

Raspberry Pi will roll with Android 4.0

2 August 2012, by Nancy Owano



(Phys.org) -- Broadcom developer Naren Sankar is porting Android 4.0 (Ice Cream Sandwich) over to the little \$35 computer from the Raspberry Pi Foundation, and so far the two coexist nicely, though with more work ahead. To demonstrate how far along the Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich port has come for the Raspberry Pi platform, Sankar has published a YouTube video that demonstrates all the action. The Foundation credits him with having made "great progress." (The chip at the heart of the Raspberry Pi is the Broadcom BCM2835.)

Up to now, the device, which functions as a computer with Ethernet, HDMI, and USB ports and SD card slot, has hosted Linux as the choice OS: "We recommend Debian as our default distribution," according to the FAQ sheet on the Foundation site, along with the recently announced, optimized Debian port called Raspbian. Released in mid-July. [Raspbian](#), specifically optimized for the Pi computer's hardware specs, was crafted in order to bring faster performance to the device.

While Raspbian is a beef-up, Android 4.0, say Pi fans, could make the device even more of a draw with wider audiences. The original vision of the Raspberry Pi foundation was to see the Pi off as a

tool for students to explore the fundamentals of computer science; the Android ICS would appeal to users excited about hooking up their devices to TVs and home networks for Android-run content.

The Android port has support for hardware-accelerated graphics and video playback; work remains, though, to add AudioFlinger. Reports say developers are working on other issues too. The port uses its own customized Linux kernel and not the Linux kernel version maintained by the Pi Foundation. Raspberry Pi's work ahead is to converge the two before publishing the source code.

"This implementation uses a different kernel and VideoCore binary image from the one available on GitHub, which is why we've been keeping quiet about it so far," said a Foundation post. "We're investigating the feasibility of converging the two code lines to produce a single common platform as soon as we can, at which point we hope to release the sources for you to play with."

Images and video playback seem adequate, but those watching the demo video of the ICS [port](#) in action would no doubt agree with a comment on Ars Technica: [Android's](#) performance and responsiveness on the [Raspberry Pi](#) are obviously not as good as they would be on a higher-end device, though it appears to work relatively well.

More information:
www.raspberrypi.org/archives/1700

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