

Home Control Assistant

Getting Started

www.HCATech.com

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Version 8

Congratulations, you've purchased the Home Control Assistant

This short guide is a tutorial that covers installing the software, starting HCA, and creating a design for your home in three different ways. This guide includes sections on how to:

- Install the software
- Starting HCA
- Creating a new file with the Quick Start Wizard
- Creating a new file with the Import Wizard
- Creating a new file with the New Home Wizard
- Activating HCA

This guide is in addition to the User Guide which described all the features of HCA in detail.

If you purchased the Home Control Assistant along with the interface hardware, you need to connect that hardware to your computer. Details for this are included in the Hardware Connection Guide. It's a very good idea to install that hardware before installing HCA.

If you already have interface hardware connected to your computer, you need to determine which communications port it uses.

Hint: Before you start installing HCA, it is a good idea to close all Windows-based programs.

Install the software

1. From the Windows task bar, click the Start button.
2. Choose Settings, then Control Panel.
3. From the Control Panel, select and open Add/Remove Programs.
4. Click the Install button.
5. Insert the Home Control Assistant install disk.
6. Click Next.
7. The Setup program will lead you through the installation process.

Now that you've installed the software, use the rest of this guide to set up a new home design.

Start HCA

Now the software is installed. You're ready to start the Home Control Assistant, and create your home design:

1. On the Windows task bar, click the Start button.
2. Select Program, and then Home Control Assistant.

When you first start HCA, its main window appears on the screen. Also in the system tray on the system task bar, a small HCA icon appears:



Unlike other Windows programs you may be familiar with (word processors, spreadsheets, email programs), HCA must always be running on your computer in order for it to control your home. To make it easier to keep HCA running all the time and to help prevent you from inadvertently terminating HCA, HCA works a bit differently than these other programs.

There are five operations that are important to understand:

Maximize the HCA Window

The HCA Window is maximized in the same manner as most Windows programs. Using the left mouse button, click on the maximum button on the upper right hand corner of the HCA window. The HCA window expands to fill the whole display.

Minimize the HCA Window

The HCA Window is minimized in the same manner as most Windows programs. Using the left mouse button, click on the minimize button on the upper right hand corner of the HCA window. HCA is removed from the display and appears in the Windows Task Bar as a button labeled with your home design name.

Hide the HCA Window

To hide HCA and have only the small icon in the system tray, select *Exit* from the *File* menu. Unlike other programs this **does not** terminate HCA. This operation can also be done by clicking with the left mouse button on the close icon on the upper right hand corner of the HCA window.

Open the HCA Window

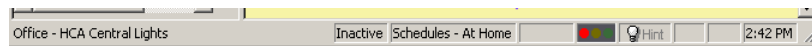
To open the HCA window when HCA only appears as an icon in the system tray, move the mouse over the icon and click the right mouse button. Select *Open* from the popup menu.

Terminate HCA

To shutdown HCA, select *Shutdown* from the *File* menu. This can only be done when the HCA menu is open.

Using the status bar

Across the bottom of the Home Control Assistant window is a status bar. The status bar provides information about what the Home Control Assistant is doing and what settings you have on your PC.



The far left of the status bar displays the name of the device, program, or group icon that your pointer is placed on.

- The state of HCA, either Active or Inactive. Clicking the left mouse button when over this slot switches HCA from Active to Inactive or Inactive to Active.
- The current schedule you have selected, or the design has selected, such as At Home, or Weekend. There can only be one schedule current at any time. Clicking the left mouse button when over the schedule slot brings up the *Change Current Schedule* dialog.
- Modified. This shows any change in the design, from adding a new device, to moving an icon.
- A set of lights that shows red, yellow, or green. Red or yellow lights show if the troubleshooter has found a condition that you should know about. Clicking the left mouse button when over the lights brings up the troubleshooter dialog.
- The hint indicator. If HCA has a tip or idea about what you are doing it makes the bulb yellow and shows “Hint” next to it. Press F1 to show the hint.
- Whether the Caps lock on your keyboard is set.
- Whether the Num Lock on your keyboard is set.
- Either the date or the time; if you click, it toggles to the other.

The HINT System

HCA contains a system that may make learning all the features of HCA a bit simpler. When you are working with the HCA User Interface if your actions could be done in a better way, or there is a feature you may not be aware of, HCA displays a hint. This can be done in one of two ways.

First, the hint can just appear on the screen in a popup window. Or, the Hint Indicator in the status bar can change to show that HCA has a hint. In this case you must either click on it or press the F1 key to show the hint.

In the Help menu is an option to select your preference. If Auto Hint Display has a checkmark next to it, hints automatically appear. Without the checkbox the status bar method is used.

On each hint popup dialog is a checkbox that you can use to have HCA no longer show that hint. As you get more sophisticated you will have no need of some of the hints.

If you find yourself wanting to get the hints back that you turned off, select Enable All Hints from the Help menu.

Your Home Design

There are two ways to begin a new home design using HCA:

- A guided process called the Quick Start Wizard. This wizard starts with a tutorial and then guides you through each room of your home and makes suggestions about where automation might be used. The Quick Start Wizard creates a complete home design with devices, programs, groups, schedules, and displays.
- A much simpler wizard, the New Home Wizard. This wizard creates an empty design for you to add devices, schedule, programs, etc., using the various HCA wizards.

Regardless of which of these methods is used to create a new home, there are two important pieces of information you'll be asked to supply.

Design name

You must supply a name for your design. This name appears in the HCA title bar when this design is loaded, but this need not be the file name that the design is stored in. If you like, you can create several designs, each with a unique name, and in a different file (you may want to do this if you're trying different approaches with your programs and schedules).

Location

HCA uses your location to compute the sunrise and sunset times for your schedules. You must supply the location of your home by latitude and longitude. HCA provides lists of states and major cities to choose from if you don't know your longitude and latitude. If you want a more accurate location, you can use one of the mapping services available on the internet. Or you can consult a topographic map of your area. However, you don't need to be too exact, as the difference between the computed sunrise and sunset and the actual sunrise and sunset times will be off by, at most, a few minutes if the city you select is within a hundred miles.

HCA also relies on the time zone you have selected in the Windows control panel Date/Time settings tool. If you select a city in HCA that is in a different time zone from the one you have set in the control panel, the sunrise and sunset times may appear to be off. So, remember to check your control panel time zone selection.

Hint: Regardless of how you plan to create your home design, you may want to develop it on your main computer and modify it until you are happy with the way it runs. Once you are sure that the design is complete, and that everything works correctly, you may want to move the Home Control Assistant, your home design file and the automation hardware to a smaller, less-used computer that can sit in a closet, or out of the way location, and just run HCA to control your home. HCA was designed to run on a computer with little disk space, memory, and processor speed.

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The Quick Start Wizard

The best way to begin if you are new to home automation or to HCA, is the Quick Start Wizard.

The purpose of this wizard is to create the start of a home automation solution for your home. The first part of the wizard is a tutorial to introduce you to the concepts and terms used in later steps. The wizard next asks questions about your lifestyle and what rooms your home has, then asks you to select which lights and appliances to control. Having completed that, the wizard creates the devices, programs, groups, schedules, and displays of a HCA design. A report is also created showing all your devices, a parts list, and some installation tips.

All homes are different, and the wizard can't anticipate all your needs. What is created is designed to give you a start. After the wizard completes, we expect that you will modify and extend your home design to add additional hardware, more programs and schedules.

The number of steps in the wizard and the length of time to complete it depends upon your answers as you go along. In the lower left corner of each dialog box is the current step number and the total number of steps.

To begin a new home design with the Quick Start Wizard, click File on the Home Control Assistant menu bar, and then choose New and click the *Quick Start* button in the *Which wizard to use* dialog box.

Once you have completed the Quick Start Wizard, the next step you should take is to save your design.

To save your home design file:

1. From the File menu, choose Save.
2. Select the file name and location that you want and click Save.

Hint: Before beginning the Quick Start Wizard, you should verify that your automation interfaces are connected to the computer and that it is working. To do this, select *Properties* from the *HCA* menu and select your hardware type and connection in the *Hardware* tab. The *Test* buttons verify that the interfaces are correctly connected and working.

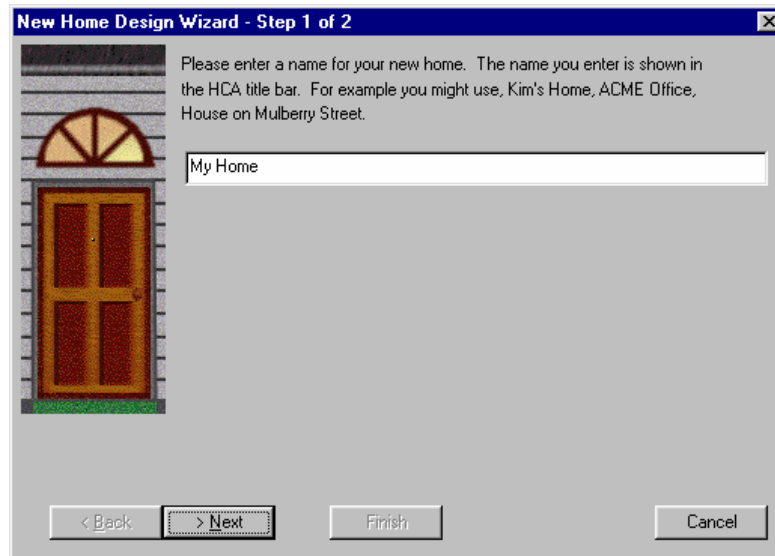
Hint: The Quick Start Wizard saves all the information that it collects from you each time it is used. After you have used the Quick Start Wizard once, you can start over or reuse the information you entered previously. If the wizard has saved information it will ask if it should reload that information or start anew.

The New Home Wizard

On the Home Control Assistant menu bar, click File, and then choose New and press the *New Home* button in the *Which wizard to use* dialog.

The New Home Wizard helps you set up the new file for your home. Unlike the Quick Start Wizard, this wizard creates an empty design ready for you to add devices, programs, schedules, etc.

This opens the New Home Design Wizard whose first page appears as:



Create the file

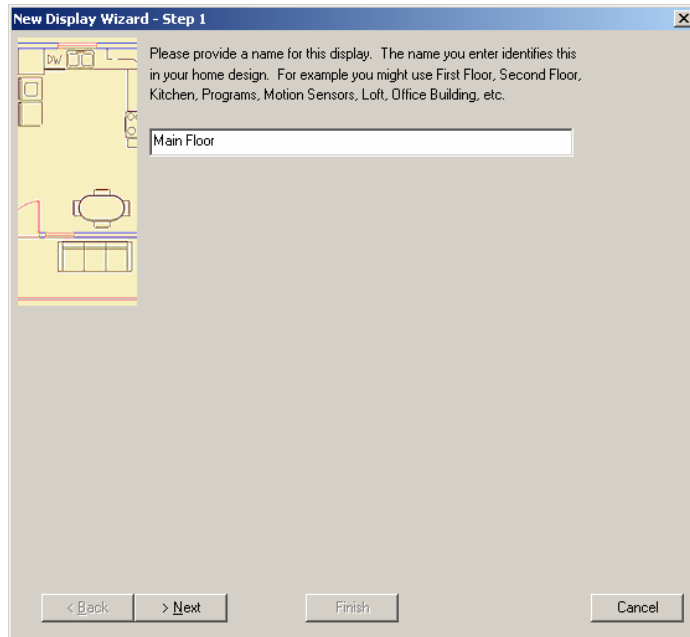
1. Type in the name of your home (*My home* is a good choice) and click Next.
2. From the State list, select your state.
3. From the City list, select the city nearest to your home.
4. Notice that the longitude and latitude change to match your location.
5. Click Finish.

Read the helpful message, and click I Understand.

Because the New Home Wizard creates an empty design, the next steps in this guide are a short tutorial to show you how to add a display with a floor plan background, device, schedule, and schedule entry to create a sample home.

Create a display

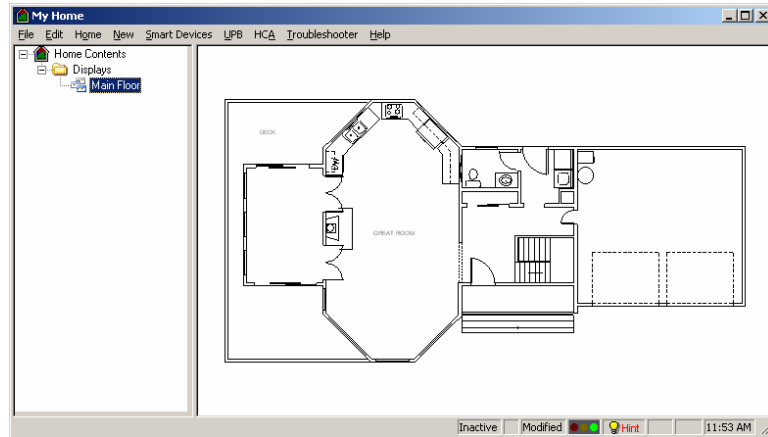
On the Home Control Assistant menu bar, click **New**, and then choose **Display**. This opens the New Display Wizard.



1. Type **Main Floor** as the name for this display, and click **Next**.
2. Chose the options for an **Icon display** and a **DXF background**. Click the **Browse** button, and from the designs folder, select the file that contains the sample house plan (**My Home.DXF**), and click **Open**.
3. Note that the complete path to the file that you selected is displayed in the upper text box.
4. In the lower text box, select the name of the application that produced the DXF file. In this case, select **Broderbund 3D Home Architect 2.X**. Then click **Next**.
6. On the **New Display Wizard** step 3, click **Next**.
7. On the **New Display Wizard** step 4, click **Next**.

8. On step 5 of the wizard, select each item that starts with FL2, and move that item to the list on the right by clicking → the right arrow button on the wizard.
9. When you have moved all the FL2 items to the right list, click Finish.

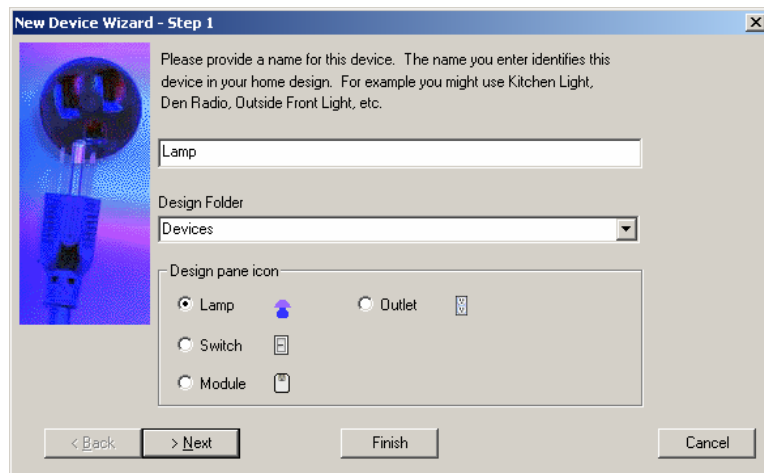
You now see the floor plan of the sample house.



Hint: If you have not purchased a software package for graphic floor plans, and do not have a DXF file, don't despair. HCA is a powerful program, with a variety of options, and makes it easy for you to add displays without floor plans.

Create a device

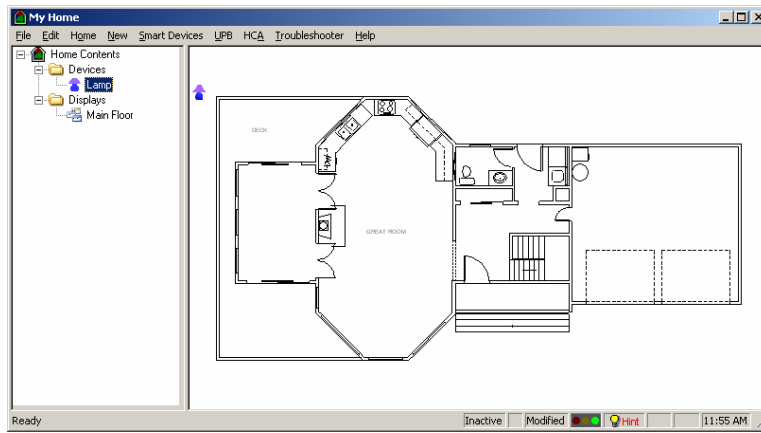
To create a device within the house: On the Home Control Assistant menu bar, click New, and then choose Device.



1. On the New Device Wizard, type **Lamp** as the name for this device, and click Next.
2. Skip step 2 by clicking Next.
3. On step 3 of the wizard select “LM465 Light module” from Manufacturer X10, then click Next.
4. Click Next to skip steps 4, 5, and 6, until you get to step 7 of the wizard.
5. On step 6 of the wizard, use the right arrow button → to move the Main Floor from the *Displays* list (left side) to the *Put icon on these displays* list (right side).
6. Click Finish.

Place the icon of the lamp where you want it.

Now when you look at the Home Control Assistant you see a floor plan. In the upper left corner of the window you have an icon of a lamp. You can drag the lamp to any place on the floor plan.



To move the lamp icon, use the mouse to position the pointer over the icon. Click and hold down the (left) mouse button, and drag the lamp to its new position.

Now connect the lamp.

This is a good time to connect some lamp in your home to a lamp module. Assign the setting of the module to A1. It would be nice if this lamp were some place near your computer so you can watch it as the computer turns it on and off. Before you unplug the lamp to connect it to the module, make sure the lamp is on.

Hint: Don't use a fluorescent light for this demonstration—you need a special module for fluorescent lights.

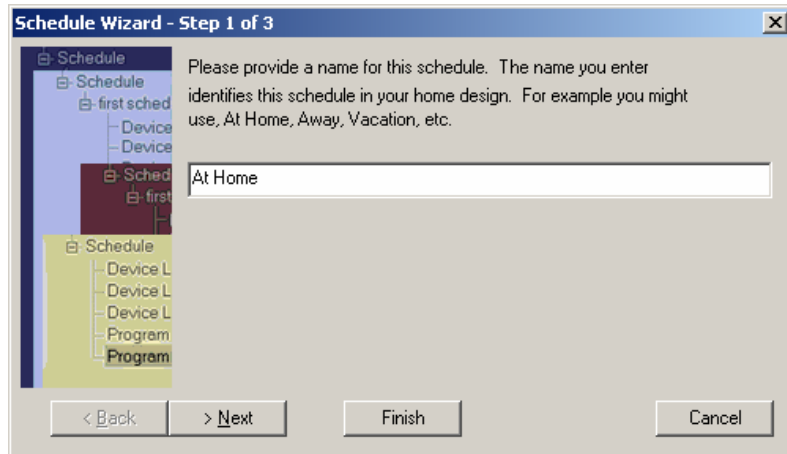
Now you have connected the lamp and you are back at the computer. Move the mouse over the icon of the lamp and right-click. From the popup menu, try turning the lamp on and off. If it does not work, go back again and check all the connections to the interface hardware, the lamp module, its settings (should be A1), and make sure that the switch on the lamp is on.

The next step is to set up your computer to turn the lamp on and off according to a schedule.

Create a schedule for the device

You need to create a schedule for the lamp so that HCA can control it.

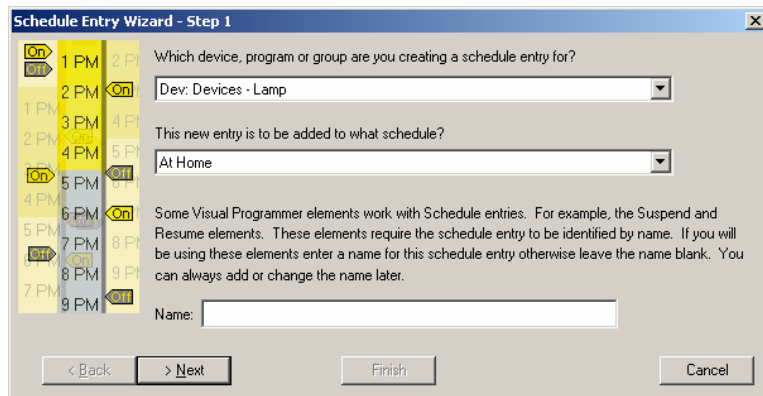
1. On the Home Control Assistant menu bar, click New, and then choose Schedule.
2. On page one of the Schedule Wizard, type the name of this schedule (At home is a good choice) and click Finish.



Add a schedule entry

Now you need to add an entry to the schedule name you have set up.

On the Home Control Assistant menu bar, click New, and then choose Schedule Entry. The Schedule Entry Wizard appears.



1. For Step 1, click Next.
2. On Step 2, click the option that reads “Schedules both the time the device goes on and when it goes off?”. Then click Next.
3. On Step 3, select Every day, then click Next.
4. On Step 4, select At, and Sunset, then click Next.
5. On Step 5, select “Come on at Full illumination”. Then click Next.
6. On Step 6, select At, and Sunrise, then click Next.
7. On Step 7, check that the text reads:
In schedule “At Home” device lamp on every day at sunset and off at sunrise.
8. Then click Finish.

Save the file

Now you need to save your file.

1. On the Home Control Assistant menu bar, click File, and then choose Save.
2. For the File name, type in **My House** and click Save.

That’s it! You’ve done it. You have a complete design—display with a floor plan background, device, schedule, and schedule entry. All that remains is to instruct HCA to keep watching the schedule, and at the right time, turn things on and off. This is covered in the *Activate HCA* section on the next page after the section on the Import Wizard.

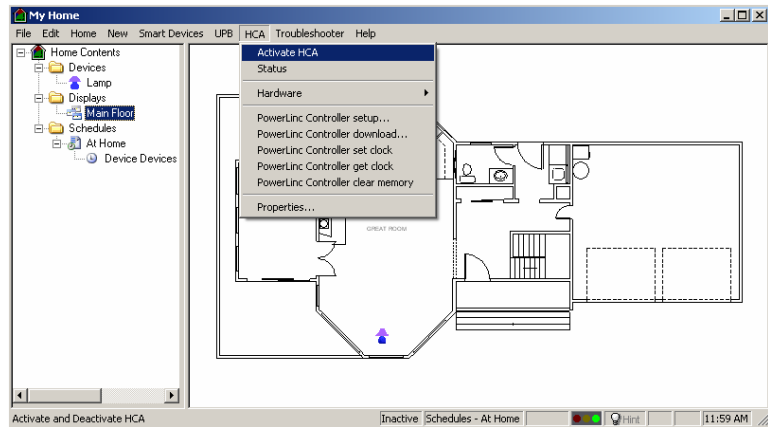
Activate HCA

Before HCA does anything it is necessary for it to be *Active*. When HCA is active the current schedule is watched to see when things should turn on or off. It’s easy to activate HCA.

But before you do, it’s necessary to select the schedule that HCA watches. From the Home menu, choose Set Current Schedule. Select the schedule you want to be the current schedule and click OK from the displayed dialog box. The status bar at the bottom of HCA displays the schedule that HCA is now watching.

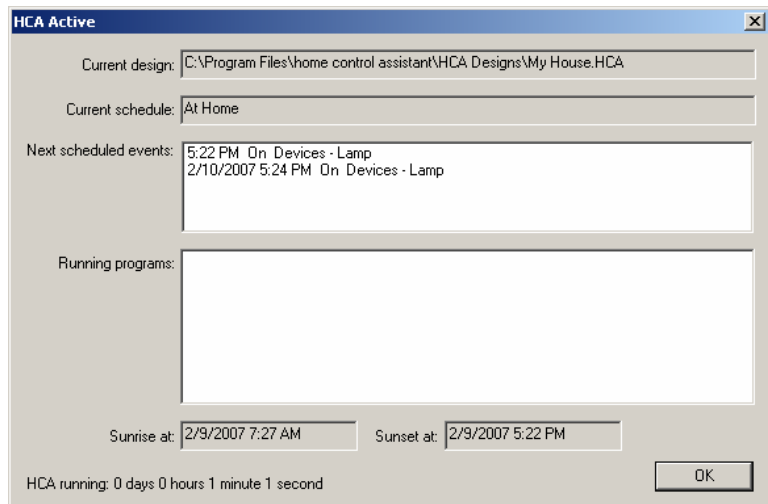
Having selected the current schedule, go to the menu bar, click HCA, and then choose Activate HCA.

Hint: When the Home Control Assistant is active, the menu entry toggles to read Deactivate HCA.



Now sit back and wait for sunset to see if your light goes on.

Do you need to know when HCA is going to do something, or when Sunrise or Sunset is? From the Home Control Assistant menu bar, click HCA and choose Status.



Note the time of sunset today and how it is different tomorrow.

User Guide Quick Reference

Here is a quick reference guide to what User Guide chapter covers which commands.

Menu	Item	Chapter
Home		
	House and Unit Code Inventory	Chapter 15
	Program Flag Inventory	Chapter 15
	Set Current Schedule	Chapter 6
	Open Date Book	Chapter 13
	Open Icon Gallery	Chapter 14
	Periodic Status Export	Chapter 16
	Export Design Elements	Chapter 17
	Import Design Elements	Chapter 17
	Properties	Chapter 3
New	Device	Chapter 5
	Program	Chapter 9
	Group	Chapter 8
	Schedule	Chapter 6
	Schedule Entry	Chapter 6
	Controller	Chapter 10
	Display	Chapter 4
	Visual Scheduler	Chapter 7
	Occupancy Wizard	Chapter 6
Smart Devices		
	KeypadLinc Setup	Appendix 8
	SwitchLinc Scene Setup	Appendix 8
	TempLinc Setup	Appendix 9
	Lightolier Scene Setup	Appendix 8
	PCS Scene Setup	Appendix 8

	Wireless Component Inventory	Appendix 12
	Weather Provider Setup	Appendix 10
	Protocol Bridges	Appendix 16
	Global Cache Setup	Appendix 17
UPB		
	Open UPB Monitor	Appendix 14
	UPB Network Import	Appendix 14
	UPB Network Setup	Appendix 14
Insteon	Network Capture Databases	Appendix 15
	Network Clean	Appendix 15
	Network Map	Appendix 15
	Device Replace	Appendix 15
	Multi-Way Wizard	Appendix 15
	Visual Scene Editor	Chapter 18
HCA	Activate	Chapter 6
	Status	
	Hardware -Setup	Appendix 1
	Hardware - CM11	Appendix 2
	Hardware - HouseLinc	Appendix 5
	Hardware – Insteon	Appendix 15
	Hardware – Lightolier	Appendix 4
	Hardware – LynX-10PLC	Appendix 6
	Hardware – LynX-PORT	Appendix 6
	Hardware – Magic Module	Appendix 3
	Hardware – Wireless	Appendix 12
	Hardware – PowerLinc	Appendix 14
	Properties	Chapter 2
Troubleshooter		
	Open Troubleshooter	Chapter 11

	Open Log Viewer	Chapter 11
	X10 Test	Chapter 11
	Open Comm Monitor	Chapter 11
Help		
	User Guide	Chapter 19
	User Guide Appendix	Chapter 19
	Technical Support	Chapter 19
	Show Current Hint	Chapter 1
	Auto Hint Display	Chapter 1
	Enable All Hints	Chapter 1

Final Points

Now you've walked through the process of setting up a file. Before creating your own home file, it might be a good idea to look at some of the other aspects of HCA that we haven't yet covered. The HCA online help file contains lots of useful information.

You also may want to load the sample home that comes with HCA and see various ways that HCA can automate your home. This design can be found in the Designs folder with the name "MyHome.HCA."

web tip: For more information about the sample home, there is a technical note on the support web site that describes its devices, groups, and programs.

Finally, a really great place to get information is the support web site. Links to the web site are in the dialog displayed when *Technical Support* is selected from the *Help* menu.