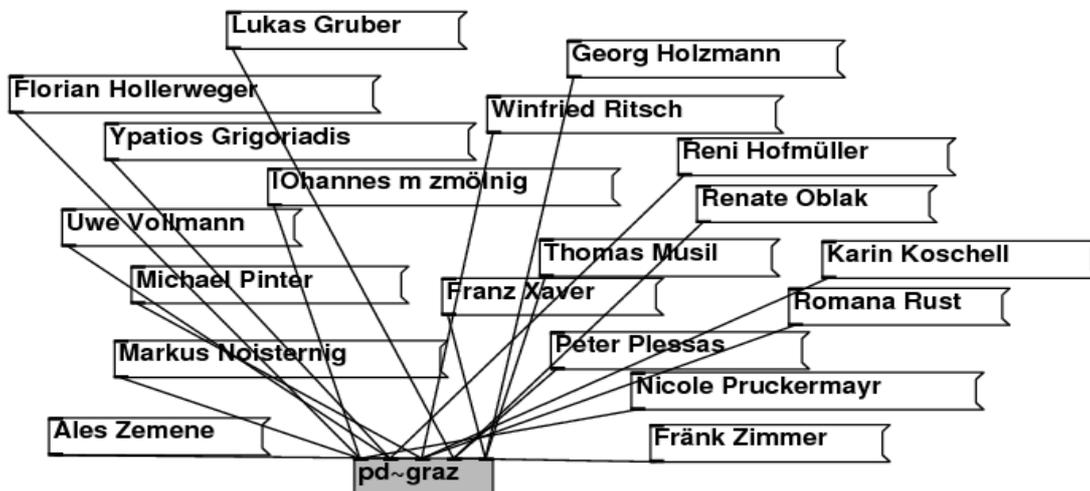


## Pd~graz



The media art collective *Pd~graz* was founded in Graz, Austria, in 2005 by a group of people who share a fascination for the *Pure Data* programming environment. It serves as an initiative for the organization of performances, installations, workshops and publications around the *Pure Data* software.

### What is Pure Data (Pd)?

*Pure Data* (aka *Pd*; <http://puredata.info>) is a real-time graphical programming environment for audio, video, and graphical processing. Unlike in text-based programming languages, Pd programs ("patches") are built graphically by using "wires" to connect "boxes", which represent routines operating on the data. Pd is the third major branch of the family of patcher programming languages known as *Max* (*Max/FTS*, *ISPW Max*, *Max/MSP*, *jMax*, etc.) originally developed by Miller Puckette and others at the IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique, Paris, France). The core of Pd is written and maintained by Miller Puckette and includes the work of many developers, making the whole package very much a community effort.

Pd was created to explore ideas of how to further refine the Max paradigm with the core ideas of allowing data to be treated in a more open-ended way and opening it up to applications outside of audio and MIDI, such as graphics and video.

It is easy to extend Pd by writing object classes ("externals") or patches ("abstractions"). The work of many developers is already available as part of the standard Pd distribution and the Pd developer community is growing rapidly. Recent developments include a system of abstractions for building performance environments, a library of objects for physical modeling, and a library of objects for generating and processing video in realtime.

Pd is free, open-source software and can be downloaded either as an operating-system specific package, source code package, or directly from CVS. Pd is cross-platform and is therefore quite portable: versions exist for Win32, IRIX, GNU/Linux, BSD, and MacOS X, running on anything from a PocketPC to an old Mac to a brand new PC. It is possible to write externals that work with both, Max/MSP and Pd using *flex* and *cyclone*.

## What/who is Pd~graz?

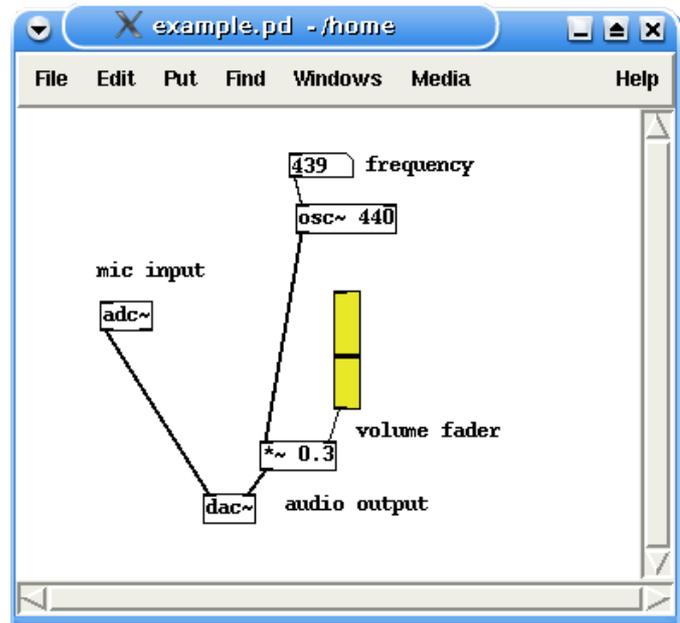
Pd users and developers in Graz, Austria come from a variety of backgrounds, including both independent artistic production and academic research.

Some of the most popular extensions to the software are written and maintained by local developers (*iemlib* by Thomas Musil, *zexy* and *Gem* by IOhannes m zmölnig). Several local institutions have a long tradition of dealing with art in a technological context and have made important contributions to the work of the collective:

- *mur.at*, an initiative for the promotion of net art: <http://www.mur.at>  
ESC gallery: <http://esc.mur.at>, which also hosted the CC, mur.at's "Competence Center"
- *Institute of Electronic Music and Acoustics* (IEM): <http://iem.at>
- *medienkunstlabor* at the Kunsthhaus Graz: <http://www.medienkunstlabor.at>

Starting with a Pd workshop in the CC, regular meetings (the "Pd Stammtisch") were being held from 2003. These resulted in a number of shared activities, including further workshops, the audiovisual installation *create/destroy* at the ESC (2003), and a twelve-hour audiovisual live improvisation at the "Lange Nacht der Musik" (long night of music) in Graz (2003).

In 2004, this community organized and hosted the *First International Pd~Convention* in Graz. This event represented the first meeting of Pd developers and users on an international basis. Local and international artists presented their work in numerous concerts and installations. More than twenty of Pd's most important developers exchanged their ideas in a series of lectures. Together with some fifteen invited media theorists they discussed the impact of free software on artistic production in a series of panels. Workshops for beginners and advanced users were being held. This event had a significant impact on the further development of the software and has since been followed up by two more conventions in Montreal (2007) and Sao Paulo (2009), both also organized by local communities.



A typical Pd patch

In the aftermath of the First International Pd~Convention, the *Pd~graz* initiative was founded in 2005. Concurrently, the *pd~* label was established as a publishing body. Its first release was a DVD with art works presented at the convention (*release 0.1*, 2005). The book *bang–Pure Data* (ISBN-13: 978-3-936000-37-5) was published in 2006 in collaboration with the Wolke Verlag. It includes articles by developers, artists and theorists who had participated in the convention.



Pd~graz performing *blind date* in Montreal

Pd~graz has been very active as a performance group in the last years. Its audiovisual group improvisation performances *blind date* and *rec.wie.m* have been performed at multiple occasions in Austria, Slovenia, Germany, the Czech Republic, the UK, and Canada. Pd~graz also conducts Pure Data workshops on a regular basis, both for beginners and advanced users. This includes a workshop at the Film and TV School of the Academy for Performing Arts in Prague (2006), a series of workshops at the CC in Graz (2007), and a workshop at the *EarZoom* festival in Ljubljana, Solvenia (2009).

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