

Love, Passion and Bat Switches



When Patty and I were first dating in the early 70's it was an exciting time! So many new discoveries in mathematics and electronics! Fractal geometry, digital circuits, dynamical systems, and personal computers!

My head was spinning. It was spinning over my beautiful girlfriend Patty, and it was spinning over the new technologies that were emerging every day. What an exciting time!

One of our early dates was a class that we took at the "Byte Shop" in Tempe, Arizona. I was in heaven! Patty, probably not so much, but she took the class with me anyway.

At that time the "state of the art" was just a bunch of components thrown together to create a computer. (Did I mention that I was in heaven with a beautiful girlfriend and a handful of resistors? It doesn't get any better than that my friend!)

So, how do you program a computer? Well, at that time it was:

1. Enter an instruction (bat switches spelling out the 1's and 0's)
2. Bump the address counter
3. Enter another instruction
4. Bump the address counter
5. See how this thing goes?

You don't need much to do this. Enter the ALTAIR and the IMSAI.



How beautiful is that!

No keyboard and no monitor, just bat switches and LED's. But they were beautiful to me. And we could make them do real things. OK, not really complicated things, but you get a sense of how exciting these times were!