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Anatomy of the Fez Panda by Ewan Fisher

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No, this is not some kind of Egyptian hat. Nor yet is it a large endangered mammal, incapable of reproducing more than once a decade and doomed to eat the worldâ€™s slowest growing plant. The Fez Panda is a micro controller board, compatible with Arduino components and an extended part of the Arduino family.

The Panda is .NET framework compatible. That means that Panda users can program and debug the micro controller board using the free downloadable versions of Microsoft Visual C# Express. Like the Arduino micro controller boards and components, the Fez Panda is intended to make the use of electronics in multi stranded projects much easier and more accessible.

The upshot of that design brief is that the Fez Panda, like its Arduino counterparts, is very well suited to the amateur and enthusiastic electronics hobbyist as well as to the serious commercial enterprise.

The Panda loads applications through its USB connection(or Serial) with full featured debugging capabilities. It is available in two versions â€“ an original version and the Fez Panda II, which has been enhanced to include an on board micro SD socket; a real time clock; and an easy to access 40 pin female header that gives easy access to extra 1/0 sockets.

The Fez Panda 2 is based on an NXP LPC2387 micro controller with a commercial USBizi firmware and software package. The board has a 72 MHz 32 bit ARM 7 processor; 512 kb FLASH; and 96 kb RAM.

Compatible with most Arduino shields, the Fez Panda 2 is a fine example of open source hardware, a movement that has emulated the open source software model by making licenses, technical information and schematics easily available to anyone who wants to use them.

The Panda II can be bought on its own or as part of a Fez Ultimate Kit, which is designed to provide a pretty massive grab bag of components and extras for the budding inventor. The kit includes sensors, wires, speakers and E blocks.

Using an Arduino form factor, the Fez Panda user can plug in pretty much any Arduino shield. The Panda includes JTAG access as well as access to the .NET framework. It additionally includes a large selection of inbuilt libraries: networking; FAT file systems; UART; USB client; PWM; DAC; ADC; SPI; and I2C.

The Arduino project, of which the Fez is a natural offshoot, began in Italy in 2005. The initial brief for the Arduino project was to make prototyping less expansive for electronics students. Its model, which consisted of a basic board with input and output capabilities, run by an easy to use software control panel based on the C++ language, has influenced the design and proliferation of hundreds of open source micro controller boards including the Fez Panda.

Now the proliferation of micro controller boards and open source hardware is fuelling a generation of electronics enthusiasts

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GHI FEZ Ultimate Kit (GHI-FULTIMATEKIT-265) In Stock for Same Day Despatch! Wealso provides a complete andfree project ebookfor the kit. Already own a a Fez Panda 2

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