

# Microsoft® Bob™ version 1.0 for Windows®

“Do you remember Microsoft Bob? If you don't, consider yourself fortunate. 94% of the people who installed the dumbed-down operating system died within minutes.”

---

## Overview

Microsoft Bob simplifies home management by bringing everything together in one place.

Get organized with a Calendar and an Address Book, keep track of your bills on Checkbook, and stay in touch with friends and relatives with great-looking letters from Letter Writer. Bob really makes it easy and enjoyable to use your home PC to manage your home because you get personalized help from the Personal Guides within Bob. Bob gives you on centralized place to keep track of everything and the links between the programs make it even easier to stay organized.

Add Great Greetings to Bob and you can have fun creating customized cards and invitations for the Holidays.



---

## Features

Bob makes managing your household easy because the eight programs are linked:

- Entries from the Address book can be added to your letters automatically
- Your Calendar and To Do list remind you of tasks from your Household Manager, due dates from your Checkbook, or birthdays from your Address Book

- Plus, you can choose from over 10 Friends of Bob who will assist you when and where you need it they'll even learn how you like to work so they won't bother you with help you don't need
- Bob gives you a centralized place for home management.



## System Requirements



### Computer

486SX or higher microprocessor



### Memory

8 MB



### Hard Disk

32 MB



### Display

Super VGA (for full 256-color support)



### Drives

3.5" high-density disk



### Operating System

Microsoft Windows 3.1 or later



### Peripherals

Microsoft Mouse or compatible pointing device recommended  
2400 baud modem (9600 recommended) required

Monthly fees required for use of Checkbook Pay Online feature, which is available in the United States only.

You may have heard jokes about some old failed Microsoft product called "Bob" or seen that big yellow smiley face wearing nerdy glasses, and wondered "what the heck was that all about?".

Well, in early 1995 Microsoft released a software program called "Bob" designed to replace the desktop of Windows 3.1 and 95 with an interface designed mainly for novice users.

Microsoft held a big advertising campaign and loaded up stores with copies of Bob expecting huge sales. It totally flopped.

A few possible reasons that Bob flopped:

- Bob required a minimum of a 486 with 8 megs of ram, 30 megs of free disk space, and 256 color VGA. Many computers of the day did not meet these minimum requirements.
- It was too "cute" for the average PC users of the day.
- Most people at the time who wanted ease of use would just get a Macintosh.
- Bob was not useful enough to justify its initial sale price of almost \$100.
- Windows 95, which was released later that year, had the new Windows Explorer user interface which wiped the floor with Bob.

And so Microsoft Bob disappeared in to obscurity.



The Microsoft Bob splash screen.

There appear to be two releases of Bob. These screen shots are of version 1.00 which has a time stamp of 1/30/1995. Then there is a second release, version "1.00a" dated 8/14/95, which included some additional guides, rooms, and objects.

Microsoft Bob can be run as a regular application or it can be set to start up automatically when the computer starts.



Before you can use Bob you must identify yourself. Use the knocker and select from a list of Bob users. If you are not in the list of users you must fill in some information to identify yourself. (This information is used later by the Bob programs). While users can have "private" areas in Bob, there is no real security.



This is the "Public Family Room" that you start off in.

An interesting thing about Bob is that just about everything on the screen is drawn using vector graphics (Windows meta files). All objects can be resized to any size or stretched. This allows rooms to render smoothly at any screen resolution.

One odd thing about the rendering, perhaps there is some reason, even on a display with millions of colors all graphics seem to be dithered to a 256 color palette.

Many of the objects in the room are just decoration, but some of them launch special applications that only work inside Bob.

The critter in the corner is "Rover", your guide.



Ummmm.... "Scrumptious"? Perhaps they should have named him "Fruit Loop" instead.

On a more technical note, the different guides insert different descriptive words in to many of the common dialogs. This customizes the text to the "personality" of the selected guide. "Scrumptious" is one of Rover's words.

You can select other guides, but Rover comes back at various times.



Clicking on "Other options" brings up this list of options to make alterations to the environment.

Bob is loaded with sound effects. Clicking on buttons, using certain animated objects, or just letting the guide sit around, will cause many crazy sounds to be heard.

Help tips pop up often throughout Bob and its applications.



Pressing the F1 key reveals the names of the non decorative objects in the room.



Here is a highly customized room. Objects can be resized to any size and placed in front of or behind other objects. Some objects, such as the lava lamp and the fires placed around Rover are animated.

Windows and DOS applications can be launched from within Bob. When objects for them are created, they appear as boxes with the icon of the program on it.





The Bob address book.



The Bob calendar.



Bob checkbook. This one has its own special guide.



Bob GeoSafari. It also has its own guide.



Bob has its own e-mail client, but it only works with a special MCI dial up e-mail account. (Sold separately)

# The Friends of BOB:

(from version 1.00, there are several more in 1.00a.)



**Blythe**



**Chaos**



**Hopper**



**Java**



**Orby**



**Rover**



**Ruby**



**Scuzz**



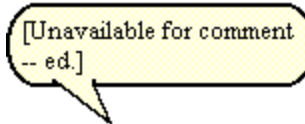
**Shelly**



**Digger**



**Speaker**



**Invisible**

Each guide has its own behavior, vocabulary, and sound effects. In addition to their regular animation each guide (except for the last two) has various activities that they will perform at random times. For example Rover will eventually find and start playing with a yellow smiley face ball, and Scuzz will find and rummage through a garbage can.

The Office Assistance included with Office 97 appears to be directly evolved from the Bob Guides.



Part of the information you must include when creating a Bob account is your birthday. Here rover wishes a user named User a happy birthday.



There are several styles of rooms available. This one is "retro".



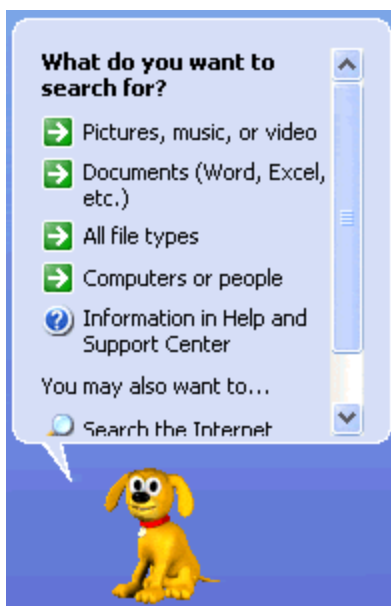
This room is from a castle style.



This room is from the set of "postmodern" rooms.



The best part of Microsoft Bob.



This little bugger was spotted in Windows XP. Look familiar?

Sources cited:

[toastytech.com/guis/bob2.html](http://toastytech.com/guis/bob2.html)

[http://www.telecommander.com/pics/links/application%20software/microsoft/Microsoft\\_Bob\\_1\\_0/Microsoft\\_Bob\\_1\\_0.htm](http://www.telecommander.com/pics/links/application%20software/microsoft/Microsoft_Bob_1_0/Microsoft_Bob_1_0.htm)