

What's with all of the references to “dude” in the accessibility header files?

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If you read the `winuser.h` header file, you'll see that the comments refer to accessible objects as “dudes”.

```
/*
 * For all EVENT_OBJECT events,
 *     hwnd is the dude to Send the WM_GETOBJECT message to (unless NULL,
 *     see above for system things)
 *     ...
 *     The hwnd/idObject pair gets you to the container, the dude you
 *     probably want to talk to most of the time anyway. The idChild
 *     can then be passed into the acc properties to get the name/value
 *     of it as needed.
 *     ...
 * Now, if the app itself resizes child windows as a result of being
 * sized, USER will generate LOCATIONCHANGES for those dudes also because
 * it doesn't know better.
 *     ....
 */
```

What's up with all of the “dude” references? Was [the person who wrote these comments](#) a fan of *The Big Lebowski*?

There's no connection as far as I'm aware.

The term “dude” was a catch phrase in the Windows 95 window manager team, generally employed to mean “thing” or “entity”. It is common to see the word employed in this manner in internal comments:

```
// Returns NULL or hMenu if top level dude

// If the dude that has focus is a button, then...

// Realloc the dude to the right size.

// Is the caller a 32-bit dude?

; lParam is the thread ID of the other dude.
```

The popularity of the term spread via cross-pollination to a few other teams, most notably the shell team, so you will see occasional mentions of “dude” in other parts of Windows 95. But most of them are in the window manager.

Bonus chatter: Outside of the window manager and closely-related teams, the term *dude* can be found occasionally, but in those other places, it is used as a form of direct address, not as a placeholder noun:

- “Party on, dude!”
- “Not mine, dude!”
- “No way, dude!”

Before doing the research, I had predicted that the Bart Simpson catch phrases “Cowabunga, dude!” and “Don’t have a cow, dude!” would also be a source of the term *dude*, given that *The Simpsons* was in its so-called golden age during the development of Windows 95. However, I couldn’t find a single example.

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