



Martin Guthrie talks about his how he started writing software, his favourite software titles and tips for beginners interested in programming.

Martin Guthrie is one of the most respected software authors in the EPOC arena, and a champion of genuine freeware or charityware software titles.

As a dominant force behind FreEpoc Martin's software can be found available for download at

www.freepoc.org and also at his own website

www.pscience5.net/software.htm.

One of Martin's best known project is that of bringing colour to Psion computers (7 and netBook) by colourising icons and offering full colour patches to existing grey scale applications. Martin has also written the

excellent Palette software that at last allows users to take full advantage of the Psion's 256 colour spectrum - see Issue 1 of the P.C.J. for a full review.

Martin has also recently taken control of the Macro 5 project, arguably one of the most famous and certainly one of the most useful Psion applications ever!

Macro 5 is alive! NB. The progress of Macro 5 will be monitored with great interest by the P.C.J. and a full progress report and review will feature shortly.

Martin's web site also has loads of articles, resources and tutorials for download, a current list is provided below.

Martin's Current Software Catalogue.

Clock5...

Clock5 is a full-screen digital clock with calendar, stopwatches, world clock, and dual time clock.

Colour Icons...

Turn your old black and white icons into glorious colour on your netBook or Series 7. Also see Icon Patcher.

ebc...

Add colour support to Jason Kneen's excellent ExtraBars. Also see the program Extras.

Macro5...

Martin now looks after the legendary Macro5.

MCI...

A program for showing you what your machine's contrast is set at without having to go through the Control Panel.

Palette...

Use the full 256 colour spectrum on your netBook or 7 in Psion Sketch.

Project Galactic Guide

The Hitchhikers favourite read!

psAddle...

A strategy game.

Space Invader5

The classic shoot 'em up!

Toggle!...

Link and Sound utility.

VoiceMan5...

A Voice Management system for your Psion.

Plus other documents & resources...

'Back to the Future'...

Leaving and coming back to Psion

Compact Flash...

How to get the most from your compact flash.

Digital Cameras...

Digital Cameras: a Psion User's guide.

EBook for EPOC...

A guide to using and reading EBooks with EBook.

GPS on a netBook...

Speaks for itself!

Hints & Tips...

See this Issue's Hints & Tips for a few stolen ideas!

Infrared & PsiWin...

How to get PsiWin to link to your EPOC machine over Infrared (IrDA).

My Hardware & Software Setup...

How Martin creates Web Pages with his Psion.

PsiDat...

Getting PsiDat to run your web site. See Donald's Databases Issue 3 of the P.C.J.

Why Write Freeware?...

Why Martin supports freeware.

WiFi on a netBook...

Three part guide (including introduction) on the challenges of getting WiFi working with you netBook.

How did you start writing software?

Well if I really wind the clock back (and somewhat admit my age!), I'd have to confess to being an occasional teenage programmer of ZX81's and ZX Spectrums!

Then when I was a student, I had to learn to program in Pascal and Fortran. However, I only really 'got in' to programming with Psions. I played around with OPL on my first machine (a Series 3a) but seriously got the bug when the Series 5 first came out - and Clock5 was spawned...

What tips have you for someone new to programming?

To begin with I'd go along with a certain footwear manufacturer's tag line: just do it!

It can look very daunting at first but it's surprising how quickly things fall into place. Look at (and play with) as many example programs as you can get hold of - especially from authors who write 'quality stuff' and/or who you particularly admire if you can.

With more and more Psion software being made open source, this is increasingly easy to do.

In relation to the above, any web resources you could recommend for new software authors?

Yes. Steve Litchfield has been around on the Psion scene (or should that be pscene?) for many, many years and has an excellent series of OPL tutorials on his web site in easily digestible chunks. An excellent way to start for even a complete beginner.

See <http://3lib.ukonline.co.uk/>

What do like most about programming for Psion?

That's an easy one - portability. The thing that has always endeared Psions to me is the built in OPL editor and translator. With a few (free) 3rd-party software tools, it's completely possible to write, compile, and package up software ready for publication. In fact, I rarely use my PC for any part of the Psion-software writing process these days - it's all done on my netBook.

What is your favourite software title for the Psion (excluding your own!)?

Hmm... That's a tougher one. I could perhaps reduce it down to a shortlist by category if that's acceptable (and also excluding the built-in apps. - since many of these would be

strong contenders otherwise)?

These'd be (in no particular order):-

Category =====	Program =====
System util.	RMRZip
Graphics	MBMView
Travel util. - Streetplanner/Routeplanner duo.	TomTom's -
Financial	abp5
Leisure	EBook

Okay, so it's not exactly a single favourite - more like 5 or 6! It's just so hard to choose...

Do you programme for any other software platforms?

I dabbled with programming for the PocketPC platform for a while (basically when I dabbled with PocketPC - before seeing the light and coming back to the only truly fully-functional PDA(s) I've ever owned!).

Try as I might, it was never really possible to completely program on the platform itself - something that I was spoiled with on the Psion. It more or less put me off PocketPC for ever.

If I were to try on a different platform again, it'd probably either be on a Palm or (more likely) on a SonyEricsson / Nokia smartphone.

Have you have any anecdotes or stories you could mention regarding your years of Psion programming?

Erm... <thinks> Not so much an anecdote I think as a general observation.

When I first got into Psions and their programming - almost 10 years ago I guess now - the Psion community was (not surprising) a much smaller place. It was also a much nicer place - with a real sense of 'community'.

When the Series 5 and then 5mx/revo took off, it expanded very quickly and became a very masss-market, consumer-orientated place. With Psion's withdrawl from the market-place, it's once again contracted back into being a 'nice' place to hang out.

Two places in particular I'd recommend for newbies to the community: the PsionPlace discussion forums on PDASTreet

<http://www.pdastreet.com/forums/forumdisplay.php?s=&forumid=8>

These are moderated and in constant use (far nicer that the Psion news-groups in my opinion).

Also the EPOC Digest

<http://www.psioneering.co.uk/>

- a completely free daily (usually - although depends on the number of posts in any given day) email digest sent out to about 800 subscribers (at the time of writing).

It's privately run - so no email addreses being given out, sold, used for spam, etc. and there's no advertising in it. Just a friendly bunch of people exchanging EPOC-related thoughts, questions, answers, etc.