

## Adafruit CharliePlex LED Matrix Bonnet

Created by Kattni Rembor



https://learn.adafruit.com/adafruit-charlieplex-bonnet

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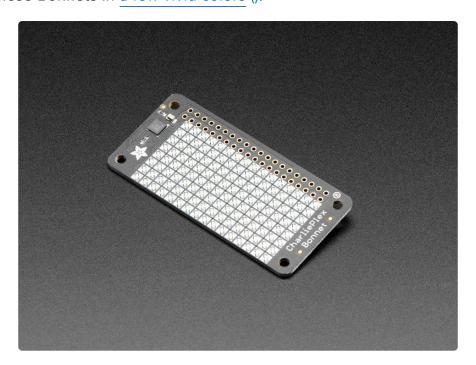
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## Overview



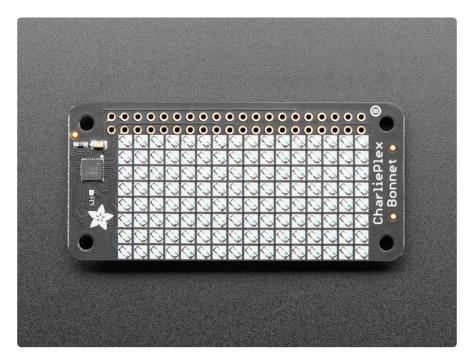
You won't be able to look away from the mesmerizing patterns created by this Adafrui t CharliePlex LED Matrix Display Bonnet. This 16x8 LED display can be placed atop any Raspberry Pi computer with a 2x20 connector, for a beautiful, bright grid of 128 CharliePlexed LEDs. It even comes with a built-in CharliePlex driver that is run over I2C.

We carry these Bonnets in a few vivid colors ().



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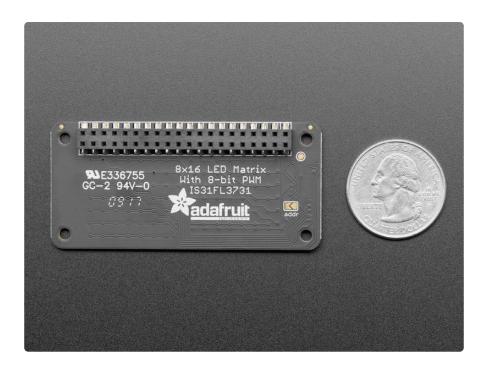
What is particularly nice about this Bonnet is the I2C LED driver chip has the ability to PWM each individual LED in a 16x8 grid so you can have beautiful LED lighting effects, without a lot of pin twiddling. Simply tell the chip which LED on the grid you want lit, and what brightness and it's all taken care of for you. You get 8-bit (256 level) dimming for each individual LED.



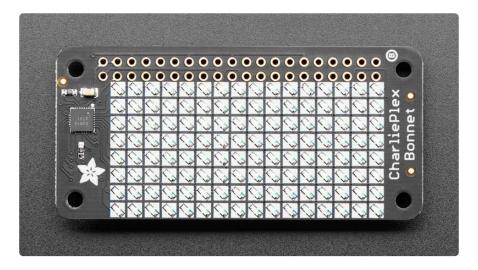
The IS31FL3731 is a nice little chip - and it runs happily over 3.3V power. Inside is enough RAM for 8 separate frames of display memory so you can set up multiple frames of an animation and flip them to be displayed with a single command. Since it uses I2C, it takes up only the SDA/SCL pins on your Pi and can share those pins with other I2C devices and sensors.

The bonnet comes fully assembled, no soldering required, so you can plug it in immediately. To program it, <u>you'll use our CircuitPython library</u> (), which works with Linux computers like Raspberry Pi. After a pip install, <u>run some of the examples to display simple graphics or text</u> ().

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### **Pinouts**

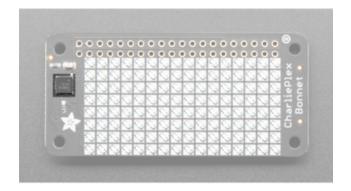


The CharliePlex LED Matrix Bonnet includes the IS31FL3731 driver chip and 128 LEDs in an 8x16 matrix. Let's take a look!

The main pins used by the Bonnet are 5V, GND, SDA and SCL on the Raspberry Pi. We power the LEDs from the 5V supply, but the SDA/SCL logic level is still only 3.3V so it's safe!

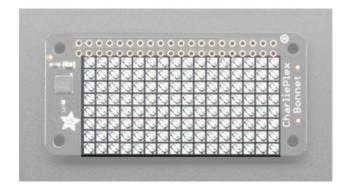
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## IS31FL3731 Driver Chip



The IS31FL3731 drives the LED matrix via I2C.

#### 8 x 16 LED Matrix



The 8 x 16 LED matrix on the CharliePlex Bonnet provides 128 LEDs.

### Address Jumper



The default I2C address for the Bonnet is 0x74. Solder this jumper closed to change it to 0x70 to avoid I2C address conflicts, if needed.

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## Python & CircuitPython

It's easy to use the IS31FL3731 Charlieplex breakout, the Charlieplex FeatherWing, and the CharliePlex Bonnet with Python or CircuitPython and the <a href="Adafruit CircuitPython">Adafruit CircuitPython</a>
<a href="IS31FL3731">IS31FL3731</a> () module. This module allows you to easily write Python code that does all sorts of fun things with the LED matrix.

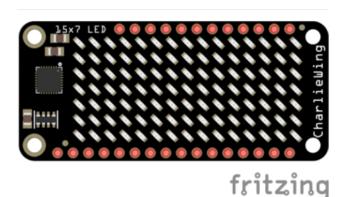
You can use CharliePlex LED matrices with any CircuitPython microcontroller board or with a computer that has GPIO and Python thanks to Adafruit\_Blinka, our CircuitPython-for-Python compatibility library ().

#### CircuitPython Microcontroller Wiring

First wire up a IS31FL3731 breakout to your board exactly as shown on the previous pages for Arduino.

For the FeatherWing, solder on the headers, and attach to the Feather.

Here is the CharlieWing on a Feather M4:

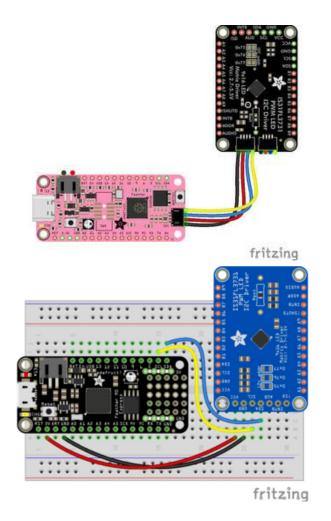


Assemble the CharlieWing by soldering headers onto the board.

Once assembled, plug it into a Feather!

Here's an example of wiring a Feather to the breakout with I2C:

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Board 3V to breakout VCC Board GND to breakout GND Board SCL to breakout SCL Board SDA to breakout SDA

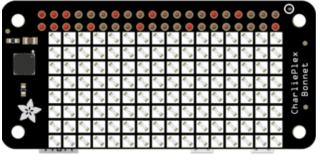
#### Python Computer Wiring

Since there's dozens of Linux computers/boards you can use we will show wiring for Raspberry Pi. For other platforms, <u>please visit the guide for CircuitPython on Linux to</u> see whether your platform is supported ().

For the Bonnet, simply attach the Bonnet to your Raspberry Pi header.

Here is the CharliePlex Bonnet on a Raspberry Pi Zero:

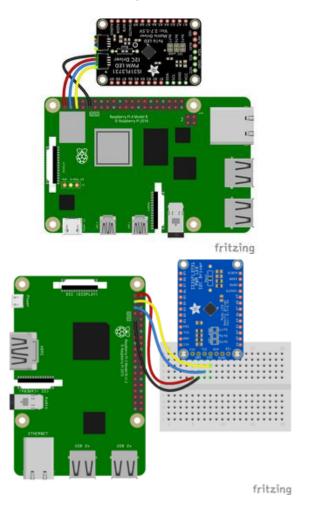
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The CharliePlex Bonnet comes fully assembled. Simply plug it into your Raspberry Pi!

fritzing

Here's the Raspberry Pi wired to the breakout with I2C:



Pi 3V3 to breakout VIN
Pi GND to breakout GND
Pi SCL to breakout SCL
Pi SDA to breakout SDA

### Python Installation of IS31FL3731 Library

You'll need to install the Adafruit\_Blinka library that provides the CircuitPython support in Python. This may also require enabling I2C on your platform and verifying you are running Python 3. Since each platform is a little different, and Linux changes often, please visit the CircuitPython on Linux guide to get your computer ready ()!

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Once that's done, from your command line run the following command:

• sudo pip3 install adafruit-circuitpython-is31fl3731 adafruit-circuitpython-framebuf

If your default Python is version 3 you may need to run 'pip' instead. Just make sure you aren't trying to use CircuitPython on Python 2.x, it isn't supported!

#### CircuitPython Installation of IS31FL3731 Library

You'll need to install the <u>Adafruit CircuitPython IS31FL3731</u> () library, and its dependencies, into the lib folder on your CIRCUITPY drive. Then you need to update code.py with the example script.

Thankfully, we can do this in one go. In the example below, click the Download Project Bundle button below to download the necessary libraries and the code.py file in a zip file. Extract the contents of the zip file, and copy the entire lib folder and the c ode.py file to your CIRCUITPY drive.

Your CIRCUITPY/lib folder should contain the following folders:

- · /adafruit is31fl3731
- /adafruit\_bus\_device



#### Full Example Code

```
# SPDX-FileCopyrightText: 2021 ladyada for Adafruit Industries
# SPDX-License-Identifier: MIT

import board
import busio

# uncomment next line if you are using Feather CharlieWing LED 15 x 7
from adafruit_is31fl3731.charlie_wing import CharlieWing as Display
```

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```
# uncomment next line if you are using Adafruit 16x9 Charlieplexed PWM LED Matrix
# from adafruit_is31fl3731.matrix import Matrix as Display
# uncomment next line if you are using Adafruit 16x8 Charlieplexed Bonnet
# from adafruit_is31fl3731.charlie_bonnet import CharlieBonnet as Display
# uncomment next line if you are using Pimoroni Scroll Phat HD LED 17 	imes 7
# from adafruit_is31fl3731.scroll_phat_hd import ScrollPhatHD as Display
# uncomment next line if you are using Pimoroni 11x7 LED Matrix Breakout
# from adafruit_is31fl3731.matrix_11x7 import Matrix11x7 as Display
# uncomment this line if you use a Pico, here with SCL=GP21 and SDA=GP20.
# i2c = busio.I2C(board.GP21, board.GP20)
i2c = busio.I2C(board.SCL, board.SDA)
display = Display(i2c)
# draw a box on the display
# first draw the top and bottom edges
for x in range(display.width):
    display.pixel(x, 0, 50)
    display.pixel(x, display.height - 1, 50)
# now draw the left and right edges
for y in range(display.height):
    display.pixel(0, y, 50)
    display.pixel(display.width - 1, y, 50)
```

#### CircuitPython & Python Usage

To demonstrate the usage of the sensor we'll initialize it and manipulate the LED matrix from the board's Python REPL.

To do this, <u>connect to the board's serial REPL</u> () so you are at the CircuitPython >>> pr ompt.

NOTE: Due to size and design of each CharliePlex matrix form-factor, import and initialisation is different for each. Make sure you're running the correct code for your matrix!

First, run the following code to import the necessary modules:

```
import board
import busio
```

If you're using the CharliePlex breakout, initialise it by running the following code:

```
from adafruit_is31fl3731.matrix import Matrix as Display
```

If you're using the CharliePlex FeatherWing, run the following code:

```
from adafruit_is31fl3731.charlie_wing import CharlieWing as Display
```

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If you're using the CharliePlex Bonnet, run the following code:

```
from adafruit_is31fl3731.charlie_bonnet import CharlieBonnet as Display
```

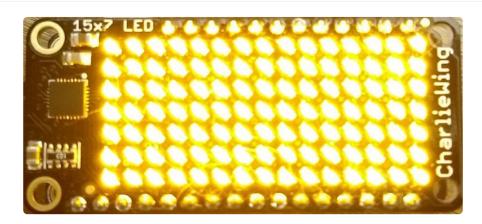
Now, no matter which board you are using, you'll create the I2C object and pass that into <code>Display</code>.

```
i2c = busio.I2C(board.SCL, board.SDA)
display = Display(i2c)
```

When the display initializes it will go through and clear each frame (there are 8 frames total) of the display. You might see the display momentarily flash and then turn off to a clear no pixel lit image.

You can control all of the board's pixels using the fill function. Send to this function a value from 0 to 255 where 0 is every LED pixel turned off and 255 is every LED pixel turned on to maximum brightness. For example to set all the pixels to half their brightness run:

```
display.fill(127)
```



You might notice some buzzing or ringing sounds from the display when all pixels are lit, this is normal as the Charlieplex driver quickly switches LEDs on and off.

If you've used other displays like LED matrices you might notice the Charlieplex module doesn't need to have a show function called to make the changes visible. As soon as you call fill or other display functions the display will update!

You can turn all the pixels off with fill set to 0:

```
display.fill(0)
```

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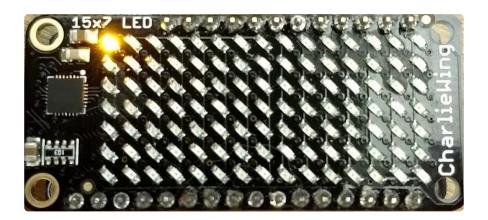
Be careful setting all pixels to 255 maximum brightness! This might pull more power than your computer's USB port can provide if you are powering your board over USB. Use an external powers supply or battery when lighting lots of LEDs to max brightness.

Now for some fun! You can set any of the LED pixels using the pixel function. This function takes the following parameters:

- X position The location of the horizontal / X pixel position.
- Y position The location of the vertical / Y pixel position.
- Intensity This is a value from 0 to 255 which specifies how bright the pixel should be, 0 is off and 255 is maximum brightness. Use an in-between value to show a less bright pixel.

For example to set pixel 0, 0 to full brightness run:

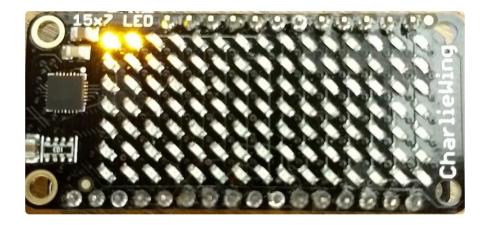
display.pixel(0, 0, 255)



Or to set the pixel next to it horizontally to half brightness run:

display.pixel(1, 0, 127)

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You can turn off individual pixels by setting them to an intensity of zero.

You can even make pixels blink! The board supports a fixed blink rate that you set using the **blink** function. This function takes in the number of milliseconds to use for the blink rate (but internally it can only blink in 270ms increments so you might not get an exact match). For example to blink pixels about once every half second call:

```
display.blink(500)
```

You'll notice nothing actually changes on the board. This is because in addition to intensity each LED pixel has a blink state which can be enabled and disabled. The fill command can actually set all pixels and turn them on to blink:

```
display.fill(127, blink=True)
```

You can turn off the blinking by setting blink=False.

The pixel command supports the blink parameter too! You can turn on and off blinking pixel by pixel as needed. For example to turn on blinking for pixel 0, 0:

```
display.pixel(0, 0, 127, blink=True)
```

Currently the Charlieplex module is very simple and only exposes pixel set commands. In the future more advanced graphics commands like line drawing, text display, etc. might be implemented but for now you'll need to manipulate the pixels yourself.

Finally the display supports holding up to 8 frames of pixel data. Each frame contains an entire matrix of LED pixel state (intensity, blinking, etc.) and by default the module

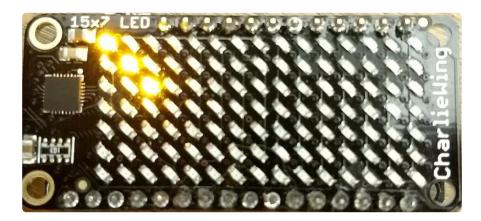
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starts you on frame 0. You can change to start displaying and drawing on another frame by calling frame which takes these parameters:

- Frame number This is the frame number to make the active frame for display or drawing. There are 8 frames total, 0 through 7.
- show An optional boolean that defaults to True and specifies if the frame should be immediately displayed (True) or just made active so that pixel and fill commands draw on it but it's not yet shown.

For example to clear frame 1 and draw a few pixels on it, then display it you can run:

```
display.frame(1, show=False)
display.fill(0)
display.pixel(0, 0, 255)
display.pixel(1, 1, 255)
display.pixel(2, 2, 255)
display.frame(1) # show=True is the default, the frame will be displayed!
```



Notice how the first call switches to make frame 1 the active frame but doesn't display it because show is set to false. Then the frame pixel data is changed with fill and pixel commands, and finally the frame is shown by calling frame again but letting the default show = True be used so the frame is displayed.

Using frames you can build simple animations by drawing each frame and swapping between them over time!

That's all there is to the basic Charlieplex driver module usage!

#### Text Scrolling Example

NOTE: When running this example on Raspberry Pi, you must have the font8x5.bin file found here () in the same directory as the program!

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# wget https://raw.githubusercontent.com/adafruit/ Adafruit CircuitPython framebuf/master/examples/font5x8.bin

```
# SPDX-FileCopyrightText: 2021 ladyada for Adafruit Industries
# SPDX-License-Identifier: MIT
import board
import busio
import adafruit framebuf
# uncomment next line if you are using Feather CharlieWing LED 15 	imes 7
# from adafruit is31fl3731.charlie wing import CharlieWing as Display
# uncomment next line if you are using Adafruit 16x9 Charlieplexed PWM LED Matrix
# from adafruit_is31fl3731.matrix import Matrix as Display
# uncomment next line if you are using Adafruit 16x8 Charlieplexed Bonnet
from adafruit_is31fl3731.charlie_bonnet import CharlieBonnet as Display
\# uncomment next line if you are using Pimoroni Scroll Phat HD LED 17 x 7
# from adafruit_is31fl3731.scroll_phat_hd import ScrollPhatHD as Display
# uncomment next line if you are using Pimoroni 11x7 LED Matrix Breakout
# from adafruit_is31fl3731.matrix_11x7 import Matrix11x7 as Display
# uncomment this line if you use a Pico, here with SCL=GP21 and SDA=GP20.
# i2c = busio.I2C(board.GP21, board.GP20)
i2c = busio.I2C(board.SCL, board.SDA)
display = Display(i2c)
text to show = "Adafruit!!"
# Create a framebuffer for our display
buf = bytearray(32) # 2 bytes tall x 16 wide = 32 bytes (9 bits is 2 bytes)
fb = adafruit framebuf.FrameBuffer(
    buf, display.width, display.height, adafruit framebuf.MVLSB
)
frame = 0 # start with frame 0
while True:
    for i in range(len(text_to_show) * 9):
        fb.fill(0)
        fb.text(text_to_show, -i + display.width, 0, color=1)
        # to improve the display flicker we can use two frame
        # fill the next frame with scrolling text, then
        # show it.
        display.frame(frame, show=False)
        # turn all LEDs off
        display.fill(0)
        for x in range(display.width):
            # using the FrameBuffer text result
            bite = buf[x]
            for y in range(display.height):
                bit = 1 << y & bite
                # if bit > 0 then set the pixel brightness
                if bit:
                    display.pixel(x, y, 50)
        # now that the frame is filled, show it.
        display.frame(frame, show=True)
        frame = 0 if frame else 1
```

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## Python Examples

If you want to expand the capabilities of the CharliePlex LED Matrix even more, we can add Pillow into the mix. So we'll show you how to add Pillow and then go over a couple of examples that use Pillow.

## Additional Setup

If you haven't already installed the library, follow the setup section on the Python & CircuitPython page. If you have, then continue.

#### DejaVu TTF Font

Raspberry Pi usually comes with the DejaVu font already installed, but in case it didn't, you can run the following to install it:

sudo apt-get install ttf-dejavu

#### Pillow Library

We also need Pillow, also known as PIL, the Python Imaging Library, to allow using text with custom fonts. There are several system libraries that PIL relies on, so installing via a package manager is the easiest way to bring in everything:

sudo apt-get install python3-pil

That's it. You should be ready to go.

#### Speeding up the Display on Raspberry Pi

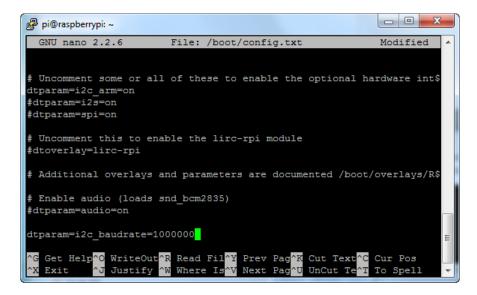
For the best performance, especially if you are doing fast animations, you'll want to tweak the I2C core to run at 1MHz. By default it may be 100KHz or 400KHz

To do this, edit the config with sudo nano /boot/config.txt

and add to the end of the file

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#### dtparam=i2c baudrate=1000000



Reboot to 'set' the change.

## Scrolling Marquee Example

The first example, we're going to take a look at an example that will take some text, draw it in a TrueType font and then scroll the rendered text. Let's start by looking at the code in each section.

We start by importing the libraries we need which include the board and a few Pillow modules.

```
import board
from PIL import Image, ImageDraw, ImageFont
```

Next we do the import for the IS31FL3731 driver for the matrix itself. Since the different boards have been split into their own modules, we just import the appropriate module and alias it as <code>Display</code>.

For instance, if you have the breakout instead of the bonnet, you'll want to uncomment that and comment out the bonnet line.

```
# uncomment next line if you are using Adafruit 16x9 Charlieplexed PWM LED Matrix
# from adafruit_is31fl3731.matrix import Matrix as Display
# uncomment next line if you are using Adafruit 16x8 Charlieplexed Bonnet
from adafruit_is31fl3731.charlie_bonnet import CharlieBonnet as Display
# uncomment next line if you are using Pimoroni Scroll Phat HD LED 17 x 7
# from adafruit_is31fl3731.scroll_phat_hd import ScrollPhatHD as Display
```

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Next we set a couple of variables. We have the <a href="SCROLLING\_TEXT">SCROLLING\_TEXT</a> variable. Go ahead and change the text if you would like. It shouldn't matter how long, though you probably shouldn't make it too long if you want to see it loop. You can set <a href="BRIGHTNES">BRIGHTNES</a> as well, in case you want to adjust the intensity.

```
SCROLLING_TEXT = "You can display a personal message here..."
BRIGHTNESS = 64 # Brightness can be between 0-255
```

Next we do the basic setup for the display by declaring the I2C object and passing that into the display.

```
i2c = board.I2C()
display = Display(i2c)
```

Next we go ahead and load up the Deja Vu font into an object. We are going with an 8 pixel high font because that's the largest we can fit on the display and still see everything.

```
# Load a font
font = ImageFont.truetype('/usr/share/fonts/truetype/dejavu/DejaVuSans.ttf', 8)
```

In this next part, we first start by getting the width and height of what the text would be when rendered with the font we chose. Then we create a virtual image of that width and height and draw the text onto it.

```
# Create an image that contains the text
text_width, text_height = font.getsize(SCROLLING_TEXT)
text_image = Image.new('L', (text_width, text_height))
text_draw = ImageDraw.Draw(text_image)
text_draw.text((0, 0), SCROLLING_TEXT, font=font, fill=BRIGHTNESS)
```

Next we create a virtual image that's the same size as the display. This will be where we draw what we want to actually display.

```
# Create an image for the display
image = Image.new('L', (display.width, display.height))
draw = ImageDraw.Draw(image)
```

Finally we get to our main loop. We start by drawing a rectangle to be sure we are not leaving any existing text behind. Then we paste our image of the text onto the image we are going to display using the value of x, which represents the left offset we want to use to give a nice scrolling effect. We have a for loop which will scroll

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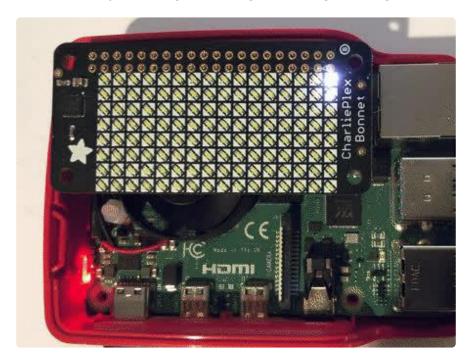
the complete text plus empty display width by one iteration. That's all placed inside an infinite while loop for endless iterations.

```
while True:
    for x in range(text_width + display.width):
        draw.rectangle((0, 0, display.width, display.height), outline=0, fill=0)
        image.paste(text_image, (display.width - x, display.height // 2 -
text_height // 2 - 1))
        display.image(image)
```

Now go ahead and run the example code.

```
python3 is31fl3731_pillow_marquee.py
```

You should see the display showing a message scrolling from right to left.



#### **Full Source Code**

```
# SPDX-FileCopyrightText: 2021 ladyada for Adafruit Industries
# SPDX-License-Identifier: MIT

"""

Example to scroll some text as a marquee

This example is for use on (Linux) computers that are using CPython with Adafruit Blinka to support CircuitPython libraries. CircuitPython does not support PIL/pillow (python imaging library)!

Author(s): Melissa LeBlanc-Williams for Adafruit Industries
"""

import board
from PIL import Image, ImageDraw, ImageFont
```

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```
# uncomment next line if you are using Adafruit 16x9 Charlieplexed PWM LED Matrix
# from adafruit_is31fl3731.matrix import Matrix as Display
# uncomment next line if you are using Adafruit 16x8 Charlieplexed Bonnet
from adafruit_is31fl3731.charlie_bonnet import CharlieBonnet as Display
\mbox{\#} uncomment next line if you are using Pimoroni Scroll Phat HD LED 17 x 7
# from adafruit_is31fl3731.scroll_phat_hd import ScrollPhatHD as Display
SCROLLING_TEXT = "You can display a personal message here..."
BRIGHTNES\overline{S} = 64 # Brightness can be between 0-255
i2c = board.I2C() # uses board.SCL and board.SDA
# i2c = board.STEMMA_I2C() # For using the built-in STEMMA QT connector on a
microcontroller
display = Display(i2c)
# Load a font
font = ImageFont.truetype("/usr/share/fonts/truetype/dejavu/DejaVuSans.ttf", 8)
# Create an image that contains the text
text_width, text_height = font.getsize(SCROLLING_TEXT)
text_image = Image.new("L", (text_width, text_height))
text draw = ImageDraw.Draw(text image)
text_draw.text((0, 0), SCROLLING_TEXT, font=font, fill=BRIGHTNESS)
# Create an image for the display
image = Image.new("L", (display.width, display.height))
draw = ImageDraw.Draw(image)
# Load the text in each frame
while True:
    for x in range(text_width + display.width):
        draw.rectangle((0, 0, display.width, display.height), outline=0, fill=0)
            text_image, (display.width - x, display.height // 2 - text_height // 2 -
1)
        display.image(image)
```

## Animated GIF Example

Next let's take a look at an animated GIF player example. First we'll start by downloading an animated GIF and copying that into the same folder as the script as a dafruit-star-rotating.gif. It looks tiny and that's because it is. It is 8x8 pixels which works out nicely for the CharliePlex matrix.

0

#### **Download Rotating Star**

Now let's start with the first section, the imports. You may be surprised that this code uses fewer Pillow modules than the previous example. We are also adding sys, which we mostly use for passing the name of an animated gif.

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```
import sys
import board
from PIL import Image
import adafruit_is31fl3731
```

Next we do the usual setup for the CharliePlex display.

```
i2c = board.I2C()

# uncomment line if you are using Adafruit 16x9 Charlieplexed PWM LED Matrix
#display = adafruit_is31fl3731.Matrix(i2c)
# uncomment line if you are using Adafruit 16x9 Charlieplexed PWM LED Matrix
display = adafruit_is31fl3731.CharlieBonnet(i2c)
```

Now we make sure the user specified a gif file, so we have something to work with that's not hard-coded and open the file. If the file wasn't specified, we are using sys. exit(), since that is the preferred way to do it if you are importing sys anyways.

```
# Check that the gif was specified
if len(sys.argv) < 2:
    print("No image file specified")
    print("Usage: python3 is31fl3731_pillow_animated_gif.py animated.gif")
    sys.exit()
# Open the gif
image = Image.open(sys.argv[1])
```

We need to check that this is an animated gif. While we could have just displayed it as a static gif in this case, the point was to show how to display the animation.

```
# Make sure it's animated
if not image.is_animated:
   print("Specified image is not animated")
   sys.exit()
```

Next we get some gif animation information such as the delay. Only the duration of the first frame is extractable at the time of this writing with Pillow.

```
# Get the autoplay information from the gif
delay = image.info['duration']
```

The loop number is a little trickier because it means different things between the IS31FL3731 chip and an animated gif. With an animated gif, it is guaranteed to play at least once and then loop by the number of times is provided by the loop value, unless it is zero, which means forever.

With the IS31FL3731, loops mean exactly the number of loops to play the animation, unless it is zero, in which case it will play forever.

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So if loop is 0, we just pass it on. If we only want to play the animation once, then loop is not provided in the image information. If it is more than once, we need to count the first time it plays plus the number of times to loop the animation.

```
# Figure out the correct loop count
if "loop" in image.info:
    loops = image.info['loop']
    if loops > 0:
        loops += 1
else:
    loops = 1
```

Next, we need to make sure these values are in the ranges that the driver likes. The number of frames in the animation is available from the property n\_frames and the IS31FL3731 can handle a maximum of 8 frames, so if a longer animation is provided, only the first 8 frames are used.

```
# IS31FL3731 only supports 0-7
if loops > 7:
    loops = 7

# Get the frame count (maximum 8 frames)
frame_count = image.n_frames
if frame_count > 8:
    frame_count = 8
```

Now that we have a frame count, we will go through each of those frames and load the frame image into the IS31FL3731 using the paste function and center the image. First the frame is converted to a 256-grayscale image, which is what mode L is, and then it is copied into a centered position, which is calculated from the difference in size between the display and image. After that, it is inserted as the current frame number.

Finally, we call the <u>auto\_play</u> function using the delay and loop information from the animated gif.

```
display.autoplay(delay=delay, loops=loops)
```

Now go ahead and run the example code.

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You should see the rotating star appear on the display.



## **Python Docs**

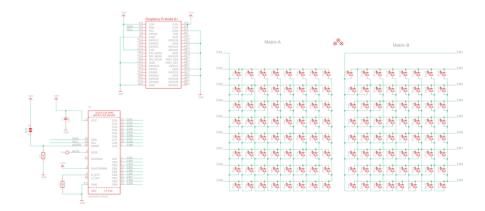
Python Docs ()

## Downloads

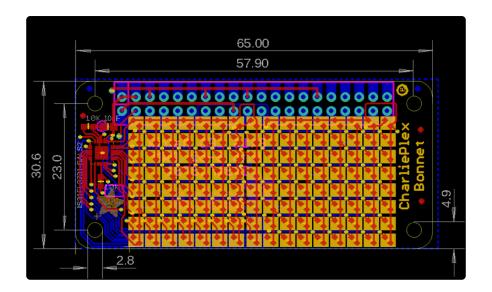
#### **Files**

- IS31FL3731 Datasheet ()
- Adafruit CharliePlex Bonnet EagleCAD files on GitHub ()
- Fritzing object in Adafruit Fritzing Library ()

### Schematic and Fab Print



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