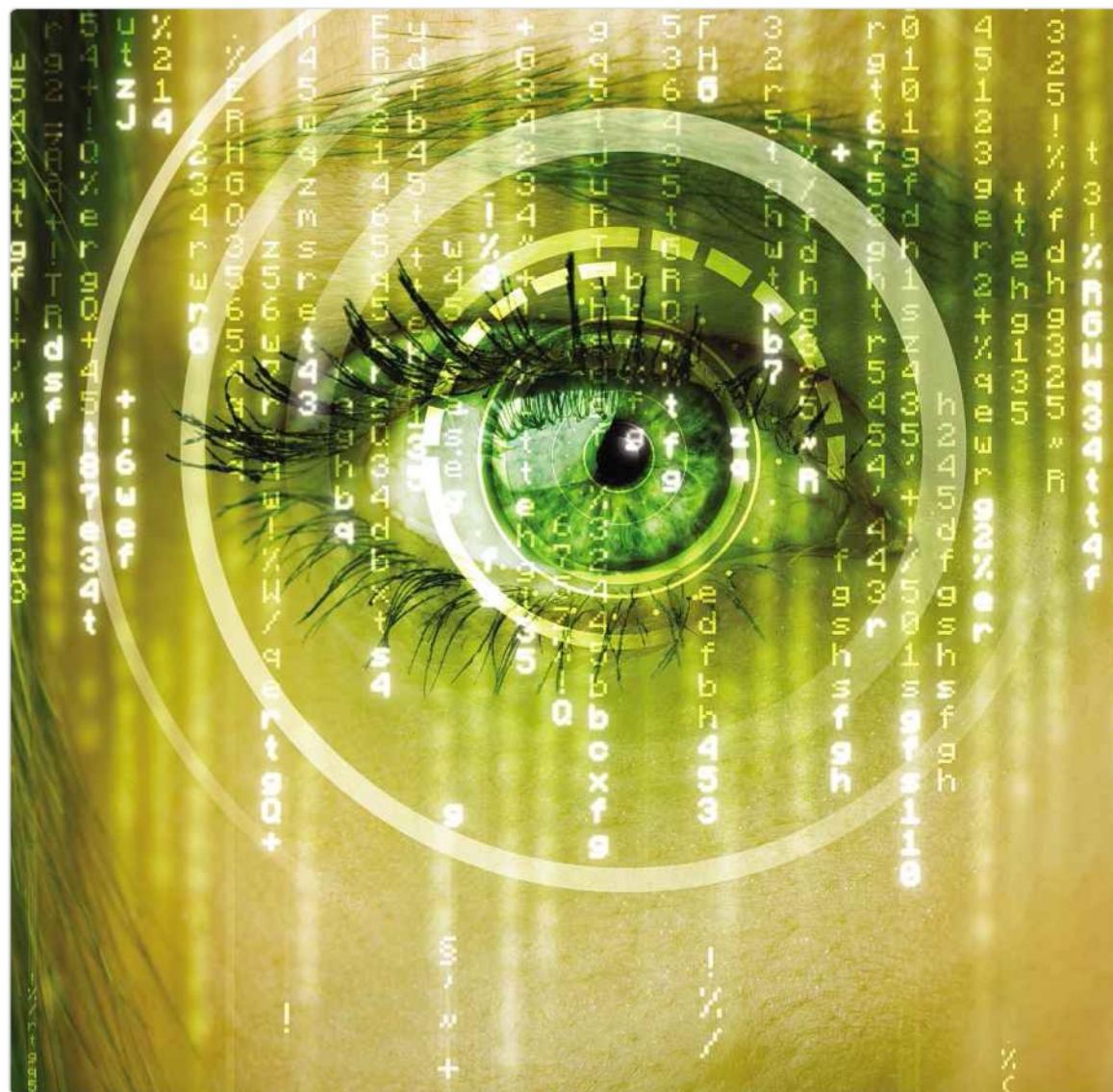
Geany displays messages and status reports in this window. You can also select the Terminal tab to get quick access to the LXTerminal.

# Programming from the inside out

We help you understand the principals of programming, using examples from real life

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » Understand how computer programming works
- » Learn about the input-logic-output model
- » See the logic model in action with our examples



## EXAMPLE 1 – A VAT CALCULATOR

Yes, it's boring but somebody has to write programs to carry out useful, mundane tasks such as this. A VAT calculator would ask the user to type in an amount; it would then work out the VAT on that amount and add that to the original value to arrive at a total. Finally, the program would display the result on-screen. In this case, then, the amount

entered by the user is the input, the VAT calculation is the logic, and displaying the result on-screen is the output. Bear in mind that the output could just as easily be to a printer or even a speech synthesiser; however, if that was the case, neither of the first two parts would be affected. Whilst this might make little difference on a tiny app such as

this, on large corporate systems splitting the code into these three purposes makes it possible for different programmers to work on each and for the application to be easily ported from desktop to web to mobile, or to update individual parts easily.

► A simple calculator still works to the input-logic-output model



**C**omputers, microcontrollers and other electronic devices are used for so many tasks that you might imagine they share very little in common. However, whether they're running on an Xbox, inside the dashboard of a car or controlling the Curiosity Mars Rover on the surface of the planet, most programs work in a fundamentally similar way: they take input, apply some sort of logic to it and then output the results.

Some very simple programs do this once each time they're run – for example, a calculator – but most applications go through this loop many times per second. As a programmer, almost every process you'll ever work with will fall into one of these three categories – and knowing how they work makes understanding how code is put together much simpler. Dotted around this article are a few examples to show how this works in practice.

### Under the microscope

Most programs take input, process it using logic and then output it in some form; we can use this model as we design and write our applications. For example, let's say you've decided to create an old-school arcade game. In your mind's eye you see fruits falling from the top of the screen, some of them raspberries. The player uses a laser-gun that moves across the bottom of the screen to shoot the raspberries but miss all the other fruit. Without some sort of model, you'd struggle to work out where to begin and how to organise your thoughts. The ILO model gives you a template to get started.

### Input

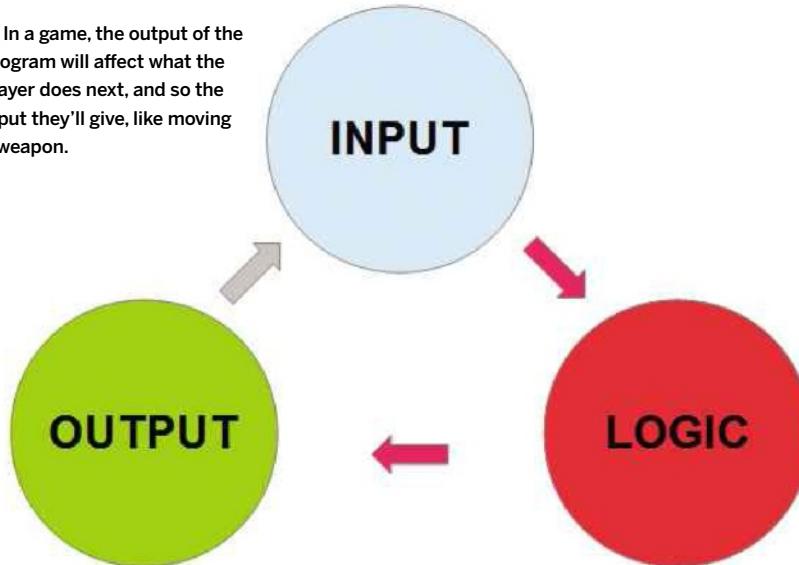
Let's begin by thinking about what inputs a game will take from the user. During the game, the player needs a way of controlling the laser gun, so we need to decide if that's going to be achieved via keyboard, mouse or touch. The choice depends largely on the platform we're aiming at. In the case of the Raspberry Pi, keyboard is best, so we're going to track the left and right arrow keys, along with the spacebar for firing laser bolts. Why space?

Because it's the convention. How do you know? By playing games. If you ever needed an excuse for trying out as many games as possible now you have one! Other inputs will include buttons for starting, choosing levels, exiting and help.

### Output

Think about how the user will experience the game. First they'll see the fruit, laser and bullets appear on-screen and then move. So we'll need to write code for displaying these graphical elements and animating them. The player also needs to see a score and any other status information – perhaps a time limit and basic instructions – so we'll need a way to display information in text format. And then we'll need to write code to play the obligatory bleeps of the classic arcade game.

But output isn't just what the player sees or hears. If we want to store the players' high scores, we need to save the data somewhere. This is output even though it isn't visible to the user.



### EXAMPLE 2 – FORZA MOTORSPORT 4 FOR XBOX 360

In a driving game, the player uses a controller or steering wheel as input and the console then translates the directional changes and applies them to its calculations of the car's position using its logic code. Once it has done this, it generates and displays the output in the form of graphics on the screen. Given the frame rate

of a modern console game, this is happening many times per second – not just for the visuals, but for the sound effects too. In that case, the input might be the controller buttons assigned to acceleration and braking, the logic involves applying the correct physics to the Xbox's model of the game world, and the output – along

with the visual elements – includes the sound of a thrashed engine or screaming brakes. Together, the way the inputs are processed and the reactions to them are often described as the 'physics' of a game.

► A complex game will process input many times a second



#### Logic

Whilst a player might notice the quality of graphics and animations, or how well the laser gun responds to their keyboard presses, far more effort will go into the behind-the-scenes tasks our program must carry out to make sure the game works as intended. Logic is the glue that links input to output: without it you might have falling fruit and rising bullets but no way of connecting the two.

In most cases, you'll find yourself spending the majority of your time writing logic code. For example, we must constantly send new co-ordinates for all the objects on the screen to the output code so it can accurately reflect their positions. We must check for collisions, and when one is detected we must react accordingly by updating the output and scores – as well as checking whether the game has finished. By breaking all these jobs down into smaller and smaller steps, you eventually end up at the level of the single programming task.

#### Mirror mirror

Most programs interact with a user in some way. In a game, it's the user that's providing the input in the first place. In fact, the player and the program become part of a cycle: the user sees the fruit descending (input), decides where to move the

laser gun (logic), and presses the keys accordingly (output). Put another way, the output of your program becomes the player's input, and vice versa.

If you're designing a program that interacts with a user like this, you must take account of the whole system. It's not enough to think about the best way for the code to accept input; you must also consider how the player will provide it. For example, when choosing keys for moving the gun left and right, it may be more convenient from a programming point of view to use A and B – but it makes much more sense for the player to use the left and right arrow keys. We've all used apps that have clearly been designed for the convenience of the programmer – try to avoid that in your own.

#### Modularise

So you've split the tasks your program needs to perform into input, logic and output: how does this translate into the real world of creating your game? It does this by helping you to work out how to organise your code. Imagine slicing a pie into equal parts. You could begin by cutting it into thirds, and then continuing to halve until you reach the optimum size. Input, logic and output are these thirds, which you then divide up into smaller units of programming. In Python these units are called Modules, Functions and Objects.

### EXAMPLE 3 – THE MARS ROVER

Right now, around 225 million miles away, a robot the size of a Ford Fiesta is wending its way across the surface of Mars. Controlling the Curiosity Mars Rover is a computer less powerful than a Raspberry Pi. This computer, the RAD750, created by a subsidiary of British company BAE Systems, contains over 2 million lines of code written in C (although Python was used to create

testing scripts). This code controls everything from sensing the environment to navigating the Rover through the Martian landscape. Since radio waves take more than 12 minutes to travel between Mission Control and Mars, the Rover can't be driven like a remote-control car. So it includes software that uses its cameras (input) to determine where

rocks and other obstructions are, calculates a safe path (logic) and turns the wheels (output). Bear in mind that human beings wrote the code, and they started programming with as little knowledge as you may have right now. The sky really is the limit!

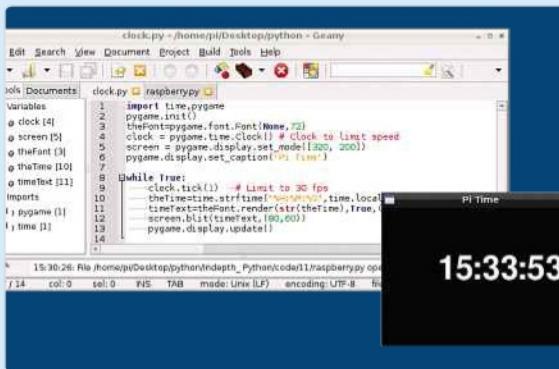
► Millions of miles away, the Mars Rover has less computing power than a Raspberry Pi



## EXAMPLE 4 – OUR CLOCK

Finally, remember the tiny clock app we created in the last section? It took the current system clock time as input, converted it to a human-readable form (logic) and displayed it on-screen (output).

► Our clock is simple, but it still shows how information flows



“Learning how to split your code up into modules, functions and objects will help you to program efficiently.”



### Modules

To create a Python program, you type code into an editor and save it. The saved file is a module so, in a way, every Python program could be called a module, even our tiny clock. However, typing all your code into a single file is rarely a good idea unless the app is very simple. More typically, you create a main script file, then split the rest of the code into separate files, each of which is a module. For example, you might create a module for handling the display, one for saving the score and reading it back, and another to listen for the user's key presses. You would then make the code in those modules available to the main script by ‘importing’ them. Take a look again at the first line of the clock code:

```
import time,pygame
```

As you've probably guessed, time and pygame are modules. time is built into all Python installations and is, in effect, part of the standard language, whereas pygame is a specialised module that helps in the development of games. Importing your own modules is done in exactly the same way.

### Functions

Modules divide into functions: blocks of code that perform a specific task and have their own unique name. For example, in the “display” module for our game, we might have a function for drawing

▼ In a game, information is constantly flowing between user and program, each affecting the other

a bullet, another for painting the animated background, and a third for exploding the fruit. Within these functions you'll find our actual lines of code – so functions are the smallest subdivision of your program.

### Objects

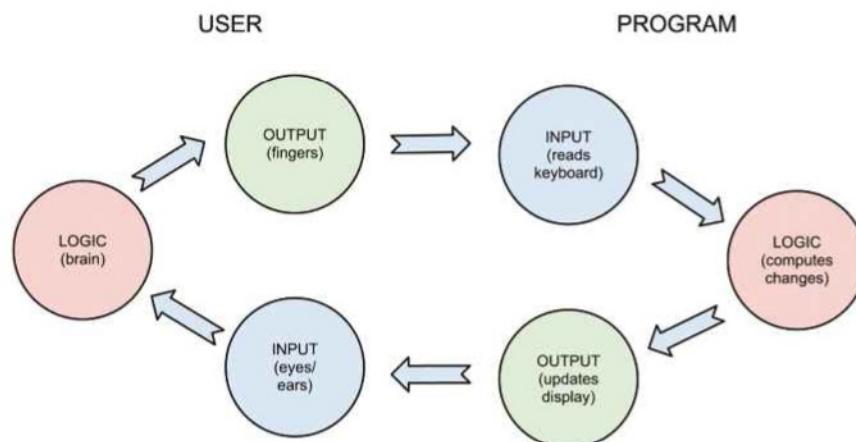
Python is an object-oriented programming (OOP) language. This means the code that controls how parts of a program works is contained within those parts – as opposed to the procedural approach used by languages such as BASIC, which keep everything in a big central file. OOP makes it easier to build and maintain code, and it means we can effortlessly create multiple copies of objects.

For example, think about a game of Space Invaders. The invaders themselves are identical to each other and move left, right and down the screen. The procedural approach would be to draw each invader separately, one at a time, and keep track in memory of which one is where, whether it's been destroyed or has reached the bottom of the screen.

The object-oriented approach is to write code for one invader (this is called a Class) so that it keeps track of its own position and status, and then to create as many copies (called Instances) of that class as necessary. Once they're up and running, they each run independently.

As a rule, OOP means less code overall; programming that is much easier to understand (as you know that any code within the ‘invader’ class relates to the aliens); and, because of this simplicity, fewer bugs and better performance.

So, a Python program is usually made up of modules containing functions and classes (which also contain functions). Despite their somewhat intimidating names, modules, functions and classes are simply ways of organising code, and they're there to make life easier. With that behind us, it's time to dive into Python. 

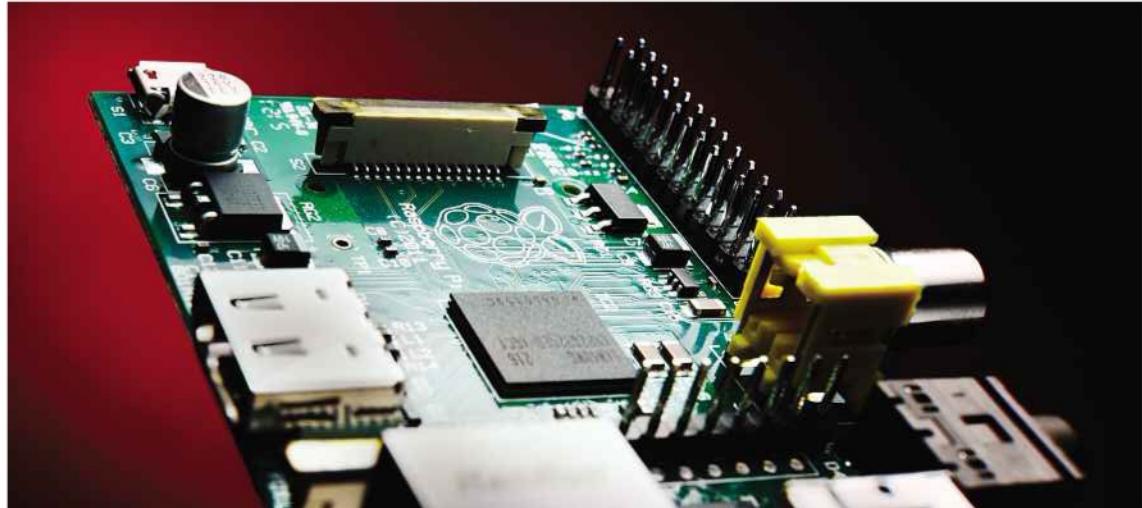


# Introducing Python

Learning to speak another language has never been this easy

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » Find out how easy it is to program in Python
- » Learn the dos and don'ts of programming in Python



You've set up the Raspberry Pi and you've got a basic grasp of the principles of programming under your belt. It's time to start learning the practical skills needed to create Python programmes.

In the next few sections of the book you'll find many code samples. These are all short and we strongly recommend you type them in by hand: doing so will help you gain familiarity with the structure of a Python program, and give you practice in using an editor and running programs. However, you will also be able to download much of the code from the web – we will provide you with link as we go along.

Don't worry if you struggle with some of the concepts introduced in this section; we're going to cover a lot of ground quickly so we can move onto programming larger, more rewarding projects as soon as possible. Whether you're aware of it or not, if you follow the examples, most of what you need to know will sink in and you'll then have plenty of

opportunity to see how the fundamentals of Python work in action as we build the code for our projects in the following sections of the book.

## Speaking in tongues

All programming languages have the same broad purpose: to provide a way for humans to control devices powered by a microprocessor. With most languages, code made up of letters, numbers and symbols is typed into an editor line by line before being run by the computer.

Python is a high-level language because the code itself is relatively English-like. Indeed, any competent programmer looking at a well-designed Python application should be able to work out what it is trying to achieve, whether or not they have ever learned the language itself. This makes Python a good first language and an excellent choice for a wide range of purposes. But how does it compare with English, for example? Let's have a look using this table.

English	Python	
Books	Programs	Books and programs tend to be about one thing – whether that's a story or a game.
Chapters	Modules	Books are split into chapters and programs into modules – the difference is that chapters are designed to be read in order whereas modules can be used multiple times.
Pages	Functions	Chapters are subdivided into pages but, again, they are presented in a linear order. Modules are made up of functions, each responsible for a specific task.
Paragraphs	Blocks	Usually blocks of code, within functions, are processed in the order they appear, just like paragraphs on a page.
Lines	Lines	Each line of a book contains one thought or idea, while each line of a program contains one complete action.
Words, numbers and punctuation, etc	Statements, commands, operators and separators, etc	The nuts and bolts of both human and computer languages. To become a French speaker, you must learn French words, and how they are put together using grammar. To write Python code, you learn the various statements that have meaning in the language, and how they are put together in meaningful ways.

So, both human and machine languages have much in common. Perhaps the biggest difference is that while you don't have to speak perfect German to make yourself understood to a native, computers are entirely unforgiving; if you don't get your language 100% correct, they won't understand what you mean. This is because, at their digital hearts, computers understand only two conditions – 1 and 0, right and wrong – so there can be none of the ambiguity or guesswork of human communication. Fortunately, Python is much easier to learn than French, for example; when you get it wrong, only you and your Raspberry Pi will know. And the Pi won't tell.

## The basics

Python is what's known as an interpreted language. This means that when you want to run a program you've written, it must first be saved as a text file and then passed to another program called the Python Interpreter, which reads in your code and converts it, on a line-by-line basis, into low-level code that the computer understands. Without the Python Interpreter, the program can't run. You can contrast this with C, which is a compiled language: with C, before your code can be run, the text of the program is converted into a machine-readable form that doesn't need an interpreter.

All things being equal, compiled code runs more quickly than its interpreted equivalent, because it's ready to go when it's loaded; Python needs to first load its runtime engine – that is, the software the PC needs to run to convert the language from high level to low level – and then read in the text files and then, finally, run the program.

You might wonder why, in that case, we have interpreted languages. First, because the difference in speed is, for most real-world purposes, undetectable on modern hardware (even the Raspberry Pi). Sure, if you wanted to create a 3D engine for a first-person video game, you'd write it in C (or C++) rather than Python to get the best possible performance, but most games – and most other programs – run perfectly through a runtime engine.

Another important benefit of an interpreted language is that it eliminates a step from the development process. With Python you can write code, save it and immediately run it to see whether it works. With C, you must write, save and compile before you get results. The more code you write, the longer this process takes and the more time you save with Python.

We've described in the last chapter how the work a computer program does can be divided into input, logic and output processes. In practice, this means that Python programs tend to be made up of several text files that are usually saved with a .py extension. In most cases there is a central file, normally called main.py, which is the starting point; this is the text file that the interpreter is instructed to run.

The other files are linked to main.py using the import statement and, if you could slow down the interpreter to human reading speed, you'd be able to watch as it jumps in and out of those other files in response to your commands, but always returning back to main.py. Geany makes all this simple because it has a button on the toolbar for running the project – just make sure you have the main.py file in the edit window when you click.

## The Python philosophy

Very few programmers stick to a single language, and as you gain experience of programming, you'll notice that different languages seem to have 'personalities' of their own. Quite often, you'll find you come to prefer one language over another because its personality appeals to you – so it's good news that Python is easy to like.

As you'd expect from a language that takes its name from a TV comedy series, Python doesn't take itself too seriously. Some languages seem to hoard their secrets and so attract fans who take great pride in overcoming their limitations: the harder it is to get something done, the more they

```

1 import pygame,random
2 pygame.init()
3 clock = pygame.time.Clock() # Clock to limit spe
4 WIDTH=600; HEIGHT=600; BLACK=(0,0,0)
5 screen = pygame.display.set_mode([WIDTH, HEIGHT])
6 screen.fill(BLACK)
7
8 def draw_circle(colour):
9     x=random.randint(1,WIDTH)
10    y=random.randint(1,HEIGHT)
11    size=random.randint(1,5)
12    pygame.draw.circle(screen,colour,(x,y),size)
13
14 def random_colour(minimum, maximum):
15    red=random.randint(minimum,maximum)
16    green=random.randint(minimum,maximum)
17    blue=random.randint(minimum,maximum)
18    colour=[red,green,blue]
19    return colour
20
21 for n in range(100):
22    clock.tick(25)
23    colour=random_colour(100,255)
24    draw_circle(colour)
25    pygame.display.update()
26
27 raw_input("Press a key")
28

```

▲ Python is a simple language to learn. Read on and you'll soon be able to understand all of this code

seem to like it. Python takes the opposite approach and this has helped to build a community of fans eager to help others get into the language.

### The Zen of Python

#### 1. There is one right way to do it

Some languages encourage you to find your own way of achieving something, providing many different methods. Whilst Python has plenty of flexibility when it comes to organising your code (which is your business), when it comes to writing individual lines of code to carry out a task there's

## NO CURLY BRACES

If you've seen programming code at any point, you've probably seen curly braces used to divide code into blocks. When the interpreter reaches an opening curly brace – “{” – it knows that everything that follows belongs together, until it gets to a closing brace. The problem with this approach is that you end up with a lot of curly braces.

Traditionally, programmers have used tab indenting to make a visual link: in other words, all the code that's indented by one tab stop belongs together. However, most languages use the braces to group code, so using tab stops is purely

usually a single best way to go about it. If it feels as though you're going around the houses to get something done, there's almost certainly a better way.

#### 2. Always choose simple over complex and complex over complicated

Python is built to make it easy for you to write simple code. This is good because it reduces bugs and makes it simpler to maintain your program, whether you're doing it or someone else. If you can't make it simple then make it complex, but keep it clear rather than complicated.

#### 3. Get it done

Python is an incredibly productive language. It takes a remarkably small amount of code to achieve useful results. Whereas programmers using other languages boast about how many lines of code their application contains, Python programmers brag about how few lines it took.

#### 4. Organise for readability

As we'll see, Python includes many ways of putting code into blocks to get things done. You can also put blocks within blocks (within blocks) but this leads to code that's difficult to understand. If this happens when writing Python code, think about how you can put the sub-blocks elsewhere (into modules, functions or objects for example) so that the main code remains simple to read.

#### 5. Have fun

Whereas coding in some languages can feel as though you're wading through treacle to do the simplest things – Objective-C and Java, used for the iPhone and Android respectively, we're looking at you – using Python is a joy. If you don't have fun writing programs using Python then you might want to reconsider taking up programming. As with any new skill, learning to program is a challenge, but Python manages to make it as simple as possible whilst doing its best to demand little and deliver plenty. ☕

optional and anything that's optional tends to get forgotten by busy programmers. The end result is a mess of braces that can be very difficult to understand.

Python solves this problem by not using curly braces at all, and relying entirely on indentation. In other words, if you don't organise your code to be easy to read, it won't work; and code that does work is readable. Remember, then, to take care with indenting. It quickly becomes natural but it's also the biggest single source of errors by new coders, especially those transferring across from another language.

# Learn Python basics

Put all the theory into practice by writing your very first lines of code

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » Create your very first programs easily
- » Break down your code into easy-to-understand elements
- » Learn all about strings, statements and expressions

We've looked at how programs are split, like a book, into smaller and smaller subdivisions. When you're planning a novel, you need to think about the overall plot, character and setting. But actually writing the book is done one word at a time, building up sentences, paragraphs, pages and chapters. Planning a program involves thinking about what you want to achieve through input-logic-output and how that's reflected in its modules, objects and functions, but it boils down to typing code letter by letter into an editor.

The programming equivalent of the sentence is a statement – the smallest chunk of code that makes sense on its own. Statements are usually made up of several expressions, which are similar to verbs in that they get things done. They achieve this by creating and using objects, whether these are built into Python or created separately (perhaps by you).

One of the main advantages of Python over lower-level languages is the range of pre-existing objects you can draw upon. If you were a C programmer you'd spend much of your time manually setting up objects; using Python allows you to bypass much of this and get on with making something useful quickly.

### Start coding in Geany

We're going to look at some simple code, and the best possible way for you to learn is to follow along. To do this, start Geany and click the Terminal tab in the Message window at the bottom. If you don't see the Message window, click the View menu, and select the Show Message Window option. If Terminal is not amongst the tabs and you're using Linux, then open up a terminal window and type the following line to install it.

```
sudo apt-get install libvte9
```

Now, restart Geany and the tab should appear. If it doesn't then use LXTerminal (on the Raspberry Pi) or the Terminal app in other forms of Linux. If you're using Windows, you'll need to run the command prompt.

In all cases, now type python into the Terminal tab (or window) to start the Python interpreter. You should get a message reporting which version of Python is running, followed by the prompt >>>, which indicates that it's waiting for input. What's happening here is that you are talking directly to the interpreter rather than loading a text file into it. This means you can try things out instantly, which is what we're going to do now.

Note: in the code snippets that follow, if we want you to type code into the interpreter via the terminal/command prompt, we'll start the line with >>>. Lines that don't begin with the chevrons represent text the interpreter is 'printing' out and should not be typed.

### Variables

In basic algebra, you swap numbers for letters to help solve problems. For example:

$$a \times 3 = 6$$

In this case, a is equal to 2. Variables work in a similar way – they act as containers for values. These values can be numbers, letters or even objects – the variable works as a convenient way of working on a value and passing it from place to place.

Let's look at this by re-writing the above code as it might appear in a real program. Go to the Terminal tab in Geany (or a running terminal or command prompt) and type the following lines, pressing Enter after each (remember – don't type the chevrons!):

```
>>> a=2  
>>> print(a * 3)  
6
```

The first line creates a variable called `a` and gives it a value of 2. The second line is a statement that contains an object (`print`) and an expression (`a * 3`).

What makes the last part an expression is that it returns a value that it has calculated. In this case, Python multiplies the variable `a` (which contains a value of 2 as set in the previous line) by 3 giving a result of 6. Note that in programming, we use the asterisk to indicate multiplication.

The result is sent to the `print` object which, as you'll have guessed already, simply writes the value to the message window. You should see the number appear on the next line.

Here's a variation:

```
>>> a = 2  
>>> b = 3  
>>> print(a * b)  
6
```

You'll see the number 6 appear again, just as before. This time two variables were multiplied together.

Let's try a simple VAT calculator. Type the following and press Enter:

```
>>> beforeVAT=raw_input("Add VAT to this: ")
```

The `raw_input` part refers to a Python function that asks the user to type something in. In this case, we add a message asking them to tell us what figure they want us to add VAT to. This figure is then assigned to the variable `beforeVAT`.

When you see the prompt, type a number (for example, 100) and press Enter. Then type the following, pressing Enter after each line:

```
>>> afterVAT=float(beforeVAT)*1.2  
>>> print(afterVAT)
```

The second line creates a new variable, `afterVAT`, which is the result of `beforeVAT` (the number you typed in) multiplied by 1.2 (which has the effect of adding 20%) and, finally, we print this new value out on the next line.

Now, that's all very well but what if we wanted to use this program again? Commands typed into the interpreter will be erased from memory when you shut down your computer or Geany; we're going to start creating files for our programs so we can keep and reuse them.

In Geany, select File|New (don't select a template) and type the following line (including the `#` symbol)

### #my first program

Now save the file to a location of your choice, making sure you add the extension `.py` to the end of the file name. You should notice that your single line has turned red. This is because any line that begins with the `#` symbol is ignored by Python – it's used to make comments in your code so that when you come back to it you can understand what you were doing. Geany knows you're writing Python code because you added `.py` to the file name, so it's turned the line red to indicate a comment.

Retype all the lines of the VAT calculator into Geany. Notice that, as you type the first few characters of `raw_input`, Geany offers an autocomplete – press Enter to accept. It also shows you what information `raw_input` expects you to type in – this can be useful to help you learn the specific commands and also reduces bugs.

Once you've typed each line, save the file and then click the Execute button on the Geany toolbar (the cogs). After a short delay, LXTerminal will pop up and your prompt will appear. Type a number and Python will tell you what the total including VAT would be.

Now that the program has been saved, you can run it as many times as you like by loading it into Geany and clicking Execute.

### Data

We've seen that we can use variables as containers and then do things with them. We've used numbers in the example so far, but Python provides several types that you'll be using a lot. Here are the most important:

### Numbers

Which of the following are numbers?

```
3290, 3290.123, 3290e3, "3290"
```

We can find out by making use of the fact that Python is a strongly typed language. This means that if you try to multiply two variables that aren't both numbers, for example, it will report an error. PHP, which is another popular programming language, would do its best to work out what you meant – but this can often result in bugs. Go back to the Geany Terminal tab and type:

```
>>> a=3290; print(a*5)  
16450
```

Python prints the answer we'd expect. Notice that semi-colon? It's there to allow us to put two statements on one line. Other languages use the semi-colon at the end of every line. In Python,

we use it only when we want to use multiple statements on a single line.

Now let's try the next one:

```
>>> a=3290.123; print(a*5)
16450.615
```

This time, the number has a decimal point – in Python, numbers formatted in this way are called floats, because they have a floating decimal point. Numbers without points are called integers. Floats take up a little more memory than integers, so use them only if you need the extra precision. Note that when two number types are multiplied (the floating point 3290.123 and the integer 5), Python shows the answer in the most precise form – in this case, as a float. Go back to the terminal:

```
>>> a=3290e3; print(a*5)
16450000.0
```

This is another type of floating point number, except that this time we used e3 at the end: this is a convenient way of signifying  $3,290 \times 10^3$  or, to put it another way, 3,290,000.

Now try:

```
>>> a="3290"; print(a*5)
3290329032903290
```

That was unexpected! But completely logical – to Python. By putting quotes around the number, you told Python that the characters 3290 were intended to be treated as a string rather than a number. A string is a sequence of letters, numbers and symbols intended to be treated as text. When you multiply a string, as we did here, Python thinks you want multiple copies so it just repeats them.

To see Python throw a real wobbler, try this slightly different version (with a plus rather than a multiplication symbol):

```
>>> a="3290"; print(a+5)
```

What happens? Python shows an error message. This is because the + symbol is interpreted in different ways depending on whether it's dealing with numbers – where it means to add the numbers together arithmetically – or strings, where it means glue the second onto the end of the first. So, 'raspberry' + 'pi' becomes 'raspberrypi'; but faced with the expression 'raspberry' + 3.141592 (the number pi), Python is unable to perform the operation and will simply return an error.

Although Python has several other number types, most of the time you'll stick to integers and floats. As you've seen, to perform arithmetic on numbers,

we use the \* operator to represent 'multiplied by' and + to indicate addition. We can also process numbers in different ways using built-in functions and modules – the most useful being the math module.

We'll come across all of these later but, as a taster, here's a list of the main operators and functions you'll come across:

Operator/ function	What it does	Example
+	Numerical addition	>>> a=9; b=a+5; print b 14
-	Numerical subtraction	>>> a=9; b=a-5; print b 4
*	Multiply by	>>> a=9; b=a*5; print b 45
/	Divided by	>>> a=9.0; b=a/5; print b 1.8
%	Modulus (the remainder of a division)	>>> a=9; b=a%5; print b 4
int	Convert to an integer	>>> a=9.0; b=a/5; print int(b) 1
round	Round to the nearest float	>>> a=9.0; b=a/5; print round(b) 2.0
float	Convert to a float	>>> a=9; b=float(a)/5; print b 1.8

Of these, modulus is probably the only one that's not immediately obvious. That's partly because the percentage sign is commonly used to mean something quite different. The term may also be unfamiliar: it simply means the remainder that's left after performing a division. So, 11%2 gives a result of 1, because 2 goes into 11 five times with 1 left over.

You'd be surprised at how often this is used in programming: it's excellent for finding out if a number is odd or even, because any even number divided by 2 will have a modulus of 0, whereas any odd number divided by 2 always results in a modulus of 1. You might use this when shading the rows of a table alternately, for example.

The math module includes some additional useful and interesting functions, too. Python has two types of built-in function: those such as round that can be used as if they were part of the language; and those such as math.floor that can only be used if the appropriate module is imported first. Don't worry, it's very simple. Look at the following table. Remember, they're still all one line.

Function	What it does	Example
<code>math.floor</code>	Always rounds down to the nearest integer	<code>&gt;&gt;&gt; import math; a=9.0; b=a/5; print math.floor(b) 1.0</code>
<code>math.ceil</code>	Always rounds up to the nearest integer	<code>&gt;&gt;&gt; import math; a=9.0; b=a/5; print math.ceil(b) 2.0</code>
<code>math.pi</code>	Stores the value of pi	<code>&gt;&gt;&gt; import math; print math.pi 3.14159265359</code>

### Strings

String variables are used to store things such as usernames, text we're going to display on-screen (for example, the prompt we used earlier with `raw_input`), and other elements we might want to work with, such as database entries. To tell Python you want a variable to be a string, you can enclose the text in either double or single quotes – it makes no difference from the interpreter's point of view. These are equally valid:

```
>>> myName="Terry"
>>> myName='Terry'
```

The only thing you need to look out for is to use the same marks at the start and end of the string. If you try to use double quotes at the start and single at the end, Python will return an error. If the phrase itself includes speech marks or apostrophes, simply use the other punctuation mark to enclose it:

```
>>> myName="Terry's Terrifics"
>>> myName='Terry "Terrific" Travis'
```

In other words, if the string contains apostrophes, you simply need to surround it with double quotes, and vice versa. Given that apostrophes and single quotes turn up in text more often than speech marks, it makes sense to use double quotes by

### ARRAYS

If you've ever used another programming language before, you'll probably have come across arrays. And, in that case, you may have already worked out that lists and dictionaries are the equivalent structures in Python. Where you might have used a standard array sorted by index in PHP, for example, you

use the list in Python instead. Dictionaries are the equivalent of associative arrays in other programming languages. If you've never programmed before, just bear this in mind when you look at the documentation for other languages – this is one particular aspect in which Python is quite unusual.

default.

Hold on – what if a piece of text contains both? In this case, simply add a backslash in front of the character you've used to enclose the string where it appears within the text. This tells Python that the character is to be taken literally. For example, here's how we might signal to Python that the internal apostrophe in a phrase is to be treated as part of our string, and not as an end-marker:

```
>>> myName='Terry\'s the "Terrific" Travis'
```

### Things to do with strings

Once you've loaded some text into your variable to create a string, Python allows you to process it in all sorts of weird and wonderful ways. Python thinks of strings as being similar to Scrabble tiles – each character on its own tile – which makes it really easy to get at any letter or number, as well as dead simple to split the string into bits. There are dozens of functions designed to handle strings, but the selection below will give you an idea of how such functions work and how they might be used:

Function	What it does	Example
<code>len</code>	Tells us how long a string is (including spaces)	<code>&gt;&gt;&gt; print len("Terry Travis") 12</code>
<code>+</code>	Add (concatenate) two strings together	<code>&gt;&gt;&gt; print "Terry " + "Travis" Terry Travis</code>
<code>String[position]</code>	Return the character at that position in the string (the first position is zero)	<code>&gt;&gt;&gt; a="Terry Travis"; print a[0] T</code>
<code>String[p1:p2]</code>	Return all the characters between two positions	<code>&gt;&gt;&gt; a="Terry Travis"; print a[5:12] Travis</code>
<code>replace(old,new)</code>	Replaces an existing set of characters with another	<code>&gt;&gt;&gt; a="Terry Travis"; print a.replace("rav","ard") Terry Tardis</code>
<code>split</code>	Splits a string into parts	<code>&gt;&gt;&gt; a="Terry Travis"; print a.split() ['Terry', 'Travis']</code>

### Lists

Strings and numbers contain single values: Python's list object lets you store multiple values in one variable. Imagine, for example, you had a database of names such as 'Terry Travis' and you wanted to write to everyone using their first name only. The names could be stored in a list object, then pulled out one at a time so that the `split()` function could be used to fetch the first name from each.

## IT'S MATHS – BUT DON'T PANIC!

If the idea of having to deal with maths brings you out in a cold sweat, there's good news. Far from being the difficult-to-grasp subject you might have found it at school, maths is at the heart of all computer programming, so you'll see its practical use. Plus, the vast majority of the maths-related programming you'll ever have to do is based on simple arithmetic.

Here's how we might define that list of names. Note that because the line is longer than our margins can accommodate, we've used the symbol » to indicate that the code spills over to the next line. Don't press Return when you see this symbol, but keep typing to the end of the next line.

```
>>> list_of_names=['Andrew Ant','Charlie »
Childs','Martina Mongoose','Peter Purbrook', »
'Terry Travis','Vera Verity']
```

Once this list is entered, to pull out Terry we could do this:

```
>>> this_name=list_of_names[4]
>>> print "Full name="+this_name
Full name=Terry Travis
```

To isolate just his first name:

```
>>> first_name=this_name.split()[0]
>>> print "First name="+first_name
First name=Terry
```

In Python – and most other computer languages – when you're selecting elements from inside a variable, the numbering starts with 0, not 1 as you might expect. This number is called an index and the item it fetches is called an element.

In the case of a string, specifying a single index gives you one character from the string as its element; with a list, you get the whole element. So, "Terry Travis"[0] would return "T" (the first character) whereas list\_of\_names[0] would give you "Andrew Ant".

A list can contain a mix of variables, including other lists. For example, for a calendar divided into the weeks of the year, each week could be a list containing the dates. This is how that would look for the beginning of 2013:

```
>>> year_2013=[[31,1,2,3,4,5,6],[7,8,9,10,11,12, »
13],[14,15,16,17,18,19,20],[21,22,23,24,25,26,27], »
[28,29,30,31,1,2,3]]
>>> week=year_2013[1]
```

```
>>> print week
[7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13]
```

Note how each of the nested lists is contained within square brackets. The second line fetches the dates for the second week in January (remember, list indexes start with 0); that is, a list within a list. You could extract the date for Wednesday of that week with week[2].

As you can see, lists allow you to pack a lot of data into a single variable. Don't worry if they seem a little complex right now. We'll be using lists a lot and you'll soon get to grips with them.

## Dictionaries

You can think of dictionaries as super-lists. Like lists, they're collections of other objects; unlike lists, each element is given its own name so you can access the variable directly. Try this:

```
>>> family={'father':'Terry','mother':'Vera', »
'daughter':'Jane','son':'Jack'}
>>> print family['father']
Terry
```

As you can see, each pair is given a name and a value. We can then pull out any dictionary element by using that name. As you'd expect, this means that each name must be used only once per dictionary. You'll also notice that dictionaries use curly braces to indicate when they start and end, whereas lists use square brackets – this is how Python knows which of the two you mean to create.

You can change the contents of both lists and dictionaries during a program. If you typed in the family example above, you could change it like this:

```
>>> family['son']='Jak'
>>> print family['son']
Jak
```

You don't have to use literal values when you create a dictionary or list – you can use a variable instead.

```
>>> son="Jake"
>>> family['son']=son
>>> print family['son']
Jake
```

This time, we created a new variable called son and assigned it a string value "Jake". We can then use the variable to feed into the family dictionary. Not particularly useful as it stands, but imagine if we were reading a database of families: we'd then be able to change the son variable to the name of each son without having to type them manually. A final useful thing to know is that you can add a new

## “ Dictionaries and Lists are great ways of organising data in Python, and there are plenty of commands to work with them. ”

entry to a dictionary after it's been created. In this case, let's add grandparents:

```
>>> family['grandad']='Cyril'  
>>> family['granny']='Edith'  
>>> print family  
{'daughter':'Jane','grandad':'Cyril','mother': ''  
'Vera','father':'Terry','son':'Jake','granny':'Edith'}
```

### Fortune teller

Remember those little plastic balls that presented a random answer to your questions when you shook them? Let's create our own fortune teller in Python – in just a few lines of code. We're going to want to run this more than once, so fire up Geany and type in the listing. Remember that the ‘»’ on line 2 tells you to keep typing, rather than pressing Return to start a new line.

```
import random  
fortunes=['Yes',"Probably","Certainly","Outlook »  
promising",'Not sure','Ask again','Doubtful','No']  
how_many_fortunes=len(fortunes)  
raw_input('Think of a question, press Enter for »  
the answer')  
which_fortune=random.randint(0, »  
how_many_fortunes-1)  
print fortunes[which_fortune]
```

The code begins by importing the random module, which will produce the random numbers that allow us to pick an unpredictable answer each time the program is run. On the following line we create a list containing all eight of the possible answers – feel free to change them as you wish!

### VARIABLE NAMES

You have plenty of flexibility about what you call your variables. You can use any letter and number (although the first character of a variable can't be a number – '1ucy' is invalid, for example) and also the underscore character. There are a few words that Python uses itself, such as 'else', which you can't use. Don't worry too much,

though, it will soon tell you! The Python community uses some conventions which, in the main, we'll follow in this book. In the end, however, whatever system you use needs to make sense to you. You can't use spaces in variable names as they must all be one word. One way to get around this is to use

the underscore character; another is to capitalise the first letter of words after the first – this is called camelCase. It's up to you whether you believe that my\_variable is a better name than myVariable; Python doesn't mind – both are more readable than myvariable though. For now, just try to be consistent.

On the next line we use the len function to find out how many answers there are. This might seem odd, when we could count them (how\_many\_fortunes=8), but this way we can add and remove answers without affecting the rest of the code.

The following line uses the raw\_input statement to pause the program, displays the prompt and waits for the user to press the Enter key.

Next, we use the randint function to generate a number. Notice the brackets after randint? Those are there to pass parameters to randint. Parameters are the information the function needs to work. In this case, we're telling randint to generate a number between 0 and how\_many\_fortunes-. Given that there are eight fortunes in our example, this means randint will give us a number between zero and seven. That's because, in case you've forgotten, the first item in a list has an index of 0, not 1, so the last one has an index of 7, not 8. Don't worry if you find this frustrating: the zero-based indexing of lists and other objects catches out even experienced programmers from time to time.

Finally, on the last line of the program, we print the element from fortunes that has the index generated by randint.

Run the program a couple of times by clicking the cogs; you should receive a different answer pretty much every time (though of course things will repeat occasionally – that's the nature of randomness). Also have a go at changing the text in the answers and adding or removing some.

Congratulations! You have just written your most advanced computer program yet – a fortune-telling genie, in only six lines of code! If you're having problems typing in the code, you can copy and paste the finished code from [www.snipca.com/9798](http://www.snipca.com/9798) to compare it with your own. ☕

# Variables, decisions & loops

---

Take your programming skills to the next level by learning to use decision-making structures

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

Find out how computers make decisions based on variables

Discover how to run sections of code multiple times with loops

Create a simple dice roll program to see variables, decisions and loops in action

Over 200 years ago, Joseph Jacquard demonstrated a new mechanical loom with a unique feature: it used punched cards to control the pattern of the textile. Each card contained several rows of holes in specific locations. As the card was fed through, row by row, small rods detected whether there was a hole. If there was, that particular thread would be used; if not, it wouldn't.

Since each row in Jacquard's system offered 25-30 positions for holes, very complex patterns could be created with minimal human involvement. Loading up another set of cards yielded a completely different pattern.

This invention (building on earlier work by others) was such an efficient way to create textiles that it's still in wide use today. It also gave rise to two important concepts that formed the foundation of computing: the idea that you can program a series of operations in advance and, secondly, that a machine can be given more than one purpose by simply changing its 'software' (or 'paperware' in this case).

Another similarity between Jacquard's system and modern computing becomes apparent if you take one row from a set of Jacquard cards, and represent a hole with a 1 and the absence of a hole with 0. You might get a sequence like this: 111100 1100000110011001111111. In other words, Jacquard used a 19th-century implementation of binary notation – the 'language' at the heart of all digital computers. The looms used mechanics in place



▲ Programming is nothing new - Jacquard's loom was an early example of how to create a sequence of commands

of programming languages but, essentially, they worked in a similar way. If a 1 was encountered in any particular position, a certain action was taken; if it wasn't then either a different action was taken or nothing happened.

Jacquard's system had only one variable type (a binary number), whereas Python has many (including its equivalent of the binary type, namely the Boolean). We've covered the most important of these – numbers, strings, lists and dictionaries. Now it's time to move onto the coding equivalent of the mechanics that decide what to do with those variables.

### If-then-else

The ability to make decisions based on the contents of variables and then take actions depending on the results is what separates computers from calculators, and if-then-else is the most important decision-making structure. In the case of the Jacquard loom, each position on the card where there might be a hole is a simple if-statement. In English, this could be written as:

If there's a hole here use blue thread,  
otherwise use yellow thread.

In Python, that statement might be represented as:

```
if hole==1:  
    thread=blue  
else:  
    thread=yellow
```

The first thing you'll notice is how clear this code is – we mentioned earlier how easy Python is to understand – and this sort of readability is one of the main aims of the language. We begin with the if keyword, and we follow this with the condition that's being tested.

In this case, if the hole variable (a number) is

equal to 1 then the program moves immediately to the next line. You'll notice that this line is indented and Python will now carry out all lines at that indentation (in this case, there is only one). If the hole variable is not 1 then the interpreter skips down to the line containing else and executes the code beneath it.

Python uses a colon to indicate the start of a block of code and then continues until the indentation changes. In practice what this means is that you add the colon, then hit the Enter key to start a new line. You then hit tab once (Geany does this automatically after a colon) and type your first line – every other line that's also tabbed once will be executed one after another. The interpreter will stop when it spots a different indentation.

This is really important – Python is the only mainstream language that relies entirely on indentation to mark blocks of code. The benefit of this is that your code is much clearer, as we explained earlier, but it takes a little getting used to. Let's look at a slightly more involved chunk of code to help you understand. Don't type in the line numbers in the left-hand column – these are just for reference. We've left some blank lines between sections, which helps to follow the structure more easily. In this case we have also colour-coded some of the lines too, to help make it even easier.

```
1 input_name=raw_input("What is your name?")  
2 name_length=len(input_name)  
3 average_name_length=5  
4  
5 if name_length>average_name_length:  
6     result="longer"  
7     conjunction="than"  
8 elif name_length<average_name_length:  
9     result="shorter"  
10    conjunction="than"  
11 else:  
12     result="the same"  
13     conjunction="length as"  
14  
15 response=input_name+", your name is "+result+" "+conjunction+" "+average"  
16 print response
```

The program above asks the user to type in their name. It then works out how many characters their name contains. The if block compares this with the average length of a first name (the average\_name\_length variable) and puts together a response depending on the result.

At line 5 – the start of the red section – the length of the user's name is compared to the average. If their name length is greater than the average (we

use the mathematical > symbol), then the following code in red is carried out. Once Python reaches the end of the red text, it jumps out of the if statement and straight down to line 15.

If their name length is not greater than average, the interpreter skips the red text and then evaluates line 8. elif is short for 'else if' – in other words, 'now check whether this is true'. Here, we ask if their name length is less than (<) the average.

If it is, the code in blue is carried out, then Python jumps to line 15.

If the user's name is neither larger nor smaller than the average, it must be the same length. So, we use else as a catch-all: it means 'if none of the others is true, then do this'. Note that Python will only arrive at this line if it hasn't already been diverted by one of the other if statements. This time it will carry out the instructions in green before jumping to line 15. Give it a try with names of different lengths to make sure it works.

We've now met three different ways to compare two variables: equals (==), less than (<) and greater than (>). The complete list of commonly used comparison operators is shown here:

Operator	What does it do?	Example
==	Are the two values the same?	if a==b:
<	Is the first value less than the second?	if a<b:
>	Is the first value more than the second?	if a>b:
>=	Is the first value greater than or equal to the second?	if a>=b:
<=	Is the first value less than or equal to the second?	if a<=b:
!= or <>	Is the first value not equal to the second?	if a!=b:

In other words, when used in an if statement, if the answer to the question is yes then Python executes the code immediately following. If not, it skips to the next block. Finally, in case you were wondering, we use == rather than = for 'equals' in conditional statements because Python assigns values to variables using =. Watch out for this – it'll trip you up sooner or later!

## Repeating yourself

Using only if-then-else structures leads to very short programs. Remember our fortune teller app? Every time you wanted to ask a new question, you were forced to run the program again. The Jacquard Loom, conversely, kept on going because the cards were constantly fed into the machine via a loop mechanism; otherwise it would have only created one line of thread.

Similarly, we can create loops in our programs, to run sections of code multiple times. Almost every useful Python program will include loops.

## For..in

If you want to do something a specific number of times, the 'for' loop is the tool to pick. Let's take a look at a very simple for loop in action:

```
input_name=raw_input("What is your name?")
for c in input_name:
    print c
```

Give it a go. Create a Python file in Geany, type in those three lines and run it. When prompted, enter your name. You'll find that Python then prints each character of your name one at a time, each on a separate line.

The structure of a for loop is this:

```
for [iterator] in [collection]:
```

Collection means any variable that can be split into parts. Lists and dictionaries are often used but, in this example, it's a string. Iterator is just the name we give to each bit as it's pulled out. Put into English, our example would be 'for each letter in input\_name', and it means that the next line will be repeated until it gets to the end of the collection (the name you typed in, in this example).

So, let's say you typed 'Jo Bloggs' at the prompt. Collection is therefore 'Jo Bloggs' and the loop will start. The value of our iterator will be 'J' to begin with and so the print line will output that letter. Python now checks to see if we've reached the end of the collection and, since we haven't, moves to the next letter and prints 'o'. Bear in mind that if there were several lines after the for statement, Python would execute them all as part of the loop – until it got to a line that wasn't in the same tab position, at which point it would go back to the for and start again.

What do you think would happen if you were to replace the first line with the code below? Give it a try.

```
input_name=("Jo", "Bloggs")
```

You should find that, this time, Python prints 'Jo' on one line and 'Bloggs' on the next, rather than each word on its own line. Why? Because input\_name is now a list, not a string, so the iterator is now each element in the list, not the individual characters in the string. In fact, it's much more common to iterate over a list than a string, largely because lists are so useful.

If you've studied any other programming language, you've probably come across a for structure that iterates a fixed number of times. In BASIC this would be written as for n=1 to 10, which would create a loop that ran ten times. Whilst this might seem simpler, in practice you nearly always iterate through a collection, so the Python approach is much more efficient. If you do need to loop a fixed number of times – for example, if you wanted to create a specific number of objects – the

Python equivalent of that BASIC statement would be:

```
for n in range(10):
```

Again, below this statement, simply place the code you want to be run ten times (in this case), indented by one tab stop.

### While

Most Python programs, especially games, include the ‘while’ loop. In English, this loop means ‘while a particular condition is satisfied, keep looping’. For example, in a game you’ll usually have a main loop that keeps repeating until the Escape key is pressed:

```
import random
user_roll=raw_input("What number did you roll?")
my_roll=0
how_many_rolls=0

while my_roll != int(user_roll):
    my_roll=random.randint(1,6)
    how_many_rolls+=1
    print my_roll

print "it took "+str(how_many_rolls)+" rolls"
```

This little program asks you to roll a die and input the number. It then works out how many rolls it took to get the same number (on average it should be around six). As you can see, we need to begin by importing the random module. We also create two number variables and set them to zero.

When Python gets to the while loop, it checks its value for my\_roll (remember, we set it to zero when we created it) and compares that to the number you entered. The != comparison means ‘does not equal’ so, if my\_roll does not equal the user’s number then Python will move into the block. Since you will have typed a number from one to six, my\_roll will not equal user\_roll the first time, so Python will always run the loop at least once.

We then set my\_roll to a randomly generated number between one and six to simulate our die roll. On the next line we increase the how\_many\_rolls variable by one to keep track of the number of rolls it took to get the same number the user rolled. The += characters are used as a shorthand to increase (increment) that value by one.

We then print the randomly generated die roll, and Python jumps back to the while line. This time my\_roll will not be zero, it will be a number from one to six. Python checks whether this randomly generated number matches whatever the user typed in earlier. If it doesn’t, it moves into the loop

again. This continues until they do match, each time generating and printing out a new random number. When it does match, Python jumps to the final line and prints out the number of attempts it took.

You’ll notice that the while statement includes the int function. This is because, when we use raw\_input, the user’s input is treated as a string, even if they’ve typed in numbers. Python can’t compare a number with a string (even if that string contains only digits), so we use the int function to convert the string into an integer (a number without a decimal point) that the while statement can use to compare. Similarly, on the final line, we use the str function to turn the how\_many\_rolls number variable into a string so it can be incorporated into the print statement.

### Decisions, loops, nesting and breaks

Loops and if-then-else structures are at their most powerful when they work together. You can also create loops within loops (this is called nesting) and ifs within ifs – and any combination of both. Indeed, a program of any complexity at all will involve these sorts of combinations and it can be tricky to work out where you are at any one time.

But this is where Python’s clear structure pays off: you know that all lines at the same tab stop are at the same level. This is much easier than the approach other languages use of employing curly braces – in that case, unless you’ve been hyper-careful making sure your tabs line up, you’ll end up counting braces to see where you are. In Python, if you don’t line up your tabs, the program won’t work so you’re forced to get it right. This is a good thing!

Occasionally, you will want to break out of a loop before it has completed. If you’d created a Space Invaders-type game, for example, and were using a while loop to update the position of the invaders several times a second, you might want to exit to another part of the program if the user pressed F1 for help. In that case, you use the break statement; this exits the loop immediately and proceeds as if it had completed.

The continue statement, on the other hand, skips straight back to the start of the loop, preventing Python from executing the remaining lines in that cycle. Combining all these, you create the logic that determines how your program behaves. **ca**

“Decisions, loops and breaks are the building blocks that let you tell the computer how to behave.”

# Organising your code

Discover ways to simplify your code and make it more manageable

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

» Make your own code easier to understand

» Find out what functions, objects and modules are and how to use them

We've covered Python's most important nuts and bolts – variables, decisions and loops – enough to create simple programs. However, to create a useful application, you need a way to organise your code. Otherwise it would end up as one long, indecipherable block of Python.

### Functions

Going back to our book analogy, functions are the equivalent of paragraphs: a chunk of lines with a specific purpose. Functions can exist on their own or within objects or modules. They're the smallest unit in the Python universe. A function is a block of code with a particular purpose. By

organising your code this way, it can be used as many times as you like from within your program. For example, you might have a function that reads the system clock every second to update the elapsed time in a game. Rather than having several lines of code to do this within the main program, this can be isolated into a function to be called as often as you like. This has the added benefit of making our main code much simpler and easier to understand because it isn't so cluttered. Each function can be named, which, again, makes the program as a whole much easier to understand.

Let's get straight into a practical example that uses functions and modules. Type the listing below into Geany and run it (it continues over the page).

```
1 import pygame,random
2 pygame.init()
3 clock = pygame.time.Clock() # Clock to limit speed
4 WIDTH=600; HEIGHT=600; BLACK=(0,0,0)
5 screen = pygame.display.set_mode([WIDTH, HEIGHT])
6 screen.fill(BLACK)
7
8 def draw_circle(colour):
9     x=random.randint(1,WIDTH)
10    y=random.randint(1,HEIGHT)
11    size=random.randint(1,5)
12    pygame.draw.circle(screen,colour,(x,y),size)
13
14 def random_colour(minimum, maximum):
15    red=random.randint(minimum,maximum)
16    green=random.randint(minimum,maximum)
17    blue=random.randint(minimum,maximum)
18    colour=[red,green,blue]
19    return colour
20
21 for n in range(100):
22    clock.tick(25)
```

```
23 colour=random.colour(100,255)
24 draw_circle(colour)
25 pygame.display.update()
26
27 raw_input("Press a key")
```

This simple program fills a black window with randomly generated circles. You'll remember that when we created if-then-else, while and for..in blocks, we started the block with a colon and then indented the code that is to be run. Functions work in exactly the same way.

We use the 'def' keyword to define a function. You can see that, in this code, we have two functions, which we've called `draw_circle` and `random.colour` – we can use any name that makes sense to us and follows the rules for naming variables.

When the program is run, Python will begin at line 1 and immediately carry out the instructions through to line 6. Note the two variables `WIDTH` and `HEIGHT` are in capitals – this is the convention for variables whose values remain the same throughout ('constants'). When it gets to line 8, it comes across the first function: rather than being immediately run, the code within the function is loaded into memory to be used later. The same happens with the second function (`random.color`).

The Python interpreter arrives at line 21 and finds a `for..in` loop. In this case, it's a loop that will run exactly a hundred times, since this is how many circles we want to generate. In other words, Python carries out the code from line 22 to line 25 one hundred times before the loop ends. The interpreter then jumps down to line 27, which waits for a key to be pressed before ending the program.

To run the code in a function, we call it – you can see the two ways to do this on lines 23 and 24. The purpose of many functions is to carry out a task and send back the result. Take a wild guess at what line 23 is doing:

```
colour=random.colour(100,255)
```

Yes, we're creating a variable called `colour` and assigning it the value sent back by the function `random.colour`. Note that every single element in this statement was named by us, not Python, so we can choose words that make sense to us so that our code is easy to understand.

But what about the set of brackets at the end? Well, have a look at the function definition on line 14. Immediately after we name the function, we also indicate what information the function needs in order to run: in other words, which parameters must be passed to it. In this case, we need a

minimum and maximum value for the colour (see the box entitled Mixing Colour on page 80 for an explanation of how colour works in Python).

Since our background window is black, we don't want colours that are too dark. Look back at line 23 and you'll see we're passing 100 to the function as the first parameter (minimum) and 255 as the second parameter (maximum).

Each of the first three lines of this function (starting at line 14) generates a random number between minimum and maximum (100 to 255 in this case). The variable names have been chosen to make clear what they represent. However, red, green and blue at this point are just number variables and nothing more; their names are to help us remember their purpose.

In line 18, we create a new list variable called `colour` containing each of these random values. Again, it's just a list with a convenient name containing three numbers of between 100 and 255 each. Finally, on line 19, the `return` command sends the list back to the line that called it (line 23).

### Scope

Hold your horses – why does the variable `colour` appear twice? Surely that can't be right? It is right, because variables, by default, only exist inside the function that gives birth to them. This is what we call their scope. So, the variables within the `random.colour` function (red, green, blue, `colour`) can be accessed only by lines of code also inside that function. The `colour` variable defined at line 23 is not inside `random.colour`, so this part of the program can't 'see' the one at line 18: this is why we must return it.

Having said that, if a function contains another function, then variables declared in the parent are accessible in the child. This is why `screen`, which is declared in the main code, can be used in `draw_circle`.

On the face of it, you might think it would make more sense to allow every part of a program to see and use variables from every other part, but there are two reasons why this isn't a good idea.

Firstly, each variable takes up memory and, since the variables within a function are there purely to help the function to perform its task, it would be wasteful to keep them 'alive' once that task is complete. In fact, it might cause a program to run out of memory entirely.

Secondly, by keeping variables ‘local’ to their function, we can reuse the variable name in other functions without causing a naming clash. This isn’t just a matter of convenience: it also means that we can use reuse functions across lots of programs (including functions written by other people) without having to worry about accidentally duplicating variable names.

Occasionally, you do need to have access to a variable throughout the program. You can achieve this simply by using the `global` keyword in the line that originally defines the variable:

```
global my_var = 999
```

For the reasons given above you should only use global variables when absolutely necessary, and this is very rarely. There is usually a better way to do it that avoids the problems they create. So, back to our program. The `random_colour` function generates a list with red, green and blue colour values and sends this list back to line 23. What happens next? On line 24, we call our other function `draw_circle`. This time the parameter is the colour we just received back from `random_colour`. On lines 9 and 10 we create random numbers between 1 and the width or height of the program window.

Most programming languages use a coordinate system, with the point at the top left-hand corner being 0,0. The x axis is left to right so, on line 9, we generate a horizontal position for our circle. The y axis is top to bottom, so line 10 generates a vertical coordinate. Line 11 generates a random number between 1 and 5, which will be the radius of the circle, and line 12 uses a function from the Pygame module to actually draw the circle on the screen.

When the interpreter reaches the end of line 12, it will see that there is no next line at the same tab level and go back to line 25 – there is no return statement this time because, well, there’s nothing to return!

To make sure you understand, follow the order of the lines executed by the interpreter as it goes once

through the loop from line 21:

```
21,22,23,14,15,16,17,18,19,24,8,9,10,11,12,25
```

Each of these iterations generates and displays one circle. Python repeats this until 100 have been generated, then drops down to line 27 to finish.

It’s quite possible that, at this moment, your brain is smouldering – but don’t worry! It all becomes natural very quickly, and this program contains most of the key concepts you need to understand to become a coder. From here on in, it’s a question of broadening your knowledge and applying it to more sophisticated (and more useful) apps.

## Modules

Modules sound intimidating, but they’re simply groups of functions saved in a separate text file and accessed by the interpreter as needed. In fact all Python files are modules, and the usual approach is to have one main module and one or more other modules with specific jobs. So, a word processor might – in addition to its main module – have modules called `print.py`, `save.py` and `spellcheck.py`.

Python comes with a range of standard modules – `random` and `math` are two that we’ve used already – and there’s a huge selection of third-party modules, including `pygame`.

You might wonder why Python doesn’t include all these functions in the main language. It’s for efficiency: not all programs need random or maths functions, so the code is kept lean by only including modules necessary for a particular task.

Python’s built-in modules are available automatically; use the `import` statement and they become usable. Third-party modules either have to be specially installed (as with `pygame`) or saved as `.py` files where the interpreter can find them. In practice, this usually means including them in the same folder as your code. Let’s look at how we might refactor (improve) our colour circle program using modules. Here’s the main module, which we’ve called `snow.py`:

```
1 import pygame, display
2 pygame.init()
3 clock = pygame.time.Clock() # Clock to limit speed
4 screen=display.setup()
5
6 for n in range(100):
7     clock.tick(45)
8     colour=display.random_colour(100,255)
9     display.draw_circle(colour,screen)
10    pygame.display.update()
11
12 raw_input("Press a key")
```

```
1 import pygame, random
2 pygame.init()
3 clock = pygame.time.Clock() # Clock to limit speed
4 WIDTH=600 HEIGHT=600 BLACK=(0,0,0)
5 screen = pygame.display.set_mode([WIDTH, HEIGHT])
6 screen.fill(BLACK)
7
8 def draw_circle(colour):
9     x=random.randint(1,WIDTH)
10    y=random.randint(1,HEIGHT)
11    size=random.randint(1,5)
12    pygame.draw.circle(screen,colour,(x,y),size)
13
14 def random_colour(minimum, maximum):
15    red=random.randint(minimum,maximum)
16    green=random.randint(minimum,maximum)
17    blue=random.randint(minimum,maximum)
18    colour=[red,green,blue]
19    return colour
20
21 for n in range(100):
22    clock.tick(25)
23    colour=random_colour(100,255)
```

▲ Geany will highlight and colour your code, to make it easier to follow on screen

Now we're going to create a secondary module. Let's call this one `display.py`:

```

1 import pygame, random
2 WIDTH=600; HEIGHT=600
3
4 def setup():
5     BLACK=(0,0,0)
6     screen = pygame.display.set_mode([WIDTH, HEIGHT])
7     screen.fill(BLACK)
8     return screen
9
10
11 def draw_circle(colour, screen):
12     x=random.randint(1,WIDTH)
13     y=random.randint(1,HEIGHT)
14     size=random.randint(1,5)
15     pygame.draw.circle(screen, colour, (x,y), size)
16
17 def random_colour(minimum, maximum):
18     red=random.randint(minimum,maximum)
19     green=random.randint(minimum,maximum)
20     blue=random.randint(minimum,maximum)
21     colour=[red,green,blue]
22     return colour

```



▲ Our code draws random circles on the screen, and only needs about thirty lines of code.

In a nutshell, we've moved everything to do with drawing to a new module called `display.py`, by creating a new Python file in Geany and pasting the existing functions into it. We've added `import` statements for `pygame` and `random` at the top, since they're needed by these functions, and moved the `WIDTH` and `HEIGHT` variables to this module, too. The only major change we made is moving all the screen setup code into a function called `setup`.

Back in our original file (our main module), having moved code to `display.py`, we need to make some changes. Firstly, we import our new module on line 1 (and we've removed '`random`' as it isn't used here anymore). Secondly, we need to call the `setup` function in `display`.

There are a few things to notice. Firstly, if we

want to call a function in another module, we add the module name to the beginning so that Python can find it. Secondly, if a function has no parameters, we add empty brackets. Finally, note that the `setup` function returns a `screen` variable: this is because it is needed by `draw_circle`. When we created our `setup` function, we put `screen` inside it, so it's no longer accessible by `draw_circle`, and we must return it from `setup` to the main program, then pass it as a parameter to our `draw_circle` code.

Whilst this might seem a lot of work, take a look at `snow.py` now. By moving the display code to another module, it's much shorter and very clear.

The more sophisticated your program, the more you will gain from splitting the code into modules. It's a good habit to get into right from the start. ☕

### MIXING COLOUR

In Python, colours are made up by mixing red, green and blue, with each component colour assigned a value representing how strong it is. The possible values range from 0 to 255; in other words, there are 256 possibilities. This may seem odd – to a human it would make more sense if the range were set to 0-100, for example – but doing it this way makes complete sense to a computer.

Remember that, at their heart computers use binary notation. In binary, 255 is 11111111; or, put another way,  $2^8$ . In other words, it's the largest number that can be written in eight bits or one byte of data. So, 0 represents none of that colour, and 255 represents 100% of it. For our circle, the colour is written as a list of the three channels. Pure black would be [0,0,0] – in other words

0% of red, green and blue – and pure white is [255,255,255], with mid-grey being [128,128,128]. Pure red would be [255,0,0], pure green [0,255,0] and a pure blue would be [0,0,255]. To get other colours, you simply mix the channels. Magenta is [255,0,255] and yellow [255,255,0], whereas [128,64,0] makes brown. Geany has a colour mixer built in, to help you work out the best values.

# Object-oriented programming

Use advanced programming techniques to produce reliable, reusable code

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

Find out how to create and use 'classes'

Create self-contained objects that you can reuse elsewhere

Make your code much more efficient

**M**any introductory books avoid explaining object-oriented development because it's seen as an advanced topic. But it's an essential part of modern-day programming, and something you'll need to understand if you're to do serious coding, let alone have a career in programming.

Fortunately, it's a pretty simple concept to get your head around – and it's very useful, especially for creating games, so we're going to tackle it head on. We'll leave some of the nitty-gritty to later on. For now the point is to understand what we're doing when we use object-oriented programming (OOP) techniques and why.

### The basics

We introduced objects in the article on page 60. Procedural programming is like writing code to directly control a puppet. Object-oriented programming is more like placing the code inside the puppet itself, so you can simply tell it what to do and it will go off and do it independently.

The code for an object is contained in a class. You can think of this as a blueprint. Each time a new object (sometimes called an instance) is needed, Python uses the class as its model for that object. In other words, if you needed lots of on-screen puppets, you could write just one class, then create a `for..in` loop to create hundreds at once.

One of the main benefits of OOP is called encapsulation. This means that everything an object needs to know is contained within its own code. You could, in theory, take an object and use it in another program without having to change it at all. And that means that objects are often an important part of any big programming project.

In this way, objects are similar to modules, and they're made up of functions, just as modules are (functions are often called methods when they're inside classes). Objects can sit within the main code, within modules, or in a file of their own. The more reusable they are, the more likely you'll want to store them separately.

Perhaps the most powerful feature of OOP is inheritance. Writing a single class for puppets is all very well, but marionettes come in many forms and the code for creating a Pinocchio would be different to that used for creating Mr Punch. Inheritance lets you define a generic class containing the code that applies to all puppets, and supplement it with child classes to define more specific cases.

So, let's say the generic class includes code for drawing a head, arms and legs. When we come to create the Pinocchio child class, we can simply write new code to add support for his extending nose. Mr Punch doesn't have standard puppet legs, so his child class might override the `draw_legs` function of the generic class with his own `draw_legs` function, whilst keeping all the rest of the code intact.

This approach means you, as a coder, only have to write the minimum code. It also becomes very easy to create new child classes, since most of the work is already done. And each change you make to the generic class is immediately inherited by all child classes, making bug fixing much simpler.

### A simple class

Let's have a look at how we can revise our circle drawing program to use object-oriented principles. First we'll write the main module, as below:

```
1 import pygame, circle
2 pygame.init()
3 clock = pygame.time.Clock() # Clock to limit speed
4 WIDTH=600; HEIGHT=600
5 screen = pygame.display.set_mode([WIDTH, HEIGHT])
6 BLACK=(0,0,0)
7 screen.fill(BLACK)
8 circles=[]
9
10 for n in range(100):
11     clock.tick(45)
12     circles.append(circle.Circle(screen,WIDTH,HEIGHT))
13     pygame.display.update()
14
15 clock.tick(1)
16
17 for c in circles:
18     clock.tick(45)
19     c.clear_circle(screen)
20     pygame.display.update()
21
22 raw_input("Press a key")
```

Now we'll add a module containing a class called `circle`, as below:

```
1 import pygame, random
2
3 class Circle:
4     _minimum=100; _maximum=255
5     _colour=None
6     _properties=[]
7
8     def __init__(self,screen,width,height):
9         self.random_colour()
10        self.draw_circle(screen,width,height)
11
12     def draw_circle(self, screen, width, height):
13         x=random.randint(1,width)
14         y=random.randint(1,height)
15         size=random.randint(1,5)
16         self._properties=[x,y,size]
17         pygame.draw.circle(screen,self._colour,(x,y),size)
18
19     def random_colour(self):
20         red=random.randint(self._minimum,self._maximum)
21         green=random.randint(self._minimum,self._maximum)
22         blue=random.randint(self._minimum,self._maximum)
23         self._colour=[red,green,blue]
24
25     def clear_circle(self,screen):
26         pygame.draw.circle(screen,(0,0,0),(self._properties[0],self._properties[1]),self._properties[2])
```



“ Objects are a powerful tool for programmers, and can be re-used in different projects very easily. ”



Should you need to, you can also download the finished code for both of these in a zip file from [www.snipca.com/9799](http://www.snipca.com/9799). The circle class completely replaces our display module. This in itself demonstrates object-oriented thinking: rather than creating a module that draws circles over the screen, we instruct each circle to draw itself. That's why we name the class this way.

You'll see immediately that two of the functions of the display module are present, largely unchanged, in our circle class. We begin with the keyword `class`, which is used to define the block containing all the code relating to that class. You can see that every line within the block is indented; again, this is how Python knows it belongs to the block.

Creating a class makes a special type of function available, which is always called `__init__` (with two underscores either side of the name). This is short for 'initialise' and, as you might imagine, is run when the object is first instantiated (created). In this case, the `__init__` function automatically runs the two functions we created for the display module, so as soon as it's created our circle is drawn. This isn't always the case: the `__init__`

function is often used to set up the object for later use.

You may have spotted that the main difference in the code is the addition of the 'self' keyword. This is critical to understanding how objects work. As you'd expect, `self` refers to the specific circle object being created at that moment. Remember the loop that runs 100 times in our main module? Each time it runs, it will create a new object, each of which has its own `self`. It's just as if you met 100 children: you might struggle to tell them apart, but each would themselves know who they were. So, each function has a `self` parameter that's used to refer to itself.

Finally, the other main change is that a new function called `clear_circle` has been created. Guess what this does? We've added a new variable to the object called `_properties` (note: it's a convention to use the underscore before the names of class variables, but it isn't compulsory) into which we save the `x` and `y` coordinates of this particular circle, along with its size.

Now go back to our main module. First, we replace `display` in the import statement with `circle`. You'll see that we've moved the initial setup code

“ Objects contain all their own code - they ‘know’ how to behave, so you can just tell one to display itself on screen, like a puppet. ”

back here, because it doesn't make sense for it to be within the Circle object. We also create an empty list called circles. Our main loop has become even simpler, and line 12 is the critical one. Just as with the display module, if we want to refer to a function within an imported class we must start with the name of the import – circle – followed by a full-stop and then by the name of the function.

In this case, because we're creating a new object, we simply refer to it. By convention, class names start with a capital letter, and our class name is Circle so that gets us to circle.Circle. This will run our `__init__` function, requiring three parameters of screen, WIDTH and HEIGHT. So now we have `circle.Circle(screen,WIDTH,HEIGHT)`. Finally, so that we can use our objects later, we load them into a list using the append method; this simply adds one to the end. We'll end up with a list that's 100 objects long.

So the effect of line 12 is to create a new object based on the Circle class (which results in a circle being drawn on the screen), and to add that object to a list. If we were just showing the circles, then the list wouldn't be needed but, as you can see in the second for..in loop, we also want to erase them.

Line 17, then, says “for every circle in the list”; line 18 sets the speed and then line 19 calls the clear\_circle function in the class. So, it'll pull out each circle object, beginning with the first and, because each circle knows where it was painted on the screen and how big it was, we can use this self-awareness to paint a black circle on top, effectively

erasing it.

The old-school way of doing this would have been to keep track of all of this within the main program. That's not as neat for a simple program such as this, and the more sophisticated a class is, the more useful it is to have objects look after themselves. It also makes it possible to reuse your code and objects elsewhere since they're fully self-contained.

Run the program (always run the main module, not the class) and you should see the random field of circles appear, pause for a moment, and then just as sedately disappear in reverse order.

This program has been an exercise rather than a functional application. For example, there's no user input at all. However, by adding input it could be turned into something more useful. Imagine if you painted circles across the whole screen and then paused the program. If you noted the position of the mouse pointer, you would be able to tell when it moved and respond by removing the circles using the code from line 17. What would you have? A simple screensaver – in fewer than 50 lines.

Again, don't worry if not all the principles of object-oriented programming have fully sunk in. The aim of this introduction is simply to start you thinking in an object-oriented way. You're now equipped with all the main concepts you need to build a career, or simply personal expertise, in programming. The rest of this section will help firm up what you've learned and show you how it works in practice as we create a working game. 

### NEVER DO IT TWICE

As a programmer, one of the most important attitudes to develop is a distaste for writing the same code twice. Whenever you find yourself repeating chunks of code, it should send a shiver down your spine; this is your warning that you should be finding a better way of doing it. For example, could you spin the code out into a function? This is marginally more hassle the first time you do it, but it pays dividends once you're able to use

that function the second, third and fourth time.

In fact, most programming takes this organic form. You spot an inefficiency in your code and tidy it up by creating a function. Let's say, for example, that you find yourself asking the system to provide the current time repeatedly. This takes several lines of code because you want it returned in a specific way. You decide this would be better in a function so you create one.

Later, you find yourself doing a similar thing for the date or, perhaps, implementing a countdown timer. You create functions for each and then realise they could be organised together into a separate module called `time.lib`. This is great, but then you realise that you need to have multiple countdowns running at once – so you decide to take that particular function and turn it into a class. Later, you can re-use the class in another program.

# Extending Python

Explore some of the essential third-party modules available for Python

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- Find out about the extra functions Pygame adds
- Learn about ways to store and retrieve your data
- Understand how database systems work

We've already seen that Python has a number of built-in functions – for example, those that handle strings, lists and dictionaries – as well as a range of modules that are supplied with the language but must be imported before being used, such as those containing operations for random numbers and time. However, part of Python's great versatility comes from the huge library of free third-party modules out there. These range from very popular mainstream libraries, such as Pygame, to those aimed at niche uses, such as connecting a Raspberry Pi to a robot.

Let's take a quick look at some of the most important modules – especially those we're going to use in our game and project.

### Pygame

Don't be fooled by the name: Pygame can do much more than help you develop games. Remember our clock widget, the first thing we coded to test our setup was working? We used Pygame to display the window and display the text. Most of our examples so far have used Pygame, even though we haven't started coding a game. Pygame functions include:

- Display** – Create windows, or allow games and projects to run full-screen
- Draw** – Draw a whole range of basic shapes such as rectangles, polygons, lines, ellipses, circles and arcs (and optionally fill them with colour)
- Surface** – Draw objects in memory, then paint them to the display in one go – essential for games with lots of graphics
- Font** – Embed fonts into your project, so you can display them without relying on the end user having the same font installed on their system

- Image, Transform** – A wide range of image manipulation functions that might be used to create specialised picture-processing applications
- Sprite** – Create self-aware sprites with built-in collision detection, making complex games much simpler to create
- Mixer, Music, Movie** – Add sound and video to your projects
- Event** – 'Listen' for player action such as key presses or mouse movements

Pygame is written mainly in C, so it gives good performance in games (remember that one of Python's strengths is its ability to use properly prepared C libraries). It's also available for a wide range of platforms: you can create games and apps for every mainstream desktop platform, and a few not-so-common ones!

### Saving data

It's important to be able to save data between sessions, and load it back in as required – whether you want to allow users to save their position within a game, store records to a database or exchange information with a web server. Python offers a whole range of methods for achieving this, but the main ones – in order of increasing complexity – are: the File object, pickle and sqlite3.

### File

The File object lets you create, save to, read from and delete text files. Anything you save is converted to text so, essentially, you're reading and writing strings. That doesn't mean you can't use File to handle sophisticated data, though. Let's take a very simple example. Type the listing over the page into Geany and save it as file1.py:

```

1 first_name=raw_input('Type your first name...')
2 second_name=raw_input('Type your surname...')
3 savefile=open('data.dat','w')
4 savefile.write(first_name+'\n')
5 savefile.write(second_name+'\n')
6 savefile.close()
7 print('Saved')
8 first_name=None
9 second_name=None
10 openfile=open('data.dat','r')
11 name=openfile.read().split()
12 first_name=name[0]
13 second_name=name[1]
14 print first_name+" "+second_name

```

Should you need to, you can also download the finished code for this example from [www.snipca.com/9806](http://www.snipca.com/9806). Clearly, the first two lines ask the user to type in their first and second names. The interesting stuff begins on line 3, where we create a new variable using the file object's open method (remember, 'functions' are called 'methods' when inside objects). We pass in the name of the text file: this can be any name we choose as long as it's valid for our operating system (if the file doesn't exist, it will be created by Python at this point). The 'w' parameter means that we want to write to the file; in other words, we want to save some data.

In line 4 we write the first name. By appending '\n' we add a new line. This is the file equivalent of pressing the Enter key – essentially we're using a file to organise text by line, so by inserting a \n at this point the surname will appear separately a line below. You could also simply add a delimiter to each saved record – the pipe symbol '|', for example – but you must choose a character that you would never use within a record.

Having written the second name to the file, we then close it. This tells the operating system to save the file, together with its new contents.

We're now going to open it up again and read the contents back in. Lines 9 and 10 clear the name variables, so we can be sure we've read in the file and not simply kept what the user typed. On line 10

we create a new file object, using the same name, but this time with the parameter 'r', which reads in the contents of a file but leaves it unchanged. Since files only contain text, openfile is a string at the moment: this means we can use the split() function to take this text and create from it a list with each of the lines as a separate element.

For example, if the user's name was Jo Bloggs, printing name would result in:

['Jo','Bloggs']

To retrieve the first name we use name[0]; for the surname we use name[1]. Run the program and you'll see your name reappear in the terminal. There's an even better test, however: find the file data.dat (if you've used the same name) and open it in a text editor. You should see the names one per line. The file object is the workhorse of Python file input/output; it's pretty simple to use.

### Pickle

The great benefit of pickle is that, unlike file, it can take any data form and save it to a file. It can also "unpickle" the data back to exactly its original form. In fact, pickle is specifically built to augment the built-in file object and make it more useful. Again, this is best understood through a short example, which we'll call pickleExample.py:

```

1 import pickle
2 save_data={'username':'Joe Bloggs','score':9234,'max_level':5}
3 save_file=open("savedata.dat","wb")
4 pickle.dump(save_data,save_file)
5 save_file.close()
6 #zero variables, read file back in
7 progress_file=open("savedata.dat","rb")
8 progress_data=pickle.load(progress_file)
9 print "Dear "+progress_data['username']+ ", your data \n"+str(progress_data)

```

Note that we must begin with an import statement – pickle is part of the standard Python install but, because it isn't quite as basic an object as file, it must be explicitly added to the code. You don't have to install anything, however, if you're using Linux (including Raspbian), Windows or Mac.

On line 2 we create a dictionary containing basic data, including the user's name, their current score and the furthest they've reached in our imaginary game. Next, we create a file object with the parameter 'wb', which stands for 'write bytes'. Pickle uses its own storage format, so we need to specify that it's writing bytes of data, not text. This means the file it creates will look like gobbledegook if you open it in a text editor.

Line 4 uses the pickle.dump method to save the data – passing it the data itself (it could be any variable type, we're using a dictionary) and the file object. We then close the file.

In a real game, you'd probably want to read this data back in later or, indeed, in a later game session. The code from line 7 achieves this. We create a new file object, this time with the 'rb' parameter because we're reading bytes back in. On line 8, we create a new variable and use it to receive the data from pickle using the load method. Line 9 prints it out.

Pickle is a very powerful and widely used module. Its main advantage over the simpler file object is that you don't need to write code to parse (read and convert) the saved data when you want to retrieve it: pickle simply gives it back to you in the same format you used to save it. If you think about the amount of information you're likely to want to save in your game (a leaderboard, for example), you can appreciate how much simpler pickle makes this – not only saving time, but reducing the chances of bugs creeping in.

### SQLite3

If you get into commercial programming then you'll encounter SQL (Structured Query Language – and no, it is not pronounced 'sequel') pretty quickly. This is a database system that's ideal for starting large amounts of structured data – such as for a customer database, or a football league manager game.

The main advantage of relational databases (the sort of databases SQL is most often used with) is that they make the retrieving of data lightning-quick. After all, if you have a large database of Conference League footballers and you want to list all players for sale, this needs to happen in the blink of an eye to avoid your game appearing slow.

SQLite is a halfway house between the ease of use and versatility of pickle and the full-fat power and complexity of, for example, MySQL (the database software used by a large percentage of

websites). It's a cross-platform standard, represents data in a flat form similar in concept to card indexes. It isn't good at cross-indexing data but it's very good at simple retrieval – for example, it would make mincemeat of our 'players for sale' query.

Python's SQLite3 module allows you to create, edit, read and write SQLite files and, if you intend to find work as a programmer, it's a good place to start learning about SQL whilst also being very useful. SQL itself is standard across its many forms so your experience of SQLite3 with Python would give you a head start when faced with learning any other mainstream database.

To do things with SQL databases, you write queries and then execute those queries using your chosen SQL engine. So, our Conference League player search might look something like this:

```
SELECT * FROM players WHERE league = 'conf'  
AND status = 'for sale'
```

It really is that straightforward – but since this isn't a book about SQL, we'll move along. The key point to bear in mind is that it's nothing to be frightened of. You can carry out most database functions with a small range of commonly used techniques.

### Congratulations

So far in this book you've seen how to set up your Raspberry Pi and your coding environment. You've learnt how to think like a programmer. And you've had a whistle-stop tour of the basics of Python and object-oriented programming, so you now know the most useful variable types; how to create and use functions, modules and objects; and how to structure your code using decisions and loops. You've also learnt about the extra functionality Pygame adds, and explored the various ways to store and retrieve data using Python modules.

The best way to reinforce this knowledge and make sure it sticks is to put it into practice; so in the coming chapters we're going to cover, in great detail, the development of three very different projects. You've learned a lot so far, but don't worry if you don't remember everything we've covered – even the most experienced programmer considers Google to be their best friend. Programming is much more about technique and knowing which tool to use in a given situation than about remembering the specifics of how Python, or any other language, implements that tool.

Once you've completed the projects, you should have a very good idea of which situations call for a loop, which require a decision, and when it's best to spin out your functions into separate objects. This only comes through practise, so once again it's time to roll up your sleeves and get stuck in. 

# SECTION 4

# Program your own game

Go beyond the theory by using your newfound programming skills to create a simple but effective game that your friends will love

In the previous section of this guide you will have learned a lot about the principles of programming and written your first few lines of code. Now we're going to take all that theory and put it into practice with a project that will see you putting together a game from scratch. Don't worry if you still feel

unprepared – we will guide you through every step of the way and provide you with all the resources you need to complete the project. And, once you've finished, we'll show you how to share your work with others. We guarantee your homemade game will impress your friends and family!

## IN THIS SECTION

**104****Design a game**

Take some time to consider your options before you start

**106****Create the basic game**

Put together the first building blocks of your game's code

**108****Add graphics to your game**

Create the visuals for your game and define their behaviour

**111****Setting up the game**

Refine, edit and update your game code

**116****Completing the game**

Add the all-important finishing touches to your first game

**122****Sharing your game**

You've finished your game, now find out how to share it with others

**124****Create a polished game**

Take what you've learned and make an even more advanced game



# Design a game

Take some time to consider your options before you start

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » How to plan your project before you start
- » Find out where to get music and images for your game



In this section we're going to build on what we've learnt to design and create a simple game. By doing this, not only will we create an end product that will be fun to play, but we'll also explore many of the general programming skills you'll be able to transfer to future projects.

To get the most from this section, we strongly recommend that you type in the exercises as we go through. This way, you'll better understand what each line and statement does within the game. However, if you need to save time or check your work, the resources can also be downloaded from [www.rpilab.net/code](http://www.rpilab.net/code).

### Fools rush in

However simple the game, you shouldn't just sit down at your computer and start coding right away – such an approach will result in nothing but chaos

and frustration. You need to begin by thinking carefully about exactly how your game is going to work and, from that, generate a list of the tasks both you and your code will need to complete.

### Genres of games

According to Wikipedia, there are 13 major genres of game, including action, role-playing, strategy, sports and puzzle. One way to come up with game ideas is to look through the genres and think about examples from each. Another option is to play plenty of games – on a phone, console or computer – and think about what you enjoy most. Don't bite off more than you can chew, though. A Space Invaders clone is certainly achievable by a new programmer, whereas a first person shooter inspired by Call of Duty probably isn't a realistic ambition – not as a first project, at least!

## SPECIFICATIONS

If you follow a career in programming, you'll quickly come across the concept of the 'specification'. This is a document that is created before programming starts and fully details what the

application does, how it works and what it looks like. Different programming teams use different specifications and many now adopt a more rapid development approach

called 'agile', which minimises the up-front work and focuses more on smaller work units that evolve as the project progresses. For a simple game, our specification will be brief.

### The concept

In this case, we're going to choose a simple shoot-'em-up called Pi Splat. We're using the Raspberry Pi as our inspiration so, naturally, our targets are going to be fruit. The concept can be summarised as follows:

We're being invaded! Several types of fruit fall from the top of the screen – but beware, most are poisonous. Use a mobile gun platform to destroy poisonous fruit, but allow raspberries through to

reach the ground. When enough raspberries have landed, the planetary defences will be activated and the population will be saved.

Okay, it isn't exactly the most original concept but it's simple and fun – two excellent traits for our first game. Our next job is to decide on the rules for our game, and the victory conditions.

## Rules

In real life there's nothing to stop you creating your own card game and making up the rules as you go along. However, the computer needs to know what to do in every conceivable situation. In this case, the game rules are simple.

1. Fruit appears randomly and drops vertically down the screen, disappearing if it reaches the bottom.
2. The gun turret can be moved left and right along the bottom of the screen. Pressing the Fire button launches a bullet up the screen.
3. If a bullet collides with a fruit, the fruit is destroyed.
4. If the destroyed fruit is not a raspberry, the player receives points.
5. If the destroyed fruit is a raspberry, the player loses points.
6. If a raspberry reaches the bottom of the screen, the player receives points.
7. If any other fruit reaches the bottom of the screen, the player loses points.
8. Once a set number of raspberries have reached the bottom, the level ends.
9. As levels pass, the speed of the falling fruit increases.

## Victory condition

A game needs to have an aim. In games that have multiple levels, there is often one victory condition for the levels and a different, overall, aim for the game as a whole. For our game, the aim of each level is to collect the prescribed number of raspberries. The aim of the game as a whole is to clear 5 levels.

Now we have our rules and our victory condition, it's time to design the game, according to the principles of input, logic and output.



► Our simple game will involve shooting fruit - but keep the raspberries safe!

## WHERE TO FIND GRAPHICS AND SOUNDS

You can download a huge quantity of graphical and audio resources from online libraries – but check the terms of use, especially if you intend to edit them. You can find free graphics at the Open Clip Art Library

(<http://openclipart.org>), which you can normally edit and use as you wish. Fotolia (<http://en.fotolia.com>) provides top-quality graphics and photos for a small cost: for the best results, download the vector

format of the image and edit it in a suitable program. A good source of free sounds is <http://freesound.org>. You'll find everything here from music loops to special effects, freely reusable.

## Input

The user needs to control the gun. This means we'll have to set up a way for the player to move it left and right, as well as firing. Keyboard control works best for a game of this sort, so we need to write code to specify which keys the player can use to control their gun turret and more code to 'listen' for those key presses.

We'll also want the user to be able to save their progress so they can exit the game and resume later. So, when the game loads, it needs to check whether there's any progress data and, if so, read it as an input.

## Output

We'll need to create (or find) graphical images for each of the fruits that's going to appear in our game, and we'll need to write code to move them down the screen. To add a bit of visual interest, we'll also want to create an explosion effect for when the fruits are hit.

In addition, we'll need a turret graphic and bullets for the player – and this is also the right time to consider screen decorations for the background, over which we might display text for game instructions, score reports and so forth. In all we'll need the following graphics:

- Fruit (raspberry, cherry, strawberry, pear and banana)
- Player graphics (turret and bullets)
- Background graphic
- Splash screen

Sound is also a form of output, so we should also at this point consider whether we might want to include some in-game music and sound effects. Lastly, as mentioned opposite, we will also be saving the player's progress data to the hard disk – another form of output.

## Logic

Our logic code will check whether bullets have collided with fruits, and update the score accordingly. It will also keep track of which level is being played, and when the game is over. ☕

# Create the basic game

Put together the first building blocks of your game's code

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » How to organise your code into modules
- » What types of files to use for graphics and sound
- » How to test code as you go along

**N**ow we've done our large-scale planning, you can finally open up your editor and start typing. We haven't yet worked out the fine details of how we're going to implement everything, but that's all right. Creating a game is a completely different process to building a real-world object such as a house. In that case you need a detailed blueprint before you dig the first hole. Programming is more like building a house out of Lego: you select from a toolset of pre-created blocks and build one part at a time, experimenting and amending along the way. It's an iterative and organic process, in which you focus on the building blocks of the program – writing, testing and editing code to create each function, module and class – before bringing them together to make the final product.

### Getting started

We'll begin by creating a simple template for our game, then fill in the code to get the game working. To create the template, we need to think about how our code will be organised in terms of graphics, sounds and Python files – and we do this using the familiar structure of input, logic and output from

## PICTURE AND SOUND FORMATS

The images used in this game are saved in PNG (Portable Network Graphics) format. This is because PNGs can have transparent backgrounds; if you used the popular **JPEG** format, for example, you'd see a white edge around each of the fruits. When developing games for the Raspberry Pi, you need to choose the best format for each graphic, and for those with transparent backgrounds the **8-bit** PNG format with alpha transparency works well.

As you'll remember, an 8-bit image can include a maximum of 256 colours (a 32-bit PNG can contain millions of colours), so this also gives the Pi less work to do when it's painting each screen. When it comes to sound, **WAV** is a good format for short noises. Although the file size is larger than **MP3**, files in this format aren't compressed, so your computer doesn't have to do any unnecessary work to play them.

the previous chapter.

Broadly speaking, you should expect to create a class for each of the game's visible objects. You could add the code for each of these classes in the main Python file, but it makes more sense to have each in its own file: this is clearer and easier to understand, and removes clutter from the main program code.

### 1. Main.py

Create a folder to contain your Python game. Now, in Geany, create and save a file called main.py. Type in the code in the listing overleaf and save it.

### 2. Classes

Create Python files named bullet.py, fruit.py, turret.py and game.py. The first three are straight out of our design document and represent visible objects. The game class is there to hold information about the game as a whole. For example, it can keep track of the player's score and level number, and can be conveniently reused across multiple projects.

Add the following text to the top of each of the class files:

```
class Bullet():
    def __init__(self):
        pass
```

...replacing Bullet with the name of each class. The pass command is simply a placeholder – it doesn't do anything, but if we didn't provide it Python would report an error since it isn't valid to define a completely empty function.

### 3. Images

Finally, in your project folder, create a subfolder called 'images' and copy all the game's graphic files into it, so they're in a convenient place for us to access later.

## Main.py – the ‘boilerplate’ of our program

```

1 import math,random,pygame,sys
2 from fruit import *; from game import *;from turret import *; from bullet import *
3
4 ##TOP LEVEL CONSTANTS
5 FPS = 30
6 WINDOWWIDTH=480; WINDOWHEIGHT=640
7 GAMETITLE="Pi Splat"
8 WHITE=[255,255,255]; RED=[255,0,0]; GREEN=[0,255,0];
9 BLUE=[0,0,255]; BLACK=[0,0,0]
10
11 def main():
12     #set up initial display
13     pygame.init()
14     clock=pygame.time.Clock()
15     surface=pygame.display.set_mode ([WINDOWWIDTH,WINDOWHEIGHT])
16     pygame.display.set_caption(GAMETITLE)
17
18     #MAIN GAME LOOP
19     game_over=False
20
21     while game_over==False:
22         for event in pygame.event.get():
23             if event.type==pygame.KEYDOWN:
24                 if event.key==pygame.K_ESCAPE:
25                     game_over=True
26             print pygame.time.get_ticks()
27             pygame.display.update()
28             clock.tick(FPS)
29
30     if __name__ == '__main__':
31         main()

```

The initial 31 lines of our program comprise the “boilerplate”, or standard structure, which hardly varies from game to game. Line 2 imports our classes. We then set a series of constants: variables whose values will not change during the game. Unlike many other languages, Python doesn’t have a separate type for constants, so we name them using capital letters so we can identify them later.

On line 11 we set up a function called `main`, which is where our program will begin. Lines 13–16 use Pygame functions to draw the initial window for the game. Lines 21 to 28 constitute the main loop: this is the code used to draw the screen many times per second as the game is being played.

We set up a variable called `game_over` in line 19 and give it the value `False`. We then start a while loop that will keep repeating until `game_over` becomes `True`. The for loop at line 22 asks Pygame if any events have taken place. In this case, we’re interested in keyboard events so, in line 23, we cycle through all the events in the queue and, if a

key has been pressed, we then ask if that key was “Esc”. If it was, we set `game_over` to `True`, causing the game to exit.

Line 27 updates the display (we haven’t yet added anything visual, but will do soon) and line 28 tells Pygame to make sure the loop doesn’t cycle more quickly than 30 times per second. Finally, lines 30 and 31 are used to make sure that the `main` function will be accessed only if this was the file open in Geany when we clicked the cog button. In other words, if we accidentally imported this module into another, `main` would not be called.

Once you’ve entered and checked all this code, click the cog icon (or press F5). You should see a series of numbers running down the terminal window: these are generated by line 26 and are simply the number of milliseconds since the program started, proving that you’ve typed everything correctly and are ready to move on. If you see any error messages in the terminal window, you need to correct them before continuing. 

## USING EXTERNAL RESOURCES

You can find the code, images and other resources for this game at [www.snipca.com/9811](http://www.snipca.com/9811). The finished game can be downloaded in its entirety from [www.snipca.com/9812](http://www.snipca.com/9812), though obviously it’s much better to type all the code yourself. You’ll find specific information about Pygame functions at [www.pygame.org/docs](http://www.pygame.org/docs) and documentation for Python 2.7 is at <http://docs.python.org/2/index.html>.

We’re not going to go into detail about every single command used in this code. Where a command or function is new we’ll explain what it does; but we expect you to use the documentation to learn the detail, as a skilled programmer would.

You’ll also notice our code doesn’t include many programming comments (explanatory text following the `#` symbol). This is to keep our listings clean and short. The downloadable code (which you should look through after completing the chapter) is heavily documented.

# Add graphics to your game

Create the visuals for your game and define their behaviour

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » How to create object classes and use inheritance
- » When and where to use constants
- » Basic image manipulation



```

1 import pygame, random
2 class Fruit(pygame.sprite.Sprite):
3
4     def __init__(self,WINDOWWIDTH):
5         pygame.sprite.Sprite.__init__(self)
6         self._species=random.choice(["raspberry","strawberry","cherry","pear","banana"])
7         self.image=pygame.image.load("images/"+self._species+".png")
8         self.rect=self.image.get_rect()
9         self.rect.y=0-self.rect.height
10        self.rect.x=(random.randint(self.rect.width/2,(WINDOWWIDTH-self.rect.width)))
11
12    def update_position(self,speed,WINDOWHEIGHT,game):
13        if self.rect.y<(WINDOWHEIGHT):
14            self.rect.y+=speed*5
15        else:
16            if self._species=="raspberry":
17                game.update_score(50)
18                game.update_raspberries_saved()
19            else:
20                game.update_score(-10)
21            self.kill()
22
23    def shot(self,game):
24        if self._species=="raspberry":
25            game.update_score(-50)
26        else:
27            game.update_score(10)
28        self.kill()

```

**O**pen up fruit.py in Geany and type in the code above. Now it's time to make the fruit appear and drop down the screen.

We'll start by setting up the fruit object, so let's look at the code in a little more detail.

We begin by importing the pygame library and the random module. Take a look at line 2 – you can see that we've added pygame.sprite.Sprite to the class definition. This is an example of class inheritance in action: this line tells Python to create a new object based on Pygame's Sprite class, so Python will assume that this object is a sprite in all its behaviours and properties – except where we explicitly specify otherwise. A sprite is a specialised object that's based on an image and which can be easily moved around the screen. It contains all the functions needed to handle the visual side of our fruit.

The `__init__` function is run when the main program creates a new instance of the Fruit class. In other words, when we want a new fruit to appear and fall down the screen. In line 6 we create a property of the sprite that we've named `_species`.

In reality it's just a variable like any other, but the convention is to call variables that are inside objects 'properties'.

The `self` keyword in front of a variable name tells the object that this variable is part of its unique identity and should be remembered. So every Fruit instance will remember which species it was set to for as long as it's alive; this is a very useful feature of objects, as we'll see.

In line 7, we use Pygame's image functions to load an appropriate picture into the sprite from the images folder we created on page 92. The next line makes sure that the size of the sprite matches the size of the image just loaded. Line 9 sets the y (vertical) position to zero minus the height of the image. So if the picture was 50 pixels tall, the top-left corner of the fruit will be drawn at -50, so it's just off the top of the screen.

Line 10 looks a little bit more complicated, but it simply specifies a random horizontal (x) position for the fruit. The `random.randint` function takes two parameters, to set the range between which you want it to generate a number. Our first



▲ Our Raspberry Pi game is built up from re-usable objects

parameter – the lower bound – is:

`self.rect.width/2`

In other words, we want the lowest possible horizontal value to be half the width of the image from the left. This ensures the fruit will never be drawn either wholly or partially off the left edge of the screen. The second parameter, specifying the upper bound, is:

`WINDOWWIDTH-self.rect.width`

In this case, the maximum right-hand position will be the width of the window minus the width of the

### WHY USE VARIABLES FOR CONSTANTS?

You'll have noticed that once we've set the value of `WINDOWWIDTH` in `main.py`, it stays the same throughout our game – that's why we call it a constant and why, conventionally, we write it all in capital letters. So why do we bother with it? Why don't we just specify the value 480 directly when we need to refer to the width of the window?

We do it this way for two reasons. Firstly, because this allows you to create a new game – with a different width – by doing nothing more than changing a value once at the start of the program, rather than having to find and alter every occurrence of 480.

The second reason is that it makes reading your code much simpler. By using `WINDOWWIDTH` rather than 480 in a calculation, you know exactly what that number represents.

Constants are often used to make configuring a script easy. By grouping them all at the start of the main code, you can change all the settings very easily.

image. So with a `WINDOWWIDTH` of 480 pixels and a fruit width of, say, 72 pixels, we'd be asking `random.randint` to provide a number between 36 ( $72/2$ ) and 408 (480-72). That would be used to place each fruit in a different horizontal location.

The `__init__` function sets things up, but we need to add more functions to make things happen. These will vary depending on the purpose of the class, and in this case the most obvious attribute of our fruit is that it moves down the screen, so we'll begin with a function called `update_position`. Unlike `__init__`, this function will only run when it's called (in this case, by the main program).

The function definition in line 12 includes four parameters that it must be passed. `self` is part of all class definitions, but the others are our own variables. `WINDOWHEIGHT` is self-explanatory, `game` is the game object (we haven't created it yet) and `speed` is a parameter we'll set in `main.py`.

The function is pretty simple. On line 13 we check to see if the vertical position of the fruit is still less than the height of the window (if it isn't, then the fruit must have dropped off the bottom). If it is, then in line 14 we increase its `y` position by an amount related to the speed.

If the fruit has dropped out of the window then Python will execute the code after the `else` in line 15. In this case, it's another if statement: it's very important to understand that code between lines 16 and 21 will only be executed if line 13 is false.

So, on line 16 we check to see if the current fruit is a raspberry. Remember that the point of the game is to allow raspberries to reach the bottom of the screen, so, in that case, we are going to increase the score and increment the number of raspberries saved so far (the game ends when this number gets to ten). Note that we haven't actually added any code to the game object yet, but we now know which functions to create.

Line 19 translates as "if the fruit is not on-screen (because it's reached the bottom) and it's not a raspberry then execute the next line". In this case, line 20 decreases the score because the player has allowed one of the other fruits to reach the bottom.

Finally, line 21 deletes the object. Look closely at the indentation to make sure you understand when this line will be executed: the `self.kill` function is not inside the if structure starting on line 16, so if the object has fallen off the bottom of the screen it will be "killed" whichever fruit type it represents. Although the fruit is no longer visible, it makes sense to clear it and stop it updating: otherwise it will continue to fall, even though we can't see it, pointlessly wasting computing power and memory.

Finally, since the object of the game is to shoot fruit (except raspberries), we add a function called `shot`. A quick look over the code should be ample for you to see what it does.

# Setting up the game

Refine, edit and update your game code

```

1 class Game():
2     def __init__(self):
3         self._score=0
4         self._raspberries_saved=0
5
6     def update_score(self,amount):
7         self._score+=amount
8
9     def get_score(self):
10        return self._score
11
12    def update_raspberries_saved(self):
13        self._raspberries_saved+=1
14
15    def get_raspberries_saved(self):
16        return self._raspberries_saved

```

Having written our Fruit class, we now know what we need (initially, at least) to include in our Game class (above – save it as game.py). Remember that this is a different sort of class to Fruit; it doesn't relate to a visible object on-screen. It's simply a convenient wrapper for code and variables that relate to the game as a whole.

The class definition doesn't contain anything between the brackets because we're not basing Game on a pre-existing class. The `__init__` function initialises two variables – the score and the number of raspberries we've saved – so we can use them later. `update_score` takes the amount sent to it and adds that to the running score (see line 17 of fruit.py to see this function called). Meanwhile,

`get_score` uses the `return` keyword to send back the score. So, we could write a line of code like this to print the current score to the terminal:

```
print game.get_score
```

The final two functions fulfil the same purpose for the `raspberries_saved` variable, so our program can easily check this value too.

## Updating Main.py

It's time to fill out the 'boilerplate' code we created earlier, to accommodate the additional features needed to work with our fruit sprites. Update your main.py module as follows:

```

1 import math,random,pygame,sys
2 from fruit import *; from game import *; from turret import *; from bullet import *
3
4 ##TOP LEVEL CONSTANTS
5 FPS = 30

```

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » How to create your game's main logic loop
- » Controlling speed and performance
- » How to use Pygame's sprite functions

```

6   WINDOWWIDTH=480; WINDOWHEIGHT=640
7   GAMETITLE="Pi Splat"
8   WHITE=[255,255,255]; RED=[255,0,0]; GREEN=[0,255,0]; BLUE=[0,0,255]; BLACK=[0,0,0]
9   SPEED=0.5
10
11 def main():
12     game=Game()
13
14     #set up initial display
15     pygame.init()
16     clock=pygame.time.Clock()
17     surface=pygame.display.set_mode([WINDOWWIDTH,WINDOWHEIGHT])
18     pygame.display.set_caption(GAMETITLE)
19
20     #MAIN GAME LOOP
21     game_over=False
22     live_fruit_sprites=pygame.sprite.Group()
23     ticktock=1
24     while game_over==False:
25         for event in pygame.event.get():
26             if event.type==pygame.KEYDOWN:
27                 if event.key==pygame.K_ESCAPE:
28                     game_over=True
29
30             if ticktock % (FPS/SPEED)==1:
31                 if len(live_fruit_sprites)<10:
32                     live_fruit_sprites.add((Fruit(WINDOWWIDTH)))
33
34             surface.fill(BLACK)
35             for sprite in live_fruit_sprites:
36                 sprite.update_position(SPEED,WINDOWHEIGHT,game)
37
38             live_fruit_sprites.draw(surface)
39
40             pygame.display.update()
41
42             ticktock+=1
43
44             clock.tick(FPS)
45
46     if __name__ == '__main__':
47         main()

```

You'll see we've made quite a few changes. We've added a new constant called SPEED at line 9; and at line 22 we create a sprite group. This is essentially a list of all the fruit sprites so we can easily handle them later.

The if statement beginning at line 31 checks if there are fewer than ten fruits on the screen, and if so creates a new fruit object and adds it to the sprite group. You'll notice we created a variable called ticktock on line 23, and we use it on line 30. This is needed because the main loop (beginning at line 24) runs at 30 frames per second (see line 44). Without the code at line 30, all the fruits would be

added almost instantly rather than spread out.

At line 42, ticktock increments each loop, so it'll be worth 30 after one second, 60 after two seconds and so on. Line 30 says that if you divide ticktock by the number of frames per second (30 in this case), divided by the speed variable (0.5 at the moment), and get a remainder of 1 (that's what the % or modulus means), run line 31 and add a fruit if there are fewer than ten. It's a bit of a brain-melter, but if you think it through, you'll see that there will be a remainder of 1 when ticktock is worth 61, 121, 181 and so forth. The effect, then, is to run line 32 every two seconds or so – which is exactly what

we want. Alternatively, we could use Python's time functions, but doing it this way keeps things in sync if the computer struggles to keep up for any reason.

Line 34 fills the window with black. Line 35 cycles through every fruit (if there are any) and in line 36, we call the Fruit class's update\_position function we just created, moving each one down the screen or deleting it. Finally, we run Pygame's draw function, which will paint every fruit to the

screen in one go. Give it a try. Make sure main.py is in your Geany window and press F5 or click the cog. You should see fruit appear at the top and move smoothly down the window. Stop the program then add a hash symbol (#) to the start of line 34; this "comments out" the line so that Python ignores it. Press F5 and you'll see you should see a very different result.

Enter the code below and save it as turret.py:

```

1 import pygame
2 class Turret(pygame.sprite.Sprite):
3     def __init__(self,WINDOWWIDTH,WINDOWHEIGHT):
4         pygame.sprite.Sprite.__init__(self)
5         self.image=pygame.image.load("images/turret.png")
6         self.rect = self.image.get_rect()
7         self.rect.x = (WINDOWWIDTH-self.rect.width)/2
8         self.rect.y =WINDOWHEIGHT-self.rect.height
9
10    def update_position(self,direction,WINDOWWIDTH):
11        if direction=="left" and self.rect.x>10:
12            self.rect.x-=10
13        elif direction=="right" and self.rect.x<(WINDOWWIDTH-10):
14            self.rect.x+=10
15
16    def get_gun_position(self):
17        position={}
18        position["x"]=self.rect.x+(self.rect.width/2)
19        position["y"]=self.rect.y-(self.rect.height/2)
20

```

This class is similar to the Fruit class, with lines 7 and 8 positioning the turret graphic at the centre of the screen's bottom edge. At line 10 we set up the update\_position method, which takes the direction and the width of the window as parameters and either deducts from the turret's horizontal (x) position to send the graphic left, or adds to send

it right. See if you can work out how we stop the turret from disappearing off the side of the screen.

Finally, starting at line 16, we add a function to send back the position of the gun in the centre of the turret, so we can make bullets appear like they're emerging from the gun. Here's the code for the last class, bullet.py:

```

1 import pygame
2 class Bullet(pygame.sprite.Sprite):
3     def __init__(self,position):
4         pygame.sprite.Sprite.__init__(self)
5         self.image=pygame.image.load("images/bullet.png")
6         self.rect = self.image.get_rect()
7         self.rect.x=position["x"]
8         self.rect.y=position["y"]
9
10    def update_position(self):
11        if self.rect.y>=-self.rect.height:
12            self.rect.y-=5
13        else:
14            self.kill()
15

```

In the `__init__` function, we send the gun position from Turret. The function `update_position` is very simple; since bullets go up the screen, their `y` value gets smaller as they move. Once they go off the top, we destroy the sprite.

### Main.py – the fully working version

Now we've set up the code to handle our turret and bullets, we simply need to make a few last changes to `main.py` to tie it all together and finish the first version of the game.

```
1 import math,random,pygame,sys
2 from fruit import *; from game import *; from turret import *; from bullet import *
3
4
5 ##TOP LEVEL CONSTANTS
6 FPS = 30
7 WINDOWWIDTH=480; WINDOWHEIGHT=640
8 GAMETITLE="Pi Splat"
9 WHITE=[255,255,255]; RED=[255,0,0]; GREEN=[0,255,0]; BLUE=[0,0,255]; BLACK=[0,0,0]
10 SPEED=0.5
11
12 def main():
13     game=Game()
14
15     #set up initial display
16     pygame.init()
17     pygame.key.set_repeat(1, 75)
18     scoreFont=pygame.font.Font("256BYTES.TTF",32)
19     clock=pygame.time.Clock()
20     surface=pygame.display.set_mode([WINDOWWIDTH,WINDOWHEIGHT])
21     pygame.display.set_caption(GAMETITLE)
22
23     #MAIN GAME LOOP
24     game_over=False
25     live_fruit_sprites=pygame.sprite.Group()
26     bullet_sprites=pygame.sprite.Group()
27     other_sprites=pygame.sprite.Group()
28     turret=Turret(WINDOWWIDTH,WINDOWHEIGHT)
29     other_sprites.add(turret)
30     ticktock=1
31
32     while game_over==False:
33         for event in pygame.event.get():
34             if event.type==pygame.KEYDOWN:
35                 if event.key==pygame.K_ESCAPE:
36                     game_over=True
37                 elif event.key==pygame.K_LEFT:
38                     turret.update_position("left",WINDOWWIDTH)
39                 elif event.key==pygame.K_RIGHT:
40                     turret.update_position("right",WINDOWWIDTH)
41                 elif event.key==pygame.K_SPACE:
42                     bullet=Bullet(turret.get_gun_position())
43                     bullet_sprites.add(bullet)
44
45                 if ticktock % (FPS/SPEED)==1:
46                     if len(live_fruit_sprites)<10:
47                         live_fruit_sprites.add((Fruit(WINDOWWIDTH)))
48
49                 for sprite in bullet_sprites:
50                     sprite.update_position()
```

```

52     collisions=pygame.sprite.groupcollide(live_fruit_sprites,bullet_sprites,False,True)
53
54     if collisions:
55         for fruit in collisions:
56             fruit.shot(game)
57
58         surface.fill(BLACK)
59         bullet_sprites.draw(surface)
60         other_sprites.draw(surface)
61
62         for sprite in live_fruit_sprites:
63             sprite.update_position(SPEED,WINDOWHEIGHT,game)
64
65         live_fruit_sprites.draw(surface)
66
67         scoreText=scoreFont.render('Score: '+str(game.get_score()),True,GREEN)
68         surface.blit(scoreText,(10,10))
69         pygame.display.update()
70
71         ticktock+=1
72         if game.get_raspberries_saved()>=10:
73             game_over=True
74
75         clock.tick(FPS)
76
77     #handle end of game
78     surface.fill(BLACK)
79     scoreText=scoreFont.render('Game over. Score: '+str(game.get_score()),True,GREEN)
80     surface.blit(scoreText,(10,200))
81     pygame.display.update()
82
83     raw_input("press any key")
84
85 if __name__ == '__main__':
86     main()

```

Line 17 calls a Pygame function that sets the repeat interval on a keypress to 75 milliseconds, so the player can hold down the spacebar to fire a stream of bullets. Line 18 imports a custom font ([www.1001freefonts.com](http://www.1001freefonts.com) is a good source) that we'll use to show the score. In lines 26 to 29, we create two new sprite groups: one to hold the bullets, and a second for any other sprites we're adding.

Lines 37 to 40 respond to the arrow keys, updating the turret's position. Lines 41 to 43 create a new bullet when the spacebar is pressed and add it to the group. Lines 49 and 50 cycle through all the bullets currently visible and trigger the update\_position function for each in turn.

Line 52 is a bit of Pygame magic. This one line checks whether any bullet has collided with any fruit. If one has, Pygame generates a list of those fruits that have collided. All we have to do is pass in the two sprite groups we want to check (hence our maintaining separate groups for bullets and

fruit), along with parameters indicating whether Pygame should kill colliding sprites. For the fruit, we send a False parameter because we want to update the score before killing them manually. For the bullets, it's fine for Pygame to kill them.

In lines 54 to 56, we iterate through any collisions and run the shot function of the fruit that was hit. Lines 59 and 60 draw the new groups to the screen.

On line 67 we use Pygame's font.render to create a picture that displays the score in green with a transparent background. Line 68 paints the score onto the screen using the blit function.

Lines 72 and 73 let us break out of the main game loop once we've saved 10 raspberries, then lines 78 to 83 clear the screen, draws the final score and wait for the user to press a key.

Once your code matches our listings, save and press F5 to play the game. Whilst it's basic, you now have a fully working, playable, arcade game in fewer than 200 lines of code. Not bad! 

# Completing the game

Add the all-important finishing touches to your first game

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » How to use pickle to save a game's progress
- » Boost your game with extra levels

To add a bit of depth to Pi Splat, we might add levels that become progressively harder. While we're at it, we should also implement the additional input and output functions we planned at the start: adding a splash/instructions screen at the start of the game, and giving the player the ability to save and restore the player's progress. We'll also smooth out a few rough edges to give the game a more professional polish.

### The finished code

Rather than typing in all the code that follows, we recommend you download the complete version of the game from [www.snipca.com/9812](http://www.snipca.com/9812), load it into Geany and follow the discussion.

```
1 import math,random,pygame,sys,pickle,os
2 from fruit import *; from game import *; from turret import *; from bullet import *
3
4 ##TOP LEVEL CONSTANTS
5 FPS = 30
6 WINDOWWIDTH=480; WINDOWHEIGHT=640
7 GAMETITLE="Pi Splat"
8 WHITE=[255,255,255]; RED=[255,0,0]; GREEN=[0,255,0]; BLUE=[0,0,255]; BLACK=[0,0,0]
9 NUMBER_OF_LEVELS=5
10
11 def main():
12     game=Game()
13
14     #INITIAL SETUP
15     pygame.init()
16     pygame.key.set_repeat(1, 75)
17     pygame.mouse.set_visible(False)
18     displayFont=pygame.font.Font("256BYTES.TTF",28)
19     clock=pygame.time.Clock()
20     surface=pygame.display.set_mode([WINDOWWIDTH, WINDOWHEIGHT])
```

Most of the remaining work takes place in main.py. This makes sense, as adding levels doesn't affect the way individual objects such as fruits or bullets behave.

On line 1, we add two new modules: pickle and os. Both are needed so that we can save the user's progress. We remove the SCORE constant and replace it with NUMBER\_OF\_LEVELS, which we're setting to five. You can change the number of levels in your version of the game by altering this number.

Starting at line 23, we've added some code to create a splash screen. This has been created as a single graphic. It might have been more flexible to add the text at runtime, but a static image is fine for a simple game such as this.

```

21     pygame.display.set_caption(GAMETITLE)
22
23     #SPLASH SCREEN
24     splash=pygame.image.load("images/splash.png")
25     surface.blit(splash,(0,0))
26     pygame.display.update()
27     game_over=False
28     start_game=False
29
30     while start_game==False:
31         for event in pygame.event.get():
32             if event.type==pygame.KEYDOWN:
33                 if event.key==pygame.K_ESCAPE:
34                     game_over=True
35                 elif event.key==pygame.K_RETURN or event.key==pygame.K_KP_ENTER:
36                     resume=False
37                     start_game=True
38                 elif event.key==pygame.K_LSHIFT or event.key==pygame.K_RSHIFT:
39                     resume=True
40                     start_game=True
41
42             if resume==True: #if they want to pick up a saved game
43                 if os.path.exists("savedata.dat")==True:
44                     game.load_game()

```



▲ A splash screen displays instructions

At line 24, we load the splash screen and blit it to the surface on line 25, before refreshing the screen so it becomes visible. We've moved the game\_over variable to this point so the user can exit even when a game isn't underway.

Lines 30 to 40 wait for the user to press a key, and respond when he or she does. The instructions tell them to press Enter to start a new game or Shift to resume an existing one. Since there are two physical Enter keys (the one under Backspace and the one alongside the numeric keypad), we have

to handle this in line 35. Similarly, there are two Shift keys: line 38 captures this and sets the resume variable to True.

On line 42, we check to see if they chose to continue an existing game, but we first need to check if a save file already exists (there won't be one if it's the first time they've played the game). This is achieved through the os (**operating system**) module function. On line 44, we run a yet-to-be-created function of the game object. The code continues:

```

45
46     #MAIN GAME LOOP
47     while game.get_level()<=NUMBER_OF_LEVELS and game_over==False:
48
49         #SHOW LEVEL NUMBER
50         surface.fill(BLACK)
51         levelText=displayFont.render('Level: '+str(game.get_level()),True,GREEN)
52         surface.blit(levelText,(150,300))
53         pygame.display.update()
54         pygame.time.wait(1500)
55
56         #SET UP VARIABLES FOR LEVEL
57         game.save_game()
58         live_fruit_sprites=pygame.sprite.Group()

```

```

59
60     game._raspberries_saved=0
61     bullet_sprites=pygame.sprite.Group()
62     other_sprites=pygame.sprite.Group()
63     turret=Turret(WINDOWWIDTH,WINDOWHEIGHT)
64     other_sprites.add(turret)
65     ticktock=1
       level_over=False

```

We've added a new loop that runs while the current level is less than or equal to the total number of levels and the user hasn't pressed Escape. Before each level begins, we want to display a text message, so on lines 50 to 54 we erase the splash screen (by filling it with black) and set up a font. We've changed the name of this variable from scoreFont because it now has a more general use.

We then use Pygame's time.wait() function to pause for 1.5 seconds, after which we start the code

for each level (remember, the code after line 47 runs each time a new level is started). On line 57 we run another function of game – one we haven't yet written – to save progress. Why save it now? Because we want the user to come back at the start of the level they were playing when they exited, so we save the state before it begins. The only other changes to this block of code are that we zero the variable game.\_raspberries\_saved before the level starts and we create a new variable level\_over.

```

66
67 #PLAY INDIVIDUAL LEVEL
68 while level_over==False and game_over==False:
69     for event in pygame.event.get():
70         if event.type==pygame.KEYDOWN:
71             if event.key==pygame.K_ESCAPE:
72                 game_over=True
73             elif event.key==pygame.K_LEFT:
74                 turret.update_position("left",WINDOWWIDTH,game.get_level())
75             elif event.key==pygame.K_RIGHT:
76                 turret.update_position("right",WINDOWWIDTH,game.get_level())
77             elif event.key==pygame.K_SPACE:
78                 bullet=Bullet(turret.get_gun_position())
79                 bullet_sprites.add(bullet)
80
81         if ticktock >=120:
82             ticktock=0
83             if len(live_fruit_sprites)<10:
84                 live_fruit_sprites.add((Fruit(WINDOWWIDTH)))
85
86         for sprite in bullet_sprites:
87             sprite.update_position()
88
89         collisions=pygame.sprite.groupcollide (live_fruit_sprites,bullet_sprites,False,True)
90
91         if collisions: #if there are any
92             for fruit in collisions:
93                 fruit.shot(game)
94
95         background=pygame.image.load ("images/gameBoard.png")
96         surface.blit(background,(0,0))
97         bullet_sprites.draw(surface)
98         other_sprites.draw(surface)
99

```

```

100    for sprite in live_fruit_sprites:
101        sprite.update_position(game.get_level(),WINDOWHEIGHT,game)
102    live_fruit_sprites.draw(surface)
103
104    scoreText=displayFont.render ('Score: '+str(game.get_score()),True,GREEN)
105    levelText=displayFont.render ('Level: '+str(game.get_level()),True,WHITE)
106    raspberriesText=displayFont.render ('Raspberries: '+str(game.get_raspberries_»
107    saved()),True,RED)
108    surface.blit(scoreText,(10,10))
109    surface.blit(levelText,(10,50))
110    surface.blit(raspberriesText,(10,90))
111    pygame.display.update()
112    ticktock+=game.get_level()
113
114    if game.get_raspberries_saved()>=10:
115        game.update_level(1)
116        level_over=True
117        clock.tick(FPS)

```

You'll notice that all of this code has been indented by an additional tab (do this in Geany by highlighting the lines you want to indent and pressing Tab once). If you think this through you'll see that we've done this because, at the end of each level, we want to loop back to line 47 to see if we've reached the final level.

You'll also see that on line 68 we're testing two conditions: the level will play if `level_over` isn't True and if the user hasn't pressed Escape. The event-handling code is unchanged, but we've simplified the code for adding new fruits to the screen: we're now doing this every time `ticktock` reaches 120, which, for level 1, will be 4 seconds (30 frames per second into 120).

On lines 95 and 96 we load a more interesting background, as an 8-bit PNG. The code then remains unchanged until line 101 when we add a new parameter to the `update_position` function of the `Fruit` class. We'll come to this when we look at the changes to that class.

Lines 104 to 110 have been enhanced to add extra player information. And on line 114 we call a new function of the `game` object to increment the level if ten raspberries have reached the bottom of the screen. We set `level_over` to True so that the level exits and Python loops back to line 47.

The only change to the last few lines (which we haven't reproduced here) is to add a summary to the final screen showing the player's overall score.

## Game.py

```

1 import pickle
2 class Game():
3     def __init__(self):
4         self._score=0
5         self._raspberries_saved=0
6         self._level=1
7
8     def update_score(self,amount):
9         self._score+=amount*self._level
10
11    def get_score(self):
12        return self._score
13
14    def update_raspberries_saved(self):
15        self._raspberries_saved+=1

```

```

bullet.py  fruit.py  game.py  main.py  turret.py
1 import pickle
2 class Game():
3     def __init__(self):
4         self._score=0
5         self._raspberries_saved=0
6         self._level=1
7
8     def update_score(self,amount):
9         self._score+=amount*self._level
10
11    def get_score(self):
12        return self._score
13
14    def update_raspberries_saved(self):
15        self._raspberries_saved+=1
16
17    def get_raspberries_saved(self):
18        return self._raspberries_saved
19
20    def update_level(self,amount):
21        self._level+=amount
22
23    def get_level(self):
24        return self._level
25
26    def save_game(self):
27        save_data={'score':self._score,'level':self._level}
28        save_file=open('savestate.dat','wb')
29        pickle.dump(save_data,save_file)

```

▲ Our game module now includes code to save and restore progress, using pickle

```

17     def get_raspberries_saved(self):
18         return self._raspberries_saved
19
20     def update_level(self,amount):
21         self._level+=amount
22
23     def get_level(self):
24         return self._level
25
26     def save_game(self):
27         save_data={'score':self._score,'level':self._level}
28         save_file=open("savedata.dat","wb")
29         pickle.dump(save_data,save_file)
30
31     def load_game(self):
32         progress_file=open("savedata.dat","rb")
33         progress_data=pickle.load(progress_file)
34         self._score=progress_data['score']
35         self._level=progress_data['level']

```

The main change to game.py is to add the code for saving and loading the player's progress. So, on line 1 we import the pickle module. We've also added functions to update the score – on line 9 we multiply the amount the score changes by the level number, so the further through the game you get the bigger the rewards for hitting the right fruit (and the deductions for shooting a raspberry!). We also add functions to update and get the level numbers.

The interesting stuff starts at line 26. The code here is very similar to the examples in the

section on Python libraries. On line 27 we create a dictionary containing the data we want to save (just score and level numbers for this game, but we could include the player's name for example). We open a file to save the data (if it doesn't exist, Python creates the file) and then dump it to save.

The load\_game function is almost exactly the reverse. If the user had reached level 3 with a score of 1,234 when they pressed Escape, on restarting the game, pickle would load that data and game.\_level would now be 3. game.\_score would be 1,234, exactly as if they had never exited.

### Fruit.py

```

1 import pygame, random
2 class Fruit(pygame.sprite.Sprite):
3
4     def __init__(self,WINDOWWIDTH):
5         pygame.sprite.Sprite.__init__(self)
6         self._species=random.choice(["raspberry","strawberry","cherry","pear","banana"])
7         self.image=pygame.image.load("images/"+ self._species+".png")
8         self.image=pygame.transform.rotate(self.image, random.randint(-35,35))
9         self.rect=self.image.get_rect()
10        self.rect.y=0-self.rect.height
11        self.rect.x=(random.randint(self.rect.width/2,(WINDOWWIDTH-self.rect.width)))
12
13    def update_position(self,level,WINDOWHEIGHT,game):
14        if self.rect.y<(WINDOWHEIGHT):
15            self.rect.y+=2+level
16        else:
17            if self._species=="raspberry":
18                game.update_score(50)
19                game.update_raspberries_saved()

```

```

20     else:
21         game.update_score(-10)
22
23         self.kill()
24
25     def shot(self,game):
26         if self._species=="raspberry":
27             game.update_score(-50)
28         else:
29             game.update_score(10)
30
31         self.kill()

```

```

bullet.py | fruit.py | game.py | main.py | turret.py
1 import pygame, random
2
3 class Fruiting(pygame.sprite.Sprite):
4
5     def __init__(self,WINDOWWIDTH,level):
6         pygame.sprite.Sprite.__init__(self)
7         self.image=pygame.image.load("images/raspberry.png")
8         self.image=pygame.transform.rotate(self.image,random.randint(-35,35))
9         self.rect=self.image.get_rect()
10        self.rect.y+=self.rect.height/2,(WINDOWHEIGHT-self.rect.height)/2
11
12        self.update_position(level,WINDOWWIDTH,game)
13
14    def update_position(self,level,WINDOWWIDTH,game):
15        if self.rect.y>WINDOWHEIGHT:
16            self.kill()
17        else:
18            if self._species=="strawberry":
19                game.update_score(strawberries_saved)
20            else:
21                game.update_score(-10)
22
23            self.kill()
24
25    def shot(self,game):
26        if self._species=="raspberry":
27            game.update_score(-50)
28        else:
29            game.update_score(10)

```

▲ By using the game's level to make the falling fruit speed up, we make things more exciting

We've made only a couple of minor changes to fruit.py. Line 8 rotates new fruit images by a random value between -35 and 35 degrees, making their appearance a little more varied. You could add code into update\_position to have them gently swing as they fell if you wanted the full effect!

Otherwise, the only change is on line 13, where we replace the speed parameter with level. Then, on line 15, we use that to change the position of the fruit. Effectively, that means that as the player progresses through the levels, the fruit falls faster, making the game harder.

## Turret.py

```

1 import pygame
2 class Turret(pygame.sprite.Sprite):
3     def __init__(self,WINDOWWIDTH,WINDOWHEIGHT):
4         pygame.sprite.Sprite.__init__(self)
5         self.image=pygame.image.load("images/turret.png")
6         self.rect = self.image.get_rect()
7         self.rect.x = (WINDOWWIDTH-self.rect.width)/2
8         self.rect.y = WINDOWHEIGHT-self.rect.height
9
10    def update_position(self,direction,WINDOWWIDTH,level):
11        if direction=="left" and self.rect.x>10:
12            self.rect.x-=10+level
13        elif direction=="right" and self.rect.x<(WINDOWWIDTH-10):
14            self.rect.x+=10+level
15
16    def get_gun_position(self):
17        position={}
18        position["x"]=self.rect.x+(self.rect.width/2)
19        position["y"]=self.rect.y-(self.rect.height/2)
20        return position

```

```

bullet.py | fruit.py | game.py | main.py | turret.py
1 import pygame
2 class Turret(pygame.sprite.Sprite):
3     def __init__(self,WINDOWWIDTH,WINDOWHEIGHT):
4         pygame.sprite.Sprite.__init__(self)
5         self.image=pygame.image.load("images/turret.png")
6         self.rect = self.image.get_rect()
7         self.rect.x = (WINDOWWIDTH-self.rect.width)/2
8         self.rect.y = WINDOWHEIGHT-self.rect.height
9
10    def update_position(self,direction,WINDOWWIDTH,level):
11        if direction=="left" and self.rect.x>10:
12            self.rect.x-=10+level
13        elif direction=="right" and self.rect.x<(WINDOWWIDTH-10):
14            self.rect.x+=10+level
15
16    def get_gun_position(self):
17        position={}
18        position["x"]=self.rect.x+(self.rect.width/2)
19        position["y"]=self.rect.y-(self.rect.height/2)
20        return position

```

▲ To help catch all the fruit, the gun turret moves faster in higher levels of the game

The final change we've made is to add the level number to the amount the turret moves each cycle. This has the effect of speeding it up as the levels get higher; otherwise, as the gameplay accelerates, the player would struggle to get across the screen in time to shoot the fruit.

Run the game and you should find you can play multiple levels and get a final score. It may not be of commercial quality but it's a complete, working game, and strangely addictive!

## Targeting the Raspberry Pi

If you've been using a PC to create your game for the Pi, the last step is to test it on real Raspberry Pi hardware to ensure it performs acceptably.

Pi Splat could certainly be enhanced – with animations and explosions, for example – but it isn't currently possible to access the Pi's full graphics capabilities from Python. Once support is added, you'll be able to include spectacular effects with little impact on performance. 

# Sharing your game

You've finished your game – now find out how to share it with others

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » How to prepare your game for sharing
- » How to compile Python programs on Windows

▼ You can turn your Python code into a Windows app

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [www.pygame.org/wiki/Pygame2exe](http://www.pygame.org/wiki/Pygame2exe). The page title is "Pygame2exe". On the left, there's a sidebar with links like "Resources", "What's New", "Wiki", "Cookbook", "RSS Feeds", and "Project Comments". Below that is a "projects" section with categories: "arcade" (571), "2d" (507), "pygame" (461), "puzzle" (219), "game" (205), and "shooter" (172). The main content area contains text about Pygame2exe, a sample script, and a note about creating a zip file with libraries. At the bottom, there's a command-line snippet:

```
# This will create a dist directory containing the executable file, and its dependencies. All Libraries will be bundled in executable file.
```

Once you've polished your masterpiece, you'll want to share it. Exactly how you go about that depends on your target audience.

### Sharing with Raspberry Pi and Linux users

Every major **Linux** distribution, including Raspbian, comes with Python installed, and Raspbian also has Pygame as part of its default installation. If you share your game with users of other distributions, they may need to install Pygame.

### Zip it up

To share a Python program with other Linux users, you can simply compress the files into an archive (on Windows, these are called ZIP files) and send it. To do this on the Raspberry Pi, right-click on the main folder containing your game and select Compress. Then choose a file name and type for the package. If you're sharing with other Linux

users then you can leave the type as .tar.gz. (If you want to share your file with Windows users, you'll want to change it to .zip – in this case, there are other some steps you'll need to take too, which we'll discuss below.) When the recipient receives this archive, they'll be able to extract your files, load main.py into Geany (or their preferred Python environment) and launch the game.

Clearly it would be nicer if the player could simply double-click a file to run the game. We can achieve this by creating a script file that tells the computer how to launch and run it. Here's how to do this in Linux:

Start by navigating to the folder containing your main.py file, then right-click and select Create New Document|Empty Document. Give it the name start.sh. Now, right-click and select 'Open with Geany'. Then, in Geany type the single line:

**python main.py**

...and save the file. This is the same line you would type in at the terminal to run a Python file. We now need to tell Linux that it should execute this command when the text file is double-clicked. To do this, open a terminal window and type the following:

**cd Desktop/Pi\_Splat**

The cd part is the Linux command for 'change directory' and it simply tells the terminal that we want to work in the folder containing the game. Replace Desktop/Pi\_Splat with the location of your game if you've saved it somewhere different. Now, in the terminal type:

**chmod +x start.sh**

The chmod command changes the 'mode' of the file; in this case, the +x makes it executable. So, for example, instead of launching a text editor, the operating system knows that it can load the file as if it's an application, and then run the command it contains. To see this in action, double-click the start.sh icon and select Run.

## Sharing with Windows users

Windows doesn't come with Python installed as standard, so you can't simply send a Windows user an archive of your game and expect them to be able to play it. If they had to download and install Python just to try out your program, there's a good chance that they simply wouldn't bother - no matter how good it is.

An easy solution to this problem is a tool called Py2Exe, which can compile your game into a single executable file that a Windows user can run with a double-click. The process feels convoluted the first time, but needs doing only once - and the person you're sharing with doesn't need to do anything at all.

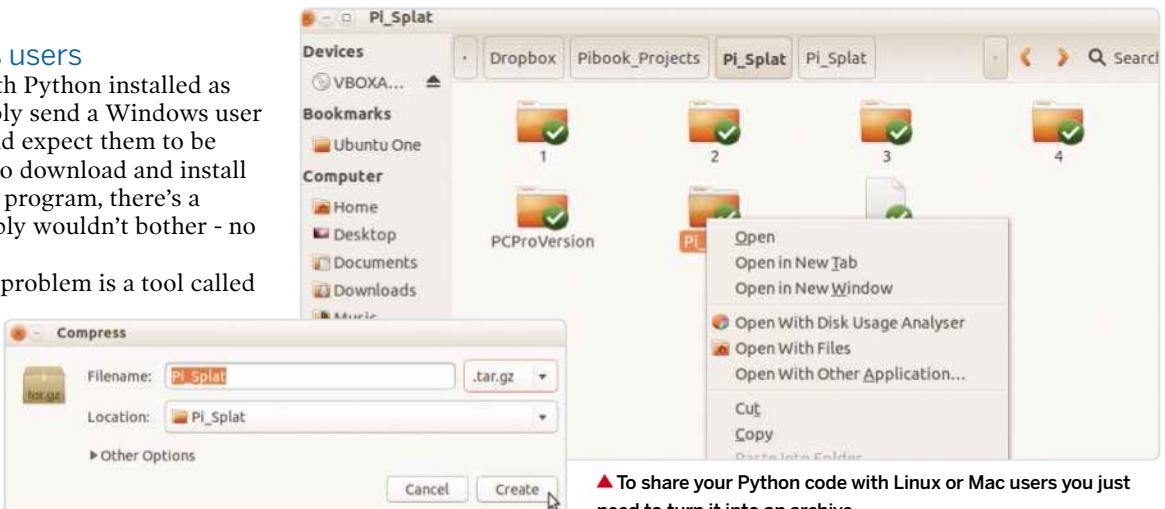
To begin, head over to [www.rpilab.net/links](http://www.rpilab.net/links) and download Py2Exe. Next, we need to delve into the bowels of Windows to make sure Py2Exe can find Python. To do this in Windows 7 or 8, press the Windows key, type **edit environment variables** into the Search box, then press Enter. Open the Settings dialogue that comes up, click the Environment Variables button, and then, in the System Variables list, find the entry Path and click the Edit button. Now, assuming you've installed Python 2.7 to the default location, simply add the following entry to the text in this box (making sure the entry before it ends in a semi-colon):

**c:/Python27;**

Save these settings and then reboot the PC.

When Windows comes back up, go to [www.pygame.org/wiki/Pygame2exe](http://www.pygame.org/wiki/Pygame2exe) and copy and paste the text in the white box on that page into a Geany window. This is a template specifically written for using Pygame with Py2Exe, so, to get it to work for our project, we need to change the following lines:

45. change filename to main.py
48. Change project name to PiSplat
54. change project version to 0.1
57. change licence to GNU General Public License (sic)
65. change description to A simple shoot-em-up
71. change the self.extra\_datas list to include images so that the game images, in a subfolder of that name, will be bundled into the resulting file.



▲ To share your Python code with Linux or Mac users you just need to turn it into an archive

When you're done, save the file as `compile.py`, then open a Windows command prompt and navigate to the folder containing your game using the `cd` command.

So, for example, if you've been saving the program files into a folder on your desktop, you might type:

**cd Desktop\pi\_splat**

Now, to compile your EXE file type:

**python compile.py**

At the end of the process, you'll find a new subfolder called `dist` that contains all the files you need to distribute for your game to run. Double-click the file with the EXE extension and your game should now run.

To share the game, all you need to do is zip up and distribute the contents of the `dist` folder. Now, the people you send your game to can just click the file and start playing - effectively all the bits of Python they need have been wrapped up ready for them to use.

So that's your first game done, dusted and out of the door. For more of a challenge, turn the page.

▼ By compiling your code, it will run on any Windows PC

```
Desktop>Command Prompt
Desktop>Temp\pisplat\dist\pygame.overlay.pyd
copying C:\Python27\lib\site-packages\pygame\pixelarray.pyd -> C:\Users\Kev Partn
er\Desktop\Temp\pisplat\dist\pygame.pixelarray.pyd
copying C:\Python27\lib\site-packages\pygame\rect.pyd -> C:\Users\Kev Partner\Desktop\Temp\pisplat\dist\pygame.rect.pyd
copying C:\Python27\lib\site-packages\pygame\rbobject.pyd -> C:\Users\Kev Partner\Desktop\Temp\pisplat\dist\pygame.rwobject.pyd
copying C:\Python27\lib\site-packages\pygame\scrap.pyd -> C:\Users\Kev Partner\Desktop\Temp\pisplat\dist\pygame.scrap.pyd
copying C:\Python27\lib\site-packages\pygame\surface.pyd -> C:\Users\Kev Partner\Desktop\Temp\pisplat\dist\pygame.surface.pyd
copying C:\Python27\lib\site-packages\pygame\surflock.pyd -> C:\Users\Kev Partner\Desktop\Temp\pisplat\dist\pygame.surflock.pyd
copying C:\Python27\lib\site-packages\pygame\time.pyd -> C:\Users\Kev Partner\Desktop\Temp\pisplat\dist\pygame.time.pyd
copying C:\Python27\lib\site-packages\pygame\transform.pyd -> C:\Users\Kev Partner\Desktop\Temp\pisplat\dist\pygame.transform.pyd
*** copy dlls ***
copying C:\Python27\lib\site-packages\pygame\SDL_mixer.dll -> C:\Users\Kev Partn
er\Desktop\Temp\pisplat\dist
copying C:\Windows\system32\python27.dll -> C:\Users\Kev Partner\Desktop\Temp\pi
splat\dist
setting sys.winver for 'C:\Users\Kev Partner\Desktop\Temp\pisplat\dist\python27.
dll' to 'py2exe'
copying C:\Python27\lib\site-packages\pygame\libvorbisfile-3.dll -> C:\Users\Kev
```

# Create a polished game

In the previous chapters we made a simple game – now let's make a commercial-quality game that could have been produced professionally

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- » How to plan a large project effectively
- » Optimise your program to run efficiently
- » Creating complicated objects



**B**ack in the mid-1990s, Russian programmer Eugene Alemzin released a game called Shariki in which the player scored points by matching three or more circles of the same colour.

Shariki was the basis of many popular games including the hugely successful Bejeweled series by PopCap Games and current favourite Candy Crush Saga by King.com. Together, this genre has become known as match-three games.

In this chapter, we'll look at a Raspberry Pi version of this game called Fruit Pi. Although (in principle) match-three games are relatively simple, creating a commercial-quality game is a more involved task than Pi Splat, our simple shoot-'em-up.

With that in mind, we're going to take a look behind the scenes at the game halfway through its development. That way, we can discuss the game's design phase, the programming techniques used so far and what remains to be done before it can be released. The code can be downloaded from [www.snipca.com/9819](http://www.snipca.com/9819).

## How the game works

As with Pi Splat, the first step is to look at the game from the user's point of view: what do they expect from a match-three game? Here are the basic rules, which are shared by most games of this type:

- The player sees objects arranged in a grid, usually eight down by eight across
- These objects are randomly drawn from a limited selection. In the case of an 8x8 grid, there are usually six. Too small a selection would lead to too many matches, while too large a selection would result in too few matches.
- The aim is to swap adjacent objects so that, in their new configuration, they form a pattern of three or more identical objects either vertically or horizontally. If no swap is possible, the objects return to their original place.
- The initial board for each level should contain no matches (this is why it is pseudo random rather than truly random).
- When a pattern is formed, the objects are then removed from the board and points are awarded.
- The objects directly above then drop into that space. Random fruits are added at the top of the grid to keep the whole board populated.
- If this change in configuration causes matches, the game processes them and awards points.
- The level is complete when a pre-determined score threshold is reached.
- Different versions of the game add extra features such as "power-ups" or rewards for matching the same object type more than once in succession.

This is a comparatively brief list of rules – it's not like learning chess. However, translating these simple requirements into a computer program is a

different matter. Once again, we'll start by breaking the rules down into the familiar categories of input, logic and output to arrive at an initial set of tasks.

## Input

The user needs a way to indicate which objects they wish to swap. In a computer-based game, this will usually mean by using a mouse. The final game will also need a way of reading in any saved progress data or stored game preferences.

## Logic

The code must generate a pseudo-random set of objects with no matches for the initial board. When the player starts swapping objects, it must check for matches. When a match is made, the logic must identify which objects to delete as a result, move existing objects down the grid, and add new objects at the top to replace them. Our game logic must keep track of game data, such as the player's current score and which level has been reached.

## Output

From the player's perspective, the graphics, animations and sounds are what generate the experience of playing the game. So the game design, and the code we create to implement it, must include:

- Drawing attractive graphics
- Loading them into appropriate classes
- Animating them onto the screen
- Indicating which fruit has been selected during swapping
- Displaying the score and other game information
- Saving game progress and preference information to a file
- Playing in-game music and sounds

It's quite a list – and each of these tasks breaks down into many smaller programming jobs. Ultimately, we could be looking at hundreds or even thousands of lines of code. But don't be intimidated: as we mentioned earlier, many successful games have been developed by very small teams or individuals.

## Fruit Pi

As with Pi Splat, we'll aim to get a single level running before going on to add multiple levels and the various other features that make for a complete, professional game. Aside from sourcing the fruit images for our game, we need to make several decisions, namely:

1. The size of the playing area. We've decided on a width of 1,024 pixels and a height of 768. This stretches the Pi's capabilities whilst still being large

“Our Fruit Pi game has much in common with some of the most popular mobile games available today.”

enough to make for a good visual experience.

2. How we will indicate which fruit is selected. The player needs a visual indicator. This might be that the fruit increases in size when clicked, for example. We've opted for a simple rectangle over the selected fruit.
3. How we will animate fruit. Many games make use of metaphor. We present the fruit as if they've been poured into the top of the computer screen from left to right, so we need to reflect this in the animation.
4. How we will present user information. Our 1,024 x 768 window leaves room for us to display information alongside the play area. We've opted to put the board on the right and the information on the left.

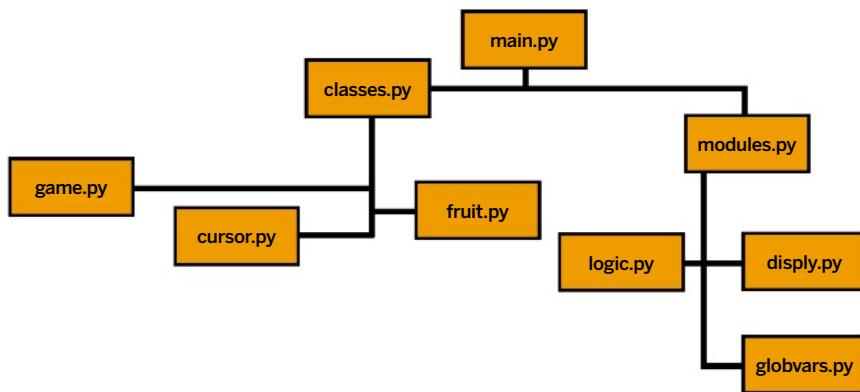
The game background is an 8-bit PNG file, and we've created a graphic for the board that's placed on top. We can refresh just this area when fruits move, saving processing power. We'll use sounds from [www.freesound.org](http://www.freesound.org) as before, but before implementing them we'll focus on getting the game mechanics and graphics working well on the Pi.

## Programming approach

As with Pi Splat, each fruit will be based on a Fruit class, which will remember what type of fruit it is and where it's located on the screen. It will be capable of updating its own position and following rules about when to stop moving. We'll also once more organise our code into modules. The main module contains the game loop; most of the logic is contained in a logic module and most of the output code will go in a module called display.

Fruit Pi follows a structure that's typical of games, and in particular those games created in Python. The central module, main.py, contains the core of the game – the main loop – with most of the work of generating and displaying the visual objects and handling user interaction undertaken by an array of modules and classes summarised in the diagram over the page.

This structure provides good examples of the differences between modules and classes. You can see that each of the classes defines an object that has a clear, individual, identity. The Fruit and Cursor classes are graphical objects and the Game



▲ Our new game is divided into modules and classes, to make coding and testing much simpler

class is used to hold information about the game currently being played (including score and level).

The modules, on the other hand, are simply blocks of code organised according to their purpose. The file logic.py, for example, doesn't define a sort of object: it's a set of functions that handles the program's decision making.

Similarly, the functions in display.py deal with the visual aspects of the game – including creating and handling the fruit objects. To use a juggling analogy, the class defines the balls and the module describes how the juggler throws them. We'll see this working in practice as we look at the code.

Modules, then, are mainly used to organise code into logical units, and they also make it easier to share code across projects. You could dump the entire contents of each module into the main.py file and it would still work, but it would be ungainly, impossible to reuse and hard to manage.

You'll have noticed that the module names are influenced by our input, logic and output approach (display.py representing the last of these). The only reason there isn't a discrete input module is that, for this game, user input amounts to little more than clicking a pair of fruits, so it can be easily handled within the other modules.

The way you organise your code must make sense to you (and your team if you have one). And, above all else, it must be practical. If you ever feel restricted by the structure you've created, then you've created the wrong structure!

So, from our thoughts on design and using our input, logic, output approach we can quickly generate structure for our game; we know from the start which objects we're likely to need and which modules to create. We may add or remove classes or modules as we go, but we have a starting point.

You'll notice one module that doesn't fit this rule: globvars.py. As its name suggests, this module contains all our global variables. Now, mention global variables to programmers of a certain type and they'll throw up their hands in horror because, used inappropriately, they can cause problems.

However, it makes sense to use globals for variables that need to be accessed by all modules, especially where they are constants. We do this by defining them in a separate Python file and then importing it into all modules and classes. Here's the relevant code:

```

1 import pygame
2 #TOP LEVEL VARIABLES
3 FPS = 30 # frames per second to update the screen
4 WINDOWWIDTH = 1924 # width of the program's window, in pixels
5 WINDOWHEIGHT = 768 # height in pixels
6 BOARDLEFT=300 #the position of the board, from the left
7 BOARDTOP=50 #the position of the board, from the top
8 CELLWIDTH=62 #the width of individual cells
9 CELLIMAGENWIDTH=68 # the width of the image files
10 BOARDWIDTH = 8 # how many columns in the board
11 BOARDHEIGHT = 8 # how many rows in the board
12 NUDE=(CELLWIDTH-CELLIMAGENWIDTH)/2+4 #because the cell image is smaller than the
13 speed=30
14 WHITE=[255,255,255]; RED=[255,0,0]; GREEN=[0,255,0]; BLUE=[0,0,255]; BLACK=[0,0,0]
15
16 pygame.init()
17 displayFont=pygame.font.Font("256BYTES.TTF", 28)
18
19
  
```

In the case of this game we're defining variables including the height and width of the game window, the position of the game board within that window, and the height and width of the cells within the board. We also define some common colours and a typeface.

### The main loop

Let's look at the structure of a typical main loop for a game. Broadly speaking, this will be all that main.py contains, with all the other work being done by the modules and classes. We might characterise the structure of operations as:

```

#Import modules and classes
#Define variables
#Draw the background
#Game Loop
    #Level Loop
  
```

So, when the player first launches the game and the background has been drawn, they enter the game loop. Unless they've continued a saved game, they'll be at level 1, so the player enters a level loop that handles everything that happens next – fruit dropping into view, swapping, deleting and so on.

Once the level is completed, the player is sent back to the game loop (as the level loop is inside it). This checks to see whether the player was playing the final level and, if not, starts a new iteration of the level loop. This continues until the levels run out or the player exits the game. Let's take a look at how this works in practice.

### Imports

We start by importing the various Python libraries we want to use on line 1:

```

1 import pygame, random, time, math, sys, copy
2 from pygame.locals import *
3 from game import *
4 from fruit import *
5 from logic import *
6 from display import *
7 from globvars import *
8 from cursor import *
9
  
```

Pygame is the only one of these libraries that isn't included in a standard Python install (although it is included on the Raspberry Pi). Lines 3 to 8 import our custom classes and modules. With these we use a slightly different syntax:

```
from [module/class name] import *
```

The from keyword is mainly used to allow us to import part of a module. For example, the following line would import only the randint function from the Random library:

```
from random import randint
```

This is a more resource-efficient way of doing things, because Python doesn't have to import any unnecessary code – but it means that if you subsequently want to use another function from the library, you'd have to go back and add it to the from line. By specifying an asterisk we import everything, exactly as if we'd used the import keyword. This may seem to defeat the object of using from; but by doing it in this way we can refer to the functions within the module by just using their function name, rather than having to also add the module name. So, if we use the from keyword with an asterisk as above, we can turn this line:

```
my_number=random.randint(0,5)
```

... into the simpler:

```
my_number=randint(0,5)
```

In other words, once you've imported a function using the from syntax, you can use it as if it were built into the language rather than imported. This saves typing and, in many cases, is just as clear as explicitly naming the module.

There's one caveat to this approach, though. If multiple functions in separate modules have identical names then this will cause an error, so it needs careful handling. One way to do this is to use only the from method of importing with your own classes. This means that game=game.Game() becomes game=Game(). The first one must indicate which file the class is contained in; the second doesn't have to because we've used from.

If your code is to be easy to understand, either by yourself or another programmer, you can either prefix all module functions with their name by using import or, if you use the shorter form, have a logical structure to the modules that makes it obvious which one a function belongs to. For example, you could reasonably expect to find a function called animateFruits in the display module; you wouldn't expect to see it in logic.py.

Let's look now at the heart of the game – the level loop. This loop runs many times per second and carries out the following instructions during each cycle:

- 1.** If fruits are falling (both at the beginning and when fruit is removed) draw the animation before moving on.
- 2.** If not:
  - a. Check whether any keys have been pressed or whether the mouse button has been clicked.
  - b. If a fruit has been clicked on then:
    - i. If it's the first of a pair, draw the cursor.
    - ii. If it's the second of a pair, check whether the two fruits are neighbours (if not, they can't possibly match).
    - iii. If so, run the matching algorithm and:
      1. If they do match, swap the fruits, update the score, delete the fruits, regenerate the board in its new configuration and animate into place.
      2. If they don't match, move the fruits back.
    - iv. If the two fruits were not neighbours, set the second fruit to be the new position for the cursor and await a second click.
  - 3.** If no animation is taking place, refresh the screen.

This level loop continues to run until a pre-determined score is reached for the level, at which point it exits back to the main game loop. Most of the lines within the level loop call functions from modules or classes that carry out the actual work. For example, consider this line:

```
animateFruits(board,DISPLAYSURFACE,fruit_»
sprite_group,BOARD_AREA,board_graphic)
```

This single statement calls a 34-line function in display.py. Using functions in this way makes it easy to reuse the function elsewhere in this program, and it helps keep the code clear and easy to understand.

Without knowing any of the detail of how animateFruits works, another programmer could look over the main module and instantly understand what the line does. So, main.py is, in a sense, a road map showing the primary route the program takes, with each module serving as a street atlas providing the detail.

## Loading fruits

Before each level begins, the game must create a valid board. To do this we must first decide how the board will be represented; that is, what sort of

variable can we use to store it? Fundamentally, the board is simply a table with eight rows and eight columns, and once you're used to Python you'll immediately realise that the humble list is the ideal variable type to store this. We might create a list for the bottom row of the playing area that looks like this:

```
('strawberry','strawberry','pear','banana','pear',»
'cherry','raspberry','raspberry')
```

To deal with the fact that we have eight different rows to handle, we'll make use of the fact that a list can contain other lists. In other words, we'll store the play area as a list of eight lists, each of which represents a row. We can then access the value of, say, the second fruit on the bottom row via the statement below. Remember that all lists are zero-indexed!

```
Fruit=board[7][1]
```

In practice, we rarely need to do this: it's easier simply to pull the whole row out and then access it in the normal way.

Now we've decided how our board will be represented, we can write a function that will create a new valid grid of fruits. The game loop runs this command before each level:

```
loadFruits(board,fruit_sprite_group)
```

As you'd expect, this function is found in display.py: here's how the relevant code looks:

```
16 def loadFruits(board,fruit_sprite_group):
17     cell_number=1
18
19     #if loadboard==None: board=[[]]*8 #clear the board if there are any fruit objects already there (ie this is level 2)
20
21     ##### CREATE FRUIT OBJECTS AND LOAD THEM INTO THE LIST HERE
22     for row in range(8):#from 0 to 7, each of the 8 rows
23         for column in range(8):#from 0 to 7, each of the 8 columns in each row
24             #this is the vertical position for the whole of the row
25             y=((CELLWIDTH*EIGHT)+BOARDTOP+MOVE)*cell_number
26
27             for column_2 in range(2):#run once for each of the 2 columns in each row
28                 exclude_fruits=[]
29
30                 #check if the two fruits in the left do not match each other (not a prob for the first 2 columns)
31                 #if column_2 > 0:#check that the two fruits in the left do not match each other (not a prob for the first 2 columns)
32                 #if thisrow[column_2].name==thisrow[column_2-1].name:#if the two to the left are the same as this one
33                 #    exclude_fruits.append(thisrow[column_2-1].name)
34
35                 if row>1:#check whether the previous two rows held the same fruit in this column
36                     if thisrow[column_2].name==thisrow[column_2-1].name:
37                         exclude_fruits.append(thisrow[column_2-1].name)
38
39             fruit_name=get_fruit(exclude_fruits) #now get a fruit from the valid choices
40             x=(column*CELLWIDTH)+BOARDLEFT+MOVE #set the left position of each fruit
41             this_fruit=Fruit(fruit_name,x,y,row,column,»
42             speed,BOARDWIDTH,BOARDHEIGHT) #create a fruit object
43             fruit_sprite_group.add(this_fruit)
```

The use of two for..in loops such as this is very common when you want to represent two-dimensional structures such as a table in code. Line 23 runs eight times, once for each row – during which line 27 runs eight times, once for each cell in the row.

Line 25 sets the vertical position of the row, using the global variables to do so. By doing it this way we could replace the existing board with one of a different size by simply changing the values of those global variables.

Remember that one of the rules for the initial board is that it mustn't contain any immediate

matches, so the if statements at lines 30 and 34 check whether a pair of the same fruit already exists to the left of the current cell or immediately above it. If so, then we can't use that fruit for this cell. So, we make a list called exclude\_fruits, specifying those fruits we mustn't choose this time. We then call the get\_fruit function in the logic module, which will send back the name of a randomly generated valid fruit. Here's the relevant section of logic.py:

```
32 def get_fruit(exclude_list=[]): #however many fruits there are, send back one randomly
33     fruit_names=['banana','blueberry','berry','pear','raspberry','strawberry']
34
35     for rottenfruit in exclude_list: #if any of the fruits are invalid
36         if rottenfruit in fruit_names: fruit_names.remove(rottenfruit) #remove them from the list of choices
37
38     fruit_name=random.choice(fruit_names) #pick a fruit from the list of valid choices
39     return fruit_names[fruit_name]
```

Take a look at the parameters for get\_fruit. You'll see that we specify exclude\_list as you'd expect, so that display.py can send a list of fruit names we mustn't choose. However, most of the time this list will be empty. By setting exclude\_list=[] we're telling Python that if we aren't sent a list, we can assume that there are no fruits, and to therefore use an empty list in this function. This is a default setting – it can be very useful if you aren't sure which parameters will be passed to a function.

We then create a list with the complete set of fruit names and, in line 123, cycle through the list of excluded fruits, removing them from the list of fruit names in line 124. The if statement in line 124 is needed because if, say, there are two raspberries to the left and two above, then exclude\_list would contain "raspberry" twice – and Python would throw an error if we tried to remove it when it had already been deleted.

Lines 126 and 127 pull a random fruit out of the remaining candidates and send it back.

Once we have that name, we can create a new Fruit object for this cell. We then add this fruit to the row and, once we have a whole row, we add it to the board.

```
this_fruit=Fruit(fruit_name,x,y,row,column,»
speed,BOARDWIDTH,BOARDHEIGHT)
```

This calls the initialisation routine in the Fruit class and sends it the information it needs in order to create a fruit object. In this case, this means it will load the correct graphic and set its final position on the board. It also sets a variable called \_moving, which the code will use later to work out if the fruit is still animating or whether it's arrived in place.

The other functions contained in the Fruit class illustrate how self-aware it is. calculate\_new\_position works out where the fruit should be the next time it's drawn to the screen. It takes account of whether it's travelling down the screen (as it would be initially), across or up (in the case of

a swap), and also works out when to change the `_moving` variable to False so that the game can then ignore it during animation. In traditional procedural programming, you'd need to write a complicated nested list to track each fruit from within the level loop; here we leave it to the object itself to do this.

The `calculate_neighbours` method records the fruits above, alongside and below this fruit (where applicable). This is used later by the level loop when determining whether fruits can be swapped.

`change_image` is used when we swap fruits – this is because we're actually changing their image rather than directly swapping objects. This is a much simpler approach because it means that each object can retain its x and y positions in the grid for the entire level, and simply needs to update its fruit graphic to reflect the state of play. This function handles all the changes necessary when a fruit changes.

## Finishing the game

One particularly distinctive aspect of games such as Bejeweled and Candy Crush Saga is the way the objects – gems, sweets or, in our case, fruit – fall onto the screen. When designing a routine for this, the first step is to write a set of rules for displaying the objects. Our rules are simple enough: first, the fruit appears from the top and fills the board from the bottom upwards. Then, fruit fills from the right-hand side of the row.

In other words, when building an empty board, the bottom right-hand cell is the first to be filled with fruit, and the top-left-hand cell the last. The implication of this is that we have to build a routine that not only adds fruit from bottom to top but also from right to left.

Remember, at this point we have a list called `board` containing eight sub-lists representing the rows and each containing eight fruit objects, one per cell. Our job now is to animate them onto the screen rather than simply plonking them there in one go (even though that would be much simpler to program!). To make matters more difficult, the row should fill from right to left rather than the whole row appearing at once.

The `animateFruits` function is contained in `display.py`, as you'd expect, and is called from the level loop whenever the `re_paint` variable is set to True. This will be the case at the start of each level as the board fills up and each time fruit is removed by swapping.

Here's the line that calls it:

```
animateFruits(board,DISPLAYSURFACE,fruit_»
sprite_group,BOARD_AREA,board_graphic)
```

What do we send to `animateFruits`? The board (the list of fruits organised by row), the Pygame surface onto which we're drawing, the sprite group into which the fruits will be placed, a global containing a rect of the board area (that is, its x, y, height and width), and a reference to the graphic itself.

The structure of `animateFruits` is similar to that of `loadFruits` in that we're iterating over rows and columns. This time, however, we're altering the position of the fruit each cycle.

```
32 def animateFruits(board,DISPLAYSURFACE,fruit_sprite_group,BOARD_AREA,board_graphic):
33     #start the animation of the fruits falling in staggered fashion
34     #clock=pygame.time.Clock() #create a game clock for limiting the frames per second
35
36     falling_fruits=[ ] #make a copy of the board-nested list
37     for row in range(len(board)):
38         falling_fruits.append(board[row])
39
40     current_row=0
41
42     for fruit in reversed(falling_fruits): #the "reversed" keyword starts at the end of the list and works up
43         fruit_sprite_group.add(fruit) #add all the fruit objects from this row to the sprite group ready to be displayed
44
45         if fruit._moving==True:
46             for fruit in reversed(fruit._row): #stopper initial position
47                 fruit._speedup=0
48                 fruit._row_index+=1 #add 1 to the starting position of the fruit
49                 #+speed ensures a smaller (negative numbers) on the starting position goes up the screen off the page
50
51                 while len(fruit._row)>0 and there are any fruits still in fruit._row[i] as fruit._row[i].still_in_board():
52                     fruit._move(delta_time) #move it each fruit in the row
53
54                     if fruit._moving=False: #if it's reached the bottom
55                         fruit._row.remove(fruit) #remove it from fruit._row
56
57
58     shrinking_board_area=BOARD_AREA[0],BOARD_AREA[1],BOARD_AREA[2],BOARD_AREA[3]-CELLWIDTH*THELEN*(current_row-1)
59
60     DISPLAYSURFACE.blit(board_graphic,shrinking_board_area) #only blit the bit of the board over which the fruits are falling
61
62     fruit_sprite_group.draw(DISPLAYSURFACE) #draw the sprites in their new position to the surface
63
64     pygame.display.update(shrinking_board_area) #update only the animated part of the display
65     clock.tick(HIGH_FPS) #60
66
67     current_row+=1
```

The above code shows the relevant part of `display.py`. We begin by making a copy of the board list – we'll see why later. In line 63 we begin the row by row loop; the reversed keyword specifies to start at the end of the list (the bottom row) and work upwards. On line 65, we add the entire row to the sprite group; then we work through each fruit (again using reversed; this time to work from right to left) progressively raising the vertical position as we go. This gives a staggered line with the left-hand fruit further off-screen than the right.

We then run each fruit in the row's `move_me` function, which launches the `calculate_new_position` function we covered earlier. We check whether the fruit's `_moving` property is False – indicating that it's arrived at its final position – and if so, we remove the reference to that row from `fruit_row`. Thus, we use fewer resources as each fruit stops moving, and we can use the `len` function in line 72 to check if the row has completed. If we'd been using the actual `board` variable, it would end up containing no fruits. This is why we copied it.

Line 79 calculates the minimum area the fruit will pass over as it falls. As the rows build up from the bottom, we don't need to redraw the settled rows every cycle, so this area becomes smaller and smaller. We feed this calculation into line 81's `blit` operation, which draws the board. We draw the fruit sprite group in one go but only update the shrinking board area. We could redraw the whole board each cycle, but this more efficient approach helps the Pi to keep up.

Once the board has been drawn, the program waits for the user to click on a fruit. Just as with

key presses, Pygame can listen for mouse events, such as `MOUSEBUTTONDOWN`. Working out which fruit the mouse pointer was over when the button was clicked is handled in the `logic.py` function `which_fruit`:

```
112 def which_fruit(board, position): #work out which fruit is under the
113     for fruit_row in board:
114         for fruit in fruit_row:
115             if fruit.rect.collidepoint(position):
116                 return fruit
```

This code takes advantage of a Pygame function called `collidepoint`, which receives as a parameter the `event.pos` returned by `MOUSEBUTTONDOWN` (this is actually two numbers, namely the x and y positions). Our loop simply iterates through each fruit in turn, checking whether `collidepoint` is True for that fruit. When it is, we know we're dealing with the fruit that's located under the mouse pointer, so we return this object.

```
56     if clicked_fruit: #if the mouse has been clicked over a fruit
57         if pair_of_fruits['source']!=None:
58             pair_of_fruits['source'].click()
59             decoration_sprite_group.add(cursor)
60             cursor.moveTo(clicked_fruit_rect)
61         else:
62             result=check_for_neighbour(pair_of_fruits['source'],clicked_fruit)
63             if it_is_a_neighbour==result[0]:
64                 direction=result[1]
65             if is_it_a_neighbour:
66                 pair_of_fruits['dest']=clicked_fruit
67                 board.swap_fruits(pair_of_fruits,direction,board)
68                 result=handle_matches(board,pair_of_fruits)
69             if result[0]==True: #if there were matches
70                 pair_of_fruits['source']=None
71                 game.update_score(result[1])
```

Back in `main.py`, we now check whether this was the first fruit to be clicked in a pair by establishing whether `pair_of_fruits['source']` already contains a fruit. If it doesn't, we assume this is the first click, move the cursor over this fruit and wait for the player to click again.

Otherwise, the `else` at line 61 is triggered and we check whether the second fruit is a neighbour of the first. If it isn't, we consider this a "new" first click, since we assume that the player has found a match elsewhere on the board. If the second fruit is a neighbour of the first then we must check whether there is a match and, if so, increment the score and update the screen. If not, we swap the fruits back to their original positions and go back to square one.

### Finishing the game

So far, we've seen how the code builds a playing board, animates the pieces into place and handles the player's attempt at matching fruit. The next thing we need is some code to check that two selected fruits really are a valid match. The first step here is to check whether the selected fruits are neighbours. The code that handles this can be found in `logic.py`.

This code is pretty simple: remember that when we created each fruit object, we ran a function that established its immediate neighbours. Take a look at line 32 and consider how this would translate into plain English: "If both fruits are on the same row and the second fruit's column number is the same as the first fruit's neighbour on the left, then they must be neighbours."

We then check the same on the right; then, in lines 36 and 38, we work out whether they are neighbours above or below. If any of these tests returns a True result, we immediately return this, along with the direction. If none of them returns True, we return False because we've established that the selected fruits can't be neighbours.

Assuming they are neighbours, our next task is to work out whether, by swapping the fruits into the place the player intends, a vertical or horizontal line of at least three fruits would be formed:

```
4 def check_for_matches(board,pair_of_fruits):
5     copy_board=copy.deepcopy(board) #make a copy so that we can work on it without affecting the original
6
7     #first check for row matches
8     #any matches=False use this to track if there were any matches at all
9     rowid=
10    for fruit_row in copy_board:
11        colid=
12        for fruit in fruit_row:
13            if fruit_row[0].name==fruit.name:
14                #we only need to check the first 6 fruits in the row
15                #if fruit_row[0].name==fruit_row[1].name==fruit_row[2].name==fruit.name:
16                #the two fruits to the right are the same as this one?
17                #true _delete=True, fruit_row[0].name._delete=True
18                if rowid>0: #only we only need to check the first 6 fruits in a column
19                    if copy_board[rowid][0].name==copy_board[rowid][1].name==copy_board[rowid][2].name==fruit.name:
20                        #are the two fruits below the same as this one?
21                        #true _delete=True
22                        if any_matches==True:
23                            fruit.delete=True,copy_board[rowid][0]._delete=True,copy_board[rowid][1]._delete=True
24                            rowid+=1
25
26    return parameters['any_matches']
27
28    if any_matches==True:
29        return parameters.append(copy_board)
30
31    return parameters
```

The actual business of finding matches is pretty straightforward. We begin by making a copy of the board, so we can work on it without changing the original.

We then use our familiar double `for..in` structure to go through each row and column in turn. Note that at line 13 we only need to check the first six fruits in a row: this is because any pattern that begins in the seventh would be too short to be valid (the same applies to columns, of course). For each fruit, we check to see whether the two fruits to its right are of the same type. If so, we set the `_delete` property to True for all three fruits. This has no immediate effect – it simply marks the fruits for deletion later, when we process all the updates for the board.

We repeat this for the columns from line 18, and send back both the `any_matches` variable (True or False), and, if True, we also return the updated copy of the board that we've been working with.

This version of the board contains copies of all the fruit objects, with those that are part of a matching pattern having their `_delete` property set to True, which makes it very easy to process all the changes, as you can see in the code at the top of the next page.

```

58     def delete_matches(board):
59         # Create a list of all the fruits that are to be deleted
60         delete_fruits = []
61         extra_fruits_needed = [0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0]
62         last_affected_col = 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
63
64         rows = []
65         for fruit_row in copy_board:
66             rows.append(fruit_row)
67             for fruit in fruit_row:
68                 if fruit.delete == True:
69                     extra_fruits_needed[column] += 1
70                     last_affected_col = column
71                     delete_fruits.append(fruit)
72             column += 1
73
74         generate_new_board()
75         rows = []
76         for number_of_new_fruits in extra_fruits_needed:
77             if number_of_new_fruits > 0:
78                 last_affected_col -= number_of_new_fruits - 1
79                 for i in range(number_of_new_fruits):
80                     current_y = board[last_affected_col].name[-1]
81                     board[last_affected_col].change_inplace(thisrow=number_of_new_fruits+1, y=last_affected_col)
82                     board[last_affected_col].change_inplace(thisrow=number_of_new_fruits+1, name=fruits[i].name)
83                     board[last_affected_col].name[-1] = current_y
84                     board[last_affected_col].is_fruit = True
85                     board[last_affected_col].direction = None
86
87             col += 1
88
89         for thisrow in range(number_of_new_fruits):
90             board[last_affected_col].current_y = board[last_affected_col].change_inplace(fruit=fruits[i].name, board=thisrow)[col], 0, board[thisrow][col], current_y
91             board[last_affected_col].is_fruit = True
92             board[last_affected_col].direction = None
93             col += 1
94
95         col += 1
96
97         if number_of_fruits_matches == len(delete_fruits):
98             return number_of_fruits_matches
99

```

The above code implements the `delete_matches` function – arguably the most important function in the entire program. This section of code removes fruits that have been found to be part of a matching set, and generates a new board with all the necessary changes made. It begins by creating two lists, both of eight elements (one for each column of the board).

Each element of the first list, `extra_fruits_needed`, represents the number of new fruits that need to be generated for that column. The second list contains the number of the last row that is affected by the changes, again by column. This enables us to simply ignore the rows that remain the same.

At this point, we need to think about how we're going to handle fruits disappearing and being added. From the player's perspective, when a gap appears, the fruit above drops to fill the gap.

As we've mentioned, it's easiest to handle this by updating the objects in the relevant positions. So, if three raspberries disappear and the fruit above the gap is a cherry, we can simply change the bottom raspberry to a cherry. This starts at line 79, above. To provide a better visual effect, however, we don't want the cherry to instantly jump down into place. Instead, we want it to fall from its old position to the new one. We can achieve this by temporarily changing the `y` position of each affected fruit to the same as that of the fruit whose variety it has stolen. Then we animate it moving back to its original position.

Lines 90 to 94 deal with adding new fruits to the board – or, to be more precise, assigning new fruit names as needed, to fill the gaps where fruits have fallen down. We generate random names for the relevant slots, load in the graphics and set the new fruits above the board so they can be animated into place, in the same way as when we originally filled it at the start of the level.

There's one final eventuality we must deal with: what if, after the player has matched a line of fruits, and the board has been updated, the resulting updated board itself contains new matches? This

## TIPS FOR PROGRAMMING GAMES

### 1 Get each part fully working before moving on

For this game, the first step is to create the initial game board – so this was implemented before animation was considered. That was completed before the interactive features were added. This approach can mean updating code when you move to the next stage, but you're always building on a fully working foundation.

### 2 Code, test, code, test...

Remember that coding is done in small steps: you write a line (or a short block) and you test it. It almost never works first time, so amend and test again. Only move on once it's working.

### 3 Write it down!

Don't be afraid to pull out a pen and paper if you get stuck. Sometimes, by drawing a rough representation of what the player will see, you can work out the consequences of your code.

### 4 Use the terminal

If you're unsure of how a piece of code works, type it into the Python interpreter to see what happens.

### 5 Use the documentation

Python has excellent documentation at [python.org](http://python.org), and on third-party sites such as [www.stackoverflow.com](http://www.stackoverflow.com).

There's no need to struggle – the Python community is very helpful.

### 6 Write the documentation

Use the `#` symbol to document your code as you go. The examples in this guide don't include many, for reasons of space, but our online samples are heavily commented.

### 7 Take a break

If you find yourself struggling with a problem, take a break. It's amazing how often a solution can pop into your head when you've rested.

### 8 Enjoy yourself

Give yourself a pat on the back when you get each part of the game working. There is nothing quite like working hard on a piece of code, running it and seeing it work on-screen.

is easy to handle: once the fruits have animated back into position, we run the `check_for_matches` process again. The function doesn't care whether the board it's working on was created by a user swapping fruits, or is the result of being regenerated. Either way, it will check through and report any matches. Because we've used modular code, we're able to reuse the `animate_fruits` and `check_for_matches` procedures to handle both the initial board and all subsequently generated boards with no additional work.

## Final steps

We now have a fully working single level. The next step is to implement multiple levels, along with a splash screen, instructions and a function to save progress. The graphics and animations will need a little extra polish and sound effects are more or less mandatory. However, adding additional pizzazz will impact performance. So it's important to thoroughly test the game on the Raspberry Pi, and optimise the basic version for this slow platform before adding anything else. If your game is intended only for more powerful computers you can omit this stage, but you're narrowing your audience. The best approach is to optimise as far as you can and add only a minimum of extra graphical overhead to the final game – that way, it should work well on all platforms. 

# SECTION 5

# Going further

---

Discover even more possibilities with these advanced Raspberry Pi upgrades, secrets, projects and ideas

If you've worked through this guide, then by now you should have mastered not only the Raspberry Pi itself but the Python programming language too. You'll have even produced your first few programs. But it doesn't need to end there. The Raspberry Pi offers almost limitless ways to extend your experience and learn new skills. In

this final section of our guide, we'll be looking at some of the ways to expand your little computer, adding new functions and abilities. We'll also offer some troubleshooting advice, reveal some of the Pi's innermost secrets and show you some of the amazing projects that other people have put together using their own Pi computers.

**IN THIS SECTION**

**134**

Turn your Raspberry Pi into a Nas drive

Convert your Pi into a network drive for sharing files with other PCs

**136**

Expand, upgrade and mod your Raspberry Pi

Accessorise your Pi with the ultimate selection of useful extras

**138**

Troubleshooting tips

Having problems with your Pi? We provide fixes for many common issues

**140**

Advanced tips and tricks

Discover secret features and ways to get even more from your Pi

**142**

Getting creative

Get inspiration from the amazing projects that other Pi owners have put together





# Turn your Pi into a network storage drive

Convert your Pi into a useful Nas drive for sharing photos, music and more with other PCs

Once you've attached a **USB** stick or **USB hard disk** to your Pi (see page 30) you can use it as a Nas (network-attached storage) drive. The Raspberry Pi can then be used to store digital photo albums, videos and music that everyone on the network can share, whether they're using a Windows computer, Mac, tablet, phone or another Raspberry Pi. It's a great way to keep important things easily accessible.

If possible, connect your Raspberry Pi and its USB storage to the network using an **Ethernet** lead rather than Wi-Fi – this makes transferring files faster and more reliable. It's also worth housing the Pi in a case or finding a case for both it and its disk – just bear in mind that a hard disk needs good ventilation. Site your new Nas as near to the **router** as possible and set it up so that it won't need to be turned off once it's up and running. **ca**

```
pi@raspberrypi ~
pi@raspberrypi:~$ sudo apt-get install samba samba-common-bin
Reading package lists... Done
Building dependency tree
Reading state information... Done
The following extra packages will be installed:
  tdb-tools
Suggested packages:
  openbsd-inet-superserver smbdap-tools ldb-tools ctdb
The following NEW packages will be installed:
  samba samba-common-bin tdb-tools
0 upgraded, 3 newly installed, 0 to remove and 48 not upgraded.
Need to get 6,077 kB of archives.
After this operation, 36.1 MB of additional disk space will be used.
Do you want to continue [Y/n]? y
Get:1 http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org/raspbian/ wheezy/main samba armhf 2:3.6.6-6 [3,344 kB]
Get:2 http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org/raspbian/ wheezy/main tdb-tools armhf 1:2.10-2 [25.9 kB]
Get:3 http://mirrordirector.raspbian.org/raspbian/ wheezy/main samba-common-bin armhf 2:3.6.6-6 [2,707 kB]
Fetched 6,077 kB in 12s (492 kB/s)
Preconfiguring packages ...
Selecting previously unselected package samba.
(Reading database ... 73850 files and directories currently installed.)
```

## STEP 1

Samba is the software used to allow Windows machines to communicate with **Linux** computers (including the Raspberry Pi), which use different file formats – including EXT4 which we used for our USB drive on page 28. To install Samba, make sure your Raspberry Pi is connected to the internet and open up LXTerminal. Type **sudo apt-get update** to make your system is up to date followed by **sudo apt-get install samba samba-common-bin**. This process will take up to 30 minutes, depending on the speed of your broadband connection. ▶

## STEP 2

We now need to set up Samba by editing its configuration files. In common with many Linux programs, there's no graphical user interface but you only have to set it up once. We're going to use nano – one of the Raspberry Pi's built-in text editors.

In LXTerminal, open the configuration file in nano by typing **sudo nano /etc/samba/smb.conf**. You use the keyboard rather than your mouse to edit files in nano but it's straightforward. Navigate through the file using the arrow keys until you reach a section called Authentication. We want to add some security to our network so find the line **# security = user** and remove the hash symbol at the beginning of the line. Hash is often used to tell computers not to pay attention; by removing it we're turning on user level security and preventing people who connect to your network as guests from having access. ▶

```
pi@raspberrypi ~
pi@raspberrypi:~$ nano /etc/samba/smb.conf
File: /etc/samba/smb.conf Modified

# Do something sensible when Samba crashes: mail the admin a backtrace
panic_action = /usr/share/samba/panic-action %d

##### Authentication #####
# "security = user" is always a good idea. This will require a Unix account
# in this server for every user accessing the server. See
# /usr/share/doc/samba-doc/htmldocs/Samba3-HOWTO/ServerType.html
# in the samba-doc package for details.
# security = user

# You may wish to use password encryption. See the section on
# 'encrypt passwords' in the smb.conf(5) manpage before enabling.
# encrypt passwords = true

# If you are using encrypted passwords, Samba will need to know what
# password database type you are using.

pi@raspberrypi ~
```

```
pi@raspberrypi: ~
File Edit Tabs Help
GNU nano 2.2.6          File: /etc/samba/smb.conf
;
; preexec = /bin/mount /cdrom
; postexec = /bin/umount /cdrom

[Share]
comment = Raspberry Pi Share
path = /media/usbflash/_Share
valid users = @users
force group = users
create mask = 0660
directory mask = 0771
read only = no
```

## STEP 3

Use the arrow keys to move down to the very bottom of smb.conf and press the Enter key at the end to insert a new line. Add these lines to the file, pressing Enter at the end of each:

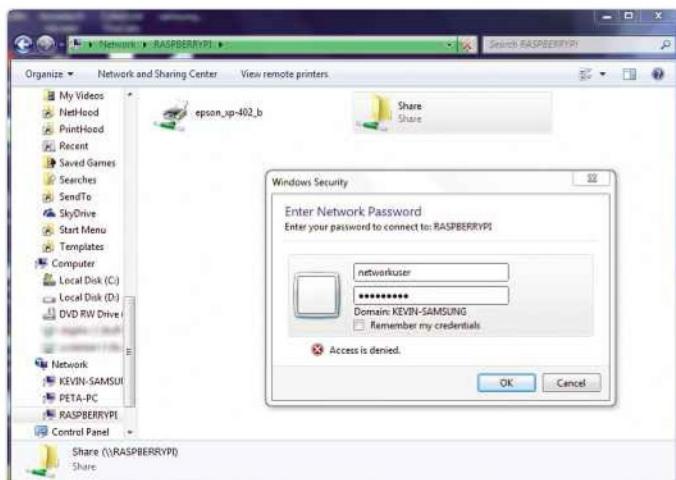
### [Share]

```
comment = Raspberry Pi Share
path = /media/usbflash/_Share
valid users = @users
force group = users
create mask = 0660
directory mask = 0771
read only = no
```

Once you've done this, press the Ctrl key and O to save the file, then Enter to confirm. Press Ctrl-X to exit nano and you should return to the command prompt in LXTerminal. ▼

## STEP 4

We need to restart Samba so that it reads the configuration file back in – to do this type **sudo /etc/init.d/samba restart**. We now create a Raspberry Pi user who can access the share – we're choosing the username 'networkuser' and password 'raspberry'. It'll be these details that people using other computers to connect to your USB drive will be asked for. To do this, type **sudo useradd networkuser -m -G users** and Enter followed by **sudo passwd networkuser**. After pressing Enter, the Pi will ask you to set a password. Make sure you write this down as you and all your Nas drive's other users will need it! ▼

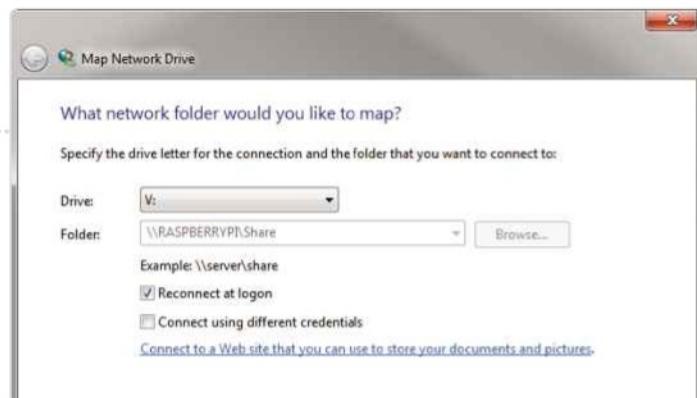


## STEP 6

To make the shared folder easy to use, we can assign it a drive letter in Windows so that it appears just like a disk drive. In Windows Explorer, **right-click** the Raspberry Pi's Share folder and select Map Network Drive from the **dropdown menu**. Choose a drive letter from the dropdown menu – it's probably a good idea to pick a high letter so that it's clear which are true disk drives and which are network storage. Leave the 'Reconnect at logon' check box selected and click Finish. After a few seconds, it'll appear in its alphabetical order under Computer on your Windows PC. ●

## STEP 5

We need to add this new user to Samba's list of authorised people. Type **sudo smbpasswd -a networkuser** and enter the password when prompted. Finally, we're going to set the permissions on the share folder so that anyone on the network can add, edit or delete files. To do this, we use the chmod command followed by the permission and the name of the folder. Type **chmod 777 /media/usbflash/\_Share** followed by Enter. Now start Windows Explorer on a PC and you should see 'Raspberry Pi' on the list of devices. Double-click it to see the Share folder. Try to open it and you should be prompted for a username and password. Once you've done that, you can **drag and drop** files. ▼



# Expand, upgrade and mod your Raspberry Pi

Accessorise your Pi with the ultimate selection of useful extras, colourful cases and amazing add-ons

We've seen that the Raspberry Pi offers plenty of possibilities for creating your own programs and projects. But it doesn't stop with the basic kit. When you're ready get more ambitious, there's a whole range of accessories and upgrades available that can add extra capabilities to the Pi.

On these pages we'll look at a selection of useful and inspirational add-ons. Some of them are simple, such as snazzy cases and mounts; others are more technically advanced, such as cameras and infrared sensors. Don't be put off – all of these expansions are easy to set up and use, in keeping with the Raspberry Pi ethos. Even better, they won't break the bank. Most of the accessories in this page can be had for under £20, so it should be possible to soup up your Pi without too much scrimping and saving.



▲ Add a case to protect your Raspberry Pi

## Cases and mounts

Some people love to gaze upon the bare circuitry of the Raspberry Pi; but if you prefer, there are plenty of customised cases that can give it a cool, distinctive look, as well as affording some protection against accidental drinks spillages. The website [www.modmypi.com](http://www.modmypi.com) offers a selection of cases in bright colours, eye-catching rainbow designs and stylish translucent plastic. Prices start at £6 and go up to £12 for the funky PiBow series,

which fit together out of seven stackable layers.

Another sort of case you might consider is what's called a VESA monitor mount – a case that's designed to hook onto the back of a TV or computer monitor. If you're using your Raspberry Pi as a media centre, or as an alternative to a desktop PC, this tucks it neatly out of the way. Again, [www.modmypi.com](http://www.modmypi.com) offers the mounts for just £3.

If you want to get really creative, you could even install your Raspberry Pi on a case that roams around the house. The PicoBorg motor controller costs £9 and lets you control up to four motorised devices directly from your Pi; affix four motorised wheels (available for £6 each) and you have a computer that can really go places – with a little programming, of course. The only catch is that if



▲ The Pi Plate gives you simple controls and a two line display

## MAKING THE CONNECTION

Some of the add-ons we've discussed on this page connect to the Raspberry Pi's USB ports, or plug directly into internal connectors. Many of them, however, come in the form of 'breakout boards': extra circuit boards that need to be wired to the Raspberry Pi's GPIO connectors. The easiest way to handle these is by investing in a 'breadboard':

a plastic board with hundreds of electrically-connected holes in it. You connect components together by pushing their wires or connectors into holes, so once you've got the board connected to your Pi you can hook up electronic components with no need to enlist the help of a grown-up and a soldering iron. Breadboards themselves can be

had for just a few pounds from many electronics suppliers, and the hardware to connect one to the Pi is cheap too: Adafruit's GPIO Cobbler kit costs just £4.50 from [www.modmypi.com](http://www.modmypi.com). Be warned, when you first receive the kit it will need putting together by an adult – it's a 15-minute soldering job.



you want your Raspberry Pi to get more than a few metres from the power socket, you'll need to find another way to power it. A 2200mAh rechargeable battery pack supply can be had for £17 from [www.thehut.com](http://www.thehut.com), and should power your Pi for around eight hours between charges.

### Screens and input devices

When you're creating and testing your Pi projects, it can be a pain to have to keep hooking up a monitor or a networked display to check what's going on. Why not equip your Raspberry Pi with its very own LCD? For £20 the Adafruit Pi Plate and LCD equips your Pi with a small display capable of showing 32-character messages. It needs a bit of soldering to put together, so some adult help is required, but once in place it can be easily programmed in Python. The Pi Plate has five built-in push-buttons too, so you can control your programs with no need for keyboard or mouse.

Another way to control your Raspberry Pi is by hooking up a touch sensor: for just £5, [www.modmypi.com](http://www.modmypi.com) will send you a small sensor that you can wire up to the Pi (see the box above); when someone touches it, a signal is generated that your program can pick up and respond to.

For the ultimate in easy control, take a look at the FLIRC infrared remote control unit. This dinky little dongle costs £23 and plugs into a **USB** port, allowing you to use a regular domestic remote control to send commands to the Pi. It's fully configurable, so you can use any control you have

► A portable power pack will keep your Pi running when it's away from the mains

lying around: it's intended primarily for people who use Raspberry Pi as a music and video centre.

### Cameras and sensors

Since the Raspberry Pi uses USB, it can support all sorts of devices intended for regular PCs. A tiny wireless USB adaptor lets your Pi connect to the internet without the need for a trailing cable. Another possibility is to connect a USB webcam, to capture snaps of the world around your Pi. However, a neater option is to invest in the official Raspberry Pi camera module. This plugs into an onboard socket, so it doesn't take up a USB port, and is fully supported by the latest version of Raspbian. It captures smooth **high-definition** video and takes five-megapixel images – a bargain at just £25 from [thehut.com](http://thehut.com).

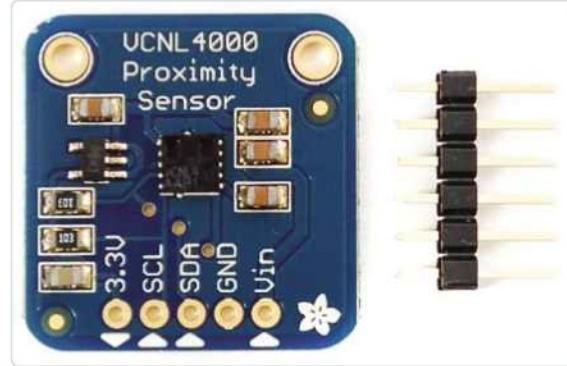
To partner your camera, you might like to invest in Adafruit's light proximity sensor, which lets your Raspberry Pi sense and react to the world around it: for example, you could set up a program to take a photo whenever someone comes near. It works best at distances of around six inches, but for around £8 it's a fun toy. You can combine it with a microphone to capture a recording of what's going on around your Pi whenever movement is detected. The microphone costs £7 from [www.modmypi.com](http://www.modmypi.com).

A last update to consider is a real-time clock: normally, if your Pi boots up without a network connection, it won't know the time or date. A battery-powered clock module solves this problem. There are several available: [www.abelectronics.co.uk](http://www.abelectronics.co.uk) for example sells a simple one for £9.75. **ca**



► Catch intruders, or just take photos, with the Pi camera

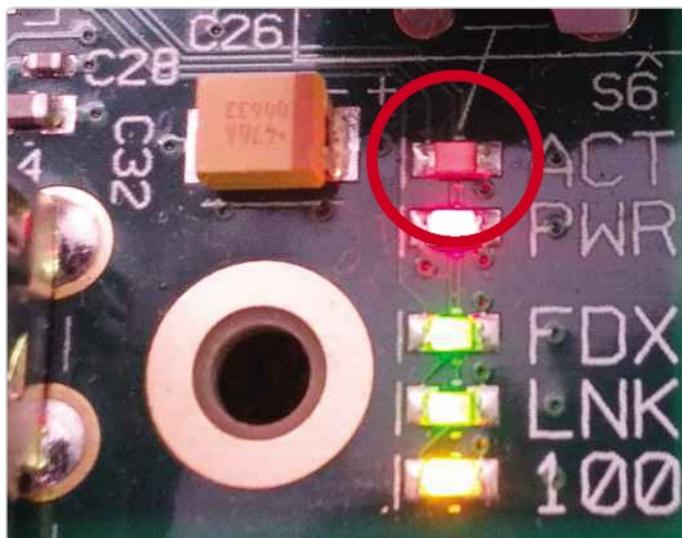
► A proximity sensor tells your Pi when someone is close by





# Troubleshooting Tips

Having problems with your Pi? Read on to find fixes for many common issues



**STEP  
1**

## SOLVE STARTUP PROBLEMS

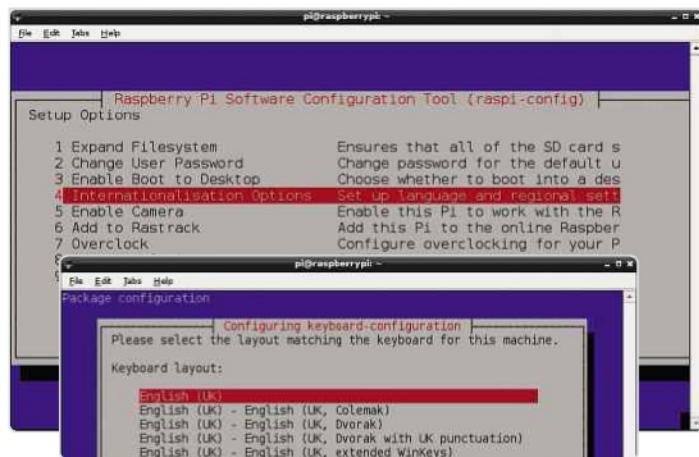
If your Pi is completely unresponsive, turn the power off and then check whether you've properly inserted your **SD card**. The slot is quite delicate so be careful – just make sure it's the right way up and fully engaged. Have a look at the LEDs next to the USB slot(s) – the light labelled 'ACT' or 'OK' indicates SD Card activity so if you don't see it flashing, there's something wrong with the card and you should either reformat it or use a new SD card. If you do see flashing that stops before the Pi boots up, the card may be corrupted and, again you should reformat it. SD Cards usually become corrupted because you've removed the power cable before shutting down the Pi properly. The easiest way to safely end your session is to open up LXTerminal and type **sudo halt**. This will immediately begin the shutdown process – wait for the green LED to stop flashing before removing the cable. ▼

**STEP  
2**

## CURE ERRATIC BEHAVIOUR

If your Pi appears to be working properly but occasionally reboots or drops off the Wi-Fi network, it's worth checking your power supply. Whilst all micro-USB mobile chargers operate at 5v, the amount of current they supply varies. The Raspberry Pi requires a minimum of 0.7 amps (700mA) so you should look for a mobile charger of that rating or higher – 1 amp (1000mA) is ideal. You can usually find the rating of your mobile charger on the back, near the prongs – look for a section called 'Output'. You may notice that if you plug a powered USB hub into the Raspberry Pi, it'll start up – this is because the power is flowing into the Pi from the hub. However, this won't supply enough current for the Pi to operate reliably, so you should always plug in the hub after the mains cable. ▼





## SET THE RIGHT TIME

**STEP 4** The Raspberry Pi doesn't have a built-in clock so it forgets the time whenever it's turned off. When you connect the power, the Pi accesses an internet time server to set its clock but it probably won't have the correct time zone set, with the result that the minutes are correct but the hour is wrong. In LXTerminal, type **sudo raspi-config** and, in the configuration menu, choose item 4, Internationalisation Options, and then select the second option, Change Timezone. Under Geographic area, choose Europe then select the London time zone if you live in the UK. ▶

```
# uncomment to force a specific HDMI mode (this will force VGA)
#hdmi_group=2
#hdmi_mode=58

# uncomment to force a HDMI mode rather than DVI. This can make audio work in
# DMT (computer monitor) modes
#hdmi_drive=2

# uncomment to increase signal to HDMI, if you have interference, blanking, or
# no display
#config_hdmi_boost=4

# uncomment for composite PAL
#sdtv_mode=2

#uncomment to overclock the arm. 700 MHz is the default.
#arm_freq=800
```

## FIX SOFTWARE INSTALLATION PROBLEMS

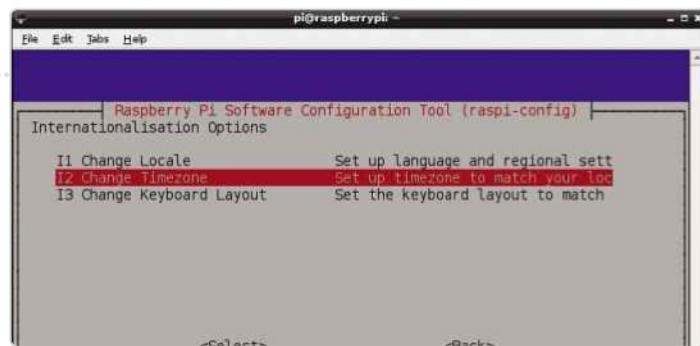
**STEP 6** You'll install most of applications using the command line utility **apt-get install [software name]**. This is usually a simple process, as long as you know the exact package name. Visit [www.snipca.com/9743](http://snipca.com/9743) to browse the complete list and make a note of their exact spelling. Before installing any new software, however, run the command **sudo apt-get update** to download the latest list of packages and their locations. If you get 'mirrordirector' errors, it could well be that you haven't run 'update' and the repositories have moved. If you still get errors after establishing that the package name is correct and having run **apt-get update** then check your internet connection. If at all possible, connect to your **router** via wired **Ethernet** for more reliable installations. ●

## STEP 3

### CURE KEYBOARD PROBLEMS

If your keyboard doesn't respond at all, whether wireless or connected via USB cable, you should check whether it's on the list of verified peripherals at [www.snipca.com/9742](http://www.snipca.com/9742).

Intermittent problems are harder to track down but can often be solved by plugging it into a powered USB hub rather than directly into the Pi. If the country settings aren't right, you may find text doesn't quite match the keys pressed. To fix this, start LXTerminal and type **sudo raspi-config**. Move down to option 4 and, on the submenu, pick the third option: Change Keyboard Layout. You'll then be asked to select a keyboard model from the list and click OK. On the next screen, select your keyboard layout – usually English (UK) – you can now press Enter through the rest of the sequence. ▶



## SET THE CORRECT MONITOR RESOLUTION

The Raspberry Pi uses a default **resolution** of 1024 x 768. This may result in a blurry picture if your display has a higher resolution. First, find out the native resolution of your monitor.

Now, go to [http://elinux.org/RPi\\_config.txt](http://elinux.org/RPi_config.txt) and scroll to the line saying 'These values are valid if hdmi\_group=2'. In the table, find the resolution and refresh rate of your monitor and note which **HDMI** Mode it corresponds to. In LXTerminal, type **sudo nano /boot/config.txt**. Use the arrow keys to scroll down to **#hdmi\_group=1**. Delete the hash symbol at the start of both lines and change the group to 2 and the mode to the correct value for your monitor. Press Ctrl-O and confirm to save, then type **sudo reboot**. ▶





# Essential Raspberry Pi tricks and secrets

Uncover the Raspberry Pi's best hidden features with our expert tips



## STEP 1

### TRY BEFORE YOU PI

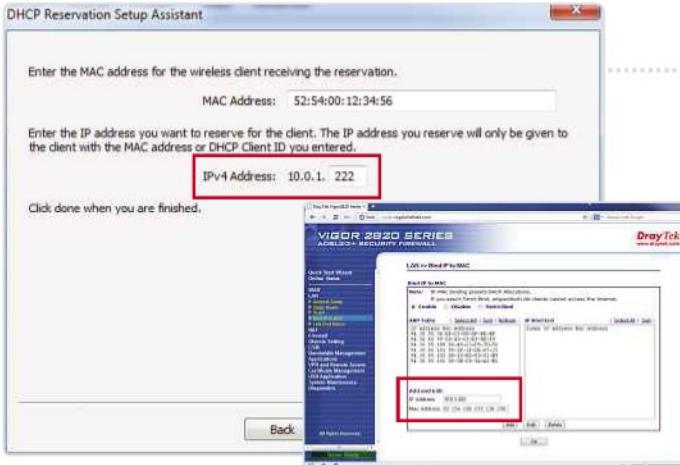
Fancy trying out some of the tips in this guide before you buy a Pi? Thanks to emulation software, you can create a 'virtual' Raspberry Pi on a Windows PC. Visit [www.snipca.com/9823](http://www.snipca.com/9823)

in your web browser and click the green 'Start Download' button. When the file arrives on your PC, right-click to extract the contents, then click the Start button, and open a command prompt by typing **cmd** and then Enter. Now type cd followed by the path to the folder where the files were extracted, eg **cd Downloads\qemu** and then type **run**. The emulator will start, and you'll see the usual Raspberry Pi boot messages. You can even run the Pi's graphical interface within Windows! It's ideal for learning the basics. ▶

## STEP 2

### GIVE YOUR PI A FIXED IP ADDRESS

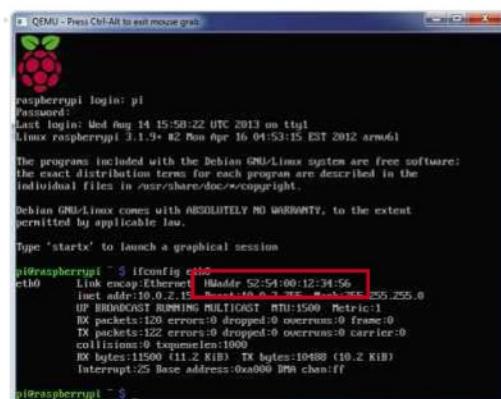
As we'll show later, your Raspberry Pi can be used for lots of things without a monitor or keyboard attached, but you still need to be able to connect to it, and each time it's plugged into the network, it may end up with a different **IP address**. Giving it a fixed one makes it simple to connect to from other devices on your network, but if you fix the address on the Pi, and then plug it into a different network, it can be very difficult to use. So, we're going to show you how to set up the Pi so that it has a fixed address on your own network, but still works fine on any other. Turn it on, connected to a monitor and keyboard, and at the command line type **ifconfig eth0**. Make a note of the information displayed after HWaddr, which is also known as the MAC address, then proceed to step 3. ▶



## STEP 3

### CONFIGURE YOUR ROUTER

Your **broadband router** is responsible for allocating IP addresses to every device on your network. Each router works slightly differently, but check the menus for **DHCP** and reservations. In the first screen here, an Apple Airport, a simple Windows **Wizard** lets you enter the MAC address for your Pi and the IP address that it should be given. In the second example, a Draytek Vigor router, the setting is under LAN (for 'local area network') and then 'Bind IP address to MAC'. In the section labelled 'Add and Edit', enter the IP address and the MAC, and click Add. Before picking an IP address, take a look at the address given to your Pi automatically, and make sure the first three numbers are the same, and the last is less than 254. We picked 222, as it's easy to remember. Now, each time the Pi starts up on your network, it will have the same address. ▶





## STEP 5

### TURN ANY PRINTER INTO A NETWORK PRINTER

By setting up the Raspberry Pi with a fixed IP address (steps 2 and 3), you can use it to share any printer on a network. Configure the printer as explained on page 26, remembering to tick the Share box. Make sure you also tick the boxes in the Server Settings section of the CUPS web page to share printers and allow remote administration. Now, the printer will be available on your network as long as the Pi is turned on. In Windows, click to add a Network Printer, and choose the option to select a printer by name. If the Pi has the IP address 10.0.1.222 and the printer is called Canon\_IP4000, type [http://10.0.1.222:631/printers/Canon\\_IP4000](http://10.0.1.222:631/printers/Canon_IP4000). Click Next and select the correct Windows driver. ▶



## STEP 7

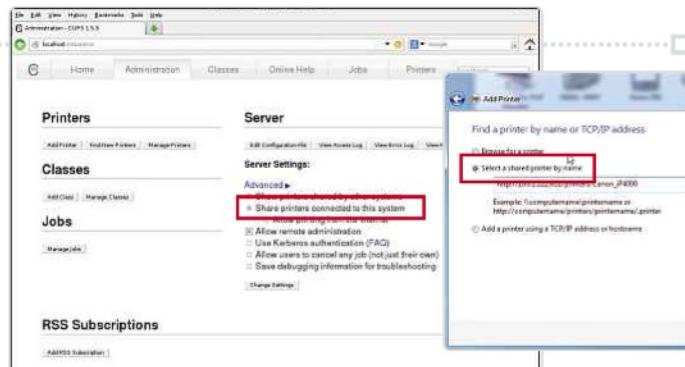
### PLAY BACK A DVD

Connect an external DVD drive, with its own power supply – the Pi won't have enough juice to power the drive itself. The intro items on some DVDs can be problematic with XBMC, so from the main menu, choose System, Settings, then Video. Select the DVD tab and tick the box 'Attempt to skip introduction.' Now put a DVD in the drive, and after a few moments, the Play Disc option should appear on the XBMC menus. Click it and the disc's menu will appear, allowing you to select what you want to watch. If the subtitles turn on automatically, simply press the T key on the keyboard to turn them off. ●

## STEP 4

### REMOTELY CONTROL YOUR RASPBERRY PI

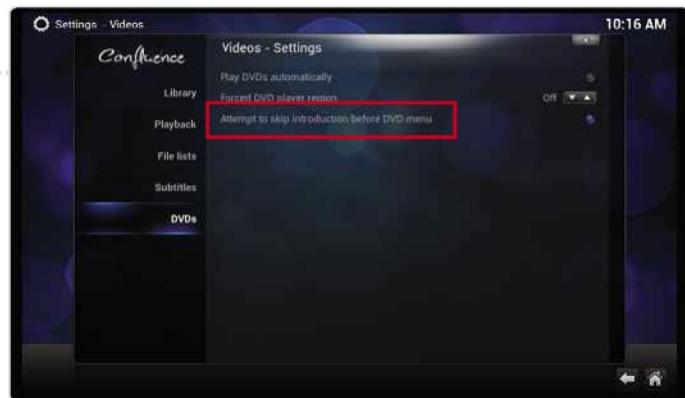
The simplest way to control your Pi remotely is via Windows Remote Desktop. To do that, enter the command `sudo apt-get install xrdp` in LXTerminal or via an SSH connection to the Pi. If all is well, the message 'Starting Remote Desktop Protocol server : xrdp sesman' will appear after installation. Now, on your Windows PC, start Remote Desktop Connection (it's in All Programs, Accessories). Enter your Pi's fixed IP address (see step 2), and click Connect. Click Yes to continue if a security warning appears. You'll be asked to log in to the Pi, and then the desktop will appear. Just logout when you're done. ▶



## STEP 6

### TURN YOUR PI INTO A DVD PLAYER

On page 32, we saw how to install OpenELEC on your Pi. With some extra work, you can make it play DVDs, too. You'll need to activate something called the **MPEG2 codec**, which costs £2.40. Go to the main menu in XBMC, click System, then System Info, and choose Hardware. Make a note of the sixteen-digit code shown as Serial. Open a web browser and go to [www.raspberrypi.com](http://www.raspberrypi.com). Click to buy an MPEG2 license key; enter the serial number you wrote down. You'll receive an email with a licence key, like 'decode\_MP2=0x01234567'. Hold down shift as your Pi boots, press E to edit config.txt, and add the license key. Close the editor, then press Esc to reboot your Pi. ▶



# Getting creative

Get inspired by the wild and wacky inventions other Raspberry Pi owners are coming up with

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

► Discover great Pi projects that anyone can do

► See what's possible with a little creative thinking

► Find out how to put your Pi to practical use

► Take amazing photos by using Raspberry Pi to control your camera



**C**onceived as a way to encourage more software engineers, the biggest surprise for the creators of the Raspberry Pi, aside from its popularity, has been the way it has been used to create amazing hardware projects. In retrospect it's easy to see why – for less than the price of a new Playstation game you can now buy a fully working computer that you can program in a wide variety of languages. This means projects that would once have required university-level coding skills and a massive budget can now be accomplished by inventors in their sheds – the cliché has finally become reality. Throughout this guide, we have demonstrated some of the ways Pi owners can make use of their little computers but really this is just the tip of the iceberg. The possibilities are practically limitless, as some of the incredible Pi-based projects we're about to explore will prove.

By mounting a camera on a rail and moving it



very slowly from left to right, taking a photo at each step, you can achieve truly breath-taking results. Sadly, the sort of rig used to create the opening credit sequence of Netflix's House of Cards costs a small fortune, but photographer David Hunt has managed to create a low-cost equivalent that's controlled by a Raspberry Pi. His setup took several months of experimentation and test shoots to put together but he's now using it to create some stunning panorama sequences of Ireland's natural and man-made landscapes. David has provided complete instructions, along with a video showing the setup in action, at his site ([www.davidhunt.ie/?p=2822](http://www.davidhunt.ie/?p=2822)). So if you have an SLR, a Raspberry Pi and a little ambition, you could try creating your own magical compositions.

## Grow your own with PiPlanter

Automating the care of plants is a huge growth area in agriculture and the Raspberry Pi is making it possible to achieve this in the home too. There are plenty of similar projects out there but PiPlanter ([www.esologic.com/?p=665](http://www.esologic.com/?p=665)), created by a student called Devon, is the best documented. Devon has built a prototype system that he can then expand to a larger scale – in this case it supplies water to a crate containing tomato plants. The Raspberry Pi's GPIO ports are connected to sensors that read the light, temperature and humidity levels of the room along with how moist the soil is. Once the moisture reading falls below a pre-set level, the Pi turns on a small pump which delivers water to the crate.

## Build an instant ice cream maker

On a recent episode of The Gadget Show ([www.snipca.com/9747](http://www.snipca.com/9747)), presenters Jason Bradbury and Rachel Riley built an ice cream machine that used

## CREATING YOUR OWN PROJECTS – HOW TO GET STARTED

You've made a good start by buying this guide; you now understand how the Raspberry Pi works, how to program it and what other people have used it for. The great thing about building your own projects is that you can start very simple and work your way up. If you break down the inventions we've listed here, you'll see that they're made up of lots of small projects, whether

that's controlling a motor, reading in a barcode or taking a photo. So, the best plan is to learn how to achieve these small tasks and then put them together into a complete invention.

Exam board OCR has worked with the Raspberry Pi Foundation to put together a series of 'recipe cards' that you can use to build these micro-projects ([www.snipca.com/9744](http://www.snipca.com/9744)) along with

plenty of resources designed to be used in and out of the classroom. It may not seem like it at first, but, having understood the basics from this guide, learning how to use your Raspberry Pi to turn on an LED is the next step to your big idea, whether that's a roving robot, an aerial photography setup or a security system for your bedroom or snack cupboard.



► Make the perfect ice cream cone, with raspberry sauce

► Make your microwave smarter, with Raspberry Pi



a Raspberry Pi to control the flow of the mixture through the nozzle and into the ice cream cone. A Pi-Face ([www.snipca.com/9748](http://www.snipca.com/9748)) add-on board was used to turn the motor on and off – a task that draws more power than the Pi can deliver unaided. The contraption was then wheeled onto the streets but failed to produce a single 99 because the mixture wasn't cooled enough. The Raspberry Pi and Pi-Face performed perfectly however, flawlessly delivering soggy goo into the waiting cone. Do you think you could do better?

### Thief Catcher

The Pi-Face add-on board was designed at the University of Manchester by Dr Andrew Robinson. It's designed to make it easy to connect to sensors and control other devices such as motors and switches. One of the first projects he built using the Pi-Face was designed to catch people trying to nab a cheeky biscuit from a cupboard. It's very simple – a standard magnetic switch from a burglar alarm system is mounted on the door and connected to the Pi-Face so that the Raspberry Pi knows when the cupboard has been opened. The Pi-Face is also wired to a battery-operated chicken with a speaker inside it. When the door is opened, a voice synthesiser plays a message telling the miscreant to get out of the cupboard. You can see how he did it, including all the code, at [www.snipca.com/9749](http://www.snipca.com/9749).

### The Intelligent Microwave

Why don't microwave ovens include barcode readers so they can automatically set the correct

▼ The Pi-Face board makes it easy to attach sensors



temperature and cooking time? Nathan Broadbent, frustrated that no such device exists, set out to create one. By working out how the keypad on the front of the microwave worked he was able to control it from his Raspberry Pi. He created his own microwave cooking database and even made the oven voice controlled. Whilst this might seem a little over the top for your average reheated curry, it makes for a lovely, integrated project. Each aspect of the project is carefully documented so you can pull out parts such as, for example, the barcode scanner, and incorporate them in your own inventions – watch the video here at [www.snipca.com/9750](http://www.snipca.com/9750).

### A Pi-powered Wi-Fi Access Point

Are there parts of your home where you can't easily get a Wi-Fi signal? Guy Eastwood has created the Pi-Point project as a cheap, easy way to extend your network or, indeed, create a wireless router. Once set up, you can plug the Pi-Point directly into your **broadband router** or use a **HomePlug** adaptor to allow you to site the Pi-Point in a weak Wi-Fi area and connect to the router via the mains.

Guy has thoughtfully provided very detailed instructions and the good news is that if you have a Raspberry Pi and Wi-Fi dongle, you already have all the hardware you need. Not only is this an easy project to put together but you'll also learn a lot about networking – information that will come in very handy as you come up with your own inventions. Find out more and download the software at [www.pi-point.co.uk](http://www.pi-point.co.uk).

# WebUser Order Form

## Step 1: Complete your details below

Mr/Mrs/Ms	First name
Surname	
Job title	
Company	
Address	
Postcode	
Daytime tel	
Mobile tel	Year of birth (YYYY)
Email	

## Step 2: Choose your payment method

### 1 Direct Debit Payment

Pay £19.99 every 13 issues, **saving 23%** on the shop price

BEST DEAL

	Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit	
Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society		
To the manager: Bank name	Originator's identification Number	
Address	7 2 4 6 8 0	
Postcode	Instructions to your Bank or Building Society Please pay Dennis Publishing Ltd Direct Debit from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Dennis Publishing Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.	
Account in the names(s) of	Bank and building societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some type of account	
Branch sort code	Signature(s)	
	Date	
Bank/Building Society account number	<input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> AMEX <input type="checkbox"/> Debit/Maestro (Issue No. <input type="text" value=" "/> )	

### 2 Cheque or Credit/Debit Card – Pay £42.99 for a 1 year subscription (26 issues), **saving 17%** on the shop price

- I enclose a cheque made payable to *Dennis Publishing Ltd*.  
 Credit/Debit card: Please charge my:  
 VISA    MasterCard    AMEX    Debit/Maestro (Issue No. )

Card No.	
Start date (if applicable)  Expiry date	
Signed	Date

## Return your completed form to:

**Freepost RLZS-ETGT-BCZR, Web User Subscriptions,  
800 Guillat Ave, Kent Science Park,  
Sittingbourne ME9 8GU** (No stamp required)

Dennis Publishing (UK) Ltd uses a layered Privacy Notice, giving you brief details about how we would like to use your personal information. For full details please visit our website [www.dennis.co.uk/privacy/](http://www.dennis.co.uk/privacy/) or call us on 0844 844 0053 or 01795 419 844. If you have any questions please ask as submitting your details indicates our consent, until you choose otherwise, that we and our partners may contact you about products and services that will be of relevance to you via, direct mail, phone, email and SMS. You can opt-out at ANY time via [www.subsinfo.co.uk](http://www.subsinfo.co.uk) or [privacy@dennis.co.uk](mailto:privacy@dennis.co.uk) or 0844 844 0053 or 01795 419 844.

Gift limited to the first 100 subscribers. Please allow 28 days for delivery, UK only.  
Dennis Publishing reserves the right to limit offers of this kind to one per household.

Offer code: G1425PMB



## 3 THINGS YOU'LL GET

- **FREE** Mini Torch
- **Save 23%** on the shop price – just £1.53 per issue
- Get your issue **before it's available in the shops**

## 3 WAYS TO ORDER



### ONLINE

Order securely at  
**dennismags.co.uk/webuser**



### PHONE

Call now on  
**01795 592 926**



### POST

Complete the order form and return it to our Freepost address

# SAVE 23%

Subscribe to *Web User* today to save 23% on the shop price and receive a **FREE Mini Torch**.



## YOUR FREE MINI TORCH

**FREE  
GIFT**

This handy torch can provide you with convenient light anywhere! Its durable metal construction and moulded grip make it ideal for everyday use or during an emergency. A carry strap, storage case and batteries are included.



Order online at  
**dennismags.co.uk/webuser**  
or call now on **01795 592 926**

Quote offer code: **G1425PMB**

### JARGON

#### 8-bit

A measure of how much data makes up a picture. An 8-bit image can have 256 colours.

#### ADSL

Asynchronous Digital Subscriber Line. The most common type of broadband connection.

#### Broadband

A high-speed internet connection that is always available and provided via a modem or router.

#### Burn

The process of saving data to an optical disc, such as a recordable DVD or CD.

#### CPU

Central Processing Unit. The processor in a PC.

#### Codec

Coder/Decoder. A piece of software designed to process information in a specific format.

#### DHCP

The means by which a broadband router issues IP addresses to devices on the home network.

#### Dialogue box

A small window that appears to display or request information.

#### Dongle

A small device that plugs into a computer to provide a function like Wi-Fi access.

#### Drag and drop

Manipulating information by selecting it and dragging while holding the mouse button down.

#### Dropdown menu

A list of options displayed beneath a menu, or by clicking an option in a dialogue box.

#### DVI

Digital Visual Interface. A display connector.

#### Ethernet

A common type of wired network connection. Ethernet is often used to link PCs to routers.

#### FAT32

A common format for arranging information on disks and memory cards.

#### Flash drive

A removable disk or memory card that retains information even when unplugged.

#### GB, Gigabyte

1024 megabytes.

#### Hard disk

A high capacity storage device fitted in most PCs, made up of spinning mechanical platters.

#### HDMI

High Definition Multimedia Interface. A standard connector found on new TV sets and monitors.

#### High definition

Video pictures that have a better quality than the standard offered by DVD or broadcast TV.

#### HomePlug

A method of transferring computer data over the mains cabling in your home.

#### Icon

A small picture, often used to represent a particular application or document on a PC.

#### IP address

The unique identifier for a computer on a network, represented by a set of four numbers.

#### ISO

A common way to create images of optical discs.

#### JPEG

A common format used for digital photographs.

#### Linux

A free computer operating system.

#### MB, Megabyte

Normally 1024 kilobytes; occasionally 1000 kilobytes.

#### Megapixel

A description of the size of a digital image. A megapixel is equivalent to one million pixels.

#### Memory

Random access memory (RAM) is the computer's temporary working space.

#### Memory key

A small flash memory storage device with a USB connector that can be plugged into PCs.

#### MP3

A common format for storing music on a PC.

#### MPEG2

The codec used to store video on DVDs.

#### Operating system

The basic software, like Windows or Linux, that starts when your computer boots.

#### Pixel

Short for Picture Element. A pixel is one of the dots making up a digital image.

#### PNG

A format for digital pictures that allows for them to be transparent.

#### Ram

Random Access Memory. The working area used by the computer.

#### Resolution

A measure of the quality of a display, or of a digital image.

#### Right-click

Clicking an item with the right mouse button.

#### Router

A device that connects items on a computer network and links them to the internet.

#### SD card

The type of memory card used by the Raspberry Pi to store its operating system and data.

#### Server

A computer on a network or the internet that makes shared information available.

#### Stream

A way of playing music or video over a network without downloading it first.

#### TB

A terabyte is equivalent to 1024 gigabytes.

#### UPnP

Universal Plug and Play. A way for devices on a network to find each other automatically.

#### USB

Universal Serial Bus. A connector used to link peripherals such as keyboards, mice and hard disks to a PC or other computer, like the Pi.

#### VGA

An older way of connecting a PC to a monitor.

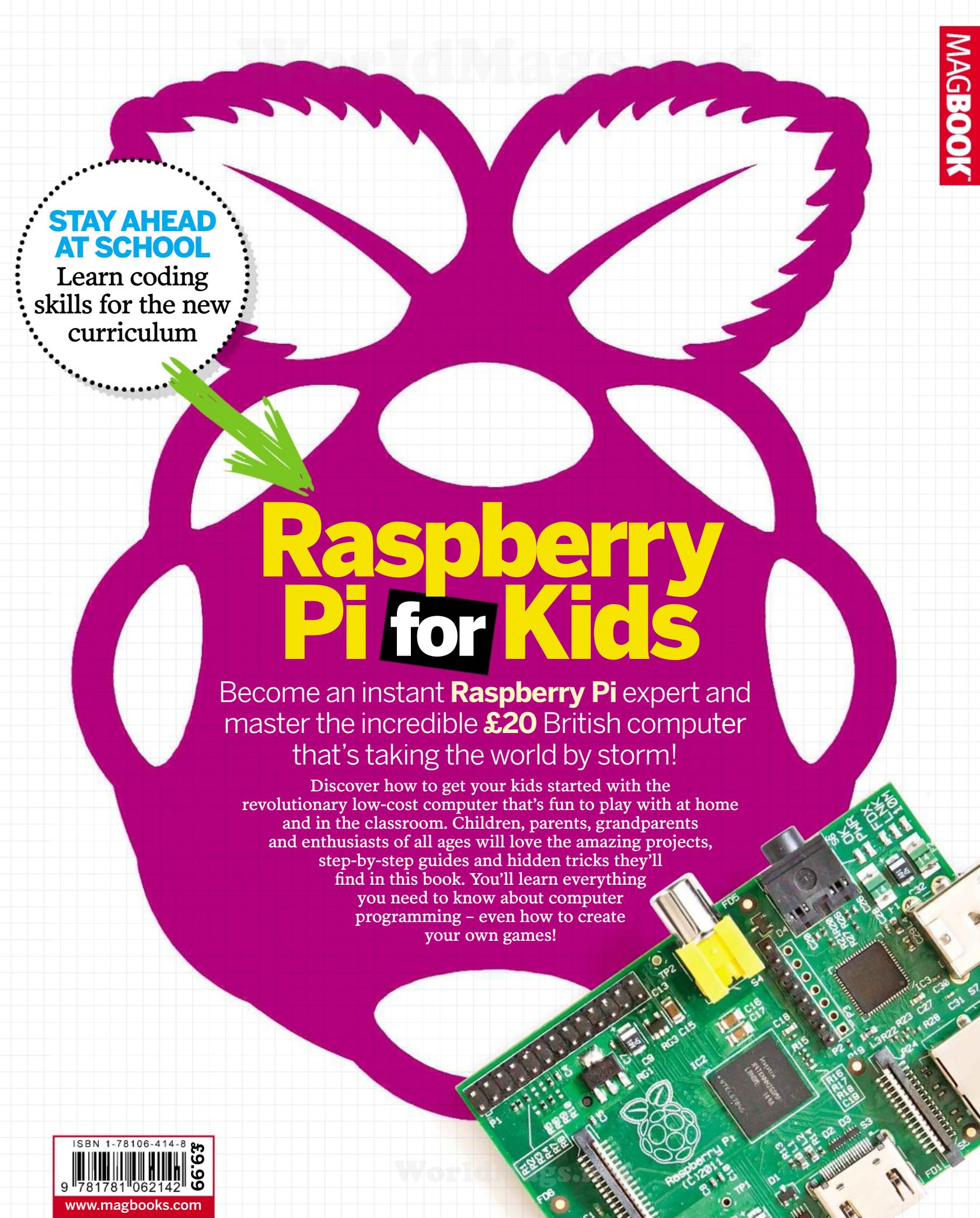
#### Wizard

An automated 'assistant' that guides you through a process step by step.



**STAY AHEAD  
AT SCHOOL**

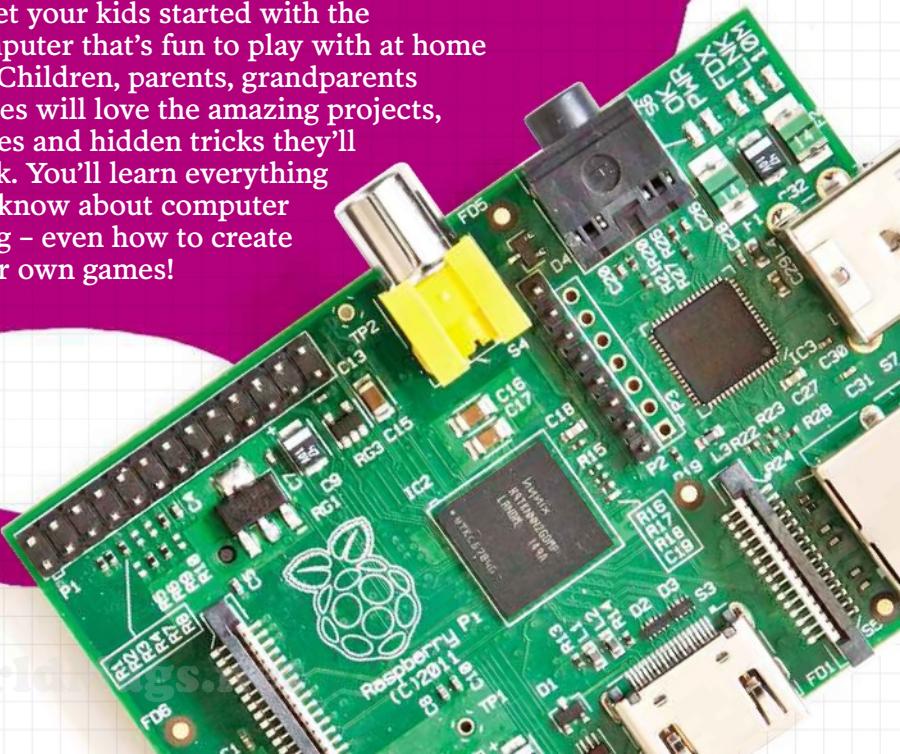
Learn coding  
skills for the new  
curriculum



# Raspberry Pi for Kids

Become an instant **Raspberry Pi** expert and master the incredible **£20** British computer that's taking the world by storm!

Discover how to get your kids started with the revolutionary low-cost computer that's fun to play with at home and in the classroom. Children, parents, grandparents and enthusiasts of all ages will love the amazing projects, step-by-step guides and hidden tricks they'll find in this book. You'll learn everything you need to know about computer programming – even how to create your own games!



ISBN 1-78106-414-8



9 781781 062142

www.magbooks.com