

Tour of an IDE | Part B

Let's look at Scratch first as you may already have used this IDE.

The Scratch IDE uses a GUI where you can drag and drop blocks of code. Let's have a look at the main features. On the screen itself you've got the file menu where you can open and close and share files and you have a block of palettes down here. So you've got a palette that allows us to access a lot of different blocks up and down here. And this is where all the action happens, this is the programming and this is where the IDE really comes into its own. And what we can do now is get the cat to bounce back and forwards across the screen and although it's a really simple thing it will give you an idea of how the IDE is designed and how it lets you control the cat.

So, I need the control block first and I'm going to drag that on and that says "when such and such is clicked then run this code". And now I'm going to go to motion and I'm going to get the cat to move ten steps. So when I click the green flag, get him to move ten steps across the screen which is fine but it will only do it once. So if I go back to control, I've got a lot of blocks here which will let me loop the code, we'll talk more about that later in the course. I'm going to put a forever loop in and you can actually see how it will click. Just like a jigsaw, it will actually drop in and now I click that now. And it will happen forever but it hits the edge of the screen. So I'm going to stop that and if I go back to motion I have a little block here, 'if on edge bounce'. If you're not quite sure what it does you can write click and get help and that will give you examples here. And again, this is the IDE helping you program.

I'm going to drag this across and double click it again and off he goes. So the cat is just going to bounce across that screen. And that's the start of a little animation and then if you put some interactivity in there, you've the start of a little game. I'm going to stop this cat now. I can also change costumes and animate the cat. I can put sounds in and I can include backgrounds and so on. So actually you can see this is quite a powerful IDE and really, really does help you create the game, create the animation, create the story, whatever you want to do with Scratch.

To summarise, the Scratch IDE makes it really easy for beginners to learn the basics of programming. You can create fun games and other programs and you can also share them. However, although Scratch is a great way to learn it's not a language that's used commercially to produce software.