The History and Development of .Net Gadgeteer by Ewan Fisher

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Released in 2011 after two years of research and development, the .Net Gadgeteer from Microsoft is an â€œopen-source toolkit for building small electronic devices using the .NET Micro Framework and Visual Studio or Visual C# Expressâ€•. It has a variety of uses and application but its history is just as interesting and colourful as these uses and many users have found themselves fascinated by how this powerful and useful piece of machinery came to be.

The .Net Gadgeteer allows users to create their own electronic devices from robotics to switches and controllers. When the project was first announced, it was thought by many critics that it had the potential to be â€œre-treading old groundâ€• as there was already much in the way of technology which would allow users to perform these tasks. The beauty of the .Net Gadgeteer in this respect is that whilst some of itsâ€™ counterparts can take hours, if not days to perform design, building and programming, the Gadgeteer allows for these tasks to be performed in minutes.

Furthermore, as a result of itsâ€™ compatibility with the technology and hardware which many users already have as part of their usual PC system, the .Net Gadgeteer is proving to be a comfortable rival to products such as the Arduino line which have been available, used and admired for a much longer period of time.

Developing the .Net Gadgeteer

It is widely known that the .Net Gadgeteer project is collaboration between Microsoft and a variety of hardware manufacturers and end users. The project was first imagined by Microsoft in their Cambridge Research facility with the idea of making the process of building gadgets in a much shorter space of time than was previously available to allow for a more efficient process.

The project quickly gathered enthusiasm from professionals, teachers and enthusiasts and as a result of their desire to make the technology as widely available as possible, Microsoft have released it in an open source format. Despite this open source format, Microsoft has made no secret of their desire to stay involved with and continues to grow and develop .Net Gadgeteer.

Support for Users

In the past, some aspects of machinery and robotics technology have received criticism for the lack of support and information which is offered to beginners and users with a basic knowledge and whilst it is certainly the case that the .Net Gadgeteer is not intended for the beginner or novice to electronics and robotics technology, there is much more support available for use of the Gadgeteer than exists in many of itsâ€™ counterparts. This information tends to be written in a more â€œhumanâ€• fo too making it easier to use and develop an understanding.

Uses

As is to be expected of any technology of this capacity and capability, there are a variety of users for .Net Gadgeteer and these range from educational use where it forms part of school and college classes, professional use where it can be used as part of or a vital aspect of research and development or simply as a way of improving efficiency. Finally, the .Net Gadgeteer appeals to hobby users who simply seek to create projects for their own enjoyment.

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