
Subject: The Intellectual People Podcast: Pi Speakers

Posted by [jtwrace](#) on Fri, 11 Apr 2025 12:09:39 GMT

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Finally, it has happened!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSFTKNJfIC8>

Subject: Re: The Intellectual People Podcast: Pi Speakers

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 11 Apr 2025 17:21:00 GMT

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Thanks for visiting with me, Jason. I have always been impressed with your varied interests and your understanding of so many technical topics.

I have an idea: I think we should get together again, but next time, I should interview you for an episode of your Intellectual People Podcast. If you haven't already done this, let's plan a date to do so!

Subject: Re: The Intellectual People Podcast: Pi Speakers

Posted by [Barryso](#) on Sun, 13 Apr 2025 18:29:54 GMT

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Nice interview. A LOT of information.

:)

Subject: Re: The Intellectual People Podcast: Pi Speakers

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 15 Apr 2025 18:48:49 GMT

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Thanks, Barry, it was fun.

You might recognize Jason 'cause he was at the Lone Star Audiofest in the late twenty-teens, maybe 2018 or 2019. I remember that he went to lunch at Rudy's with a few of us, but I can't remember if he went to dinner at Pappadeaux's or Babe's.

Good times, yeah?!! Hope to see you soon!

Subject: Re: The Intellectual People Podcast: Pi Speakers
Posted by [skywave-rider](#) on Fri, 09 May 2025 21:33:44 GMT
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Checked into the forum, saw this thread and watched/listened to the entire podcast. Loved it.

Subject: Re: The Intellectual People Podcast: Pi Speakers
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sat, 10 May 2025 14:22:38 GMT
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Good to see you here!

Subject: Re: The Intellectual People Podcast: Pi Speakers
Posted by [repeatafterme](#) on Mon, 19 May 2025 23:14:05 GMT
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Wayne,

I was listening to this interview (fascinating!) and I had a question about your distant past: Did you ever encounter FORTH created by Charles Moore, for doing embedded controllers? FORTH was my first love for many years. Just curious.

Alan

Subject: Re: The Intellectual People Podcast: Pi Speakers
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 20 May 2025 01:47:34 GMT
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Oh, yes, I remember FORTH. To me, it was sort of a sub-culture in the late 1970s and 1980s, but a relatively popular one. A relatively large minority of coders were FORTH guys.

I myself was a C guy back then. We were a large minority too. We started off as UNIX programmers but it became very popular for embedded controllers too. That's what I liked about C - I could write microcode or systems code and it was very fast and efficient. And I could control memory and stack operations with careful use of variables, pointers and function arguments.

Subject: Re: The Intellectual People Podcast: Pi Speakers

Posted by [repeatafterme](#) on Tue, 20 May 2025 16:21:44 GMT

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Here is the sales pitch for FORTH, pulling it out of my memory from 40+ years ago:

You could bring it up on a new piece of hardware by hand-coding about 100 bytes of code. After that you were in FORTH interpreter if you had RS232 terminal

It was an interpreter and compiler. You could compile machine code right into a line of interpreted code. So the non-iterative stuff could be coded quickly in high-level FORTH and then whenever you needed something to run repetitively, quickly, you could just drop into assembler with a single character.

Coding was completely hierarchical, an extension of the language itself. FORTH was written in FORTH, and structurally identical to code written on top of it.

It was a meta-compiler and capable of recursion, all within an interpreter as small as 5K, I think.

Problem was, it was write-only, according to the critics. Almost no mandatory coding conventions - Wild West. People tried hard to encourage voluntary readability conventions, naming conventions, etc, but I guess nobody followed them.

When embedded systems had to fit within 30k, FORTH was practical, fast, fun. But when they got to the point that they were using 386 processors for embedded systems, it became unmanageable. I still miss it, as a concept anyway, not that I'd want to go back to green screen.

Subject: Re: The Intellectual People Podcast: Pi Speakers

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 20 May 2025 18:15:08 GMT

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It's kinda cool - at least to me - to keep the dust blown off these older machines and write a few things here and there with the older languages.

I still regularly program on my Altair, mostly using K&R C but sometimes in assembler. I have a handful of CP/M versions running, and I do all sort of fun little things with it.

I kind of like it babbling on in the corner, running a program that creates pseudo-poetry endlessly. Or sometimes running Conway's Life program.