QL SOFTWARE PRESERVATION PROJECT

Rich Mellor has now closed his QL Software Preservation Project following two years of harassment by internet trolls on QL and Spectrum forums.

The origins of the project go back to 2007 when Rich started a QL Wiki.

http://www. rwapadventures.com/q l_wiki/

Originally it was intended as a software wiki, but expanded into a general QL Wiki. Topics included QL CD-ROMs; hardware; history; operating systems; QL websites; platforms; software; SuperBasic; and traders and personalities.

There was some discussion about whether a QL Wiki was needed in addition to the QL pages on Wikipedia. The former allowed more QL information to be included, but the latter would reach a wider audience.

Although, like all wiki sites, the content could be edited by the users, only a handful of people have contributed to it over the years and most of the content has been written by Rich Mellor.

(A full review of the Wiki can be found in QL Today v11 i5 p12.)

In 2009 Rich Mellor took the project a stage further with a project to catalogue and preserve as many commercial QL programs as possible, a task he saw as important to ensure the continued future of the QL. The intention was to provide the programs in a suitable form to run on one of the PC QL emulators, and to be a resource for QL users who have a legal copy of a program that would no longer load.

At the time Rich Mellor said:

"We have managed to get most of the software from microdrive onto a PC in a format for use with Q-emuLator in the main, although it does help us to make fresh working copies on microdrives and disks. The idea behind this, is to ensure those users who have an original copy, but cannot get it to load anymore, will be able to purchase a working copy on disk or micro drive, or for use with Q-emulalor from our website (provided that they can prove ownership of the original program."

The project soon became more complicated and painstaking as Rich Mellor embarked on a programme of tracing the software authors and publishers to determine copyright issues and, if necessary, asking their permission to re-release either as commercial or freeware software. In the last two years over 120 titles have been released as freeware, mostly downloadable from the Dilwyn Jones' website and another 29 commercially. In 2014 Rich Mellor celebrated the 30th anniversary of the QL by re-releasing 18 old classics.

It was the commercial side of the project that led to opposition, mainly from Spain, arguing Rich Mellor's commercial activities were hindering software preservation and that all QL software should be freely downloadable whether or not this was in breach of copyright. There are sites that have attempted to do this, but which were then ordered to take down the copyright software. The insinuation was made that Rich Mellor was the complainant in order to further his commercial interests. The harassment that Rich Mellor has received has lasted for about two years, and echos similar harassment of people in the Spectrum world who are attempting to preserve classic software through legal means.

Rich Mellor has compiled a spreadsheet of the present state of known QL software in the hope that this will stimulate others to continue the work.

https://www.dropbox.com/s/84m3eizdplf9fv3/%21%21%20Full%20QL%20Software%20List%20-%20Preserved.xlsx?dl=0

There is also an Italian project co-ordinated by Simone Moltolini, who has also had some harassment from the trolls:

https://sinclairql.wordpress.com