

Phil Thompson Talks About PyQt

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Created *09/08/2006 - 5:11am*

Submitted by srlinuxx on Wednesday 9th of August 2006 05:11:31 AM Filed under [Interviews](#) [1]

High level languages are increasingly being used in preference to C and C++ in new desktop software. One of these languages best supported in KDE and Qt is Python. To find out about the history and current state of PyQt KDE Dot News talked to Phil Thompson, author and maintainer of the bindings.

Please introduce yourself and your role in Free Software

Through my company, Riverbank Computing, I develop and maintain a set of related packages. These are SIP, PyQt and QScintilla.

SIP is a Python bindings generator for C and C++ libraries. It started out as a small SWIG (hence the name) and was first released in 1998. At the time I felt that SWIG, as a more general purpose tool, wasn't great at producing Python bindings for C++. So SIP was intended to do a more specialised job much better.

PyQt are the Python bindings for Qt. PyQt v3 supports Qt v1 to v3. PyQt v4 supports Qt v4. The first release was also in 1998, although named PyKDE since originally the two were not split. PyQt is written using SIP. PyQt follows Trolltech's licensing model in that there are GPL and commercial versions.

QScintilla is a port to Qt of the Scintilla code editor widget. It supports Qt v3 and v4 and (of course) includes a set of Python bindings. I initially did the port so that the Eric IDE (written by Detlev Offenbach) would have a decent programmer's editor. Again, it is available under the GPL and a commercial license.

What is PyQt and why should I use it?

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