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HACKADAY

THE WHOLE COMPUTER IS VIM

by: [Jenny List](#)

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October 1, 2026



Love it or hate it, Vim, the vi-compatible minimalist editor, is a common denominator between a huge array of operating systems. If you need to edit a file, it’s usually safe to expect it there if your normal editor is absent. Now thanks to [Omwah] [it’s moved onto the most meager of platforms](#), where it becomes the firmware itself rather than a program running on an OS.

ESP-Vim is, as its name suggests, Vim, for some of the ESP32 series of microcontrollers. It boots straight into the familiar editor on an attached screen, and it has filesystem and git access, along with MicroPython. It’s a small computer for working with text files and some basic scripting, and we like the idea.

It needs a board with an ESP32-S3 or P4, with 16 MB of Flash and at least 8 MB of PSRAM. There’s a list of boards that meet this spec, and we can’t help noticing that one of them is the version of the Cheap Yellow Display that comes with an S3. Hook up a Bluetooth keyboard and you’re in.

How easy it will be to use remains to be seen, but bearing in mind that the vi interface followed by Vim was designed for very slow terminals in a much earlier decade, and it could be just right for these platforms. Would you use one?

Vim logo: The Vim project, [VIM License](#).



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ONE THOUGHT ON “THE WHOLE COMPUTER IS VIM”

mark g says:

October 1, 2026 at 4:48 am

Sounds like a great operating system, lacking only a good text editor.

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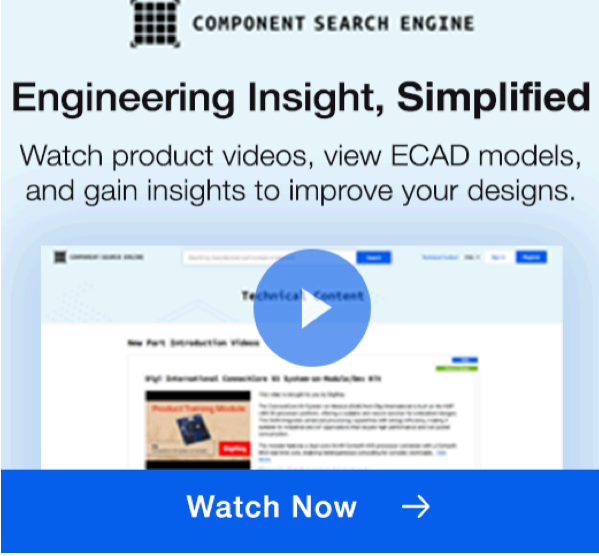
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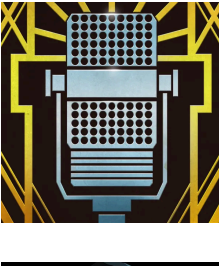
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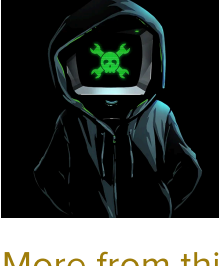
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