WOODEN TOY TEACHES PRESCHOOLERS TO CODE, BEFORE THEY CAN READ AND WRITE

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Primo is in fact a robotics kit that uses a visual, wooden block-based language to enable kids to learn how to program.

For the majority of consumers, being able to use an app is akin to knowing how to speak a language but not read and write, as many are 'code-illiterate' when it comes to computer programming. Today, consumers can barely remember how they got anything done before smartphones, and yet the majority have no idea how the code that powers the apps they use everyday actually works. Hoping to teach children the basics of coding from as young as three years of age, Primo is on the surface a wooden toy for children, but is in fact a robotics kit that uses a visual block-based language to enable kids to learn how to program.

The play set features a small, motorized cube called Cubetto, which is wirelessly connected to a wooden board with several slots in it. The board acts as the programming interface and children control Cubetto by placing the code — color-coded instruction blocks — into the slots. Once the blocks have been placed, pressing a red button on the side of the board executes the code and sends Cubetto to the programmed destination. The four blocks of the code include foward, turn left, turn right and a function block. The programming board includes a separate section where users can create a 'saved' sequence of code they can call at any time — when the function block is placed into the main code, it replays the piece of code stored in the function box. This replicates the way languages such as PHP and JavaScript use functions. This feature can even be hacked to create infinite loops. The video below offers more information about the project:

The startup successfully reached its funding target on Kickstarter, and is currently selling the full play set for USD 170 through its website. Much like the code-inspired Robot Turtles board game, Primo aims to set up the next generation to be able to read and write code — not just use it — while also entertaining them. How else can programming be promoted among young children?

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