Accessible Electronics for the Beginners by Ewan Fisher

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Around the world there is a huge swell of interest in home electronics. Enthusiasts and hobbyists are getting hold of high-quality components and building new devices at home, either to learn more about how electronics work or, for those with professional training or a lot of knowledge they have built up themselves, to prototype new gadgets that might one day have a commercial application.

Any journey into the fascinating world of home electronics begins with learning the basics, but that does not mean that the devices you make as a beginner have to be simple or boring. In fact, there are companies out there that deliberately go out of their way to make kits and components for beginners that are not only valuable tools for learning, but also result in some enjoyable and eye-catching creations.

One of the best known of these companies is Adafruit, an open-source hardware company based in New York. It produces kits and parts for original open source hardware electronics projects. Everything it produces is designed specifically to be easy for beginners to make, which means beautifully silk-screened circuit boards, through-hole parts wherever possible, and extra large solder pads.

The companyâ€™s founder, Limor Fried, is an engineer trained at MIT, and has been dubbed one of the most influential women in technology, who is widely praised for pushing the boundaries in teaching and sharing electronics. Adafruit components and kits have become well known as cool, creative and highly instructive for anyone just starting to build their knowledge of electronics.

One of the mostly used Adafruit components is the Brain Machine Kit, which looks like a whacky pair of spectacles but it designed to relax and rejuvenate your brain and put it into a meditative state. It plays beautiful patterns and colours to your subconscious and plays sounds that accompany its 14-minute meditation sequence of brainwave frequencies.

Like all Adafruit kits, the fun comes not only from using it, but also from making it. It comes with a high-quality printed circuit board, all of the electronic components - including a pre-programmed microcontroller, wires and LEDs - the glasses and the headphones. All you need to provide are the tools and the passion for electronics.

Another popular kit is the Ice Tube clock kit, which features a retro Russian display tube and is the perfect way to get to know how electronic clocks work. When it is completed it looks cool, with its glowing blue 8-digit display.

Yet, if you take a quick look at the online electronic components suppliers that stock Adafruit products you will see straight away that the kits are just the tip of the iceberg. There is a host of individual components available that allow you to explore your own creative ideas and which are all easy for the beginner to use.

There are connectors and inverters, electroluminescent wire kits, magnets, electronic clocks, stepper motors, touch screens and display tubes. Every kit and component comes with instructions that are simple to interpret.

Adafruit products will help you learn about electronics and inspire your passion, and they are easy to come by for UK customers. Just go to a reliable online supplier to get all the gadgets - and the advice - that you need to get you started.

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Ewan Fisher - About Author:
Proto-PIC is the best option for electronics enthusiasts when it comes to purchasing electronic components like a Adafruit for creating their home electronics. Their range is cost-effective

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