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We interview the man behind Leechbite.

Pete: Jory welcome and thank you for taking the time for this interview. Our readers at Winamp Enthusiasts Group will be very interested to read your story.

Jory: Hi, thanks for the chance to do this interview.

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Pete: Please give us an overview as to why and when you got involved with Winamp, your participation into skinning, your background before that etc.etc.

Jory: I was an avid user and fan of Winamp back in the day. I was quite fascinated by the architecture and customizability of Winamp and how skins were able to alter the interface entirely.

I am an electrical engineer by profession but am self-taught in programming and graphics design. I thought it would be cool to learn how to create skins. My first skin was 'Wood Chrome Finish' released back in 2004. It wasn't the last as I released 5 more skins each with increasing complexity in design and function. I collaborated with other skinners for few more skins as well.

To explain my background more, as I said I'm in the electrical engineering field but have keen interest in programming and graphics design. Before Winamp I was making small software programs for friends. I also was a layout artist on the school magazine. This introduced me to graphics design.

Winamp skinning was perfect for me since it is a marriage of coding and graphics design. I would say I'm a better programmer than designer but I like doing and learning both.

All my Winamp skins can be found on: <http://leechbite.com/?section=Skins>

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Pete: What or which are your favourite skin/s you have made over the years and what were some of the challenges in making them?

Jory: My favourite skin would be 'KameleonDUI' although 'Anunaki' was the most popular. KameleonDUI was the most complex. It uses some new techniques that were not done before. It introduced the Dynamic User Interface (DUI) and it was the first 'skinnable' skin. It took me about a year to finish the first version. It was fun to put together.

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Pete: What if any frustrations have you had with dealing with Winamp code over the years as various versions were released. Has it been painful to keep up with new builds?

Jory: It wasn't too bad. There were persistent bugs but nothing too major.

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Pete: What do you do now? Do you still code? What other hobbies do you have that readers may be interested to know about?

Jory: I moved on to developing iOS apps in 2009. Although, if you look into the apps I have released so far, they all have somehow been greatly influenced by Winamp. They all have great customization, being 'skinnable' and are somehow music related or have a music feature.

<http://leechbite.com/?section=Apps>

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Pete: What has been one of the biggest highlights and lowlights during your time working with Winamp and Winamp skins?

Jory: Highlight would making the skins and interacting with the great community back then.

Lowligh would be when I got banned by the forums for accepting an offer to sell my skin (Kameleon) to a company who used Winamp's open source code to create a rip off product. They wanted to use Kameleon as the default skin. I was naive at that time but considering we were all doing it for free, any monetary offers for your work was very tempting. The company has since then disappeared.

I still continued creating/updating skins even after the banning and was active on the SkinsConsortium.com website which was created and maintained by fellow Winamp skinner.

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Pictured: The man behind Leechbite, Jory Compendio

Pete: Do you have any funny stories about Winamp or coding you can share with our readers?

Jory: Not funny but it was quite interesting to me. One time in the Winamp forums it was spontaneously decided to put a challenge out to create a skin using only code and with no graphics . A number of skinner accepted the challenge and a number of interesting skins were created. Mine was '.mMonkey' skin which took about a week or two to build. There were no prizes and it was all for the fun of it.

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Pete: What was your reaction when AOL announced it was to close the forum and website and shut down Winamp?

Jory: I was a bit shocked as I thought Winamp should still have a good number of users. I would have thought AOL would just make the project open source instead of shutting it down.

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Pete: Where do you think are Winamp's strengths and weaknesses and where do you think the player is headed or what do you hope will happen to Winamp in the future?

Jory: Winamp has the best architecture I think. A lot of users are going mobile, but I believe there will continue a good number of desktop users. At the top of my head, it might cool if Winamp would

partner with popular streaming services like Rdio and Spotify and become their front-end. Keep the skin engine but maybe port it to OS X.

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Pete: If there was a message you would like to give to Winamp fans across the world what would it be?

Jory: Let's keep it alive! Cheers!

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Pete: Do you feel Winamp skinning marked you as a professional?

Jory: I did learn a lot from skinning, especially on the graphics part and it has helped me develop the skills I would need to do iOS app development.

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Pete: How do you think Winamp can be a great hit in the mobile market? (or possibly in iOS market)

Jory: I always viewed Winamp as a desktop app and I believe it should stay that way. The mobile market is very different and might not be a good fit for Winamp.

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Pete: Are you eager to see Winamp 6? What do you expect from it?

Jory: More partnership. Maybe streaming services. This will probably never happen but port skin engine to OS X.

Pete: From your perspective, how would you improve desktop Winamp?

Jory: Library and playlist can be improved. Make more emphasis to cover art. Universal search you can access anywhere would be good. Streaming tie up with other popular services other than ShoutCast.

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Pete: You are using Apple / iOS now, what do you miss the most about Winamp? What (software) do you use to listen to your music these days?

Jory: I mostly listen to music on my iPhone now and mainly use OS X. I still have a Windows machine which I fire Winamp once in a while.

If Winamp was ported to OS X, I would most likely be using it still full time.

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Pete: What is the future of some of your great skins such as KOMODO etc. Will they be updated to work with new versions of Winamp?

Jory: Hard to say if I would have time to update my old skins. Skinning then and even iOS app development now, I do in my spare time, which is not a lot lately. If the new versions are really good, I might just get tempted to update my old favourites.

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Pete: Jory on behalf Winamp users around the world thank you and your team for your participation and involvement with Winamp and the fantastic skins you have made over the years.

Pete Zawacki
Winamp Enthusiasts Group

Jory: Thanks and cheers!