

THE KEYSIGHT U1272A AND MACOS

The short version

I wrote a toy Perl program which talks to the Keysight U1272A: feel free to play with it!

1. 2011-06-20: Version 0.1.



The Keysight U1272A

Keysight make a very nice and particularly orange multimeter: the U1272A. Like many bits of modern test kit, one can connect it to a computer. In this case there's an infra-red dongle which connects the meter to a USB port.

Although it's nice to see the current reading, the computer connection is particularly useful in conjunction with the meter's ability to log data autonomously to its internal memory.

For example, one can leave the meter recording a voltage every 10s then come back the next day and see the result. We're limited to 10,000 measurements which is roughly a day's worth of samples if they're 10s apart.

Unsurprisingly Keysight provide pretty Windows software to handle all this, but I use a Mac. Happily kind people have done most of the hard work already. Building on this, I wrote a toy Perl program which talks to the meter. In the absence of proper documentation it's far from production quality but you might find it useful or at least fun.

The dongle

We'll begin with the hardware. It transpires that internally the IR dongle is based around a Prolific 2303 USB to Serial bridge. These are quite common devices, and there's a Mac driver. Actually there are two:

1. The official one;
2. an open source one from Failberg.

I used Failberg's driver, but I should say that I can't and don't vouch for the quality of either driver. Install them at your peril!

Assuming that you are feeling lucky and install the driver, you should find that when you plug the cable into your Mac, a device is created:

```
$ ls /dev/tty.PL*  
  
/dev/tty.PL2303-003312FD
```

The key part here is the `/dev/tty.PL2303`: the serial number which follows is presumably some unique device ID.

Source: <http://www.mjoldfield.com/atelier/2011/06/agilent-macos.html>