

Powerful smart 8bit home computer Highly integrated, all-in-one ZX Spectrum and Pentagon Motherboard replacement for models +2/+2A/+2B

User Manual



version 2.0

Welcome! Before turning the eLeMeNt ZX on, please read the first chapter of this manual, **Quick start**.

The eLeMeNt ZX has a built-in the **divSD** interface with two SD card slots, available in all its hardware models, from the 48K, through the +2 and +2A, to the latest Pentagon. If you have never dealt with a similar device, read the chapter **esxDOS** on the page 20.

view the PC keyboard layout	go to	page 12
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solve an issue (not listed in the SetUp)		page 19
change a BASIC ROM		page 18

I need to find information on how to ...

eLeMeNt ZX - User Manual, version 2.0 written by SCjoe/SamC

2021-23 (C) Jan Kučera / LMN128, <u>www.128land.com</u>, Zlín / Czech Republic

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Dear eLeMeNt ZX user,

thank you for using a new enhanced ZX Spectrum computer.

Your **eLeMeNt ZX** is a machine, that can work in various configurations and provide performance and user convenience not commonly available on this type of 8-bit computers.

The **eLeMeNt ZX** is mainly a classic ZX Spectrum compatible with several older models. You can work with the eLeMeNt ZX immediately after switching on, without any complicated settings or introductory menus. Unlike other modern ZX Spectrum computers, the built-in Z80-CPU is a real original chip, running at 20 MHz.

The **eLeMeNt ZX** contains many hardware features, only those are described in this manual that you need for daily use of the computer or for connecting older interfaces and can be easily reconfigured without programming knowledge.

I made this motherboard as a thank-you and in memory of those who created the phenomenal ZX Spectrum, the hardware, the ZX BASIC and also the all timeless design. I believe that you will be as happy with the eLeMeNt ZX as I and my friends who helped me with this project.

I wish you a lot of fun and satisfaction with your new smart and powerful ZX computer.

Jan Kučera

Quick start with the eLeMeNt ZX

What you get

The eLeMeNt ZX computer motherboard version 2, a new powerful ZX Spectrum with fast Z-80 CPU running at multiple speeds, equipped with a lot of hardware accessories, all already installed and easily accesible. You can find most of old buttons and some connectors in usual places or there is a modern equivalent of them.

It is up to you how you will use this modern and reliable machine, whether as a replica of the basic "rubber" 48K model or you will gradually switch on some extensions.

What else do you need?

• Alchitry Au Artix-7 FPGA add-on board, a heart of the eLeMeNt ZX

Two Alchitry FPGA development boards, the AU and AU+ models (made by Sparkfun) with Xilinx Artix 7 XC7A35T and Xilinx Artix 7 XC7A100T are supported.

• PS/2 compatible PC keyboard

For more comfort, we recommend the **eLeMeNt PC keyboard** with original labels of ZX Spectrum keys printed and abrasion resistant.

- standard digital video cable for your TV or monitor
- FAT32 formatted SD card, with esxDOS system files installed on it
- 7-12V power supply (9V recommended), at least 1A, polarity does not matter
- 3D printed case, the new eLeMeNt "Tiny" case or the case of Amstrad +2,+2A, +2B

The motherboard of the eLeMeNt fits into the case of Amstrad models and can be used as a replacement of the original motherboard. Another suitable alternative is a **3D printed shortened +2 case** (without a space for a cassette recorder).

- Optional internal expansions: 2 MB RAM, Wi-Fi, RTC, joystick slots no. 2 and 3
- PS/2 compatible PC mouse is highly recommended, but also optional.

A look into the case

Open the top cover of the Tiny case. You will see 6 screw holes that are prepared for the motherboard, which is supplied with 6 chrome-plated screws. You do not need to put any pads between the motherboard and the bottom of the case.

The Tiny case version 2 is prepared for all necessary connectors ad buttons. You don't have to drill or saw anything in the case until you decide to improve your eLeMeNt ZX with more add-ons, such as the other two joysticks connectors.

Installing the motherboard

Before the installation, connect the Alchitry add-on board to your eLeMeNt ZX. Turn it so that its USB connector points towards the digital video connector. The shape of mini connectors on the board do not allow to insert the add-on board incorrectly.

Before an installation, remove the blue cap of the NMI button. Now insert the motherboard carefully so that buttons and connectors on the left fit into relevant holes of the case. Use chrome-plated screws to attach motherboard. Connect the Alchitry FPGA add-on board to the motherboard with a short (10 cm) USB-A to USB-C cable.

SD card

Insert the SD card into the card-slot on the left side, next to the rounded Extra button (it is the place originally used by +2/+2A models for a second joystick connector).

You can order a card with pre-installed software. Or use any SDHC or SDXC FAT32-formatted card and copy the content of the card from the <u>www.128land.com</u> (goto Download section).

Turn on the computer

The power connector is located in the usual place. The start-up is quick and ends with an well known introductory BASIC screen.

Hint: Because ZX Spectrum computers do not have turn-on/off switches, you are advised to purchase Power Supply adapter with additional ON/OFF switcher.

Before you connect any device to your eLeMeNt ZX, read the relevant SetUp settings!

Use standard Atari joysticks only (if possible, check any switch on the joystick).

Amstrad +2,+2A,+2B cases

Place the case upside down and unscrew 6 black screws, turn the computer back over, lift the top of the case and flip it to the left. Disconnect the power-led cable and the internal cable of the cassette deck on the right. Disconnect two keyboard cables on the left. To uninstall the original motherboard, remove 6 chrome-plated screws that secure the board to the bottom of the case.

On the left side, the eLeMeNt ZX has a pair of wide connectors for keyboards. From your point of view, plug the cables of the **+2 grey keyboard to upper edges** of both connectors. On the contrary, the **black keyboard** of +2A model you should mount close **on the lowest pin** of both connectors.

The picture shows the position of +2 keyboard cables on the eLeMeNt ZX motherboard in gray +2 case. The two joystick connectors below are OPTIONAL and you had to mod the case after their installment.



Depending on the model of Amstrad computer, connect the cassette recorder cable to one of the connectors on the right, marked as TAPE +2 or TAPE +2A.



Round the motherboard

Put the motherboard on the table so that the row of 27 golden faces is oriented away from you.

Buttons

There are three buttons on the element, two on the right side, one in the back, near the upper right corner. All buttons are mapped to keys on the PC keyboard (see the section *External keyboard layout*).

The **blue NMI button** in the upper left corner is used to interrupt any running program and to start a special NMI Menu or an esxDOS File Browser. It is mostly used to find and run a software from SD cards quickly.

The **reset button** has the usual angular shape and you will find it on the right, at its old place. A **long press of reset** button (at least 1.5 sec) results into the SetUp utility, which is part of firmware flashed in ROMs.

Extra button

Next to the reset button is the rounded **extra button.** It helps to switch some hardware options quickly, by a **short press**. The button can can be linked to the memory models and timings, speed options or GigaScreen modes (see the Chapter *SetUp II*).

Or add a **Warm boot** to the extra button. The warm boot performs fast reboot of the computer while preserving the state of the machine and the divSD.

A **long press of the extra button**, if you hold down the extra button for more than 1.5 sec, puts the computer in so-called "**Spectrum Menu**" (accompanied by a speccy-rainbow in the border). Now you can press keys 1 to 4. If the **Overclock** is enabled in the SetUp, you can also use keys 5 to 8 for higher speeds.

To **switch a CPU speed in the Spectrum Menu**, proceed as follows: 1) Press the Extra (side) button. 2) While holding down the Extra button, press the 1-8 key.

1	3.5 MHz	5	OverClock: 22 MHz
2	7 MHz	6	OverClock: 28 MHz (BASIC ROM limit)
з	14 MHz	7	OverClock: 28 MHz (RAM area only)
4	20 MHz	8	OverClock: 30 MHz (RAM area only)

Note: If you want to get a **visual overview** of what speed the eLeMeNt ZX is running, you can turn on the "CPU speed option" in the last SetUp's Diagnostics page, then outer frame of border (so-called "big order") will be colored according to the given speed.

Connectors

The computer is booting from the **primary SD slots** on the left. Next to a small microSD slot is located a standard SD slot. Remember that you can ever use one of them (larger or

micro) only, what better suits the size of your fingers. Other two slots, for the **second SD** are oriented on the side in front of the user. The slot order can be changed in SetUp.

A standard **Atari joystick slot** on the left can serve for several types of joysticks or pads, incl. **SEGA** Master and Mega Drive (Genesis) controllers with up to 8 buttons. **Kempston** joystick with two buttons is by default.



Stereo Audio Out and **Digital Video/Sound** output in the top right corner use the 3.5mm minijack and the high definition multimedia interface.



In the following pair of USB connectors, the **top USB (USB1)** is for a PC mouse or keyboard. The **lower USB (USB2)** connects the eLeMeNt ZX with a PC and serves for file transfers or Alchitry Au Artix-7 FPGA core updates.

The **third USB (USB3)** socket you can find on the opposite site of the motherboard, on the right.

Note: The eLeMeNt ZX does not have any legacy connector: printer, discdrive, tape-in, special amstrad joysticks, serial, midi, TV or RGB output. You have to add these peripherals by use of an apropriate external interface or an internal expansion.

Internal connectors

On the motherboard you will find several series of pins to mount more connectors and various internal extensions. The most important ones are: pins for the **RealTimeClock** module (right), connectors for the **other two standard Atari joysticks** (bottom), 2 internal **zx-expansion bus** pin rows. And there are some others prepared, intended to connect modern **I2C** and **SPI** devices to your eLeMeNt ZX in the future.

External interfaces

The computer has a system expansion bus compatible with the ZX Spectrum 128+. For a pin description of the system expansion bus, see the chapter *Technicals*.

Please note the eLeMeNt ZX has a vast range of interfaces already built-in, by older ZX Spectrum models you previously had to connect as separate interfaces. Instead of using old interfaces, to attach Kempston joystick, mouse or double AY interface, simply go to the SetUp and make a switch in the menu.

SetUp (firmware)

To enter the SetUp, hold down the reset button for more than 1.5 sec.

In the SetUp you can configure and/or turn on/off a lot of peripherals and hardware options. You can combine various hardware expansions with several ZX Spectrums models ("machines") and as you may have been used to, also connect your favorite external peripherals.

The SetUp introductory screen, in addition to statistics of use of your eLeMeNt ZX, finds out a type of FPGA board, a version of the FPGA Core and a version of the SetUp.

This firmware built in the Flash ROM is also available as a standalone SETUP program.

LINI28 COURSES SetUP

Here are all options of the eLeMeNt ZX SetUp menu:

Machine (memory/timing) ZX Spectrum 48 ZX Spectrum 128/+2 ZX Spectrum 128+2A Pentagon 128 Pentagon 512 Pentagon 1024 v2.2 Pentagon 1024 v2.2 Pentagon 4096 (KAY/Profi /Scorpion/Phoenix/ATM1) Didaktik Gama 80

Storage/Memory interface none (disabled) divSD (512KB divSD) divSD+MB (512KB divSD & MB02+) CPU speed

3.5 / 7 / 14 / 20 MHz

- CPU OverClock and advance mode allow OverClock enable a wait state for access to ROM
- CPU speed alternative change enable ZX-Uno speed change enable Pentagon 1024 v2.2 turbo
- Joystick/Gamepad interface none (disabled) Kempston Sinclair 1 (left: 12345+mn) Sinclair 2 (right:67890+mn) Keyboard OPQA+Space+mn+bhr

Joystick/Gamepad type standard 8-bits era Sega controller (3-8 buttons)

External Keyboard/Mouse none (disabled) K-Mouse (USB1) K-Mouse Slave (USB1) Keyboard (USB1) Keyboard (USB1) and K-Mouse Master (USB3) K-Mouse Master (USB1) and Slave (USB3) EXTRA button — short press none (disabled) CPU speed Machine GigaScreen Warm reset Joystick/Gamepad interface

EXTRA button - long press none (disabled) Spectrum menu

Audio output enable ULA audio enable TurboSound FM enable MonsterBlaster DA (Soundrive,Covox) enable SID enable SAA1099 enable TAPE input

TurboSound FM chip model: 0-AY, 1-YM stereo: 0-ACB, 1-ABC

SID chip model: 0-6581, 1-8580 frequency: 0-PAL, 1-NTSC

TIMEX graphics modes enable

ULAplus enable ULAplus palettes enable TIMEX mode select by ULAplus regs

GigaScreen - old TV/Monitor
 sum colours effects
none (disabled)
mode0: 2 VRAMs always mixed
mode1: two video frames mix
mode2: autodetect mode1

Scan line (old CRT/TV) effect none (disabled) 1/2 1/4 1/8 1/16 1/32 1/64 1/128 none (disabled) internal batteryless RTC Time Zone GMT -8...+5 divSD

- only for some TVs

select esxDOS ROM: 0-FPGA (rescue), 1-FLASH swap order first/second SD

Z-Controller SD none (disabled) on first SD slot on second SD slot

Expansion pack A

Digital Video Interface

enable ULTIMĀTE sync.

enable legacy DVI

DMA

RTC

enable

enable

IO LIFO stack

2048KB memory exp.(AA-RAM)

Expansion Pack B

- UART(Wi-Fi) & USB3 UART MB03 via USB2 to PC UART MB03+ UART ZX-Uno UART ZX128-AY / USB3 disabled

Flash ROM Area (motherboard v2) Area 0-3

Diagnostic none (disabled) Video sync. Audio level CPU speed Status info Video test text pattern Video test color moving patt.

If you use **any external interface** with the eLeMeNt ZX, please check and turn off duplicate internal devices in this SetUp .



Machine (memory and timings)

"Machine" means an appropriate memory layout and exact system timings of a specific computer. Choose from **all classic** models, the Didaktik Gama and Pentagons. The +2A/+3 allram mode is also available. Some Pentagon software needs 512 KB of memory, newer programs (e.g. NSID) may require 1024K.

Memory interface (divSD/MMC, MB02+)

This option enables a memory of divSD/divMMC and MB02+ interfaces and determines whether it is available in divSD mode only or also through the MB02+ memory paging registers. You should switch it off when using an external Storage/Memory interface none (disabled) divSD (512KR divSD (512KB divSD) divSD+MB (512KB divSD & MB02+) SD/CF interface that has its own memory.

CPU speed (7 to 30 MHz, oveclocking)

The eLeMeNt ZX has got a fast 20 MHz Z80-CPU installed on the motherboard. Higher speeds are nowadays used by software, appreciated not only in the esxDOS file browsing.

Four basic speeds up to 20MHz are available. An **OverClock** option in the SetUp enables more than 20 MHz. The eLeMeNt ZX can also speed up in a way compatible with ZX-Uno and Pentagon 1024 clones.

The ZX BASIC editor is capable to work flawlessly at 28 MHz. For a safe system start-up, a default speed greater than 20MHz cannot be selected in SetUp. This is a security fuse, the OverClock is not recommended for system operations or when storing data to SD cards. Besides the SetUp menu, there are two faster ways to change a CPU speed - see the section *Extra button*, page 6.

To allow a flawless **cooperation between faster CPU and external devices** plugged to the zx-expansion bus, enable the **wait state** for access to ROM.

Joysticks (interfaces, Sega)

Joystick allows to switch on or off and to select: Kempston, Sinclair 1 (left) and Sinclair 2 (right). Switch off the Kempston if using some external interface with this joystick built-in. Various Sega gamepads are supported, with up to 8 buttons, SEGA Master and Mega Drive (Genesis) compatible.

You can redirect a joystick or a Sega gamepad to a keyboard, joystick/gamepad movements and buttons will appear as keypresses of a popular keys combinantion Q, A, O, P and SPACE. Additional Sega buttons will be mapped to keys M, N, B, H and R.

If you want to use more than one joystick with the eLeMeNt ZX, there are already a pins prepared on the motherboard for two more connectors. This is OPTIONAL and needs to cut a hole in a computer case.

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enable ZX-Uno speed change enable Pentagon 1024 v2.2 turbo

> none (disabled) Kempston Sinclair 1 (left: 12345+mn) Sinclair 2 (right:67890+mn) Keyboard OPQA+Špace+mn+bhr Joystick/Gamepad type standard 8-bits era Sega controller (3-8 buttons)

Joystick/Gamepad interface

3.5 / 7 / 14 / 20 MHz CPU OverClock and advance mode allow OverClock enable a wait state for access to ROM CPU speed alternative change

CPU speed

Machine (memory/timing) ZX Spectrum 48 ZX Spectrum 128/+2

ZX Spectrum 128+2A Pentagon 128

Pentagon 1024 v2.2 Pentagon 4096 (KAY/Profi /Scorpion/Phoenix/ATM1

Didaktik Gama 80

Pentagon 512

Beware, only a standard Atari joystick can be attached to the 2nd a 3rd joystick port (the FPGA redirects signals to a Sinclair type, keys 1 to 5 and 6 to 0).

Mouse, external keyboard (USB1 and USB3)

Mouse is the K-Mouse with two buttons, available on the USB1 connector. If an external K-Mouse interface is plugged to the eLeMeNt, you can use the second mouse on the USB1, use the "slave" option.

External keyboard (always on the **USB1**) means a PC keyboard with an USB plug, compatible with PS/2 standard. Or a keyboard with a PS/2 plug and a PS/2 to USB adapter attached to the USB1. If you have an external keyboard and a mouse connected at the same time, the keyboard must be on USB1 and the mouse on USB 3.

In case of accidental disconnection of the external keyboard, perform **a long reset** (1.5 sec) while holding down the NMI button. This action will bring the keyboard back.

A list of PC keyboards and USB mice with the PS/2 protocol you will find on sites.google.com/view/elementzx/docs. Use a "passive" USB-PS/2 adapter for old PS/2 keyboards! Most modern adapters are "splitters" with two cables for both mouse and keyboard and do not work with the eLeMeNt ZX.

Extra button settings

modes. For the "Spectrum Menu" see page 6.

EXTRA button — long press Here you can set the way the extra none (disabled) Spectrum menu button is used. Set a **short press**, to

toggle between ZX machines CPU speed options or GigaScreen

EXTRA button - short press none (disabled) CPU speed Machine Gigascreen Warm reset Joystick/Gamepad interface

Audio expansions

Audio allows to link all outputs from various audio devices together, incl. traditional **beeper** (from ULA) and the Spectrum 128K AY chip. Two AY compatible sound chips joined together are known as the **TurboSound**, AY or YM types in ABC or ACB stereo modes are available, incl. the **FM synthesis**.

Audio output enable ULA audio enable TurboSound FM enable MonsterBlaster DA (Soundrive,Covox) enable SID enable SAA1099 enable TAPE input chip model: 0-AY, 1-YM

Philips SAA 1099 is a 6-voice soundchip used in the SAM Coupé computer, for the ZX Spectrum available on the ZXM-

Soundcard. The popular SID (Sound Interface Device) is presented in all versions 6581/8580/PAL/NTSC and prepared for future stereo (tripple, quadro or more) combinations.

And finally the MonsterBlaster, the D/A sound converter with four 8bit stereo channels, for a sample based music. This hardware is compatible with the **Soundrive**. When some program "asks" for a port number, input #3F (63 decimal).



TurboSound FM

stereo: 0-ACB, 1-ABC SID

chip model: 0-6581, 1-8580 frequency: 0-PAL, 1-NTSC

Graphics enhancements

The performance and design of the eLeMent ZX allows to combine different graphics modes in one high-quality output. The **digital video output** perfectly displays all modes and timings on all machines and eliminates imperfections such as a GigaScreen flickering.

Timex: switch on/off HiColor (8x1 attributes) and HiRes (512*192 pixels, monochrome). **ULA+** provides new colour palettes, from total 256 colours.

GigaScreen provides a mix of colours and deals with both (current and shadow) screens of two videoRAMs. For the most software, set this option to "**auto**". ModeO joins data from both

Gigascreen - old TV/Monitor sum colours effects none (disabled) mode0: 2 VRAMs always mixed mode1: two video frames mix mode2: autodetect mode1

enable TIMEX mode selectby ULAplus regs

TIMEX graphics modes enable

> . enable ULAplus palettes

ULAplus

videorams. Mode1 reads two video frames, if the program quickly alternates screens with a speed of 50Hz. Mode2 detects frame switching (or video buffer switching) and if so, it turns Mode1 on. Screens are mixed in advance and then a digital output is generated, which results into a perfect stable display. GigaScreen is popular not only in demo-software, but also used in games: see *Gyron*, *Nether Earth*, *Soldier of Light*.

New graphics capabilities

The eLeMeNt ZX provides **several graphic modes**, known from the ZX-Uno or from the MB03+ Ultimate interface. They follow the original ZX and Timex resolutions (256 and 512 points per line) and are able to use a memory space of two ZX videoRAM pages.

The **KeyLayer** graphic mode allows to display image data from the second video RAM at a place of one selected color in the video RAM no. 1.

512 * 192 pixels of **HiResColour** (HRC) and **HiResindeXedColour** (HRXC) modes use colour attributes and an extended, true-colour palette (better than ULA+).

ZX-Uno's Radastan is a neat 128*96 graphics without attributes limitations, with 16 colours per pixel from 256 ULA+ palette and with an hardware scroll.

HGFX adds a poweful "planar" and "chunky" graphics, which enables to colour each individual point (pixel) with an unique indexed colour. The screen memory is relocatable (not only limited to the zx-screen area), can manage up to 8 bitplanes and consists of several modes. **LowRes** and **HiRes** modes provide resolutions of 256*192 and 512*192 pixels. **Fill mode** makes it easier to render 2D and solid 3D graphics. **HAM8 mode** presents images close to photographic quality with up to 98304 colours. Up to 256 colours can be selected from a large true-colour palette. **SuperHiRes** (SHR) provides a planar 512*384 graphics with 16 colours and **PAL546** does chunky 720*546 pixels (4 colours).

Note: Unlike old graphics enhancements, **the new graphics modes** (Radastan, Keylayer, HR(X)C and HGFX) are **not listed in the SetUp.** They are implemented in such a way that does not collide with other hardware enhancements and, if needed, they can be easily disabled by software.

External keyboard layout

Here is the **eLeMeNt's PC keyboard** layout. Use keycap stickers with other PC keyboard.

PC eLeMeNt ZX

Win	ZX (CULOUR or Meta)
Ctrl	Symbol shift
Shift	Caps shift

Esc Break

Tab Extend Mode

The **ZX Spectrum Delete** key is the **PC Backspace**, next the PC Delete key!





Shifts and extra keys of the ZX keyboard are mapped to a **PC keyboard** as follows:

Caps Shift		Shift	: (colon)	SS+Z	\ (backslash)
Symbol Shift		Ctrl	Left	CS+5	Left
Extend mode	CS+SS	Tab	Down	CS+6	Down
Edit	CS+1	` (accent)	Up	CS+7	Up
Caps Lock	CS+2	Caps Lock	Right	CS+8	Right
True Video	CS+3	Page Up	Graph	CS+9	Insert
Inverse Video	CS+4	Page Down	Delete	CS+0	Backspace
<=	SS+Q	Home	C	S+SS+0	Delete
>=	SS+E	End	Break CS [.]	+Space	Escape

CPU speed control keys (3.5 to 30 MHz, incl. 1T ROM Delay and Overclock) are mapped to the **ZX** key **+ F1** to **F8** function keys.

Machine type switchers (48, 128, +2A and Pentagon memory layouts and contention) are mapped to the ZX key + ALT key + F1 to F7 function keys.

esxDOS reboot: push reset while holding the Space key or pres and release Symbol shift + Alt keys while holding the Space key

On smaller keyboards **without a separate numeric block**, the numeric keys usually take up part of the main block. In this case, after turning your eLeMeNt ZX on, press the **NUM lock** key to switch the numeric block off.

NUM



ZX Basic colours in extended mode:

EXT +	keys 0 to 7	key 8	key 9
no caps	paper colours	no brightness	brightness
Caps shift pressed	ink colours	no flashing	flashing

Note: Every key has a **unique (PC) scancode** and can be read in the same way as the ZX-Uno does. More details you will find in the Programmer's Reference Manual.

Extended and shifted keys may have different meanings in various programs, especially in numerous Pentagon/Scorpion software.

none (disabled)

Scan line effect

The digital image might be too perfect for a true Scan line (old CRT/TV) effect retro-feeling. Here you can choose 7 levels of a blurred quality, similar to old TVs/monitors.

Digital video

Set enable legacy DVI when using an old LCD/TV. However, this option does not include a sound stream. You have to disable it if you want **to hear a sound** through a modern digital video output.

The ULTIMATE sync performs the best synchronization between DVI and ZX, however, this is still experimental.

DMA

DMA provides a supplementary Z80-DMA chips that speeds up memory and I/O transfers. Several demos use the DMA and some games were patched for it (*Elite, Int. Karate A & B*, *Visitors*). Leave this option enabled for the esxDOS.

LIFO

IO LIFO is a hardware (data) stack, that, among others things, improves a speed of the operating system. Leave this option enabled for the esxDOS.

Real Time Clock, Time Zone

"Batteryless" version of the **RTC** works till the computer is switched off. If you have previously made a Wi-Fi connection, date and time are always set when the SetUp starts.

DivSD and Z-Controller (SD slots)

You can switch the esxDOS **boot** process from the Flash (ROM) memory to the unbrickable FPGA

memory (Core). This is the safest way how to start the esxDOS, when something goes wrong and Rescue ROMs in memory Areas do not work. Many programs support only one SD slot. To avoid having to shuffle SD cards, there is an option of changing the logical order of SD slots (making a switch between SD cards no. 1 and no. 2).

divSD

In addition to the divSD, it is possible to have the **Z-Controller** enabled. This is another SD interface that can be simultaneously attached to one of the SD slots. The Z-Controller is supported by

Z-Controller SD none (disabled) on first SD slot on second SD slot

Digital Video Interface enable legacy DVI enable ULTIMATE sync. only for some TVs

1/2 1/4 1/8 1/16 1/32 1/64 1/128

none (disabled) internal batteryless

RTC

select esxDOS ROM: 0-FPGA (rescue), 1-FLASH

swap order first/second SD

great programs like Wild Player and Wild Disc Copier. Although we have only two physical SD slots in the eLeMeNt ZX, some programs can detect 3 drives (2xdivSD and one Z-Cntrl.).

Expansion Pack A (extra RAM)

Various expansion modules can be inserted between the FPGA board and the motherboard. Still installed, they can be turned off by software and in the SetUp, so that the system does not recognize them.

The AA-SRAM 2048-8 2MB expansion pack increases Expansion pack A none the memory to total 4 MB. The paging mechanism is 2048KB expansion memory 2MB (AA-RAM) compatible with the MB03+ interface. The extra memory enables 2 MB RAM in the great *LnxCopy* tool and is also utilised in the Pentagon 4096K.

Expansion Pack B — UART(Wi-Fi)

You can choose between three serial/UART connection types for the ESP8266 Wi-Fi module, from the fastest MB03+ type, through the ZX-Uno (and Karabas Pro) in the middle, to the old ZX128 serial interface.

With the **USB2 to PC** option, connect the eLeMeNt ZX to a PC computer and transfer files via the USB cable. A good transfer utility is the .SERCP dot-command.

Flash ROM Area (motherboard v2 only)

Flash ROM Area (motherboard v2) The eLeMeNt ZX contains a 512KB flash memory chip for firmware. Only a quarter of it, a block of 128KB can be used at once, the so-called ROM Area.

Every Area holds a whole set of ROMs, more than a ZX BASIC interpreter. Next the BASIC ROM is the esxDOS ROM, the RescueMode ROM and free space for diagnostic software or other firmware. This allows 4 different sets of ROMs, for 4 different machines.

Every ROM Area h	as the same layout:	Recomme	nded ROM Areas are as follows:
64KB	ROM0 – ROM3	Area	
16KB	esxDOS	0	ZX128/+2 set
16KB	reserved	1	ZX128+2A set
16KB	Rescue Mode ROM	2	ZX48 set
16KB	EleMeNt ZX SetUp	3	patched ROMs or DiagROMs set

Note: It is recommended to backup your original +2/+2A ROM to the one Area of the FLASH ROM.

Diagnostic

Diagnostic serves for testing purposes, for visualising hardware settings and signals, shown them on the edge (in a wider area) of the border.

Diagnostic none (disabled) Video sync. Audio level CPU speed Status info Video test text pattern Video test color moving pattern



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UART MB03 via USB2 to PC UART MB03+ UART ZX-Uno UART ZX128-AY / USB3 disabled

Expansion Pack B - UART(Wi-Fi) & USB3

Area Ø

Area 1 Area 2

Area 3



Technicals

Rescue Mode

The Rescue Mode is a safe way to restore the system, because every Area has its own Rescue ROM. Activated by pressing both NMI and Reset buttons, while the DIP-switch no. 3 is on, the **border goes pink** and this special ROM is started. Use this mode with a misconfigured SetUp or a damaged ROM, or when you want to flash other system that does not contain a classic ROM, like the *SE4 BASIC*.

ESP/Wi-Fi module installation

Before placing the ESP/Wi-Fi module on the expansion board, make sure that small yellow DIP switches, located in the center of the module, are in the OFF position. These Dial switch DIPs have the OFF position towards the right.

The outline of the ESP/Wi-Fi module printed on the expansion board shows the direction in which to place the module. The blue plate on the module is directed towards the edge of the eLeMeNt ZX motherboard.

The ESP/Wi-Fi module used in the eLeMeNt ZX is a "devkit" unbrickable type, which has its own USB connector. A firmware update of the ESP/Wi-Fi module firmware can be done by an AT command or by an USB cable.

DIP-switching to the legacy mode

The eLeMeNt ZX is equipped with a series of four small switches (DIP1 - DIP4), accessible on the back of the case, next to the expansion slot. Only one of them is currently used, other switches are intended for development purposes. Switched to the **upper position** means a DIP-switch is **OFF**. Move a switch down to set it on.

DIP3 – legacy mode – turn it on if you plan to plug an external ROM-based devices such as divIDE, MB02+, Betadisk, PlusD or other disk controllers to your eLeMeNt ZX. Also in the case of external divSD interfaces, e.g. the *DivMMC Sindikat Edition* (with a RTC, 2x SD slots and 512KB RAM), **move DIP 3 down**.

Note: Turning DIP-3 on (moving it down) is identical to disabling the entire divSD as well as the DMA.



Inside view, from left:

- digital audio&video output
- USB slots
- DIP switches

In the front:

• USB power cable for the FPGA module





Upper (component) side



Notes:

U22: +12V stabilized (max. 200mA) means you need 12V power supply to reach 12 voltage on this pin. (*) Signals are available only on the internal EXP0 socket.

Pinouts

View of the connectors coming out from the computer:



PLAY is IN (EAR), from tape to ULA, used for LOAD. REC is OUT (MIC), from ULA to tape, used for SAVE. Pin 7: depends on Joystick type in the SetUp

Motherboard versions

The previous version no. 1 of the eLeMent ZX motherboard has following differences:

- **two USB slots only**, the third slot must be installed via the Expanson Board B (version 2 has got the USB3 already installed)
- **microSD slots only** (two standard, bigger SD slots were added to version 2)
- **the Wi-Fi board** must be installed **with the Expansion Board B** (version 2 has a slot for an installation already prepared)
- 8 DIP switches on the back of the computer (version 2 has only 4 DIP switches)
- **Memory Areas** cannot be switched via software, in the SetUp. **DIP7 and DIP8** were used to mechanically choose one of four Memory Areas instead.
- the **Rescue Mode** works with the DIP switch no. 5
- to **reset the ESP/Wi-Fi** module just by a reset of the computer, one wire must be soldered to the board v1 (this is an optional modification)

Core and Firmware (SetUp) Update

Please note: you should always **update the firmware first!**

How to flash Firmware

Flash a new firmware with the **FLASHSET**(**UP**) program (with a .TAP or .TAR extension). Before you start flashing, check the ROM Area. The firmware is always put into the activated Area, e.g. visible in the SetUp.

To avoid problems with a corrupted system, **do not re-flash the Area 0.**

If something goes wrong:

- goto to SetUp, section DivSD, and switch from Flash to FPGA
- or press NMI and hold a reset for 1.5 sec, the Firmware will be switched to Area 0
- or turn the computer off and on, to the Rescue Mode (see below)

Changing ZX BASIC ROMs

To flash BASIC ROMs only, run programs named **FLASH48**, **FLASH128** or **FLASH2A** (with a .TAP or .TAR extension) in combination with a desired new ROM file. Use the **FLASHESX** for the esxDOS. To get know more, what and where to flash, study the ROM Areas, page 15.

How to flash FPGA Core

If you regularly **upgrade a FPGA Core** content, use the **ELCOREUP** program (with a .TAP or .TAR extension). This tool loads and flash a Core directly in the esxDOS, **from a SD card**. It automatically detects a FPGA module type and looks for an appropriate FPGA Core binary, named as "el_au.bit" for the AU board with the Artix XC7A35T chip or as "el_au_p.bit" for the AU+ board with the XC7A100T.

Reset is not enough to run the freshly flashed Core. Power cycle the computer (off/on)!

An alternative method, **upgrade made from a PC** is still retained. Make a link between a PC computer and the USB2 (lower) port with an USB-A to USB-A cable and run the **Alchitry loader** for the Linux/Mac/Windows, from the webpage <u>alchitry.com/alchitry-labs</u>. This utility needs a Core-file named "darex.bin" (AU or AU+ version).

To flash a core, the **box "Program Flash"** must be always checked, otherwise a firmware will be stored temporarily, only untill a reset of the computer.

	Open Bin File
◎Alchitry Au ○Alchitry Au+ ○Alchitry Cu ○Mojo	
🖾 Program Flash	Erase
Status:	Program

Notes: You must upgrade with the USB cable, if you have the Core older than 2023/08. If the Alchitry loader doesn't work in Windows, please install <u>ftdichip.com/drivers/vcp-drivers</u>

Troubleshooting

For each problem, a typical situation is described, followed by a hint. Please check the corresponding SetUp option (in the box).

No sound in the digital audio

You have already checked a TV/monitor connection, the picture is brilliant, but no tune can be heard.

Turn **old DVI off**. SetUp: Digital Video Interface / enable legacy DVI

esxDOS does not start after reset

The esxDOS welcome screen does not appear. Holding the SPACE key when you reset the computer (or pressing Symbol shift + Alt + Space on the external PC keyboard) does not make the esxDOS to detect a SD card.

```
Check, if the DivSD is on. SetUp: Storage/Memory Interface / divSD 512KB
Check the order of SD slots. SetUp: divSD / swap order first/second SD
Switch to the backup ROM (FPGA).
```

SetUp: divSD / select esxDOS ROM: 0-FPGA (rescue), 1-FLASH

Disconnect the TV/monitor cable. Even if the computer is switched off, some TVs may still supply low power to the computer via a digital video connection. The SD is locked and needs to be totaly switched off, cut off from any power.

PC keyboard does not work

The keyboard was not initiated by startup, LED controls on the keyboard are off.

Check the keyboard compatibility. The keyboard with an USB connector should be compatible and handle the **PS/2 protocol**.

In case of a keyboard with a PS/2 connector, use a small, compact, **"passive" USB-PS/2 adapter** only, not a splitter-type converter for a dual keyboard and mouse connection.

The keyboard might be disconnected in the SetUp.

Perform **a long reset** (1.5 sec) while **holding down the NMI** button. After that, check the USB1 setting. SetUp: External Keyboard/Mouse / Keyboard (USB1)

Start-up behaves strangely

The startup procedure is frozen. Some quirks or random colourful attributes have appeared on the screen instead of the standard welcome (ROM) message.

Flash the firmware again (see the previous page).

Audio output is not clear

Sometimes old +2/+2A tape-recoders produce noise or audio peaks.

To avoid this issue, disable the tape input line. Set Up: Audio output / Tape input

esxDOS

The esxDOS is an operating system for modern storage media, so it is an ideal system for **divSD** slots in your eLeMeNt ZX. The esxDOS has a built-in tape and betadisk (TR-DOS) layer and does all load- and save- operation within TAP, TRD and SCL files. The built-in file browser helps to access and run files stored on SD cards easily.

To re-initialize the esxDOS, press the **reset button and hold the SPACE key** while resetting. If the SD card cannot be detected this way, power off/on the eLeMeNt ZX.

BASIC commands

The esxDOS provides a set of BASIC keywords with a customized syntax in order to support a file-handling to/from SD cards. Currently are implemented these commands:

	(//	
change directory	GOTO [<i>drive</i>] " <i>path</i> "	GOTO hd0"games"
	GOTO var	LET name\$="games/gyron": GOTO name\$
list directory	CAT [<i>drive</i>]	CAT hd0
	(or DIR in some ROMs)	
	fast dir:	CAT
detailed li	st of current drive:	CAT*
load file	LOAD drive "path/fil	ename" [CODE] [SCREEN\$]
		LOAD #"/progs/editor.bas"
		LOAD *; name\$
merge file	MERGE drive "path/fi	ilename"
save file	SAVE drive "path/fil	ename" [LINE] [CODE] [BIN] [SCREEN\$]
saves	screen picture:	SAVE * "filename" SCREEN \$
save "raw" file	without +3DOS header:	SAVE * "/DAT/filename" BIN 40000,25000
delete file	ERASE [drive] "path/	filename"

drive means: ***** (current drive), hd0 (main SD slot) or hd1 (second SD slot)

To recognize ZX filetypes, the esxDOS adds ZX-headers (metadata compatible with +3DOS) to a beginning of each file. However many data files can be used, saved and loaded as "raw" files, without headers. For example, a **screen picture** can be saved into a **standard SCR file** with the command SAVE *****"name.SCR" BIN 16384, 6912

Dot-commands

Dot-commands are system commands located in the /BIN directory on the SD card. These are executed directly from BASIC by typing a command with or without parameters.

Many basic dot-commands are quite self-explanatory, typing them without any parameter will print a short instruction. Most of them may use a syntax known from modern PCs, e.g.

.LS .CD .RM .MV .MKDIR .CP .MORE .FILE .TAR .CAL .DATE

e Ment

NMI Menu or File Browser

The esxDOS provides the simple **NMI Menu**, which serves as a filebrowser, that recognizes the most popular file formats and helps to run files. You can also make a system snapshots (store all memory to a SD).

An advanced **File Browser and Viewer** can display **long filenames** (LFN) in directory listings. Moreover it it can display or play many audio and video file formats. Navigation: + prev page + cursor down + cursor upp EDIT: upp directory Loading: U view screen H, 0 TRCb do drive ABCD ENTER LOBASIC A, B, C, D ENTER LOBASIC Other: SPACE exit R create snapshot H this help

If needed, you can return to the original NMI menu with CAPS SHIFT+N.

.browse ZX-UNO/e	SXDOS Browser HELP	.browse ZX-UN	0/esxDOS browser HELP	.browse ZX-UNO/6	2SXDOS browser HELP
↑ ↓ Up / Down Select key:	← → Page Up / Down Open folder / file	Caps Shift + E: Symbol Shift + R: Caps Shift + D:	Erase file Rename an 8.3 file / folder Create an 8.3 folder	Caps Shift + N: Caps Shift + S: Caps Shift + K:	Launch default NMI.SYS Save .sna file 48/128 POKE memory
Caps Shift + W: Caps Shift + A: Caps Shift + P / Delet	Go to first entry Go to last entry e: Parent folder	Symbol Shift + C: Symbol Shift + T: Symbol Shift + P:	Copy file to clipboard Cut file to clipboard Paste file from clipboard	Symbol Shift + L:	Lock 128k memory paging
Caps Shift + X / Break Symbol Shift + X:	:: Exit browser Exit (Reset)	Symbol Shift + F: Caps Shift + F:	Toggle fullscreen mode Find files in folder		
Caps Shift + R: Caps Shift + U: Symbol Shift + U: Caps Shift + I:	Show file information Attach disk image Eject disk image Open .TAP for Input	Caps Shift + Z: Symbol Shift + Z:	Create folder cache Delete folder cache		
Caps Shift + 0: Symbol Shift + I: Symbol Shift + 0:	Open TAP for Output Eject TAP for Input Eject TAP for Output	Sym Shift + 1 - 9: Symbol Shift + 0:	Launch defined speed dials Make selection a speed dial		
Caps Shift + T:	Tape Browser	Caps Shift + V:	View file as hex	EZX-Spectrum 128k	NMI Browser]
Caps Shift + H:	Show these help pages	Sym Shift + V:	View file as text	Please refer to manua	al for more details.

Configuration files

There are two text files ESXDOS.CFG and TRDOS.CFG in the directory /SYS/CONFIG, for setting up the esxDOS itself and for the TR-DOS emulation. All options are already set so that software runs to the best user's satisfaction, here are some examples to check:

TRDOS.CFG	AlwaysBoot	if a boot-file is missing, TR-DOS Navigator starts with TRD/SCL files
ESXDOS.CFG	AutoBoot	a way the /SYS/AUTOBOOT.BAS file starts
ESXDOS.CFG A	AutoLoadColour	depends on BORDER colour you like
ESXDOS.CFG	DMA timings	in the eLeMeNt make the best transfer speed ever available for ZXS

How to prepare a card for the divSD

SD cards must be FAT16 or FAT32 formatted (depending on the size, less than 2GB or more). A suitable tool is the *SD Formatter*, <u>www.sdcard.org</u>. An easy point-and-click tool for Linux is the *Gparted*.

To get the best performance, copy to a new formatted card **SYS and BIN folders first**! Please also note, that the system will give you quicker responses with bigger clusters of the SD card.

Compatible system ROMs

These patched or improved ZX BASIC ROMs were tested and work with the esxDOS and its NMI system: **Pretty** (Colour) ROM, **64Char** ROM, **GAMA81** ROM, **GW03** ROM and **ZXDIR** ROM. Nowadays, new esxDOS commands can do the same job as many functions in older patched ROMs did.

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Useful links

<u>128land.com</u>	news, manuals, fpga core and firmware updates
t.me/eLeMeNt_forum	Telegram info-channel – help, news, beta-software
<u>ilnx.cz/element-zx</u>	premium software - copier, file (SD) manager, viewer, editor
<u>esxdos.org</u>	FAT-based operating system for DivSD
<u>thefossilrecord.co.uk</u>	LFN file browser and NMI menu for esxDOS
<u>zxart.ee</u>	great site with zx-enhanced software collection (and more)
<u>vtrd.in</u>	all Betadisk software collection
<u>element.zxfiles.net</u>	eLeMeNt ZX resources
<u>vym.cz/sercp/</u>	USB- PC link utility, serial copier
sarah.speccy.cz	FTP manager for eLeMeNt ZX/MB03+
<u>ilnx.cz/lnxsp</u>	LnxSpectrum emulator
www.dadither.com	graphics PC converter

ZX BASIC: worldofspectrum.org/ZXBasicManual/ worldofspectrum.org/ZXSpectrum128Manual/ https://zxspectrumvault.github.io/Manuals/Hardware/SpectrumPlus3Manual.html#chapter8

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Miguel Guerreiro	•	esxDOS
Kamila Kučerová	•	eLeMeNt brand ∕ support
Pavel Vymetálek	•	board production
Josef Prokeš		user manual / web

How to control eLeMeNt ZX hardware in ZX BASIC

Apart from the SetUp, you can change any hardware setting quickly by sending a value to system ZXi ports. Speed up the system or switch to another machine (memory and timing) temporarily. Use the OUT command of the ZX Spectrum BASIC and type:

for machine:	OUT	30779,0: OUT 31035,0	9	48K
	OUT	30779,0: OUT 31035,3	L	128K/+2
	OUT	30779,0: OUT 31035,3	3	+2A
	OUT	30779,0: OUT 31035,0	5	Pentagon 512K
	OUT	30779,0: OUT 31035,7	7	Pentagon 1024K v2.2
for Wi-Fi:	OUT	30779,57: OUT 31035,	1	MB03+
	OUT	30779,57: OUT 31035,	,2	ZX-Uno / Karabas Pro
	OUT	30779,57: OUT 31035,	,3	AY/128
for CPU speed:	OUT	30779,48: OUT 31035,	,0	3.5 MHz
	OUT	30779,48: OUT 31035,	1	7 MHz
	OUT	30779,48: OUT 31035,	,2	14 MHz
	OUT	30779,48: OUT 31035,	,3	20 MHz
for joystick:	OUT	30779,3: OUT 31035,0	3	off
	OUT	30779,3: OUT 31035,3	L	Kempston
	OUT	30779,3: OUT 31035,2	2	Sinclair (left)
	Ουτ	30779,3: OUT 31035,3	3	Sinclair (right)
for Timex:	OUT	30779,16: OUT 31035,	1	on
for ULA+:	OUT	30779,17: OUT 31035,	1	on
for Z-Controller:	OUT	30779,28: OUT 31035,	2	use SD slot no. 2
extra button (short press):	OUT	30779,32: OUT 31035,	,0	this holds a CPU only
	OUT	30779,32: OUT 31035,	1	CPU speed switch
	OUT	30779,32: OUT 31035,	2	machine type switch
	OUT	30779,32: OUT 31035,	3	GigaScreen type switch
	OUT	30779,32: OUT 31035,	4	warm reset
	Ουτ	30779,32: OUT 31035,	,5	joystick type switch

There are settings that not only do a switch, but set multiple options at once. Before you turn a particular option on/off, inspect a state of the relevant ZXi port:

OUT 30779,1: PRINT IN 31035

This example reads a value of the Audio output register. You can check now what audio chip is set on. From positions 0 to 4, single bits of the read number hold states of: ULA audio (beeper), AY/TurboSound FM, Monsterblaster/Soundrive AD, SID (C64 sound chip) and SAA1099 (Sam Coupe sound chip.). Type your new settings then, here is an example:

OUT 31035,9; turn beeper and SID on (bits 0 and 3 are set)

The order of SD slots can be changed by OUT 30779,29: OUT 31035,3 This assigns the SD slot no. 2 to the first SD position (used as HD0 in esxDOS).

See other hardware ports in the Programmer's Manual at <u>www.128land.com</u>. When OUTing, you have to know exactly what to do, otherwise you may freeze your system.