



# Sean McManus

The *MagPi* regular and Raspberry Pi guide writer, **Sean** has done just about everything with a Raspberry Pi

> Name **Sean McManus** | > Occupation **Writer**  
 > Community role **Resource creator** | > URL **sean.co.uk**

**If you've been reading *The MagPi* for a while, you'll have seen many excellent tutorials from the pen (keyboard?) of Sean McManus.**

Writing tutorials about games, image manipulation, Scratch stuff, AI storybooks, and much more, there's a reason he's also one of the writers behind *Raspberry Pi for Dummies*.

"I tend to make educational projects, from which readers

can learn something about programming," Sean says to us. "I started in the 1980s, writing programs on the Amstrad CPC 464. Some appeared as listings in magazines, including a sprite toolkit that retro developers still use sometimes. I lost touch with programming as a hobby for a few years, but the Raspberry Pi reawakened my interest and made it easy to get back into. I learned Scratch, Python, and

Sonic Pi with it, and built some simple electronics projects."

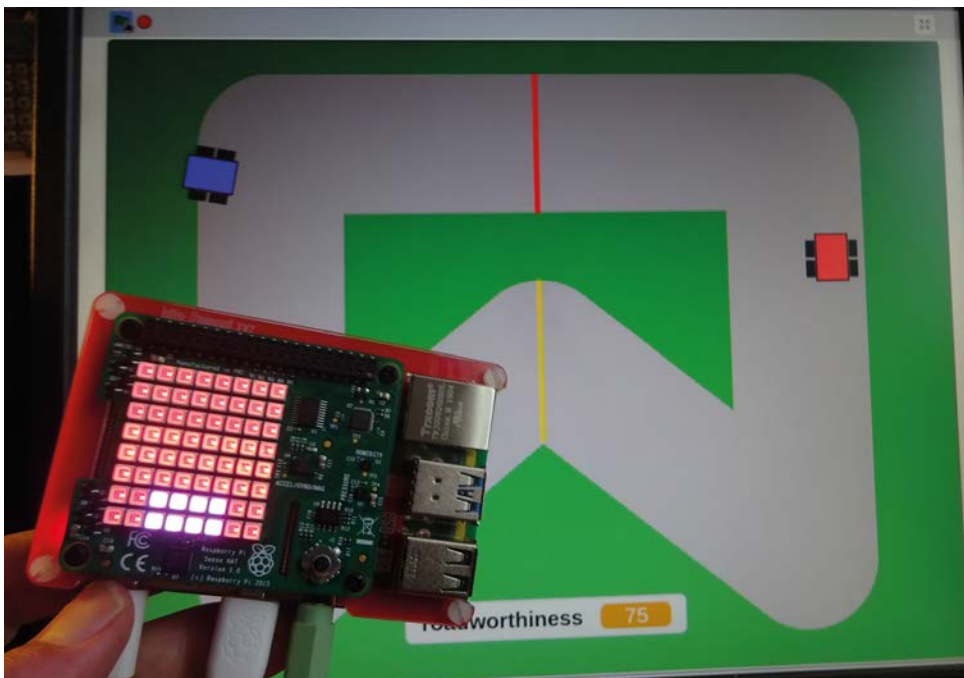
**When did you learn about Raspberry Pi?**

There was a bit of a buzz online about Raspberry Pi before it launched. I was one of the people who ordered stickers to support the project before the first model went on sale. I ordered a Raspberry Pi Model B as soon as I could, and attended a talk at Google Campus in 2012 where I asked Eben to sign the box (which I still have). The early machines were excellent value and great to experiment with. It's been amazing to see how the performance has increased over the years.

**How did you start writing about Raspberry Pi?**

In the early days of the Raspberry Pi there wasn't the ecosystem that exists today, and the software wasn't quite as friendly as it is now, either. Friends told me they'd bought a Raspberry Pi computer but didn't really know how to use it, or what to do with it. I had been writing books for Wiley's Older and Wiser series, so I pitched the idea of a Raspberry Pi book, which ended up becoming

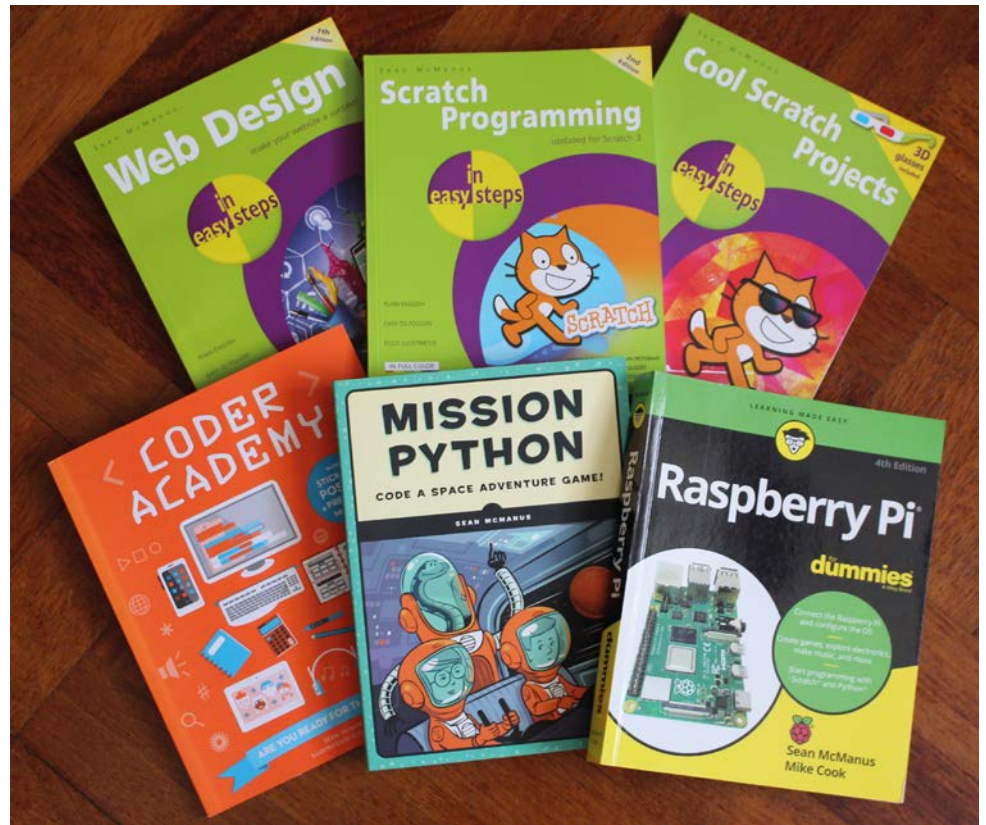
▼ This Sense HAT-controlled racing game is a great way to learn how Sense HAT works



*Raspberry Pi For Dummies*, co-written with Mike Cook. It was one of the first books about Raspberry Pi, and is now in its fourth edition.

### What is your favourite thing to write about related to Raspberry Pi?

I like creating projects that people can easily customise or learn from. ArtEvolver (*The MagPi* 119 [magpi.cc/119](http://magpi.cc/119)), for example, enables anyone to make their own digital artwork by simply curating the images they feed it. Similarly, people can personalise Raspberry Radio (*The MagPi* 122 [magpi.cc/122](http://magpi.cc/122)) with their own music and DJ banter. My book *Mission Python* featured a space game where readers can modify the maps and puzzles. The idea is to provide an easy way in for people to start tinkering and creating something unique. At the same time, those who want to do more



is Throttle and Tilt. It's a car racing game I wrote to showcase the new features in Scratch 3

(*The MagPi* 86 [magpi.cc/86](http://magpi.cc/86)). You use a Sense HAT as a steering wheel. I created a few Scratch projects that work with 3D red/cyan glasses, where the depth is part of the gameplay ([magpi.cc/angryaliens](http://magpi.cc/angryaliens)). In 12 Angry Aliens, the aliens fly towards you out of the screen. **M**

▲ Just some of the books Sean has written

**“** In the early days of the Raspberry Pi there wasn't the ecosystem that exists today **”**

with the code can find Python functions to do things like download RSS feeds, implement computer speech, or index a folder of files. I hope people see bits of my code and think: 'Aha! I can use that!'

### What are some of your favourite projects that you've made with Raspberry Pi?

I enjoyed building the graphic adventure game *Escape*, which featured in the book *Mission Python*. It shows readers how to go beyond small examples in Python to build a more substantial game. I love Scratch, and one of my favourite projects



◀ ArtEvolver was a great recent series by Sean, showing you ways to edit photos using code