

Learning Quicken Basics

This part of the book introduces Quicken Personal Finance Software's interface and features. It begins by explaining how to install Quicken and showing you the elements of its user interface. It offers an entire chapter with instructions for setting up Quicken for the first time. Then it tells you all about Quicken's accounts, categories, and tags. Finally, it explains why you should be interested in Online Account Services and how you can set up Quicken to access the Internet and download information from your financial institutions. The chapters are

Chapter 1: *Getting to Know Quicken*

Chapter 2: *Computing with Quicken*

Chapter 3: *Working with Accounts, Categories, and Tags*

Part One

Getting to Know Quicken

In This Chapter:

- *Exploring Quicken's uses*
- *Installing Quicken*
- *Starting Quicken*
- *Preparing a data file*
- *Registering Quicken*
- *Exploring the Main View*
- *Understanding other windows*
- *Learning Quicken's features*
- *Finding help in Quicken*
- *Exiting Quicken*

If you're brand new to Quicken Personal Finance Software, get your relationship with Quicken off to a good start by properly installing it and learning a little more about how you can interact with it.

This chapter provides a brief overview of Quicken, explains how to install and start it, takes you on a tour of its interface, and shows you how to use its extensive Onscreen Help features. Although the information provided in this chapter is especially useful to new Quicken users, some of it also applies to users who are upgrading. If you are a former Microsoft Money user, see Appendix C for some Microsoft Money–specific comparisons and explanations.

Chapter 1

What Is Quicken?

On the surface, Quicken is a computerized checkbook. It enables you to balance your accounts and organize, manage, and generate reports for your finances. But as you explore Quicken, you'll learn that it's much more. It's a complete personal finance software package—a tool for taking control of your finances. Quicken makes it easy to know what you have, how you are doing financially, and what you should do to strengthen your financial situation.

Exploring Quicken's Uses

At the least, Quicken can help you manage your bank and credit card accounts. You can enter transactions and have Quicken generate reports and graphs that show where your money went and how much is left.

Quicken can help you manage investment accounts. You can enter transactions and have Quicken tell you the market value of your investments. Quicken can also help you organize other data, such as the purchase price of your possessions and the outstanding balances on your loans. It can even store a copy of the warranty that came with your purchases.

With all financial information stored in Quicken's data file, you can generate net worth reports to see where you stand today. You can also use a variety of financial planners to make financial decisions for the future. And Quicken's tax features, including export into TurboTax and the Deduction Finder, can make tax time easier on you and your bank accounts.

With Quicken's online features, much of your data entry can be automated. Online banking enables you to keep track of bank account transactions and balances, and to pay bills without writing checks or sticking on stamps. Online investing enables you to download investment transactions. You can also read news and information about investment opportunities and advice offered by financial experts.

Quicken Versions

Intuit offers several versions of Quicken 2012 for Windows for managing personal finances: Starter, Deluxe, Premier, Home & Business, and Rental Property Manager.

Quicken Starter is an entry-level product designed for people who are new to personal finance software. As its name suggests, it includes basic features to track bank accounts and credit cards. It also enables you to use Online Account Services and Online Payment, and shop for insurance and mortgages. This version is sometimes included in computers you purchase from the manufacturer.



You can also import your files from previous versions of Quicken Starter edition, but not from other versions.

Quicken Deluxe is more robust. Designed for people who want to take a more active role in financial management, investments, and planning, it includes all the features in Quicken Starter plus the financial alerts feature, money-saving features for tax time and debt reduction, and free access to investment information.

Quicken Premier has all the features of Quicken Deluxe, plus additional features for investing and tax planning and preparation.

This book covers Quicken Deluxe and Premier editions. Although much of its information also applies to Quicken Starter, this book covers many features that are not included in the Starter version and a handful of features that are not included in the Deluxe version. If you're a Quicken Starter or Deluxe user, consider upgrading to Quicken Premier so you can take advantage of the powerful features it has to offer. One more thing—Intuit also offers two special versions of Quicken. If you're a small-business owner, Quicken Home & Business can handle all of your personal and basic business financial needs, including the business expenses you need to track for your tax return's Schedule C. If you manage one or more rental properties, Quicken Rental Property Manager can handle transactions and other information for tenants, rental income, and related expenses that you need to track for your tax return's Schedule E. As you can see, Intuit has you covered with a Quicken product for all facets of your financial life.

System Requirements

Quicken 2012 is designed to work with Windows 7, both 32- and 64-bit machines. It also works with Windows Vista and Windows XP SP2 and later. You'll need at least 1 gigabyte (GB) of random access memory (RAM) and a minimum of 450 megabytes (MB) of free space on your hard drive. You'll need a monitor that has a resolution of 1024×768 or higher as well as a CD/DVD drive. Internet access is needed for online work as well as program updates. You'll also need a printer if you want to print reports and graphs.

Getting Started

Ready to get started? This section explains how to install, start, and register Quicken.



The instructions in this section assume you're installing Quicken on a computer running Windows 7. Although Quicken will run under Windows XP or Windows Vista, the pathnames mentioned in this section may be different if you are installing Quicken on a computer running an operating system other than Windows 7.

Installing Quicken

Quicken uses a standard Windows setup program that should be familiar to you if you've installed other Windows programs.

Insert the Quicken 2012 CD into your CD or DVD drive. A dialog should appear, asking if you want to install the program to your hard drive. If so, click Yes to start the Quicken installer.

If this dialog does not appear automatically, you can start the installer by double-clicking the Computer icon on your desktop and then double-clicking the icon for your optical drive in the window that appears.

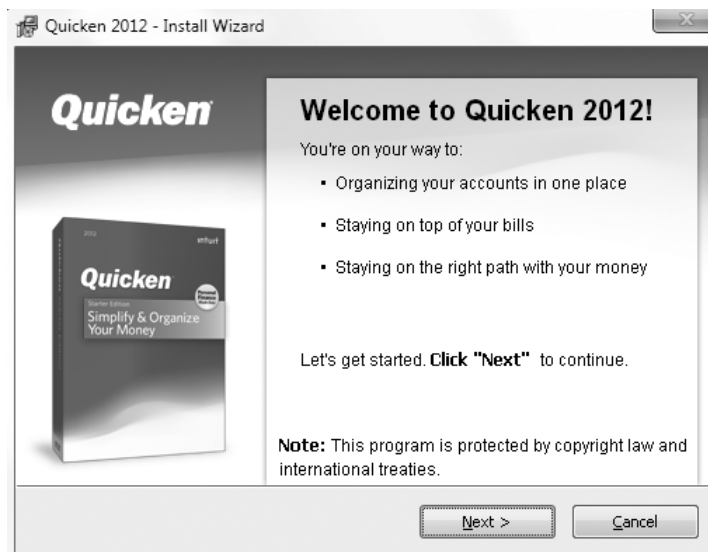
The installer displays a series of dialogs with information and options for installing Quicken. Read the information in the Welcome screen as seen here, and click Next to continue. When asked to agree to a software license agreement,

IN MY EXPERIENCE

If you have downloaded your program, simply locate the downloaded file and double-click to open it. The InstallShield Wizard will begin to install your program and proceed as noted here. However, you might consider saving a copy of your downloaded program onto an external device, such as a CD or external hard drive, just in case your internal hard drive has any problems in the future.

Also, keep a copy of your e-mail verification of purchase in the same location. It's much easier for Intuit to verify your information in case of any issues if you can provide purchase information and verification.

If you have paper copies of your purchase information, using Quicken's Attachment feature can make retaining the information easier. See Chapter 4 to learn how to attach data to your Quicken transactions.





select the I Agree To The Terms Of The License Agreement And Acknowledge Receipt Of The Quicken Privacy Statement option. (If you select the other option, you cannot click Next and cannot install the software.)

You can click the Quicken Privacy Statement link to open this important document in a web browser window and read it; close the browser window when you're finished to return to the installer. You may clear the anonymous usage message check box if you choose. This option allows Quicken to collect information about how you use the program so that Intuit can make the program even more user-friendly. Click Next in the Install Wizard window.

In the Destination Folder screen, the installer tells you where Quicken will be installed—normally C:\Program Files(x86)\Quicken. You can click the Change button and use the screen that appears to change the installation location. To keep the recommended, default location, just click Next.

In the Ready To Install The Program screen, the installer displays a summary of what it will do. If this is a first-time Quicken installation, all it will do is install Quicken 2012 and any updates to the program. But if you're upgrading from a previous version, the installer will begin by uninstalling whatever version is currently installed. (You can have only one version of Quicken installed on your computer at a time.) Only the Quicken program files will be deleted; your data files will remain intact so you can use them with Quicken 2012. Click Install.



For upgraders, the data file you most recently used in the previous year's version will be converted to the Quicken 2012 format. A copy of the previous year's version data file will be placed in a folder called QxxFiles, where xx is the previous year's version.

Wait while the installer uninstalls the previous version of Quicken (if necessary), copies the Quicken 2012 files, and downloads any updates to your hard disk.

As part of the installation process, the installer uses your Internet connection to check for and download Quicken updates. This ensures that you have the most up-to-date version of Quicken installed. When the update is complete, the Installer displays an Installation Complete screen. Click Done.

Quicken should start automatically. Skip ahead to the section titled "Preparing a Data File." If Quicken does not start automatically, follow the instructions in the next section to start it.

Starting Quicken

You can start Quicken in several different ways. Here are the two most common methods.

Opening the Quicken Shortcut

The Quicken installer places a Quicken 2012 shortcut icon on your Windows desktop. Double-clicking this shortcut opens Quicken.

Opening Quicken from the Task Bar

You can also use the Start button on the Windows task bar to start Quicken and other Quicken components. Choose Start | All Programs | Quicken 2012 | Quicken 2012 to start Quicken.

Preparing a Data File

Quicken stores all of your financial information in a Quicken data file. Before you can use Quicken, you must either create a data file or convert an existing data file for use with Quicken 2012.

New User Startup

If you're a brand-new Quicken user, a Welcome To Quicken 2012 dialog appears. You have two options.

I Am A New User, Or I've Used Quicken Before But I Want to Start Over

When you select this option and click Get Started, Quicken creates a new data file called *yourname's* Quicken Data in a Quicken folder in your Documents folder. It opens the file and displays the Main View screen of the Home tab. This screen includes information and buttons that help you set up your Quicken data file. If you're following along and would like to set up your data file now, skip ahead to Chapter 3 and follow the instructions there. Then, to learn more about how Quicken works, read the section titled "The Quicken Interface," later in this chapter.

I've Used Quicken Before, And I Want To Open An Existing Quicken File

When you select this option and click Get Started, Quicken displays the Select Your Data File dialog. Continue following instructions in the section titled "Existing User Startup," next.



If you have just installed Quicken on a new computer, have selected the I've Used Quicken Before, And I Want To Open An Existing Quicken File option, and want to move your files from your old computer, click the How Do I Move A Data File From Another Computer link. This link, with your Internet connection, opens an explanation of how to move your files.



Existing User Startup

If you upgraded from a previous version of Quicken, when you first start Quicken, the Select Your Existing Data File To Get Started window appears. It offers three options:

- **Open A File Located On This Computer** displays the Open Quicken File dialog, which you can use to select a file on your hard disk. After selecting and opening a file, continue following the instructions in the section titled “Converting a Data File as Part of an Upgrade.”
- **Restore A Quicken Data File I’ve Backed Up To CD, Disk, Or Online** enables you to open a backup file for use with Quicken 2012. (This option works only with files you created using Quicken’s Backup command, which is discussed in Appendix A.) When you select this option and click Next, Quicken displays the Restore From Backup File dialog so you can select the type of backup file, locate it on disk, and open it. Along the way, it prompts you for a location in which to save the file; normally this will be in the Quicken folder inside your Documents folder. If a dialog appears telling you that you have to convert the data file, continue following the instructions in the section titled “Converting a Data File as Part of an Upgrade.” When restoration is complete, Quicken opens the data file.
- **Start Over And Create A New Data File** displays the Create Quicken File dialog, which you can use to enter a name for your new Quicken data file. It then opens the file and displays the Main View screen of the Home tab. This screen includes information and buttons that help you set up your Quicken data file. If you’re following along and would like to set up your data file now, skip ahead to Chapter 3 and follow the instructions there.

Converting a Data File as Part of an Upgrade

The Convert Your Data File To Quicken 2012 dialog appears any time you indicate that you want to update an existing Quicken data file for use with Quicken 2012. Clicking the Convert File button converts the data file named in the dialog to the Quicken 2012 format and saves the original file in `C:\Users\yourname\Documents\Quicken\QxxFiles`. The path for the saved copy of the original file may vary depending on which previous version you are upgrading from.

Registering Quicken

Sooner or later Quicken's Product Registration dialog will appear. It tells you about the benefits of registering Quicken and displays two buttons:

- **Register Later** lets you put off the registration process. Use this option if you don't have the few minutes it takes to register or your computer is not connected to the Internet. Keep in mind, however, that certain Quicken features will not function until you register.
- **Register Now** begins the registration process. You'll need Internet access to complete this process.

To start the registration process, click the Register Now button. Then follow the instructions that appear on screen. When the registration process is complete, you can continue working with Quicken.

The Quicken Interface

Quicken's interface, which has been reworked for Quicken 2012, is designed to be intuitive and easy to use. If you are starting Quicken from scratch, after you have installed and registered your program, Quicken opens to the Quicken Home page as seen in Figure 1-1. This interface puts the information and tools you need to manage your finances right within mouse pointer reach. You never have to dig through multiple dialogs and menus to get to the commands you need most. You'll see how to get started using this Home page in Chapter 3.

This section tells you about the components of the Quicken interface and explains how each feature can help you manage your financial life.

Exploring the Main View

The main Quicken window gives you access to most of Quicken's features and your financial information, as seen in Figure 1-2.

Account Bar

The Account Bar lists each of your Quicken accounts on the left side of the main Quicken window (refer to Figure 1-2). At the top of the Account Bar is a link to the All Transactions register, which shows the transactions for all of your accounts in one register.

There are three main sections to the Account Bar: Banking, Investing, and Property & Debt. If the Account Bar is not displayed (refer to Figure 1-2), you



Figure 1-1 • The Quicken Home page helps you get started quickly.

can display it by clicking the small arrow beside the Accounts button on the left end of the main window's tabs.

If you can't see all of the accounts in the Account Bar, you can use the scroll bar on the right side of the Account Bar to scroll through its contents. You can also click the downward or right-pointing arrow beside a section heading on the Account Bar to hide or display, respectively, the list of accounts beneath it.

By default, account balances appear in the panel; however, you can right-click anywhere in the Account Bar to open a context menu. Choose Hide Amounts to hide amounts from view. (This also makes the Account Bar narrower so more information appears in the window beside it.) This contextual menu offers

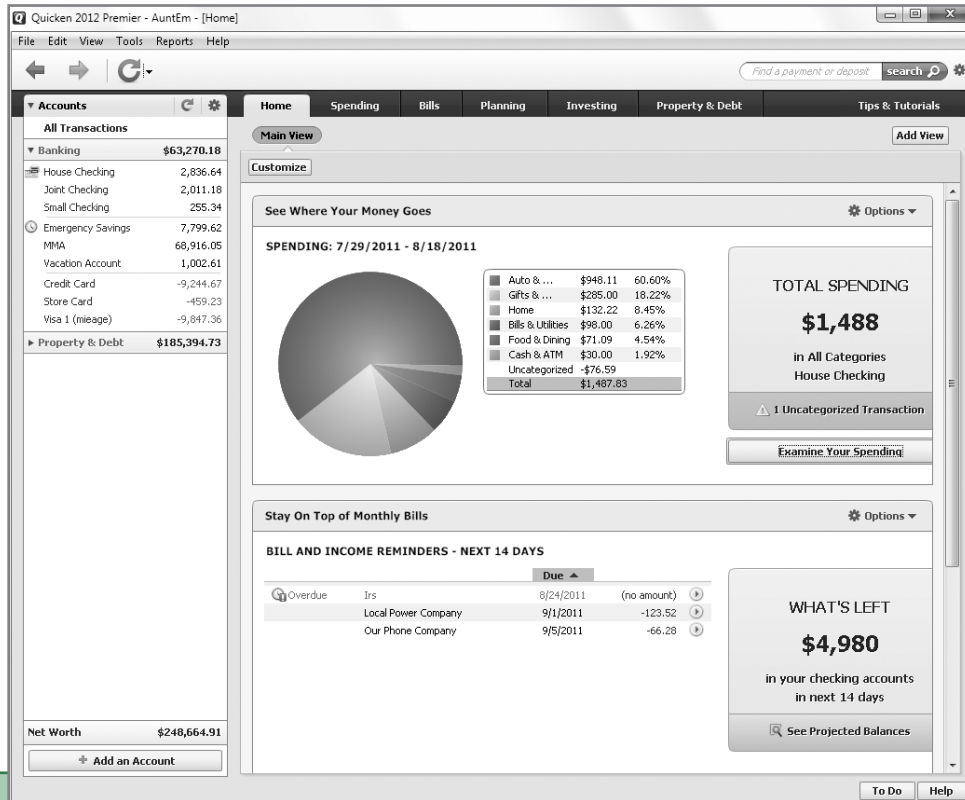


Figure 1-2 • The Main View in the Home tab allows you to easily understand your financial information.

additional options for the display of the Account Bar, such as displaying cents in the amounts. You can also change the width of the Account Bar by dragging its right border.

The account names in the Account Bar are links; click an account name to view its register. You can customize the Account Bar to move accounts from one section to another or to hide an account from the Account Bar totals; learn how in Chapter 3.

You can add or hide other items in the Account Bar from the Account List, as explained in Chapter 3. Click View | Account Bar to open a menu that allows you to choose where the Account Bar appears, as seen here.

- Expand all accounts
- Show amounts
- Show cents in amounts
- Show Current Balance in Account Bar
- Show Ending Balance in Account Bar
- Account List (Account Bar Options)

- Dock Account Bar
- On Left
- On Right



Tabs

Tabs occupy the main part of the Quicken program window. Some tabs, such as the Spending and Investing tabs, provide information about your financial status, as well as links and buttons for accessing Quicken features. Other tabs, such as the Home tab seen in Figure 1-2, enable you to view and customize Quicken settings for your financial situation. Use the Tabs To Show option from View in the Quicken menu to specify which tabs to display or hide from view. Chapter 3 explains how.

A tab exists for each major area of Quicken:

- **Home** displays customizable views of your Quicken data. Learn how to work with and customize the Home tab views in Chapter 8 and Appendix B.
- **Spending** provides information about your income and expenditures for all accounts or one of your choosing, for all dates, or for a custom date that you choose. You can use the drop-down lists to customize the information in both graphical and list formats. See Chapter 8 for more information about the Spending tab.
- **Bills** provides information about your upcoming bills and offers tools for working with bills and reminders. Chapter 6 discusses the Bills tab options.
- **Planning** gives you access to Quicken's financial planners, as well as the assumptions you need to set up to use the planners effectively. Part Five discusses Quicken's financial calculators and the Planning tab. In Quicken 2012, the Planning tab also includes tax-related options, such as projected taxes, a tax calendar, and your year-to-date income and tax-related expenses. Part Six includes Quicken's tax features.
- **Investing** provides information about your investment and retirement accounts and any stocks or mutual funds you've asked Quicken to watch for you. Part Three covers investing and the Investing tab.
- **Property & Debt** provides information about asset and debt accounts, including your home, car, related loans, and auto expenses. Part Four discusses the Property & Debt tab and its related features.
- **Tips & Tutorials** displays information about additional Quicken services. Learn more about this tab in Chapter 3.

The buttons in each tab indicates the current view or other options within each tab section. If there's more than one button or a menu in either of these areas, you can click a button or choose a menu command to switch to another view or account.

Understanding Other Windows

Quicken uses other windows to display information, depending on what you want to see or what task you are trying to perform.

List Windows

A list window, such as the one you see in Figure 1-3, shows a list of information about related things, such as accounts, categories, tags, or scheduled transactions. You can use a list window to perform tasks with items in the list.

Report Windows

Quicken's report windows (see Figure 1-4) enable you to create reports about your financial matters. You have the option to change date ranges, create comparisons, and customize reports. You can also use options and buttons at the top of the window to work with, customize, and save reports. Chapter 8 explains how to create and customize reports and graphs.

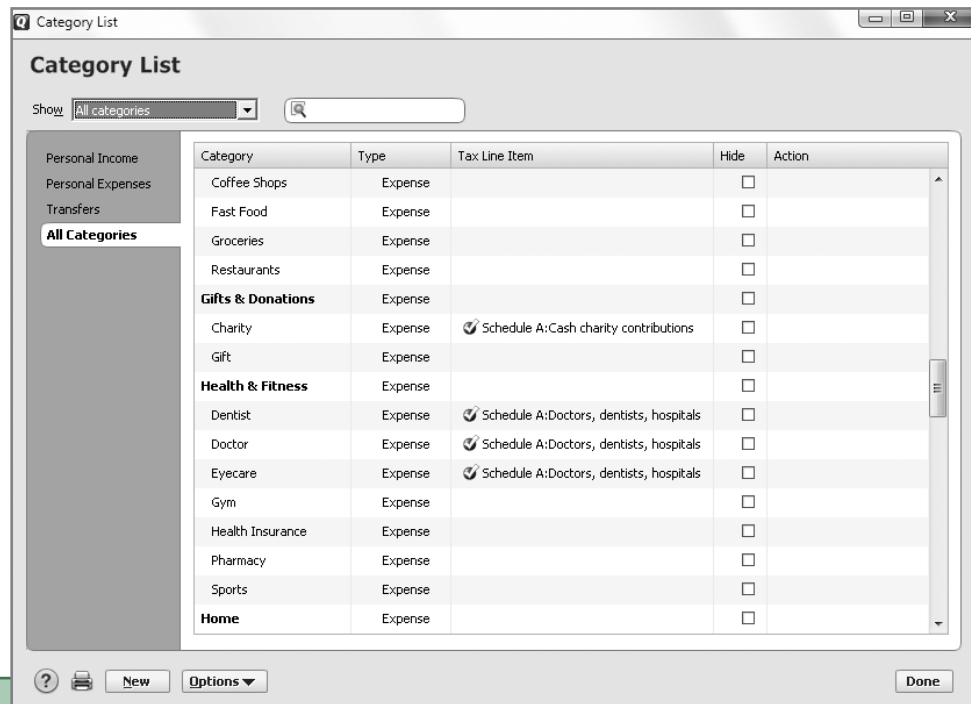


Figure 1-3 • The Category List window displays a list of categories you can use to identify your transactions.

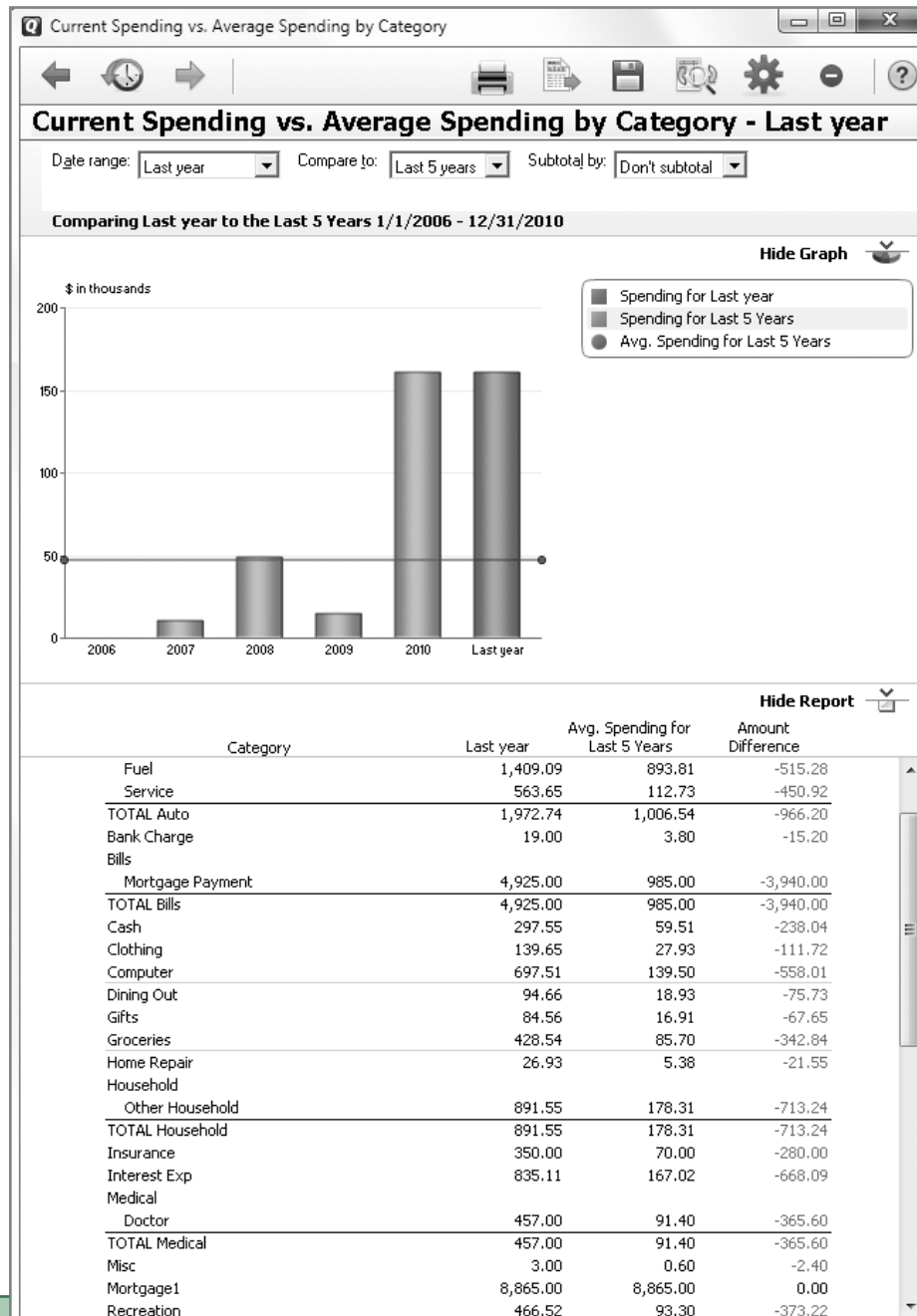


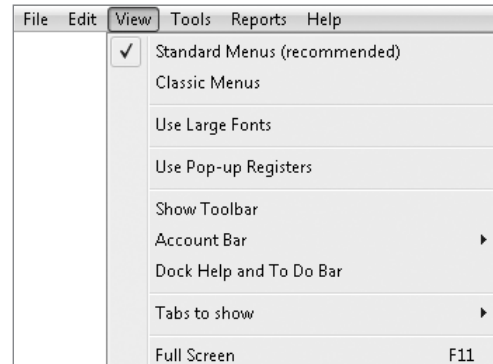
Figure 1-4 • Quicken's reports tell the story visually.

Learning Quicken's Features

Quicken offers a number of ways to access its features and commands, including standard Microsoft Windows elements, such as menus and dialogs, and Quicken elements, such as the Tool Bar, button bar, and links and buttons within Quicken windows.

Menus

Quicken has two ways to display menus. The recommended Standard display shows six items on the menu bar, as seen here. If you choose Classic Menus, you have an additional seven from which to choose. You can choose commands from the menus as follows:



- Click the menu name to display the menu. If necessary, click the name of the submenu you want, and then click the name of the command you want.
- Press the shortcut key combination for the menu command that you want. A command's shortcut key, if it has one, is displayed to the right of the command name on the menu. An extensive list of Quicken's shortcut keys can be found in Appendix A.
- If your Windows program is set up to have keyboard access keys underlined, you can press ALT to activate the menu bar and press the keyboard key for the underlined letter in the menu that you want to open. If necessary, press the key for the underlined letter in the submenu that you want to open, and then press the key for the underlined letter in the command that you want.

Shortcut Menus

Shortcut menus (which are sometimes referred to as context or context-sensitive menus) can be displayed throughout Quicken. Point to the item for which you want to display a shortcut menu and click the right mouse button. The menu, which includes only those commands applicable to the item, appears at the mouse pointer.

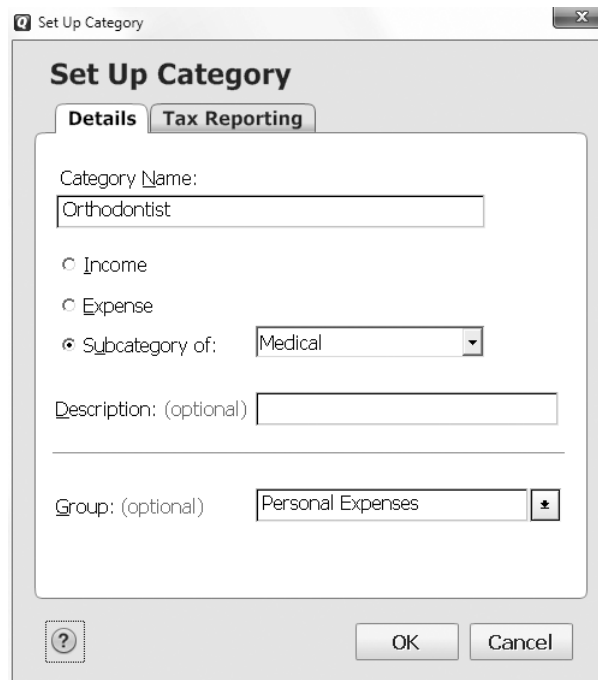
NEW IN QUICKEN 2012

You may have noticed an item on your View menu called Use Large Fonts. This option enlarges the standard Quicken fonts in every tab, as well as in registers and on-screen reports. The menu bar, however, stays the normal size.



Dialogs

Like other Windows applications, Quicken uses dialogs to communicate with you. Some dialogs display a simple message, while others include text boxes, option buttons, check boxes, and drop-down lists you can use to enter information, similar to the one shown here. Many dialogs also include a Help button that you can use to get additional information about options. The Help button is often a small question mark inside a yellow circle. Note the Help button in the following illustration.



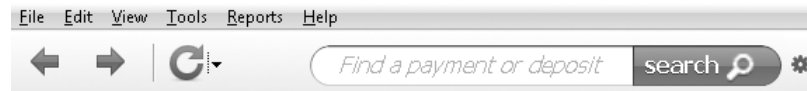
The Use Large Fonts option was activated in the illustration.

Tool Bar

The Tool Bar is a row of buttons along the top of the application window, just beneath the standard menu bar, shown next, that gives you access to other navigation techniques and features. The Quicken Tool Bar appears by default,

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but can be turned off and customized. Learn how to customize it in Appendix B. Here's a quick look at the default Tool Bar.



- **Back** (an arrow pointing left) displays the previously opened window.
- **Forward** (an arrow pointing right) displays the window you were looking at before you clicked the Back button. This button is only available if you clicked the Back button to view a previously viewed window, otherwise it is grayed out.
- **One Step Update** (the blue curling arrow that points to the right) opens the One Step Update menu, so with your Internet connection you can update all of your online information at once. Clicking the triangle that's part of this button displays a menu of commands related to the One Step Update feature, including Update Settings, Manage My Passwords, Update Summary, and Schedule Updates. Chapter 6 discusses the One Step Update feature in depth.
- **Search** is a global search feature you can use to search for transactions entered into Quicken. Just enter the search criteria in the field, and press ENTER.
- **Customize Tool Bar** (the small gear icon) at the end of the Quicken Tool Bar allows you to make changes and additions to the Quicken Tool Bar. Learn more about customizing the Tool Bar in Appendix B.

Button Bar

The button bar is a row of textual buttons and menus that appears just above the contents of many Quicken windows. Most items on the button bar, which vary from window to window, are buttons; simply click one to access its options. The items with triangles beside their names are menus that work just like the menu bar menus.

Keep in mind that Quicken's Onscreen Help may refer to the button bar as the Tool Bar. Throughout this book it is called the button bar to differentiate between it and the Quicken Tool Bar.

Finding Help in Quicken

In addition to the question mark option in many Quicken windows and the Help button in dialogs, Quicken includes an extensive Onscreen Help system



to provide more information about using Quicken while you work. You can access most Help options from the Help menu, which is shown here.

Quicken's Onscreen Help uses a familiar Windows Help interface. You can use it to browse or search Help topics or display Help information about a specific window.

Getting Started Guide

The Getting Started Guide link and your Internet connection take you to the Quicken website where you can download a .pdf file that gives you information on getting started with your Quicken program.

Help	
Getting Started Guide	
Quicken Help	F1
Quicken Live Community	
Quicken Support	
Submit Feedback on Quicken	
Join the Quicken Inner Circle	
Privacy Preferences	
Log Files	
About Quicken	
Add Business Tools	
Add Rental Property Tools	

Browsing or Searching Help

Start by choosing Help | Quicken Help or pressing the F1 key. A Quicken Help window appears. The left side of the window has two tabs for browsing Help topics:

- **Contents** lists Help topics. Clicking a topic link displays information and links for accessing additional information in the right side of the window.
- **Search Quicken Help** enables you to search for information about a topic. Enter a search word in the tab's search field, and then click the Ask button. Click the title of a topic in the search results list to display information about it in the right side of the window.

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These days, any decent software program offers on-screen help. So what's the big deal about Quicken's? Quicken's Onscreen Help is especially ... well, helpful. It covers every program feature and provides step-by-step instructions for performing many tasks. Clickable links make it easy to jump right to a topic you want to learn more about. And as you'll discover while using Quicken, Help is available throughout the program—not just in the Quicken Help windows.

Onscreen Help also gives you, a Quicken user, the opportunity to help make Quicken a better software program. At the bottom of most Help windows, you'll find Yes and No buttons that you can use to tell Intuit whether the Help topic gave you the information you needed. Click the appropriate button as you use Onscreen Help to help the folks at Intuit make Onscreen Help more useful to you.

Quicken Live Community

With your Internet connection, the Quicken Live Community command takes you to Quicken's online user-to-user forum, where you can ask questions, get answers, and share information with other Quicken users. Click links or use the search feature to get the information you need to make the most of Quicken. In addition, Intuit is currently consolidating its customer feedback site, so for product improvement ideas, comments, and suggestions, go to www.getsatisfaction.com/quicken.

Quicken Support

Click Quicken Support on the Help menu to open the Quicken support site on the Internet. Here you can look through frequently asked questions as well as find links to other Quicken resources.

Submit Feedback on Quicken

This link opens a Quicken feedback page on the Internet. While you may think that your idea or concern is not "important," it is to Quicken. It is partly through this feedback that Intuit designs its products.

Join the Quicken Inner Circle

The Quicken Inner Circle is more than just a user feedback site. Intuit has created a collaborative "virtual" community online, one that works directly with product managers and others on the Quicken team. At some point, Quicken may merge this site with the Getting Satisfaction site described earlier.

Privacy Preferences

This command opens Quicken's Preferences dialog where you can set options about sending feature usage and connectivity success rates to Intuit. There is also a link to Intuit's privacy statement. Intuit takes the job of protecting your information very seriously. The policies and procedures taken by the company to protect all of your information is displayed in this message. The statement explains what information is collected by Quicken, how that information is used, and how you can find out more about Intuit's specific methods to ensure your information is safe at all times.

Log Files

This link contains other links to several files created in the "background" by Quicken. Should you ever need to contact Quicken Support, the helpful Quicken support person may ask you to refer to these files for troubleshooting.



There are several types of log files, and should you ever need to send them, Quicken will designate which one is required.

About Quicken

This tells you which version of Quicken you are using. Also in the About Quicken message are copyright information and credit to the many people who have made the program possible. Additional technical information about your Quicken file and system resources can be displayed by holding down CTRL and clicking Help | About Quicken. You may be asked for this information when troubleshooting with Quicken Support.

Upgrading Quicken

If you're wondering whether the version of Quicken installed on your computer is the best one for you, be sure to check out Help | Add Business Tools or Help | Add Rental Property Tools. With your Internet connection, these commands display a window that provides more information about features in Quicken Home & Business or Quicken Rental Properties. From this website, you can purchase either the Home & Business or Rental Property Manager version of Quicken.

Exiting Quicken

When you're finished using Quicken, choose File | Exit. This closes the Quicken application. You can also click the red X on the title bar to close the program.

Sometimes when you exit Quicken, you'll be asked whether you want to back up your Quicken data file. Learn how to back up data files in Appendix A.

