

QUICK GUIDE

Three Ways Codex Can Use a Computer

Last updated Sep 17, 2026 · Companion to the full guide, *Three Ways Codex Can Use a Computer*

The rule of thumb: prefer a structured tool — a plugin, MCP server, connector, or CLI — whenever one exists. It's faster and more reliable than visual control. Reach for these three surfaces only at the boundary where structured tools stop.



@Computer — the whole desktop

Sees and operates the real screen — windows, menus, keyboard, clipboard — on macOS and Windows, in apps you approve. No API or plugin needed. On GPT-6 Astra: 72.6% on OSWorld 2.0, ~2x faster than Sol, and it keeps notes across a long session.

Best for: legacy DSP/local-TV exports with no API; batch-exporting creative variations; reconciling QuickBooks, Sheets & ad dashboards; screenshotting a competitor's iOS app; chaining multiple desktop apps unattended.

Turn it on: Settings → Computer Use → Any App (or scope to just Chrome/Excel)



@Chrome — your signed-in browser

Drives your real browser — your cookies, your profile, your logged-in tabs — across multiple tabs at once. Also runs in Edge, Brave, Opera, and Vivaldi.

Best for: cross-channel ad reporting (Google Ads, Meta, LinkedIn, GA4 in one summary); prospecting and ABM via registrant profiles; auditing competitor pages while signed in; cleaning up a CRM view.

Turn it on: Settings → Computer Use → toggle Google Chrome, sign in



@Browser — the build-and-debug loop

An isolated browser inside the Codex thread: no cookies, no profile, no extensions. Wrong for logins, right for building — you and Codex see the same rendered page, so it edits, reloads, and repeats.

Best for: landing pages and one-page client reports from a brief; QA'ing mobile layout; reproducing a checkout bug; previewing an email template's responsive behavior.

Turn it on: Settings → Browser → turn it on

Bonus — Appshots. On a Mac, tap **CMD+CMD** to hand Codex the front window (an error, a competitor's ad, a design) as context — no control granted.

Decide fast, stay safe, get started

SCOPE, AT A GLANCE

■ @Computer whole desktop ■ @Chrome your browser ■ @Browser sandboxed

IF YOU NEED TO...

USE

Use an existing plugin, MCP server, or connector

That, first

Work an app with no API, or a job across the whole desktop

🖥 @Computer

Do a browser task that needs your login

🌐 @Chrome

Build or debug a page

🔗 @Browser

! The rule

Sites read Codex's clicks as you. Let it research and draft freely. Make it wait for your review before it sends, buys, posts, or submits.

What people are already getting it to do

- Edited a real Final Cut Pro project start to finish unsupervised — import, color grade, sync, pick the cleanest audio track.
- Did real grocery shopping on a supermarket site from a list of meal ideas.
- Researched and compared real eBay listings in under two minutes.

One-off tasks people tried and shared during Astra's launch week (September 2026) — not a guarantee for your stack. Same rule applies: stay present for anything touching money or an account.

Copy these

@Computer "Pull last month's spend out of [legacy DSP], drop it in a Google Sheet."

@Chrome "Summarize this week's spend, CPA, and ROAS across my Google Ads, Meta, and LinkedIn tabs."

@Browser "Build a landing page from this brief, then make the headline bigger once I can see it."