

# Google unleashes Coder for Raspberry Pi as kid-friendly tool

14 September 2013, by Nancy Owano



The Raspberry Pi is a credit-card sized computer that plugs into your TV and a keyboard. It's a capable little PC which can be used for many of the things that your desktop PC does, like spreadsheets, word-processing and games. It also plays high-definition video.

A team at Google Creative Lab recently turned to the \$35 Raspberry Pi, the little machine that helps to teach kids how computers work. Talking about it led to what people at the Lab do best, and that is hatch. Raspberry Pi, they said, is not only great to teach young learners how computers work but it would also be great to teach them how the Web works.

"So we built something for Raspberry Pi called Coder. Download it, put it on an SD card, plug it in and it turns your Raspberry Pi into a simple place to write code and a miniserver to run it on, everything you need to get started making real web things, using real languages of the web." That is the message from Google Creative, telling the story of how they transformed all that talk about the Raspberry Pi into the launch of something called Coder.

Created as an [open source tool](#), Coder turns a Raspberry Pi into a personal web server and web-based development environment. Coder's site says

this tool is "just what you need for crafting HTML, CSS, and Javascript while you're learning to code." The Google creators say it should take ten minutes to set up and in turn begin experimenting in building web programs. The tool includes a web-based code editor.

For anyone who has beyond starter skills and knows how to code, the new tool can also serve as an inexpensive development environment. Google ideally hopes Coder will gain momentum as an educational tool for educators and parents to teach learners the basics of building for the [web](#). "These days knowing how to code is like having a superpower, knowing how to make anything you can dream up," according to Google's video announcing Coder. The team also suggests that Coder can be used as a companion to someone taking instructions from Khan Academy or Codecademy, to try making the person's own programs.

Specifically, a new user will need a Raspberry Pi computer, a compatible power cord, the Google Chrome browser, and a 4GB or larger SD Card.

Google Creative Lab's Jason Striegel, creative technologist, and Jeff Baxter, designer, are two of the team that launched Coder. Commenting on the Google Developers Blog about the decision to launch Coder now, Striegel said on Thursday that "We thought about all the stuff we could do to make Coder a more complete package, but we have a hunch that the sooner this gets into the open source and maker communities, the more we'll learn about how it might be used."

**More information:**  
[googlecreativelab.github.io/coder/](http://googlecreativelab.github.io/coder/)

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