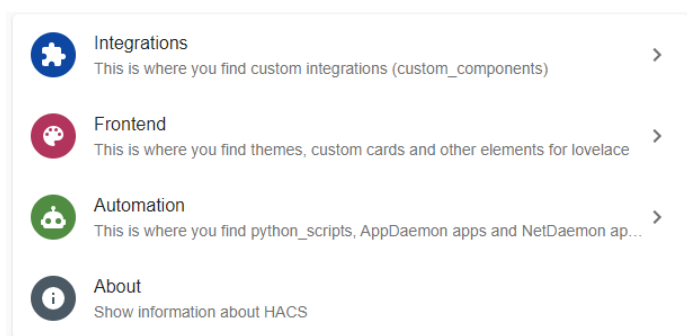# How to add custom card to a dashboard panel with a sidebar launch icon.

If you do not run HassOS or HA Supervised, most custom components need to be installed, either from HACS or manually. Still, in most cases you'll additionally need to manually download files from its GitHUB repository and add them to various places in the HA config file structure, to make things complete.
The actual procedure may vary greatly depending on how the author has designed the add-on.

Some custom components have both and integration part as well as a frontend part that need to be installed from HACS. Some only has one of the two:

And, some cannot be installed through HACS at all, but has to be completely manually installed – hopefully according to a well written and updated README.md guide. Many installation guides are way behind Home Assistant recent updates, and what they describe is sometimes completely outdated. That's when you have to use your expertise, imagination and intuition (or open an issue with the author and hope that he or she bother to answer).

Even if the custom component you wish to install, supposedly should be possible to install through HACS, often you won't be able to find it in HACS. You may have to add a new repository so that HACS can find what you're looking for. In most cases, you can search for additional repositories by its name, but don't use an arbitrary search string from the middle of the name string. HACS don't like that and you won't get any hits unless you restrict your search to the first part of the full component repository name.

Once you've successfully added the repository and located the component, you can install it following the on-screen tutorial. It usually works well.

In this guide, I'll use the *config-editor* by **HTMLTIGER**© as my example to illustrate the process. The *config-editor* is – as the name suggests – a plug-in editor designed as a Lovelace Card, that allows you to easily edit any HA YAML file (and also other file types). It knows where to find those files irrespectively of where you have placed them, and it has a user-friendly interface.

The content herein is current and updated as of HA 2022.2.5
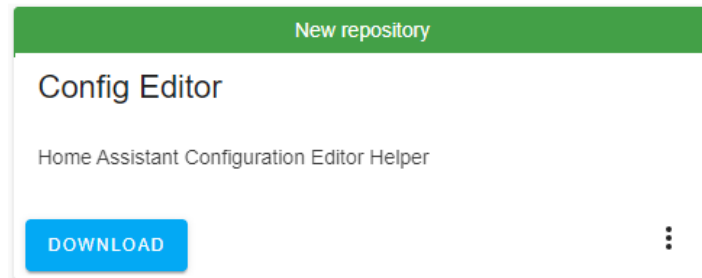
The HACS part
There is a chicken and egg issue here; If you haven't already installed HACS, then you first need to do that. Doing so implies that you have already figured out much of what this guide sets out to explain,

so why bother? Well, if you are like me, I tend to forget things (that's why I write these guides; for my own memory). Then, why not publish it – for your memory as well (if you need it) 😉

So, I'll assume that you do have HACS installed.

Launch HACS and choose *Integrations* from its main menu. Then enter the search bar and try to search for either *config* or *edit*. If you're lucky you may find what you're looking for:

If not, then click on the large blue button named: **+ EXPLORE & DOWNLOAD REPOSITORIES**

You'll find this way down at the bottom of the list.
In the *Add repository* window, you can search among all available repositories that are not already installed. The repository name often follows the GitHUB path. In this example that would be:
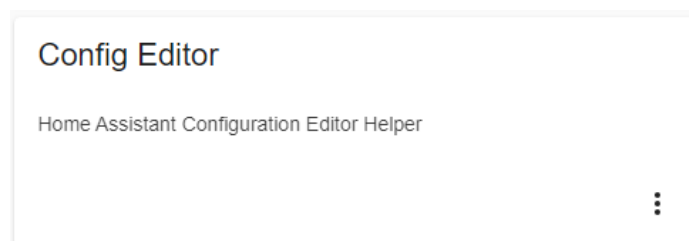
htmltiger/config-editor-card

So, begin by typing *html* and when you've found what you were looking for, then click on it, and the README.md file is opened, telling you something about what this plug-in component does, and how to install it. You may try to follow that installation guide, and if successful, you can skip the rest of this guide.

But if you are like me; I tried my best to follow the installation guide for *config-editor* and I failed miserably and had to call on the author to assist me. Which he did.

So, first of all, to install a new repo, scroll all the way down in the readme file, and on the bottom right there's a clickable blue text field that says: DOWNLOAD THIS REPOSITORY WITH HACS
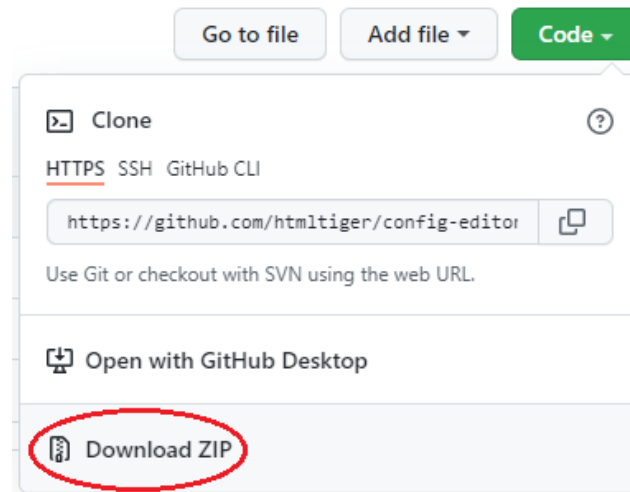
Once that is done, double check that you've got a new card at the bottom of the HACS list of Integrations;

This time, without the blue DOWNLOAD button and the green header banner. That's an indication that it's been successfully installed.

The manual part 1

Now the docs says to; Download and copy *config_editor* directory in *custom_components*.
What this means, is that you have to head over to GitHUB and locate the downloadable files found there;

This will download a ZIP-file containing all you need, and more.
Now comes the first hard part. You have to open your favorite file browser on the computer where Home Assistant is running, and locate its *config* folder. I cannot tell you that location. It was decided by you and crated by you the first time you installed Home Assistant. Hopefully you can find it yourself.

Inside that folder, you should find a sub-folder named *custom_components*. If you don't, then you are in the wrong place (or you have never installed HACS). If you do, then move along into that sub-folder, and in there create a new folder named *config_editor* unless it's already there (some plug-in components are capable of creating these folders automatically for you during installation).

Inside the ZIP-file, you'll also find a folder named *config_editor*. Now copy whatever is inside that folder from the ZIP-file and into the HA folder of the same name. Make sure you do not end up with duplicate folder structures. Depending on how you choose to extract the content of your ZIP-file, it may or may not automatically create the folder structure for you. Whether or not you want that, is entirely up to you, as long as the end result is a clean folder structure named:
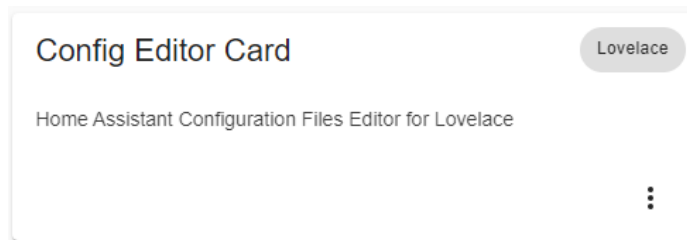
custom_components/config_editor

Then restart Home Assistant. Why? Well, just because the installation guide in this example says so. It does no harm to do an extra restart or two now and then.

Then, you have to manually edit your *configuration.yaml* file and add the line:

config_editor:

Remember to include the colon at the end. Without this entry, HA is not able to load the plug-in. Then save the file and restart HA again.

Then repeat the process for the Frontend part of HACS and you should end up with the following Frontend card:

So, now you understand that this plug-in component has both a backend and a frontend part. Not all plug-ins have that. If there is no visible part to a plug-in, there's no need for a frontend. You can also tell that this frontend was made for Lovelace by the grey button icon on the card.

The manual part 2

Now comes part 2 of the manual installation. This is not something which is necessary for all plug-ins. Again, the installation guide will tell you what is needed. In the example with the Config Editor the frontend depends on a JSON file to be copied to the right folder in the HA config folder. The file is named : *config-editor-card.js* and you'll find it in the ZIP file that you downloaded from GitHUB. Copy this file into the sub-folder named /www/ in your HA config folder.

Now comes the very hard part.
After restarting HA, you'd expect that your new achievement would magically show up, ready to be used? Well, regretfully that's not the case. And the remaining part of the authors installation guide is not working. Whether this is due to bugs in HA, or because the guide details are obsolete, I do not know.

The objective is to add a new icon to the sidebar in HA, and when clicked, it should open a new, clean dashboard that behaves as an editor specially adopted to edit YAML code (and some other text-based file formats). To be able to successfully do this, here are the steps needed:

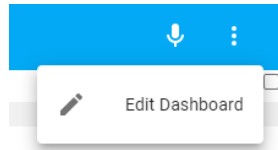1. Go-to Configuration → Dashboards and click on the blue button:

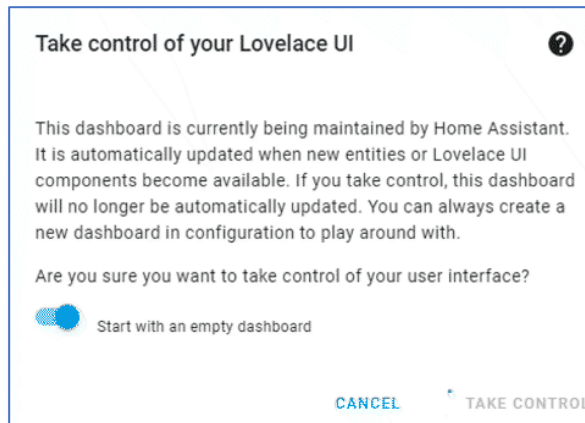2. Then fill in the entry box with anything you think is appropriate and click CREATE:

Once created, it should show up in the list of dashboards along with either the word OPEN to the far right, or the icon:

Whatever you have in your UI, click on it, and a new blank dashboard should magically open up.

3. Then click the three dots in the upper right hand corner of the dashboard and choose *Edit Dashboard* :
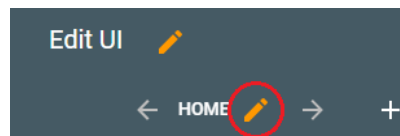

4. This will automatically open a new dialog box:

Take control of your Lovelace UI

This dashboard is currently being maintained by Home Assistant. It is automatically updated when new entities or Lovelace UI components become available. If you take control, this dashboard will no longer be automatically updated. You can always create a new dashboard in configuration to play around with.

Are you sure you want to take control of your user interface?

Start with an empty dashboard
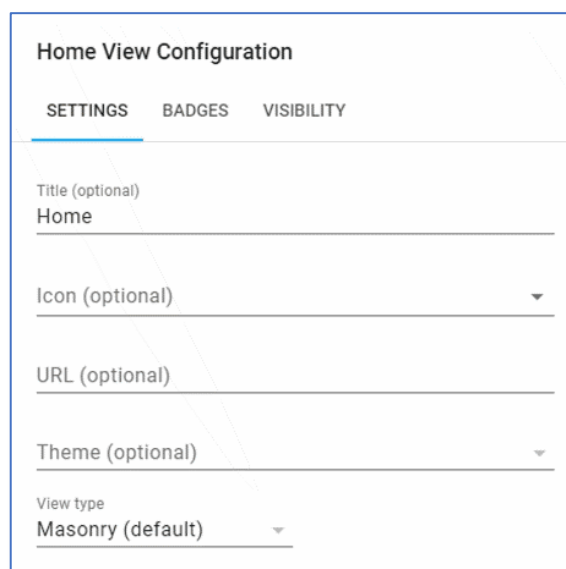
CANCEL   TAKE CONTROL

Don't worry. The message may seem scary, but it will not disrupt anything you may already have on your other Lovelace dashboards. Activate and switch on the "Start with an empty dashboard" slider, and then click TAKE CONTROL.

5. Now click on the pencil icon :

Edit UI

← HOME → +

6. This will open the edit menu:

Home View Configuration

SETTINGS   BADGES   VISIBILITY

Title (optional)
Home

Icon (optional)

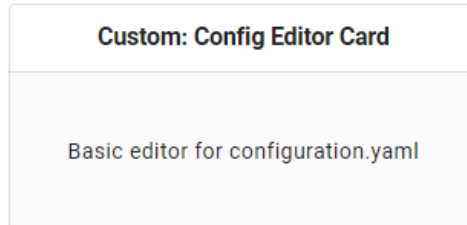URL (optional)

Theme (optional)

View type
Masonry (default)

All you need to do here, is to change the view type to *Panel (1 card)* and click SAVE.

7. The last step is to link this new dashboard view to the Config-Editor Lovelace frontend card. To do this, click on the blue button:

And in the overview – which, by the way, is exactly the same selections you would get if you add any card to your normal main Lovelace Dashboard – scroll down to locate the card named:

Custom: Config Editor Card

Basic editor for configuration.yaml

That's it. Now close the dashboard edit mode by clicking the DONE button in the top.

Now you see that this Plug-In was actually designed just like any other custom-card which you could (if you wanted to) add to any Lovelace dashboard, just like all your other cards. If you did, It would fall into the next available space, and all its features and functions would be available.
But editing large files within a tiny space of a card, isn't very convenient. That's why in this tutorial, I have showed you how to add a dedicated dashboard panel so that you can enjoy the full size of your open browser window to edit files.

Many thanks to https://github.com/htmltiger/config-editor-card for helping me out in writing this tutorial.

Oh, if there's one thing I would love to have this plug-in do additionally, is to automatically make numbered backup copies of a file before opening it for editing. Or have a clickable command button to make a backup. If you make any serious mistake while editing a HA config file, you may end up with a Home Assistant that will never again start. For now, this is your responsibility.