RETROSPECS

A PIXEL ART IMAGE PROCESSING APP FOR iOS

A brief history

It's late 2013. The idea for Retrospecs had been kicking about in my mind for a few years – the concept being part preservation/part tribute to the sort of computer systems I lusted after whilst pouring over handed down copies of Byte magazine as a lad. However, I didn't get around to implementing anything concrete until early February '14 when I roughed out some vague proof of concept algorithms.

At the time I was re-skilling between jobs (the goal being to transition between web and native app development), so I abandoned the other bits I was experimenting with and started focusing full time on the app proper. After several weeks intensive graft, the first conversion engine (the "attribute" engine, created specifically with the Sinclair ZX Spectrum in mind) was limping along natively on my trusty iPhone 4.

Fast forwarding a bit, over the following three months I threw myself into expanding the available conversion engines, added a basic user interface and by Saturday the 7th of June 2014 I'd finally submitted the first build to the Apple App Store. Shortly after that, I was back in full time work so Retrospecs became a strictly weekend affair - adding new engines and emulations and building out the UI until it was roughly how I initially envisaged it.

Three and a half years (and thirty-five updates to the 1.x app) later, work began on version 2 - the focus being to provide support for video processing. After a few months grafting away on the app, the initial soft launch of the 2.x series was on the 13th of March 2018.

At little over fifteen months (and nine updates to the 2.x series) later, the latest version of the app – complete with a new character set and palette editor was launched in the App Store on the 19th of June 2019.

About the developer

Retrospecs was developed by John Parker, a 46 year old software developer who has perhaps seen too many lines of code. Despite the staggering lack of any form of profitability he persists in adding new features for some reason.