

```
=====
WW  WW  WW  I I I I I N  N  H  H  E E E E E L  P P P P P
WW  WW  WW      I  N N  N  H  H  E      L  P  P
WWW  WWW      I  N  N  N  H H H H H E E E E L  P P P P P
WW  WW      I  N  N N  H  H  E      L  P
WW  WW      I I I I I N  N  H  H  E E E E E L L L L L L P
```

```
FFFFF  AAA  QQQ
F      A  A  Q  Q
FFFF  AAAAA  Q  Q
F      A  A  QQQ  Q
F      A  A  QQQQQ
```

FAQ for WinHelp maintained by Charlie Munro (cmunro@bigfoot.com)
Original cheesy "BIG-ASCII" type by Pete Davis
Last Update: January 29, 1998

```
=====
```

DISCLAIMER

This FAQ is information. Information is a tool. Like a saw, if you cut off your arm with it, it ain't my fault. Many of the product descriptions are provided from users or authors. I can not vouch for their accuracy. I have neither the money, time, nor incentive to check all of these products. I will always accept comments regarding products and modify this FAQ when appropriate.

{ Parts of disclaimer adapted from unknown author. If it's you, let me know and I'll give you credit. }

{ Note to users: This document was created with PDFWriter. While each heading should have been bookmarked, there are some that were not - I'm investigating. Fortunately, the TOC is fully hyperlinked. }

Contents

[1] Introduction.....	1
[1.1] What is WinHelp?.....	1
[1.2] What are Viewer and MediaView?	1
[1.3] What is HTML Help?	2
[1.4] What's this document all about?.....	2
[1.5] What if this FAQ needs more information?	2
[2] How to learn to build WinHelp files	3
[2.1] Software and Online documentation.....	3
[2.1.1] WinHelp 4.0 Help Authoring Guide (Hcw.hlp).....	3
[2.1.2] What.zip, Hag.zip, and Whag.zip	3
[2.1.3] MSDN-CD.....	3
[2.2] Books.....	3
[2.2.1] Building Windows 95 Help	3
[2.2.2] Building Windows Help Files	4
[2.2.3] Building Windows Help Systems.....	4
[2.2.4] Creating Help for Windows Applications/Book and Disk (Popular Applications)	4
[2.2.5] Designing Windows 95 Help; A Guide to Creating Online Documents, with CD-ROM	4
[2.2.6] Designing Windows Help/Book and Disk 3.5'	4
[2.2.7] Developing Online Help for Windows (3.1).....	5
[2.2.8] Developing Online Help for Windows 95.....	5
[2.2.9] Mastering Windows 95 Help : The Official Book for Help.....	5
[2.2.10] Microsoft Windows 95 Help Authoring Kit : Guide to Creating Help Files for Windows 95 (Microsoft Professional Editions).....	5
[2.2.11] The Developer's Guide to WinHelp.EXE.....	5
[2.2.12] Windows 95 Help: A Developer's Guide	6
[2.2.13] Designing and Writing Online Documentation: Help Files to Hypertext.....	6
[2.2.14] The Microsoft Manual of Style for Technical Publications	6
[2.3] Magazines (Print and Online)	6
[2.3.1] HyperViews Online.....	6
[2.3.2] Visual Developer.....	7
[2.3.3] WinHelp Journal	7
[2.4] Courses and Conferences.....	7
[2.4.1] Society for Technical Communication	7
[2.4.2] Help University	7
[2.4.3] WinWriters.....	7
[2.4.4] Solutions	8
[3] WinHelp Question & Answer.....	8
[3.1] About Authoring (creating topic and project files).....	8
[3.1.1] Is there a current bug list for WinHelp?	8
[3.1.2] Is there a style guide for WinHelp? How can I make my help look like Microsoft's help files?	8
[3.1.3] How do I insert symbols (such as the copyright symbol) in my WinHelp files?	9

[3.1.4]	How do I keep popup topics from appearing in the full-text search results?	9
[3.1.5]	How and why do I use secondary windows?	9
[3.1.6]	What's the difference between A and K keywords (ALink and KLink)? When do I use each?	10
[3.1.7]	How do I do sub- and super-scripts in WinHelp?	10
[3.1.8]	Can I link to a URL (web site) from a help file? How?.....	10
[3.1.9]	How do I control the size (and white space) in a popup window?.....	11
[3.1.10]	Why can't I set the background color with the \cb help RTF statement?	11
[3.1.11]	Can I change the color of text hotspots, and/or remove the underscore?	11
[3.1.12]	Should I hard-code the color of the text of my help system?	11
[3.2]	About Graphics and Segmented Hypergraphics (SHG files).....	13
[3.2.1]	How do I stop the screen from flickering when my graphics are displayed?	13
[3.2.2]	How do I replace graphics in Shed without having to recreate all my hotspots?.....	13
[3.2.3]	Why does SHED say that my WinHelp 4.0 macro isn't valid?.....	13
[3.3]	About the WinHelp Compiler and Help Workshop	14
[3.3.1]	Is there a de-compiler for WinHelp files?	14
[3.3.2]	Why won't my Word 6.0/7.0 .RTF files compile with hc31?.....	14
[3.3.3]	Why won't my Word 8.0 .RTF files compile with hcrtf (WinHelp 4.0)?.....	14
[3.3.4]	Why won't my Word 8.0 .RTF files compile with any WinHelp 3.1 Compiler?.....	14
[3.3.5]	Why do I get warning messages and formatting problems when I use Build Tags?.....	15
[3.3.6]	I get out of memory errors when running the help compiler. Why?	15
[3.3.7]	I get an out of file handles error when running the help compiler.	15
[3.3.8]	Why am I getting a "More opening braces than closing braces" message when I compile?	15
[3.4]	About displaying WinHelp files (WinHelp Engine and alternatives).....	15
[3.4.1]	What are .GID, .FTS, and .FTG files?.....	15
[3.4.2]	My help file has problems when it's used on Windows NT 4.0. Why?	16
[3.4.3]	Can I run a WinHelp file from a network directory?	16
[3.4.4]	Can I run a 32-bit Help file from a 16-bit application in Windows 95? Windows NT?.....	16
[3.4.5]	I'm getting Topic not found messages when I try to access my context sensitive help. How can I find the cause?	16
[3.4.6]	Can I start WinHelp from the command line? Can I display a specific topic when I do?	17
[3.4.7]	How do I stop punctuation from wrapping to the next line following a hotspot?	17
[3.4.8]	Why does the wrong Contents/Index display after an interfile jump in WinHelp 4.0?	17
[3.4.9]	Why aren't Keywords in the Index aren't sorted as I expect?	18
[3.4.10]	Why do I get the message "This is not a Windows Help File" when I try to run my help on Windows NT?.....	18
[3.4.11]	Why does the Contents tab display on my machine but not on my users' machines?.....	18

[3.4.12]	How come jumps from my context sensitive help topics don't work?	19
[3.4.13]	Can I make the Back button work across secondary windows?.....	19
[3.4.14]	How can I view my WinHelp files on the Apple Macintosh? Unix?	19
[3.5]	About WinHelp Macros and DLLs	19
[3.5.1]	When I sub-class the WinHelp window, my DLL breaks when the help file is executed from the WinHelp() API function.	19
[3.5.2]	Can I add full-text search capabilities to my Windows 3.1 Help file?	19
[3.5.3]	Why can't the programmers can't make correct tab show in Help Topics?	23
[4]	Windows Help Authoring Tools (HATs).....	23
[4.1]	Shareware/Freeware HATs	24
[4.1.1]	AstroHelp.....	24
[4.1.2]	Create Help	24
[4.1.3]	DR Help	24
[4.1.4]	DWHAT.ZIP	24
[4.1.5]	EasyHelp/Web.....	25
[4.1.6]	HELLLP!.....	25
[4.1.7]	HLPDK and Interactive Help.....	25
[4.1.8]	Microsoft WHAT6.....	26
[4.1.9]	VB AHA!!!	26
[4.2]	Commercial.....	26
[4.2.1]	Doc-To-Help	26
[4.2.2]	ForeHelp/ForeHTML Pro	26
[4.2.3]	HDK.....	27
[4.2.4]	HelpBreeze.....	27
[4.2.5]	HelpBuilder.....	27
[4.2.6]	HelpHikes	27
[4.2.7]	Help Magician Pro	27
[4.2.8]	HelpMaker for AmiPro	28
[4.2.9]	Help Maker Plus(tm).....	28
[4.2.10]	Help Perfect	28
[4.2.11]	Help Writer's Assistant	29
[4.2.12]	HelpWriter for Delphi.....	29
[4.2.13]	IMWHelp	29
[4.2.14]	MasterHelp	30
[4.2.15]	MIF2RTF	30
[4.2.16]	MiniHelp Plus	30
[4.2.17]	RoboHELP.....	30
[4.2.18]	SOS Help! Info-Author.....	30
[4.2.19]	UniversalHelp	31
[4.2.20]	VB Help Writer.....	31
[4.2.21]	Visual Help/Visual Help Pro.....	31
[4.2.22]	VivaTexte.....	32
[4.2.23]	Windows Help Designer.....	32
[4.2.24]	WP2Help	32
[4.2.25]	WYSI-Help Composer Notes.....	32
[5]	Other Authoring Tools.....	33
[5.1]	Shareware/Freeware.....	33

[5.1.1]	Arsenal DLL for WinHelp	33
[5.1.2]	Help Decompiler	33
[5.1.3]	HLP2DOC	33
[5.1.4]	SHGREZ	33
[5.1.5]	TabMaker	33
[5.1.6]	WinHelp Sorcerer.....	34
[5.1.7]	WinHelp -> HLPDK Conversion Tool.....	34
[5.2]	Commercial.....	34
[5.2.1]	Help Author's Resource Kit (HARK)	34
[5.2.2]	HyperHelp	34
[5.2.3]	QuickHelp.....	35
[5.2.4]	Steve Sweet's Help Compiler for the Mac	35
[5.2.5]	Windexer	35
[6]	Sources for Undocumented WinHelp Features.....	35
[6.1]	Magazine articles	36
[6.2]	Books.....	36
[7]	Miscellaneous	37
[7.1]	Online Sources of WinHelp Help	37
[7.1.1]	Newsgroups.....	37
[7.1.2]	Discussion Lists.....	37
[7.1.3]	CompuServe (CSi).....	39
[7.1.4]	WinHelp Developers' Home Pages.....	39
[7.2]	Online Sources of WinHelp Related Software.....	40
[7.3]	General Information about WinHelp Compilers (all versions)	41
[7.4]	Limits	42
[8]	Thanks	42

[1] Introduction

The original WinHelp FAQ was written for the comp.os.ms-windows.programmer.winhelp newsgroup, and was last updated about September 1994. At the time, WinHelp version 3.1 was the latest and greatest, and its sister program for multimedia developers was called Viewer 2.0. WinHelp 4.0—the new 32-bit version of WinHelp—was included with Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0. MediaView was released about the same time as the 32-bit replacement for Viewer 2.0.

Much of what was written about WinHelp 3.1 and designing help files still applies today. And there are still many people running Windows 3.1, Windows for Workgroups 3.11, or Windows NT 3.51, all of which rely on WinHelp 3.1 to display help files. Therefore, this FAQ still contains information about both WinHelp 3.1 and WinHelp 4.0.

In August 1997, Microsoft released HTML Help as the successor to WinHelp 4.0. This FAQ does not attempt to answer questions about the new HTML Help, which will at some point acquire a FAQ of its own.

[1.1] What is WinHelp?

If you've ever hit the help menu item in a Windows program, you've seen WinHelp. WinHelp is the program that provides the hypertext help system for Windows programs. WinHelp is actually a very complex and extendable help system. It allows programmers to add their own functionality through the use of macros and .DLLs. A number of third parties have developed such extensions for WinHelp, which are often available as shareware.

Windows 3.1 and Windows NT 3.51 (or earlier versions) use version 3.1 of WinHelp. Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0 use version 4.0 of WinHelp. The new version of WinHelp was created to take advantage of Microsoft's 32-bit operating systems, but also added some new features for both users and the authors of help files. While WinHelp 4.0 looks the same running on Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0, there are some subtle differences that affect users. These are explained in the Q&A section of this FAQ.

[1.2] What are Viewer and MediaView?

Viewer is the short name for Microsoft's Multimedia Viewer. Released approximately at the same time as WinHelp 3.1, Viewer was designed for creating stand-alone multimedia titles (as opposed to online help for applications). Viewer and WinHelp 3.1 were identical in many respects, and much of what applied to WinHelp applied to Viewer. Both used RTF files for content and formatting, and both were compiled (Viewer had its own compiler). Viewer's user interface for displaying titles was more flexible in some respects, to accommodate the needs of multimedia authors. Viewer also included a full-text search (FTS) engine, which was missing from WinHelp 3.1.

MediaView is the replacement for Viewer 2.0. Unlike Viewer, which provided a User Interface (UI), MediaView requires you to develop your own UI (using a language like VisualBasic or C++). MediaView provides only the mechanism for displaying content within your UI, which is still very similar to WinHelp. Allowing the author to develop

the UI makes MediaView a powerful Multimedia tool, although a knowledge of programming is required to take advantage of that power.

MediaView is still available from Microsoft, although support has been dropped in favor of HTML Help.

[1.3] What is HTML Help?

HTML Help is Microsoft's name for their HTML-based replacement for WinHelp. More generally, HTML Help refers to any online help (or documentation) that uses HTML pages for content. Microsoft, Netscape, Sun, Oracle, and some other companies have released systems for developing and implementing HTML Help. Each is offering development kits for their flavor of HTML-based Help. Microsoft's version is called HTML Help, Netscape offers NetHelp, and Sun has JavaHelp (Java-based Help).

Each company has extended what can be done with HTML to make the system more "usable" as a means of providing online user assistance. Note that some of these solutions are aimed specifically at Java development. For more information, you can visit each company's HTML Help related site:

- > CreativeSoft's Jelp - www.jelp.com
- > Microsoft's HTML Help - www.microsoft.com/workshop/author/htmlhelp/
- > Netscape's NetHelp - home.netscape.com/eng/help/
- > Oracle Help for Java - www.oracle.com/products/tools/ohj/index.html
- > Sun's JavaHelp - java.sun.com/products/javahelp/index.html

[1.4] What's this document all about?

This document is written as a supplement to the WinHelp Discussion List (winhlp-l@humberc.on.ca) and the comp.os.ms-windows.programmer.winhelp newsgroup. It is meant to help answer some of the more common questions about WinHelp. It also supposed to provide people with sources of information about authoring and extending WinHelp .HLP files.

[1.5] What if this FAQ needs more information?

Think this FAQ is deficient in one or more areas? Let me know. Tell me what you'd like to see. My product and documentation lists are incomplete. I don't have time to track down all products, so if you have one, let me know. I'll gladly add your product to the list. If you're a user of a product that's not listed, let me know about it.

I monitor the WinHelp discussion list for common questions to add to the Question and Answer section. I also check in on the CompuServe Help Authoring forum and the comp.os.ms-windows.programmer.winhelp newsgroup occasionally. If you have questions that you think should be included, let me know.

Send all comments, suggestions, etc., to cmunro@bigfoot.com.

[2] How to learn to build WinHelp files

It is far beyond the scope of this FAQ to teach people how to build WinHelp .HLP files. However, there is a bit of documentation out there on creating them.

[2.1] Software and Online documentation

[2.1.1] WinHelp 4.0 Help Authoring Guide (Hcw.hlp)

For WinHelp 4.0, the Help Authoring Guide is included with the help compiler and Help Workshop (a project editor and interface to the WinHelp 4.0 compiler). The Help Authoring Guide doubles as the help file for the Help Workshop, and contains all the information you need for creating help projects and authoring topics. The basic WinHelp 4.0 tools and Authoring Guide are available for free from the Microsoft Software Library at <ftp://ftp.microsoft.com/softlib/mslfiles/hcwsetup.exe>.

[2.1.2] What.zip, Hag.zip, and Whag.zip

These three files are for authoring WinHelp 3.1. What.zip has WinHelp Authoring Templates for WinHelp using Word 2.0/6.0. Hag.zip and Whag.zip are the WinHelp 3.1 authoring guides. The information is essentially the same as that available in Hcw.hlp, but it is limited to the earlier version of WinHelp. Whag.zip contains the Word for Windows .DOC version and Hag.zip contains a .HLP file version of the WinHelp 3.1 Authoring Guide. These were originally put together by Microsoft, but have been updated and modified by others (e.g., there is a HLP file version developed and extended using a tool called HDK).

[2.1.3] MSDN-CD

The Microsoft Developer's Network CD, besides having the Windows Help Authoring Guide, also has a great knowledge base with information about WinHelp and creating WinHelp files. For the WHAG, look under Unsupported Tools.

[2.2] Books

On the internet, www.amazon.com and www.barnesandnoble.com are good sources for finding books. Search on the keyword WinHelp or "Windows Help" to get a current listing. If a book is listed as out of print or hard to find, try contacting the author(s) directly. Many of them sell the book from their own web sites. You can also try the book list at www.sageline.com, which maintains a list of books of interest to Help Authors in general. Titles that I know of at this time are listed below.

[2.2.1] Building Windows 95 Help

by Nancy Hickman (List: \$39.95)
Bk&Disk Edition
Paperback
Published by M & T Books
Publication date: August 1, 1996

Dimensions (in inches): 9.28 x 7.21 x .97
ISBN: 1558514775

[2.2.2] Building Windows Help Files

by Keith E Bugg (List: \$29.95)
Bk&Disk Edition
Paperback
Published by R & D Pubns
Publication date: December 1995
ISBN: 0879304391

[2.2.3] Building Windows Help Systems

by Trevor Jenkins (List: \$39.95)
Bk&Disk Edition
Paperback
Published by M & T Books
Publication date: April 1995
ISBN: 1558514066

[2.2.4] Creating Help for Windows Applications/Book and Disk (Popular Applications)

by Rose Mary Alciere (List: \$15.95)
Bk&Disk Edition
Paperback, 134 pages
Published by Wordware Publishing
Publication date: May 1995
Dimensions (in inches): 8.97 x 5.99 x .52
ISBN: 1556224486

[2.2.5] Designing Windows 95 Help; A Guide to Creating Online Documents, with CD-ROM

by Mary Deaton, Cheryl Lockett-Zubak and others
Paperback, 684 pages
Published by Que Education & Training
Publication date: December 1, 1995
Dimensions (in inches): 9.11 x 7.30 x 1.89
ISBN: 0789703629

This book is available from Mary Deaton's web site at www.kware.com.

[2.2.6] Designing Windows Help/Book and Disk 3.5'

by Michael Patten
Published by AP Professional
Publication date: November 1995
ISBN: 0125471408

[2.2.7] Developing Online Help for Windows (3.1)

Published by SAMS, written by Scott Boggan, David Farkas, and Joe Welinske. This book, besides explaining how to generate WinHelp files, also goes into great detail about how to make your help files look good. This book is good for beginners and intermediate help writers. It does not cover advanced features such as writing DLLs for WinHelp. The updated version for Windows 95 may be more useful.

{{ Publication date: September 1993

{{ This book is no longer in print. You can obtain copies directly from

{{ Joe Welinske, however. To get copies, send e-mail to:

{{ 71640.3260@compuserve.com, or check the WinWriters web site.

{{

[2.2.8] Developing Online Help for Windows 95

by Scott Boggan, David Farkas, Joe Welinske (List: \$49.99)

Bk&Cd-Rom Edition

Paperback

Published by Intl Thomson Computer Pr (Trd Disc)

Publication date: March 1, 1996

Dimensions (in inches): 9.17 x 7.37 x .96

ISBN: 1850322112

[2.2.9] Mastering Windows 95 Help : The Official Book for Help

by Debbie Wilimek/Blue Sky Software (List: \$24.95)

Paperback

Published by Blue Sky Software Corp

Publication date: November 1, 1995

Dimensions (in inches): 8.21 x 6.71 x .94

ISBN: 0964723611

[2.2.10] Microsoft Windows 95 Help Authoring Kit : Guide to Creating Help Files for Windows 95 (Microsoft Professional Editions)

by Microsoft (List: \$49.95)

Bk&Cd-Rom Edition

Paperback, 328 pages

Published by Microsoft Press

Publication date: December 1, 1995

Dimensions (in inches): 8.98 x 7.40 x .89

ISBN: 1556158920

[2.2.11] The Developer's Guide to WinHelp.EXE

Published by Wiley, written by Jim Mischel (www.mischel.com). This book covers everything from how to create help files from scratch to a description of commercial authoring tools, to undocumented macros. The second half of the book is devoted to programming for WinHelp. This book is a must for the intermediate to advanced help

author and an absolute necessity for WinHelp DLL programmers. Make sure you get the "with disk" version.

by Jim Mischel, Jeff Duntemann (List: \$49.95)
Paperback, 383 pages
Published by John Wiley & Sons
Publication date: August 1, 1994
Dimensions (in inches): 9.25 x 7.53 x 1.03
ISBN: 0-471-30326-7 (with disk); 0-471-30325-9 (without disk)

[2.2.12] Windows 95 Help: A Developer's Guide

by Stephen Pruitt (out of print)
Published by Sybex
Publication date: July 1995
ISBN: 0782117074

[2.2.13] Designing and Writing Online Documentation: Help Files to Hypertext

A book about authoring in a hypertext environment in general, considered by many to be a classic. A worthwhile read for anyone working with WinHelp or other online information systems.

by William K. Horton
2nd Edition
Paperback, 464 pages
Published by John Wiley & Sons
Publication date: October 1994
ISBN: 0471306355

[2.2.14] The Microsoft Manual of Style for Technical Publications

While this is not strictly speaking a WinHelp book, it contains useful information for help authors.

by Microsoft (List: \$24.95)
Bk&Disk Edition
Paperback, 292 pages
Published by Microsoft Press
Publication date: October 1995
ISBN: 1556159390

[2.3] Magazines (Print and Online)

[2.3.1] HyperViews Online

A quarterly electronic newsletter published by the STC Online Information SIG, and freely available from their web site at www.stc.org/society/pics/online/hyperviews/. This FAQ will also be maintained at this site.

[2.3.2] Visual Developer

This magazine is not strictly for WinHelp, but often features articles of interest to help authors. For example, the Dec. 97/Jan. 98 issue included the following articles:

"HTML Help: Win98's Engine Transplant" by Jim Mischel

"WinHelp Extension Tabs" by Andrew Brundell (covers creation of custom tabs for the Help Topics dialog)

Critiques of Help Magician Pro 95, V4.0 by Jim Mischel and HelpBreeze 2.0 by Gary Warren King.

(Note: Also check back issues of VB Tech Journal, Windows Tech Journal, and Software Development Magazine for reviews and other articles. Dana Cline has written several articles appearing in these magazines).

[2.3.3] WinHelp Journal

Published by WinWriters (www.winwriters.com), this is a quarterly publication dedicated to WinHelp. It includes discussions of trends, previews of upcoming technology, and numerous tricks and tips for online information developers. Available by subscription from WinWriters (US\$139 annually; four issues). Contact WinWriters for more information.

[2.4] Courses and Conferences

There are now organizations offering courses and sponsoring conferences for WinHelp authors. This is not an exhaustive list; if you've been left off, please email me so I can include your site. Listing here is not an endorsement of the site or organization.

[2.4.1] Society for Technical Communication

The STC (www.stg.org) is a professional organization for people working in the field of technical communication. The STC sponsors conferences at the regional, national, and international level. Local STC Chapters often have Online Information SIGs (Special Interest Groups). Most SIGs hold meetings (open to members and non-members) where you can discuss help authoring, see demonstrations and hear about case studies. The US STC web site (stc.org) lists contact information for chapters throughout the country.

[2.4.2] Help University

Help University sponsors conferences and provides training for online information developers. For more information, visit their web site (www.helpuniversity.com).

Phone: 1-800-801-HELP

FAX: 214-902-9049

E-mail: info@helpuniversity.com

[2.4.3] WinWriters

WinWriters sponsors conferences and provides training for online information developers. WinWriters annual conference (February in Seattle, WA) is the oldest and

largest conference for WinHelp developers. For more information, visit their web site (www.winwriters.com).

WinWriters
3415 Soundview Dr. W
Seattle, WA 98199
Voice: 800-838-8999 (U.S./Canada)
206-285-2605
Fax: 206-216-0322.
Internet: mail@winwriters.com

[2.4.4] Solutions

Solutions sponsors conferences and provides training classes for online information developers. Solutions For more information, visit their web site (www.sol-sems.com).

SOLUTIONS, Inc.
274 Main Street
Reading, MA 01867 USA
+1 800.448.4230 (USA and Canada)
+1 617.942.1610
Fax: +1 617.942.1616
Email: solutions@sol-sems.com or 71554,536 (CompuServe)
America Online: solsems

[3] WinHelp Question & Answer

The following sections are questions and answers that appear frequently in the WinHelp newsgroup, discussion list and forums. If you can't find an answer here, try posting your question to one of these WinHelp communities. If you are learning WinHelp, this section is a good resource, but you'd benefit more from books and seminars.

[3.1] About Authoring (creating topic and project files)

The following questions relate to the creation of topic (RTF) and project (HPJ) files for WinHelp. I have kept the information from the WinHelp 3.1 FAQ to the extent that it still applies to WinHelp 4.0.

[3.1.1] Is there a current bug list for WinHelp?

Yes for WinHelp 4.0, no for WinHelp 3.1. Steve Pruitt was kind enough to compile the WinHelp 4.0 bug list, which has been maintained as the WinHelp compiler has been updated. A current copy can be found at www.kware.com. For WinHelp 3.1, your best bet is to search the Microsoft Knowledge Base (www.microsoft.com/kb/).

[3.1.2] Is there a style guide for WinHelp? How can I make my help look like Microsoft's help files?

I believe a template is included with the Microsoft Windows 95 Help Authoring Kit : Guide to Creating Help Files for Windows 95 (Microsoft Professional Editions).

Microsoft Word stylesheets for creating WinHelp that looks like Microsoft's are also available at a few Help Author web sites (try the KNOWware web site at www.kware.com). For more general writing guidelines, *The Microsoft Manual of Style for Technical Publications* is available from the Microsoft Press.

[3.1.3] How do I insert symbols (such as the copyright symbol) in my WinHelp files?

There are three ways. The first way works with Word 6.0 only, I believe:

1. Select Insert Symbol
Choose Normal Text, not Symbol font.
Select the copyright symbol
2. Hold down the Alt key and type 0169 (on the numeric keypad)
3. Insert the code {\ 'A9} (including the braces) in the .rtf file or your Word document.

Remember that WinHelp 3.1 and 4.0 both support the characters in the Symbol font . WinHelp 4.0 also supports the Wingdings font. In all cases, the user must have the specified font installed on their system to display the characters correctly in WinHelp.

[3.1.4] How do I keep popup topics from appearing in the full-text search results?

The full-text search usually ignores topics with no title, so topics without a \$ footnote won't appear in the results. Since most popup and What's This? Help topics don't require titles, removing the \$ footnote is a workable solutions. I said FTS usually ignores untitled topics because the FTS options allow the user to include untitled topics.

[3.1.5] How and why do I use secondary windows?

It sounds like a simple question, but it's not. There are a number of reasons to use secondary windows, and several issues with how they're used. At some point, most authors find they need to display additional information while keeping the current information displayed. Secondary windows allow you to have multiple WinHelp windows open at one time, without having to launch another instance of WinHelp.

Other times, authors simply want to be able to display a particular type of information in a suitable window. Secondary windows allow you to control the size and positioning of windows, as well as the color of the scrolling and non-scrolling region. While you could do some of this with a main window and the PositionWindow macro, it's more convenient to use secondary windows.

For example, task help is often displayed in a long narrow window along on the right edge of the screen where it doesn't cover the application. Long, conceptual or reference topics are often displayed in a larger window. Secondary windows are also useful for graphics and tables that are too big for the main window.

Now to the how: Secondary windows are defined in the [Windows] section of the project file. Since HATs handle this task quite easily, I won't go into the syntax.

Once windows have been defined, you can specify a secondary window in macros and hotspots using the greater than sign (>) followed by the window name. This works in both WinHelp 3.1 and WinHelp 4.0.

For example, in a hotspot, using `context_string>win2` (as the hidden text) would cause the topic specified by `context_string` to be displayed in the secondary window "win2". In the macro `JumpID('myfile.hlp>proc', 'how_to_dance')` would display the specified topic from "myfile.hlp" in the "proc" window.

To display a topic in a secondary window from an application, the programmer must include the window name following the help file name, just as in the `JumpID` macro. For example (using no particular language):

```
N=WinHelp(hwnd, "myfile.hlp>proc", HELP_CONTEXT, 12345)
```

In WinHelp 4.0, the > footnote can be added to a topic to specify a secondary window in which to display the topic when called from the index, FTS, or a related topics link (ALink or KLink macro). For jumps, macros, and calls from the application, you need to use ">window" even if the target topic has a > footnote to define its default window.

[3.1.6] What's the difference between A and K keywords (ALink and KLink)? When do I use each?

K keywords appear in the index, A keywords don't. That's the only significant difference. Use the KLink macro when you can build a related topics list using the structure of your Index. Use the ALink macro in combination with A keywords when you need to build list of related topics that don't correlate directly with the organization of the index. In other words, when you want to include specific related topics, regardless of how those topics appear in the index.

Mary Deaton has suggested using ALink macros extensively, even to replace normal jumps. That way you can specify a topic to display if the target topic doesn't exist. This can be more informative to the user than the stock "Topic Not Found" message. It's especially useful for modular help systems, where users may not have all components and help files on their system. (In this case, you can have a topic informing them that they haven't installed module X, and how they can get it.)

[3.1.7] How do I do sub- and super-scripts in WinHelp?

There's no easy way to get this done. WinHelp simply doesn't support sub- and super-script formatting. Most people resort to graphics, especially for displaying formulas. For standard superscript items like (tm), insert the symbol. If you need an inline subscript or equation, you're out of luck. Moving to HTML Help will solve this problem, if that's an option for you.

[3.1.8] Can I link to a URL (web site) from a help file? How?

There are a number of DLLs available for launching a web browser and displaying a web page. The DLLs are good when users don't have a default browser specified. If your users are relatively up to date, you can get away with a simple macro:

```
ExecFile('http://www.mysite.net/default.html',,0,)
```

will usually do the trick. Both Netscape and Microsoft browsers will set up the files needed to launch a URL from the command line. The ExecFile macro just takes advantage of this capability. (Hint: From the Start menu, select Run, and then enter a URL. Click OK, and your browser should launch directly to the page you specified.)

[3.1.9] How do I control the size (and white space) in a popup window?

The best way to control the display of popups is to enclose the contents within a table. A single cell table works well. You can have footnotes inside a cell, although many HATs complain about this or can't do it directly. If you're using Word (or a Word-based HAT), you can create the topic normally and then add the table formatting.

An alternative to putting the footnotes in the cell is to put the footnotes in the first paragraph of the topic, followed by the table with the topic text and graphics. Then hide the first paragraph mark. When compiled, the topic will display without any extra white space. (Tip from William Meisheid)

Note: There is an absolute minimum width for a popup, at about 250 pixels.

[3.1.10] Why can't I set the background color with the \cb help RTF statement?

Simple: It doesn't work. The \cb statement was never implemented by Microsoft. Oops. In WinHelp 4.0, the SetPopupColor macro was added to give some control to authors (see HCW.HLP).

[3.1.11] Can I change the color of text hotspots, and/or remove the underscore?

Yes on both counts. To change the color, prefix the hidden text (context string) with an asterisk (* also as hidden text). The hotspot will take the color of the hotspot text. To remove both the color and the underscore, prefix the hidden text with a percent sign (% also hidden text). Again, the hotspot will take the color of the text. E.g., hotspot*context_string appears as a red, underlined hotspot in the compiled help.

[3.1.12] Should I hard-code the color of the text of my help system?

Note: The following section was written for the original WinHelp 3.1 FAQ. To a large extent, all of this still applies to WinHelp 4.0. There was one change made that effects authors: If the user selects a non-standard color scheme in the Windows Control Panel, the background color settings in WinHelp are ignored. Always test color schemes thoroughly using a number of color schemes, including the ugly ones. [Charlie]

A certain amount of color can help the user find important information. Therefore, judicious use of color in a help system may be beneficial. The key words here, though, are "judicious" and "may".

Researchers into user interfaces seem to agree that overuse of color is significantly worse than under-use: too much color distracts the user from the message of the text, making it more difficult for them to understand what they are reading. (For those who have some experience in publishing: it's very similar to too many fonts on a page).

But there are other points, some of which are specific to PCs and the Windows WinHelp environment, that also argue against the use of colored text (or even hard-coded black!).

1. The user can set their own color scheme using Control Panel. This allows the user to choose the background color that most suits them. Hence, a help writer should NEVER assume that the background that their help text will be displayed on is white. It may, for example, be blue. If the help system contains blue text, it will be impossible to read on a blue background! And the "standard" black text is almost impossible to read on a dark blue background.

2. The user can set the color of the text of jumps and popups. If they set their jump color to, say, green, and you have green text in your help system, they WILL click on the non-jump green text. Frequently, they will click repeatedly, wondering why a new topic hasn't appeared. I have watched people do this several times (and I have done it myself).

3. You could overcome problem 1 by hard coding the color of the background as well. Most people who take this approach hard-code a white background. But a user who has changed the color of their background from the white default has probably done so for a good (to them) reason. Will they appreciate you forcing them to use a color they felt was not appropriate for them? Will you be encouraging them to use your help system? Or will you be encouraging them to look elsewhere, perhaps to a competing product which allows them to do things their way?

4. Monitors can differ markedly in their display of colors. Hence you have no way of knowing how the color scheme you carefully selected to look good on your monitor will look on the monitors of users. Two recent examples from my own experience may help explain this.

I frequently use two computers, each of which uses the same graphics card and the same driver. The monitors are different brands. Both monitors are good quality, reasonably expensive monitors. But a color scheme which looks good on one, looks atrocious on the other. The differences in the individual colors are not obvious; it is only combinations that show up the differences.

I recently wrote a program which displayed a graph (among other things). Several colors were needed for the graph, and one of the graph components I defaulted to red (though the colors were user-selectable). I ran this program on four different computers, all with different monitors. The default color scheme looked attractive (though not identical) on all monitors. I delivered the initial version of the software. The person paying for the software did not like my choice of red for the default for this graph component. When I saw the program running on their computer, I realized why. On the monitor they were using (yes, a cheap one), red was a horrible, washed out, sickly looking thing. The other colors were also different, but the red now clashed terribly with them all.

5. Don't forget that some users will probably be color-blind.

6. Different colors imply different things to different cultures, so if you want your help system to be read by people from more than one country, carefully consider any color choices you make.

And finally, you may wish to read the section on color in help systems in Chapter 4 of the Help Author's Guide, under "Formatting and Style" (Search on "Color" in the newer version of this file).

[3.2] About Graphics and Segmented Hypergraphics (SHG files)

[3.2.1] How do I stop the screen from flickering when my graphics are displayed?

Switch to high-color mode (64K or more) and make sure all your users do the same. 256 color mode requires Windows to load palettes when displaying applications, graphics, and the desktop. Screen flashing is the result of palette changes when switching between applications. Because the desktop also has a palette, you may even see flickering simply by minimizing and restoring your help window. There's no way to completely stop screen flashes in 256 color mode.

The best way to reduce screen flickering when displaying graphics is to make sure all your graphics use the same 256 color palette. For online help, they should use the same palette as the application. It's especially important for all graphics displayed within a single topic to use the same palette. If the graphics use more than 256 colors between them, one or more graphics may not display properly at all.

There is a standard Windows 256 color palette which an application may or may not use. Programs like PaintShop Pro (www.jasc.com) and PhotoShop (www.adobe.com) allow you to save palettes from, and apply palettes to, your graphics. Ulead (www.ulead.com) also has some excellent programs for managing colors and graphics. At the high-dollar end is a program called Debabelizer, which automates many of the tasks required for managing palettes in a graphics library.

[3.2.2] How do I replace graphics in Shed without having to recreate all my hotspots?

This depends on the version of SHED that you're using. Most people are using the original SHED.EXE for WinHelp, which has not been updated since early WinHelp 3.1 days. To replace a graphic in this version, you must first copy it to the Clipboard. Then, with your SHG file open in SHED, select the Replace command from the Edit menu.

Pay attention to the color depth your system is using when you copy and replace graphics. Your display should be set to the minimum number of colors needed for your graphics (usually 16 or 256). If you are in high-color mode when you copy the graphics, the resulting file will use high-color (even if the original image used fewer colors).

If you can get your hands on SHED2.EXE (SHED for Viewer 2.0), MVSHED14.EXE (SHED for MediaView), you can use it for your WinHelp files. These more recent versions of SHED have an Import command on the File menu. Import allows you to replace the underlying graphic with any .BMP or .WMF file. It's also better at handling high-color graphics, and doesn't require changing your display settings when replacing bitmaps in SHG files.

[3.2.3] Why does SHED say that my WinHelp 4.0 macro isn't valid?

First, make sure that you are using the short form of any macro commands (e.g., EF rather than ExecFile). If you still get errors, it's usually because SHED.EXE was not updated for WinHelp 4.0, and it doesn't recognize any of the new macros. In this case,

you can safely ignore the warning, provided you've checked your macro, and use the short form macros.

Paul O'Rear suggests testing and debugging macros where they'll be used in the Help file. He does this by pressing Ctrl+Shift+J while the relevant help topic is displayed. This displays a dialog box where you can enter any WinHelp macro. Enter the macro just as you would for a hotspot, including the exclamation mark. (It's a good idea to copy and paste your macro while testing). Once you've got the macro working properly, you can paste it into the RTF file or SHED.

[3.3] About the WinHelp Compiler and Help Workshop

[3.3.1] Is there a de-compiler for WinHelp files?

There are several decompilers offered by HAT vendors, and also an excellent freeware utility called HelpDeco. Which one you should use depends on how much information you want to retain from the help file. If you have a HAT, check the documentation to see if you already have a decompiler.

If you don't have a decompiler, or if the one you have doesn't retain hotspots, context strings and mapping information, get the free HelpDeco. It's currently at version 2.1, which supports all versions of WinHelp and Viewer (and I believe MediaView files as well). It's available from a number of internet sites, including www.helpmaster.com and the library section at www.wextech.com.

[3.3.2] Why won't my Word 6.0/7.0 .RTF files compile with hc31?

Microsoft changed RTF slightly with the release of Word 6.0 which made it incompatible with the old help compiler. You need to get Release 505 (HC505.EXE) of the compiler.

[3.3.3] Why won't my Word 8.0 .RTF files compile with hcrtf (WinHelp 4.0)?

Microsoft changed RTF again with the release of Word 8.0 (Word 97), which made it incompatible with the help compiler. You need to get version 4.02 or 4.03 of the compiler. Both are available for free. 4.02 has some bugs that were fixed in 4.02; 4.03 has some new bugs in Help Workshop, but nothing that affects compiling.

[3.3.4] Why won't my Word 8.0 .RTF files compile with any WinHelp 3.1 Compiler?

There are two possible reasons for this problem. First, because Microsoft changed the RTF export again, the standard Word 8.0 RTF is not compatible with earlier WinHelp compilers. Second, even if you are using an export filter specifically for WinHelp, there are new features in WinHelp that these compilers can't handle, such as floating text boxes.

[3.3.5] Why do I get warning messages and formatting problems when I use Build Tags?

There's some incompatibility between the WinHelp compiler's build tag handling and the way Word writes RTF tags. Certain information is lost, resulting in the error messages and formatting problems in the compiled help. A simple work around is to put two hard page breaks before topics that use build tags.

If you don't like the double-page break solution, I have a Word 7.0 macro that contains code which fixes the RTF file so that build tags are applied correctly. It's available by request (and unsupported).

[3.3.6] I get out of memory errors when running the help compiler. Why?

This is usually limited to WinHelp 3.1 compilers and projects, although it is possible in WinHelp 4.0. There are several reasons this could be happening:

1. You can't paste bitmaps larger than 32k into a topic. The solution is to include them by reference using the \bml, \bmc, and \bmr commands.
2. You really are running out of memory. If you're using HC31 or HC30, try using HCP.
3. You don't have a TMP environment variable set in your PC's startup file. Most people already have a line in autoexec.bat that reads TEMP=C:\TEMP (or some other folder). You also need a line that says TMP=C:\TEMP (TMP=TEMP will also work).
4. You're hitting the limitations of the compiler, or of your systems. In the latter case, make sure you don't have other applications open while you compile.

[3.3.7] I get an out of file handles error when running the help compiler.

Try increasing the number of file handles in your config.sys file to FILES=80 or higher. Also make sure that there is a setting in autoexec.bat that sets the variable TMP (without the E) to a valid directory (one that you have write access to, and which has sufficient space).

[3.3.8] Why am I getting a "More opening braces than closing braces" message when I compile?

There are a number of causes for this, but the most common is a bulleted list that contains an item starting with a hotspot. If this is not the case, it is possible that the RTF file is corrupt. Remember that this is a warning message, and usually doesn't affect the compiled help.

[3.4] About displaying WinHelp files (WinHelp Engine and alternatives)

[3.4.1] What are .GID, .FTS, and .FTG files?

These files are generated by Winhlp32.exe the first time it accesses a .hlp file, or if it detects and updated .hlp file. The .GID file is the global index to all the .hlp files that are included or linked in the CNT file. The .FTS file is the Full-Text Search index file; if more than one .HLP file is linked or indexed (specified in the .CNT file), the .FTG file is generated during the indexing process.

If these files are deleted, they will be regenerated the next time help is run (.GID only), or the Find tab is accessed and a Full-text Search index is created (.FTS and .FTG files).

[3.4.2] My help file has problems when it's used on Windows NT 4.0. Why?

WinHelp has always been more trouble-prone on NT than Windows 95. There were problems with the original Winhlp32.exe shipped with NT, and there are problems with how WinHelp is accessed by the operating system. These problems have been fixed in the NT service packs. If the problems occur on a machine that doesn't have the latest Service Pack (currently SP3), check the Microsoft Knowledge Base to see if your problem is fixed. Unless you know of a specific conflict or problem, recommend that your users keep their systems up to date with the latest Service Pack.

[3.4.3] Can I run a WinHelp file from a network directory?

Yes. WinHelp has no problem running from a network, provided it's in a directory with a read-only restriction. (A Read Only restriction on the file alone is not sufficient). The read-only restriction is to ensure that WinHelp 4.0 creates the .GID, .FTS, and .FTG files locally for each user. If these files are on the network drive, they can cause problems for users that use mapped drive letters to access this directory.

[3.4.4] Can I run a 32-bit Help file from a 16-bit application in Windows 95? Windows NT?

Yes and No. In Windows 95 this is not a problem; on NT it is. Windows 95 is a 16/32-bit hybrid operating system. Winhelp.exe is a stub that passes all help files and related DLLs to Winhlp32.exe. Windows NT is a true 32-bit operating system, and uses a virtual 16-bit windows machine to run 16-bit applications and DLLs. (NTVDM and WOW are the processes used to simulate a Windows 95 environment within NT).

On Windows NT, 16-bit applications can only run inside the 16-bit virtual machine, they must use 16-bit help (Winhelp.exe). For that reason it's necessary to create Windows 3.1 Help for 16-bit apps that will be run on NT. You must also be careful about DLLs used with your help file. If a 16-bit DLL is used on NT, Winhelp.exe is started, even if the file is already open in Winhlp32.exe. (Some authors have heard about or seen the annoying "switching to Winhelp.exe" message, and know that the switch doesn't always succeed.)

Some HAT packages will simulate WinHelp 4.0 features with DLLs (HDK is a good choice for this, RoboHelp provides limited support), but you need to test these features thoroughly to make sure they work as expected in Windows NT.

[3.4.5] I'm getting Topic not found messages when I try to access my context sensitive help. How can I find the cause?

For 32-bit applications, you can use Help Workshop to monitor WinHelp messages and check what the application is actually requesting. On Help Workshop's View menu, select WinHelp messages. Click the View menu again, and select Message options to specify how you want messages displayed.

For 16-bit applications, there is a program called HelpSpy (by Ron Burke) that monitors WinHelp messages. It may be available from some internet sites. Blue-Sky includes a program called Bug Hunter with their WinHelp Office, but it's not available separately.

You can also create your own test file: Create a help file in which the topic text matches the topic number (i.e., the topic that contains the text 123 has the map number 123). Create a topic for each map number in the range you expect. Make a copy of the test file, and give it the same name as your actual help file (don't forget to back this up). When the application calls help, the displayed topic in the test file shows the context number.

[3.4.6] Can I start WinHelp from the command line? Can I display a specific topic when I do?

Yes. Both WinHelp 3.1 and 4.0 files can be started from the command line, using one of several switches to display a topic:

```
winhelp.exe [-K keyword] [-N context-number] [-I topic-id] HLP-  
filename  
  
winhlp32.exe [[-H] [-G[n] [-S]] [-W window-name] [-K keyword]  
[-N context-number] [-I topic-id] [-P popup-id] HLP-filename]
```

WinHelp 3.1 uses WINHELP.EXE and WinHelp 4.0 uses WINHLP32.EXE, but the switches used to display a topic are the same. Note that Winhlp32.exe has additional switches (see command line switches in HCW.HLP), including one that's not documented. The -S switch is used with the -G switch to create the .GID file during a programs setup. Using -S hides WinHelp, so the user doesn't see the "Preparing Help file for first use" message. It should not be used with any other switch.

[3.4.7] How do I stop punctuation from wrapping to the next line following a hotspot?

You can't. It's been an issue since WinHelp 3.1, and it's never been resolved. The break occurs because of the change in formatting. If you include the punctuation mark in the hotspot (perfectly valid in WinHelp), the line break will be correct.

[3.4.8] Why does the wrong Contents/Index display after an interfile jump in WinHelp 4.0?

WinHelp 4.0 is designed for modular help, with multiple files linked together to share the Help Topics dialog (that is, to display a combined contents, index, and full-text search). Unfortunately, when files aren't linked, WinHelp only displays the Help Topics from first file - the file whose GID file was accessed. The problem is that WinHelp doesn't easily switch GID files, even when you jump to another .HLP file.

John Hunt and some other users experimented with ways to get around this design so that the correct Help Topics display after an interfile jump. The two best workarounds were: 1) Use the JumpKeyword macro if possible. This forced the correct index to be used, but left the Back button working, in which case the wrong index would appear again (this time file B's index would display in file A). 2) Use an ExecFile macro to launch another help session, using the command line switches to display the desired topic. In this case Back is disabled.

[3.4.9] Why aren't Keywords in the Index aren't sorted as I expect?

Most likely you have first and second level keywords, and they appear to be out of order. This occurs because the index level separator (usually a comma or colon) is treated as part of the keyword when sorting. For example, the K footnotes in the left column below would produce Index entries shown on the right.

K footnotes	Displayed in Index
K Windows	Windows
K Windows, opening	Windows NT
K Windows, closing	Windows, closing
K Windows NT	opening

The workaround is to include the separator with at least one instance of the first level keyword:

K footnotes	Displayed in Index
K Windows, (notice the comma)	Windows NT
K Windows, opening	Windows,
K Windows, closing	closing
K Windows NT	opening

This still isn't perfect, because Windows NT should follow windows. However, it's an improvement over the split entries that appeared in the first example.

[3.4.10] Why do I get the message "This is not a Windows Help File" when I try to run my help on Windows NT?

There are two possible problems here: First, under Windows NT, all 16-bit applications are run in a "Virtual DOS Machine" that simulates the behavior of 16-bit windows. This causes Winhelp.exe to be used for displaying help. If you have compiled your help using the WinHelp 4.0 compiler, the message is correct, and you should recompile your help using a WinHelp 3.1 compiler (and limit your help to WinHelp 3.1 features).

Second, there was a bug in NT where 32-bit applications could not start Winhlp32.exe if a 16-bit help was already running in Winhelp.exe. This bug will be fixed in NT 4.0 Service Pack 4; a separate fix is available for systems that have Service Pack 3. (See KB article Q169020 if it's available; it had been pulled at the time of this writing.)

[3.4.11] Why does the Contents tab display on my machine but not on my users' machines?

The Contents tab is not based on the compiled help, but rather on the CNT file. If you didn't include the CNT file with your help, or if the user didn't install it, then the Contents file can't be displayed. Once the CNT file is copied to the same directly as the HLP, it should display the next time the help file is run.

Another possibility is that the programmer is calling a contents topic directly, rather than the Help Topics dialog. Check with the programmer to see how the Help Contents command was implemented. In WinHelp 4.0, the WinHelp API function has a new HELP_FINDER command (value = 11, or 0x0B) that specifies the Help Topics dialog box. If the programmer is still using HELP_CONTENTS, change it to HELP_FINDER.

[3.4.12] How come jumps from my context sensitive help topics don't work?

Context sensitive help doesn't start a full WinHelp session, and as a result, jumps from a context sensitive help popup to a topic in a window don't work. The work around is to use a Jump macro instead. A JumpID or JumpContext macro forces WinHelp to start a full session for the specified HLP file (if it's not already running). Note that these workarounds sometimes fail as well.

[3.4.13] Can I make the Back button work across secondary windows?

Not without a lot of macros. By default, each window keeps its own history. Microsoft created a workaround for this solution, which you can see if you use the help in any Office 95/97 application (e.g., Word or Excel). The work around is a long macro, placed in each topic of the RTF file (except popups). If you use this macro, make sure you omit the quotes, and use the short form of all commands.

[3.4.14] How can I view my WinHelp files on the Apple Macintosh? Unix?

You can use QuickHelp from Altura Software (www.altura.com). QuickHelp will convert your .RTF files, .BMPs, etc and converts them into a format that is compatible with their QuickHelp interpreter. You can also use the Macintosh version of WinHelp that comes with Excel to view already made .HLP files. There is also a third party compiler available from Steve Sweet (www.sweetsteve.com) for a very reasonable price. Bristol (www.bristol.com) offers HyperHelp for Unix. HyperHelp uses your source files to compile a UNIX version of your WinHelp file. HyperHelp includes the viewer for Unix (a license fee is required for distribution).

[3.5] About WinHelp Macros and DLLs

[3.5.1] When I sub-class the WinHelp window, my DLL breaks when the help file is executed from the WinHelp() API function.

WinHelp uses the class name MS_WINDOC for the main window when run as a standalone program however, when WinHelp is executed from the WinHelp() API function, the class name is MS_WINHELP. Also, secondary windows have the class name MS_WINSECONDARY.

[3.5.2] Can I add full-text search capabilities to my Windows 3.1 Help file?

Yes. These are the updated instructions (thanks to Michael Malcolm Andersen) based on the procedure that appeared in the WinHelp 3.1 FAQ:

Using the Full-Text Search Engines in WinHelp [Corrected MMA 950614]

Q: Can I add full-text search capabilities to my Windows Help file?

A: Yes. The problem is finding the tools to do it with. The full-text search engine of the Multimedia Viewer 1.0 is completely compatible with WinHelp. To create an index file from your help file, you'll need:

FORAGE.EXE
 (FORAGEP.EXE)
 W_SCAN.EXE
 INDEX.EXE
 (GETMLT.EXE)

The run-time support is in the following DLLs:

FTUI.DLL
 FTENGINE.DLL
 MVAPI.DLL

These were all available in the MDK (Multimedia Developer's Kit), now superseded by the Multimedia Viewer Publishing Toolkit (Viewer 2.0).

Viewer 2 also supports full-text searching, but the indexing is handled by the integrated Viewer compiler: no separate .IND file is created. The runtime DLLs are also different (MVFS2.DLL, MVFSTUI2.DLL, MVAPI2.DLL).

The Indexing programs (FORAGE, W_SCAN and INDEX) are now available in the Windows NT SDK (MSTOOLS\HLPINDEX directory), as included in the MS Developer's Library Level II CD sets. They are identical to the original Viewer 1 tools.

However, WinNT does *not* include the required 16-bit run-time DLLs, but comes instead with new 32-bit versions (FTUI32.DLL, FTENG32.DLL, MVAPI32.DLL).

The 16 bit DLLs are available from ftp.microsoft.com in some of the KnowledgeBase helpfiles (e.g. Softlib/MSLFILES/WFWG.EXE). They should also be found with any Multimedia Viewer 1.0 product (like my 1991 MS Boookshelf for Windows).

MMA: I've been told that the WFWG.EXE file mentioned above doesn't exist MMA: anymore and that the DLLs are on ftp in ftp.netcom.com in directory MMA: /pub/no/noring/WinHelp in file ftskit.zip.

Q: Suppose I have laid my hands upon the EXEs and DLLs required. What must I do next?

A: Say you have a Windows Help project called MYPRJ. First you must tell WinHelp where to find the full-text search routines. In MYPRJ.HPJ, add these lines to the [CONFIG] section:

```
[CONFIG]
; initialize DLLs
; RR("ftengine", "LoadFTEngine", "U") ; MMA: Not actually needed!
; LoadFTEngine(0) ; MMA: Not actually needed!
RR("ftui", "InitRoutines", "SU")
InitRoutines(qchPath, 1)
; declare the main routines
RR("ftui", "ExecFullTextSearch", "USSS") ; MMA: Missing a double quote!
RR("ftui", "SwitchToTopicsFound", "U")
; provide ways to use them: suit to your own taste
AddAccelerator(0x46,2,"SwitchToTopicsFound(hwndApp)")
```

```
CreateButton("btn_fts", "FullText", "ExecFullTextSearch(hwndApp, qchPath, ''
, '')")
```

Add the following line to the [BAGGAGE] section

```
[BAGGAGE]
bag.ini
```

{ Editor's Note: "bag.ini" must be all lower case. Baggage files are case sensitive. Not making it all lower case will produce errors. }

Save MYPRJ.HPJ.

"bag.ini" is a simple text file, that tells the full-text search engine the name of the index file, and whether several different help-files share one single index. The simple case is one .HLP file, one .IND file. bag.ini should look like this:

```
[bag.ini]
groupcount=3D1
group1=3DMYPRJ
[MYPRJ]
Title=3DMy Project
Indexfile=3DMYPRJ.IND
```

If you have two helpfiles that share an index:

```
[bag.ini]
groupcount=3D2
group1=3DMYPRJ1
group2=3DMYPRJ2
[MYPRJ1]
Title=3DMy Project I
Indexfile=3DMYPRJ.IND
[MYPRJ2]
Title=3DMy Project II
Indexfile=3DMYPRJ.IND
```

All the Indexfile=3D lines should be the same. You can have up to 15 groups. The same bag.ini file should be included in the baggage of all the help files.

Next you'll need a field-description file. It comes with the Viewer 1 and NT Helpindex tools (as GENERIC.FLD). If you don't have it, it's a simple textfile containing the following text:

```
topic [inline, search, stop]
filename [catalog, string]
address [catalog, fixed(4)]
length [catalog, fixed(4)]
topicTitle [catalog, trunc(32), string]
topicNSR [inline, search, stop]
```

MMA: The topicTitle line above was originally without the string parameter!

Finally there's the stop-words file. This is a text file containing words that need not be indexed, each on a separate line. Viewer 1 and NT come with GENERIC.STP, which contains a list of English words:

```
a
an
and
the
...
```

If your text is in a different language, you should provide your own .STP file. Viewer 2 comes with ready-made French and German .STP files. Since we're talking internationalization, one drawback of the Viewer 1 FTUI.DLL (solved in Viewer 2) is that the Full-Text Search dialog box is English only. Borland's Resource Workshop barfed on the dialog resource in the DLL (Did MS do this on purpose?).

OK, all is set now to create the full-text index. Viewer 1 and the NT SDK come with ready-to-run batchfiles, that in turn invoke a makefile that creates the actual index. In order to explain what's going on, we'll ignore the complexities of the makefile provided by MS.

For the simple case of one helpfile with one indexfile, you can create (or generate) a batchfile, to invoke the Help Compiler and the Indexing programs:

```
@ECHO OFF
hcp MYPRJ
echo.
forage /w MYPRJ.HLP
w_scan MYPRJ.ANS,MYPRJ.WRS,GENERIC.STP,GENERIC.FLD,MYPRJ.MLT,MYPRJ.LST;
rem MMA:          ^^^^^^^^^^          ^^^^^^^^^^
rem MMA: The two files marked above should also be used in the call!
rem MMA: The MYPRJ.MLT file only contains two lines which are the title
rem MMA: from bag.ini and the name of the actual help file (see below).
index MYPRJ, ,MYPRJ,GENERIC.STP,GENERIC.FLD,MYPRJ.MAP;
rem produced by FORAGE
del MYPRJ.ANS
rem produced by W_SCAN
del MYPRJ.CFG
del MYPRJ.LST
del MYPRJ.OCA
del MYPRJ.WRS
del MYPRJ.ZON
del MYPRJ.ZOS
rem produced by INDEX
del MYPRJ.MAP
rem think that covers all the garbage generated
```

If you have several helpfiles for which you want to create a single index, first create the .HLP files (using HC or HCP), then make the index with a batchfile like this:

```
getmlt bag.ini;
forage /m BAG.MLT
rem MMA: The forage line above was originally: forage /m bag.ini BAG.MLT
rem MMA:          ^^^^^^^^^^
rem MMA: The file marked above should *not* be used in the call!
w_scan MYPRJ.ANS, ,GENERIC.STP,GENERIC.FLD,BAG.MLT,MYPRJ.LST;
index MYPRJ, ,MYPRJ,GENERIC.STP,GENERIC.FLD,MYPRJ.MAP;
rem clean up the directory
```

GETMLT.EXE is a very clever program that reads a bag.ini file and produces the following output (given the bag.ini file above):

```
My Project I
MYPRJ1.HLP
My Project II
MYPRJ2.HLP
```

It needs two arguments (name of bag.ini and name of output .MLT file), but will only accept one (hey! let's make it interactive!). If I didn't have a program to generate all of this FTSearch stuff automatically, I'd even prefer to make the .MLT file by hand!

That's it. You should now have a file MYPRJ.IND to go with your help file(s). When you distribute the help file(s), just make sure that you include the .IND file, **and** the FTUI, FTENGINE and MVAPI DLLs.

Michael Malcolm Andersen, Andersen Development

E-mail: mma@datashopper.dk

Web: <http://www.datashopper.dk/~mma/>

[3.5.3] Why can't the programmers can't make correct tab show in Help Topics?

There are a number of issues here. First, check with the programmer to see how the Help Contents command was implemented. In WinHelp 4.0, the WinHelp API function has a new HELP_FINDER command (value = 11, or 0x0B) that specifies the Help Topics dialog box. If the programmer is still using HELP_CONTENTS or HELP_INDEX, change it to HELP_FINDER.

If the programmers are attempting to use the HELP_TAB function, they should be notified that the documentation is incomplete and/or incorrect. From what we can tell it, works like this:

Programmers must define the command HELP_TAB = 0x000F (decimal 15). Then, to use the HELP_TAB command with the WinHelp API function, the dwData value (as integer) seems to work as follows:

If there are custom tabs defined, a value of 1 calls the first custom tab, 2 the second custom tab, etc. To call the standard tabs, use -3 for Contents tab, -2 for the Index tab, and -1 for the Find tab.

Calling HELP_TAB with any value greater than or equal to zero to a help system that has no custom tabs will always bring up the Contents tab.

In macros you can use the undocumented TAB (integer) macro (as discovered by Paul O'Rear): 0 displays Find tab, If there are any Custom tabs: 1 displays first custom tab, 2 displays second custom tab, etc. Any integer greater than the actual number of custom tabs displays the TOC tab.

[4] Windows Help Authoring Tools (HATs)

I've attempted to list all the tools that I've come across, but undoubtedly there are some that I've left out. If you'd like me to add a tool to the list (or update the version/vendor information), just send me a note. The tools are listed here as a service, and none of the tools are rated. Listing here is not in any way an endorsement of a tool. Most tools offer trial versions and/or money-back guarantees that you can take advantage of when making your own evaluation.

Weisner and Associates keeps a good list of tools on their web site. You can find it at www.weisner.com/universe/tools.html. The list includes links to web sites and email for vendors when available.

Note that my definition of shareware is a fully functional product that requires payment only for continued use. If a downloaded product is limited in any way (number of topics, features, etc.) or inserts comments visible in the final output (e.g., displays "made with unregistered copy of XXX" on each page of a help file), then I consider it an evaluation version, and list the product as commercial.

[4.1] Shareware/Freeware HATs

The following tools are available as freeware or shareware, meaning you can download a fully functional version and pay only if you continue to use the product (shareware), or it's free (freeware).

[4.1.1] AstroHelp

A tool for creating Windows Help in Microsoft Word 6.x/7.x. No longer supported, it's available as freeware including the source code. Available from www10.pair.com/vsap/AstroHelp.html

[4.1.2] Create Help

CHC Software
27 West Park
London SE94RZ
England

[4.1.3] DR Help

Roger Hadgraft
Civil Engineering
Monash University
Clayton Vic 3168 Australia
Phone: 61 3 9905 4983
Fax: 61 3 9905 4944

DR Help is a set of Word for Windows macros for creating WinHelp files from Word documents. It uses Word's standard heading styles to automatically create links between sections using the section titles and optionally also generating keyword links from the titles.

DR Help makes it easy to keep a single source document, maintained with a familiar and powerful word processor, and then generate printed documentation, WinHelp and potentially also ASCII and/or PostScript (using Word's and Windows' built-in capabilities). The Windows FAQ and Windows Programmer FAQ are created using DR Help.

Availability unknown.

[4.1.4] DWHAT.ZIP

DWHAT is a version of WHAT.ZIP for Word for Windows 6.0. It includes a handy Toolbar with the most used Help-Creation functions. It also can link to the on-line help in HAG.ZIP (see previous section). The package is Freeware. Availability unknown.

[4.1.5] EasyHelp/Web

A Word add-on that supports many of the foreign language versions of Word.

Eon Solutions Ltd.

Eon House

12 Juniper Rise

Upton Priory

Macclesfield SK10 4XT

United Kingdom

Phone: +44(0)973 209667

Web: www.easyhelp.com or www.eon-solutions.com

[4.1.6] HELLLP!

Guy Software

1752 Duchess Av

West Vancouver, BC

Canada V7V 1P9

Phone: 604.926.1370

Web: mindlink.net/Ed_Guy/helllp.html

HELLLP! v2.2 <ASP> - Multi-File build and HelpContextID property [MAP] generation. User friendly. Automatically sets up top level table of contents with Hypertext jumps to your topics. You add additional jumps and popups by highlighting the place you want to jump from and pointing to the place you want to jump to. Can add SOUND EFFECTS, SECONDARY windows with buttons, launch other programs for MULTIMEDIA.

Changes: Now works with both US & non-English versions of Word 6 & 2. (Ed. Note: I believe the current version supports Word 95/97.)

[4.1.7] HLPDK and Interactive Help

HyperAct, Inc.

P.O. Box 5517

Coralville, IA 52241

Phone: 319.351.8413

CompuServe: 76350,333

Web: www.hyperact.com

HLPDK is a Hypertext and Hypermedia generation system, that supports multiple targets from one source. With HLPDK's Help Compiler, one help source can be translated to Windows WinHelp and Multimedia Viewer, DOS (THELP, QuickHelp, Turbo-Vision Help, POPHelp, Native Engines), DESQview/X, OS/2 IPF, World Wide Web HTML, Ascii and Word Processor documents. HLPDK allows you to *Write Once, Help Many*.

Features : Topics, PopUps, Links, Keywords, Text Formats, Navigational and Structural facilities, Target Code insertion, Multiple module files, Automatic Pascal/C/C++ reference generation, Exception handling, Multiple file target databases, Graphics,

Sound, Groups, Application Launch, Automatic exports creation, user defined link templates and more.

HLPDK Contains 4 Native Help Readers (Engines) for the Dos and DPMS target, and 4 Help Compilers hosted on Dos, DPMS, Windows and OS/2.

[4.1.8] Microsoft WHAT6

Windows Help Authoring Tool, available from Microsoft and some other archives. For use with MS Word 6.0

[4.1.9] VB AHA!!!

VB AHA!!! is an inexpensive and easy to use utility for writing Windows help files. You won't need any expensive word processors or have to use any cryptic commands. With simple mouse clicks and Drag n Drop ease you will be able to construct your help files quickly.

If you use Visual Basic then VB AHA!!! will handle all of the HelpContextID values for you and even recompile your programs with the new values. No more hassles of having to insert the values by hand! If you program in C/C++ or Pascal then VB AHA!!! will create a header file containing all of the definitions that you will need for context sensitive help in your programs.

Available from www.winsite.com/info/pc/win3/util/vbaha152.zip/

[4.2] Commercial

[4.2.1] Doc-To-Help

WexTech Systems
310 Madison Ave., Ste. 905
New York, NY 10017
Phone: 800.939.8324
Web: www.wextech.com

Part of the Documentation Studio, Doc-To-Help allows you to create Help files from Word for Windows documents. Doc-To-Help's features make it easy to produce print and online documents from the same Word documents, and to control the process so that the content is appropriate for each medium. WexTech maintains a forum on CompuServe (GO WexTech; this may be discontinued at some point), as well as an internet discussion list where you can get product information and support.

[4.2.2] ForeHelp/ForeHTML Pro

ForeFront, Inc.
4710 Table Mesa Drive, Suite B
Boulder, CO 80303
Phone: 303.499.9181
Web: www.ff.com

A standalone HAT with WYSIWYG editor and instant test mode (doesn't required any compiling). The current version can also produce HTML Help in MS or Netscape flavors. Demo available (limits number of topics). ForeFront maintains a forum on CompuServe (GO FOREFRONT).

[4.2.3] HDK

DEK Software International
1843 The Woods II
Cherry Hill, NJ 08003
Sales: 800-DEK-5595
Tech Support: 800-HELP-955
Web: www.vmtech.com

Word-based HAT with many useful and interesting features. Strong and loyal following, including a User's Group based in Australia.

[4.2.4] HelpBreeze

Solutionsoft
370 Altair Way, Suite 200
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
Phone: 408.736.1431
Web: www.solutionsoft.com

Word-based HAT with many useful and interesting features.

[4.2.5] HelpBuilder

Graham Plowman Software
PO Box 1124
Manly 2095
NSW AUSTRALIA
Email: gplowman@ozemail.com.au
CompuServe: 100105,536
Web: www.ozemail.com.au/~gplowman/helpbldr.htm

HelpBuilder is a Microsoft Windows 3.1 application for creating and maintaining Windows Help files and is designed for developers wishing to create Windows Help files to distribute with their products and for anyone wishing to create stand-alone Windows Help files.

[4.2.6] HelpHikes

Email: 71303.20@compuserve.com
Web: web.superb.net/helphikes/

[4.2.7] Help Magician Pro

Software Interphase Inc.
82 Cucumber Hill Rd.

Foster, RI 02825
Sales: 800.542.2742
Tech: 401.397.2340
Fax: 401.397.6814
Web: www.sinterphase.com

Windows Help Magician is one of the few products to allow you to easily create WinHelp .HLP files without Word for Windows. It provides its own editor and WYSIWYG environment. Imports documents from Word.

[4.2.8] HelpMaker for AmiPro

Cris Williams
3112 Moriah Trails, #207
Memphis, TN 38115
Email: 74451.1245@compuserve.com

Availability:

<ftp://ftp.coast.net/SimTel/win3/winhelp/hm423.zip>

[4.2.9] Help Maker Plus(tm)

Ippovision Inc.
8602 Huron Court
Suite #53
Tampa, FL 33614
Web: members.aol.com/ILuvPasta7/helpmaker/

Availability:

<ftp://ftp.the.net/mirrors/ftp.winsite.com/pc/win95/programr/hmp49b.zip>

Anyone who can use Microsoft Word can now make their own Help files with Help Maker Plus(tm)! In seconds you'll be creating help topics, hypertext jumps, and special effects like pop-up windows, secondary windows and fixed regions--with the ease of pointing and clicking! Create multi-media extravaganzas with sounds, movies, and links to other programs--in moments! Help Maker Plus (tm) handles all of the hard stuff for you--you can even compile without ever leaving Word! Also, Help Maker Plus (tm) includes the latest and greatest version of the Microsoft Help Compiler and comes with an extensive documentation that will explain exactly what a help file is, as well as provide you with a list of Microsoft compiler error codes.

[4.2.10] Help Perfect

USA

European Software
1617 St. Andrews Drive
Lawrence, KS 66049
Phone: 800.936.6578
913.832.2070

Worldwide

Niceware
Oosterstraat 333581 ML
UTRECHT
FAX: ++31 30 517 555
Phone: ++31 30 520 018
CIS: 100041,2760
e-mail: niceware@let.ruu.nl

Help Perfect converts WordPerfect documents to WinHelp/ Multimedia Viewer. Does not rely on WordPerfect for RTF conversion. Use any WordPerfect style, attribute or mark for setting topics and hotspots. Automatic conversion of foot/endnotes, header/footers, index words, lists and autorefs. Extension DLL provides graphics, multimedia, advanced searching, window color manipulation, menu links, etc.

[4.2.11] Help Writer's Assistant

Olson Software
4 Anaru Place
Palmerston North
New Zealand
Phone: +64 6 359 1408
Fax: +64 6 355 2775
Email: stefan@olsonsoft.com.nz
Compuserve: 100352,1315

HWA (Help Writer's Assistant) is a visual help authoring package with features normally only seen in expensive products - at a price you can afford! A version is under development that will allow multiple authors to work from a common database. Changes made by one author will be immediately available to all others. The new version will also handle HTML Help.

HWA is a WYSIWYG help development environment. HWA provides topic management tools which make it possible to easily see the structure and links of your help file at a glance. The results of your work are displayed in a visual editor where all formatting is seen. The visual editor is designed specifically for the task of developing help files. HWA works the way you do, not forcing you to change the way you work.

[4.2.12] HelpWriter for Delphi

Teletech Systems
750 Birch Ridge Dr.
Roswell, GA 30076
Web: www.teletech-systems.com

HelpWriter for Delphi will read any Delphi project and create a full help system in minutes. Just enter your help text and push a single button to compile. It even updates all your source code, adding context sensitive help to every form/control in the program!

[4.2.13] IMWHelp

IMCSI
425 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10017
Phone: 212.319.1903

[4.2.14] MasterHelp

Performance Software Inc.
575 Southlake Blvd.
Richmond, VA 23236
Phone: 804.794.1012

[4.2.15] MIF2RTF

Omni Systems, Inc.
2229 McGee, Suite H
Berkeley, CA 94703
Email: info@omsys.com
Web: www.omsys.com

MIF2RTF is a FrameMaker to WinHelp converter. It allows single-source manual and online help from a FrameMaker document. I've only seen one comment about this program, but it was very positive.

[4.2.16] MiniHelp Plus

Paul Arnote (www.sky.net/~parnote)

A unique authoring tool that doesn't require Microsoft Word or another word processor. Demo is available as a limited feature download.

[4.2.17] RoboHELP

Blue Sky Software
7777 Fay Avenue
Suite. 201
La Jolla, CA 92037
Phone: 800.677.4946
619.459.6365
Fax: 619.459.6366
Web: www.blue-sky.com

RoboHELP, the award-winning Help Authoring Tool for Windows and Windows NT automates the task of creating on-line Help for Windows-based applications. Supports Word 2.0 through Word 8.0. Lets you easily create features such as jumps, popups, topics, secondary windows, multiple hotspot graphics and more. Current version also creates HTML Help and NetHelp.

[4.2.18] SOS Help! Info-Author

Lamaura Development Limited
Rabley Park, Ridge
Potters Bar
Hertfordshire EN6 3LX
United Kingdom
Phone: +44(0)1707 643278

Fax/BBS: +44(0)1707 643499

Web: www.lamaura.com/shia.htm

WYSIWYG Help design system for Windows creates all files required by the help compiler. RTF editors, such as Word for Windows, are redundant.

Add jumps, popups and Windows Help macros quickly and easily using the Topic editor.

Full support for styles and stylesheets: design a house style for use in any Help project.

Application Programming Interface - create context sensitive help from within an application with one function call.

[4.2.19] UniversalHelp

Softronic, Inc.

5085 List Drive

Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Phone: 800.225.8590

Web: www.softronic.com/lit_unv.html

UniversalHelp is the first product of its type for simultaneous authoring of Windows and OS/2 Help. Used in conjunction with Microsoft Word for Windows, UniversalHelp transforms the leading Windows word processor into a fully-functional Help authoring and conversion system.

UniversalHelp is available for US\$645.00. To order, call Softronic at 800/225-8590 or fax 719/548-1878.

[4.2.20] VB Help Writer

Teletech Systems

750 Birch Ridge Dr.

Roswell, GA 30076

Web: www.teletech-systems.com

VB HelpWriter creates a professional help file for any VB program in minutes. It scans your source code, creates a help framework, then adds help to each form and control in your project. Use our integrated word processor to add your help text, and press one button to compile. Nothing could be easier!

[4.2.21] Visual Help/Visual Help Pro

WinWare9

P.O. Box 2923

Mission Viejo, CA 92690

Phone: 800.507.HELP

Fax: 714.586.9792

Email: sales@winwareinc.com

Web: www.winwareinc.com/visualhelp.html

Visual Help is the completely integrated help development environment. Enables you to produce your help files and on-line documentation quickly and easily. You may have

used some of the other help authoring tools that require you to type in special codes and use a separately purchased word processors.

[4.2.22] VivaTexte

55 Spadina Ave.
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 2B8
Canada

Phone: 613.728.6635

Fax: 613.728.6420

Email: tshaver@vivatexte.com

Web: www.vivatexte.com/newvtx01.htm

\$59.95 (plus \$15.00 shipping and GST for Canada)

The VivaTexte Authoring System is a complete feature packed authoring tool for publishing BOTH WinHelp and HTML. The current version remains a 16 bit application optimized for both Windows 3.x and 95. It now includes some great developer features, such as the ability to write and combine 'live' HTML tags and on page scripting (VB or Java) with ordinary text which is automatically parsed into quality HTML. Recent changes allow developers to create both HTX files for use with the Internet Database Connector, and Active Server Pages.

[4.2.23] Windows Help Designer

Phone: 801.523.8221

Fax: 801.576.5663

Email: namela@devgr.com

Web: www.devgr.com/docs/whd.html

Availability:

www.devgr.com/downloads/whdstd.zip

[4.2.24] WP2Help

MERCSoftware
7931 Forest Ave.
Munster IN 46321
Phone: 219.836.6444

[4.2.25] WYSI-Help Composer Notes

UDI Software
Four Commercial Blvd. Suite 6
Novato, CA 94949
Phone: 415.382.8840
Fax: 415.382.8868
Email: udi@udisoftware.com
Web: www.udisoftware.com

[5] Other Authoring Tools

This section is devoted to tools that aren't really tools for authoring WinHelp files, but may be useful to WinHelp authors and/or users. As with the other product list, this is very incomplete, so send me descriptions of products you've used or authored. Check the WinHelp utilities list at www.helpmaster.com for a more complete listing of tools (courtesy of Josef Becker).

[5.1] Shareware/Freeware

[5.1.1] Arsenal DLL for WinHelp

A powerful add-on that lets you extend WinHelp. Contains many functions for macros that aren't available within WinHelp. From Paul Arnote (www.sky.net/~parnote/).

[5.1.2] Help Decompiler

While several vendors offer decompilers integrated with their product or as a standalone utility, an excellent freeware Help Decompiler is available. HelpDeco decompiles all versions of WinHelp, as well as Multimedia Viewer files.

Available from www.helpmaster.com/help/devaids/pophelpdeco.htm (also available from the Library section at Wextech (www.wextech.com)).

[5.1.3] HLP2DOC

HLP2DOC is a utility to convert WinHelp .HLP files and Multimedia Viewer .MVB files into Word for Windows 2.0 .DOC files. HLP2DOC is still in the early stages, but the author is continuing to work on it and improve it rapidly. HLP2DOC does not yet do a full translation. Bitmaps aren't converted as of the latest version (1.32). Despite the few drawbacks, it does a very good job and will make it possible for people to print entire help files by converting them to .DOC files. HLP2DOC is freeware.

Availability:

<ftp://ftp.lrz-muenchen.de/pub/comp/platforms/pc/windows/hlpdc132.zip>

[5.1.4] SHGREZ

A freeware utility that strips the resolution information used to display and print bitmapped graphics out of SHG files. This is necessary to prevent the distortion of bitmaps viewed on systems where the user has set the display to use "large fonts." Freeware from Stephen Jenkins.

Availability:

<http://www.helpmaster.com/help/devaids/popshgrez.htm>

[5.1.5] TabMaker

Easily create tabs for your help projects to give users a simulated tab interface for help topic access. If you've seen the help for PaintShop Pro, you've seen how tabs can be useful navigational aids. TabMaker automates the process of creating the bitmaps and

.SHG files required for tabs in WinHelp. Reads your RTF files to supply titles and context strings for tabs. Shareware (US\$20). Available from www.simdoc.com.

[5.1.6] WinHelp Sorcerer

A set of WinHelp tools and add-ons from Cub Lea. Many useful utilities that get WinHelp working the way you want it to. Available from www.sinterphase.com.

[5.1.7] WinHelp -> HLPDK Conversion Tool

WinHelp -> HLPDK Conversion Tool. With WH2HDK you can port your Windows Help Databases to other platforms such as OS/2, World Wide Web, DOS, DESQview/X and more. Use WH2HDK (with HLPDK) to save the additional investment required for multiple target development. Now you can create your Help Databases in your favorite WinHelp authoring tool, and still benefit from HLPDK cross-platform portability, and enhanced navigation and code generation tools.

HyperAct Inc.,
P.O.Box. 5517
Coralville IA 52241
U.S.A
Compuserve - 76350,333
Phone/Fax - (319) 351-8413
Web: www.hyperact.com

[5.2] Commercial

[5.2.1] Help Author's Resource Kit (HARK)

The Help Author's Resource Kit™ from Weisner Associates is a comprehensive, CD-ROM based collection of resources for Windows Help and HTML authors. Resources include software, samples, graphics collections, documentation and references, and discounts on products and services worth hundreds of dollars. It is distributed periodically (three times a year) to assist authors who want to keep pace with the rapid growth and changes in the fields of hypertext development and online documentation design.

Weisner Associates
2817 Zarthan Av. S.
Minneapolis MN 55416
Tel. 800.646.9989
Fax 612.928.3007
Email: info@weisner.com
Web: www.weisner.com/hark/index.html or

[5.2.2] HyperHelp

Bristol Technology
(203) 438-6969

Email: info@bristol.com

Web: www.bristol.com

HyperHelp is a WinHelp compiler and viewer for Unix. You simply recompile your rtf's, bmps, and hpjs and you get a Unix versions of your help file. HyperHelp supports MIF and SGML and has a bridge that lets you use these on the Windows WinHelp too.

[5.2.3] QuickHelp

Altura Software

Web: www.altura.com

QuickHelp is a compiler and viewer that uses RTF source files to create help for the Apple Macintosh. QuickHelp supports many WinHelp features that would not be otherwise available on a Mac. While there are license fees for using QuickHelp, the savings in development costs on cross platform projects should more than offset these fees.

[5.2.4] Steve Sweet's Help Compiler for the Mac

Steven Sweet

Web: www.sweetsteve.com

This is a reasonably priced alternative compiler for those needing Macintosh support of their applications and help files. See the web site for details.

[5.2.5] Windexer

A tool for managing and editing the Keywords for your WinHelp projects. Graphically display and edit the index, and let Windexer update your RTF source files. Available from Sageline Publishing at www.sageline.com.

[6] Sources for Undocumented WinHelp Features

WinHelp is one of Windows least documented features. As most Windows programmers are aware these days, many aspects of Windows do go undocumented by Microsoft, but for the rest of Windows, this tends to be less vital functionality. With WinHelp, many of the important aspects are kept undocumented. Whether this is the result of laziness or intentions, is unclear. WinHelp 4.0 is more fully documented than WinHelp 3.1 was, but its documentation still has holes.

Luckily, a few people have taken a lot of time to discover these undocumented features and made them available in one way or another. In particular, Ron Burk (editor of Windows/DOS Developer's Journal) has spent a lot of time working with WinHelp and he is arguably the most knowledgeable WinHelp expert outside of Microsoft (and maybe including Microsoft).

Below are a list of articles and other sources of undocumented WinHelp features listed in alphabetical order by author.

[6.1] Magazine articles

Ron Burk, "Automatic Help Topic Extraction", Windows/DOS Developer's Journal, February 1993

In this article Ron writes a .DLL that allows you to insert an "extract" button in your help file that will extract a WinHelp topic to a file. He also discusses the fact that WinHelp executes some macros asynchronously.

Ron Burk, "Automatic Help Topic Printing", Windows/DOS Developer's Journal, March 1993

In this article Ron writes a .DLL to allow you to print all topics in a WinHelp .HLP file.

Ron Burk, "Spying on WinHelp," Dr. Dobb's Journal, June 1993

In this article, Ron discusses the WM_WinHelp message used by the WinHelp() API call. The article describes some uses of this message and the parameters associated with it.

Ron Burk, "Controlling WinHelp's Always-on-Top State", Windows/DOS Developer's Journal, November 1993

Ron shows how to control the Always-on-Top State of WinHelp from your applications.

Pete Davis, "Documenting Documentation," Dr. Dobb's Journal, September 1993 and October 1993

In this two part article, a detailed, though not quite complete, description of the WinHelp file format is provided. It discusses WinHelp's internal file system and the structures of the internal files in a .HLP file.

Pete Davis, ".mrb and .shg File Formats", Windows/DOS Developer's Journal, February 1994

This article contains a fairly complete description of the .mrb (multi-resolution bitmap) and .shg (segmented hyper-graphic) file formats. These files are used by WinHelp to display bitmaps. The file formats are almost identical between the two files, though their purposes are quite different.

Jim Mischel, "Undocumented WinHelp Macros", Windows/DOS Developer's Journal, January 1994

Jim describes a lot of undocumented WinHelp 3.1 macros such as ExtAbleItem(), ExtInsertItem(), ExtInsertMenu(), ResetMenu(), JumpHash(), and PopupHash(). These have been documented in the WinHelp 4.0 help.

[6.2] Books

Undocumented Windows File Formats, by Pete Davis and Mike Wallace, R&D Books

This book is a good resource for programmer's seeking to understand the internal structure of WinHelp files, including .HLP, .SHG, .ANN, and .BMK file formats.

[7] Miscellaneous

The following sections contain information of interest to WinHelp developers that just didn't fit anywhere else.

[7.1] Online Sources of WinHelp Help

The following sections list places you can go for additional information and support with WinHelp. With just a browser or email program, you can get excellent support from the World-wide WinHelp community.

[7.1.1] Newsgroups

The comp.os.ms-windows.programmer.winhelp newsgroup has been active for several years, and still generates a fair number of message each day. To access it, you must have a newsreader program or web browser, and access to a server that provides the newsgroup. Contact your system administrator or ISP for more information on accessing newsgroups, or if you are not able to find this group on your news server.

If you can't get newsgroups, but have an internet email account, use the Listserv List instead.

[7.1.2] Discussion Lists

Listservs are e-mail discussion lists, and with the growth of the internet, these discussion lists have become very popular. You can find a list for just about any subject. Listserv is actually the name of L-Soft's (expensive) application used to run many mailing lists. MajorDomo is another popular discussion list application (mostly because it's free and can be modified by the user). You'll see most lists using one of these two. *Since commands are not the same on all systems, make sure you keep any instructions sent when you subscribe.*

Discussion lists are very similar to Usenet newsgroups and can be subscribed to over the Internet. The main difference is that all messages are sent as e-mail. After subscribing, you will be sent a message confirming your subscription and instructions on how to unsubscribe. For other commands, send e-mail to the listserv (or majordomo) with the word Help as the contents of your message.

WINHLP-L Discussion List

This is currently the most popular place to discuss WinHelp related questions, with about 1900 members. Discussions include WinHelp, HTML Help, tools, authoring issues, and so on. A friendly helpful place from which every Help Author can benefit. Cambridge Publications (www.documentation.com) has graciously created a searchable archive of this lists messages.

To subscribe to the WINHLP-L list, send e-mail to:

```
LISTSERV@ADMIN.HUMBERC.ON.CA
```

The contents of your e-mail should be simply:

```
SUB WINHLP-L first_name last_name
```

where first_name and last_name are replaced by your real name.

To unsubscribe, send e-mail to the same address with the contents:

```
SIGNOFF WINHLP-L
```

To post a message to the WINHLP-L list, send e-mail to:

```
WINHLP-L@ADMIN.HUMBERC.ON.CA
```

The subject and contents of the e-mail are sent to all subscribers.

Technical Writers List

While it is not strictly a WinHelp list, the Technical Writers discussion list can be a valuable resource. Discussions usually revolve around matters of written communication, but occasionally go into tools, distribution methods, and general philosophy. Cambridge Publications (www.documentation.com) has created a searchable archive of messages for this list.

To subscribe to the Technical Writers list, send a message to:

```
LISTSERV@LISTSERV.OKSTATE.EDU
```

Leave the subject line blank, and include on the first line of the message:

```
SUB TECHWR-L first_name last_name
```

where first_name and last_name are replaced by your real name.

To post a message to the TECHWR-L list, send e-mail to:

```
TECHWR-L@LISTSERV.OKSTATE.EDU
```

The subject and contents of the e-mail are sent to all subscribers.

HDK Users Group List

A discussion list for user's of Virtual Media's HDK authoring tool, maintained by an independent users group.

To subscribe to HDK-L, send a message to:

```
majordomo@hilink.com.au
```

Include the following line in the body of the message :

```
SUBSCRIBE HDK-L
```

No subject is required. List instructions are sent when you subscribe.

RoboHelp List

This is a list maintained by Blue-Sky Software for their products (RoboHelp, RoboHTML, WinHelp Office). It is a closed list, meaning that your subscription must be approved by Blue Sky. You don't need to be a customer to subscribe, but you do need to fill out a form at their web site (www.blue-sky.com) to request a subscription.

WexTech List

A discussion list for users of WexTech's Doc-To-Help, Smooth Scaling, Quicture, or Documentation Studio. Open to anyone. Available in digest form. To subscribe, send a message to

Majordomo@wextech.com

with the following line in the body:

```
SUBSCRIBE WEXTECH-L
```

and leave the subject line blank. If you want the digest form (one message per day containing all discussions), use the following line in the body instead:

```
SUBSCRIBE WEXTECH-L-DIGEST
```

and leave the subject line blank.

The address for posting messages is wextech-l@wextech.com.

[7.1.3] CompuServe (CSi)

CompuServe members have for a long time benefited from the information exchanged in the WINS SDK forum's WinHelp/Tools section. About a year ago that section became its own forum (GO HYPERTEXT), which now has sections for WinHelp, Tools, HTML Help, Graphics, etc. Dana Cline manages the forum. CompuServe is moving to a web based interface, and this forum is now available using just a browser (you still must have a CompuServe account). See

<http://forumsb.csi.com/gvforums/default.asp?srv=helpauth> for information.

[7.1.4] WinHelp Developers' Home Pages

Many WinHelp developers have personal or company home pages. Many of these list valuable resources and show useful examples. Some of these pages promote the company's products and services. If you would your page listed here, please contact me with details.

Brett Merkey's Page (ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/BWMerkey/)

Includes an excellent WinHelp Macro reference as a help file (download as a zip file).

Bruce White's Page (ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/whited/)

Contains some links and downloads of interest for Help Authors.

Cambridge Publications (www.documentation.com)

Has a searchable archive of the WinHelp Listserv discussion group; one of the best resources available to help authors. I used it many times to check information in this FAQ.

Cub Lea's WinHelp Repository (www.sinterphase.com/winhelp.htm)

Download many useful files and utilities for WinHelp directly from this page.

HDK User Group (www.nullarbor.com.au/hdkug/)

Resources for users of Virtual Media's HDK authoring tool.

Jim Mischel's Page (www.mischel.com)

Home page for WinHelp developer Jim Mischel. Includes copies of his many articles and utilities for developers working with WinHelp.

Josef Becker's HelpMaster Pages (www.helpmaster.com)

A large collection of WinHelp and HTMLHelp related programs and hints.

John Daigle's HyperTexas (www.hypertexas.com)

Tips and tricks from an innovative author. Includes examples and resource links.

KNOWware Home Page (www.kware.com)

Information about WinHelp and HTML Authoring. Mary Deaton's books can be ordered from this site. Also the current home of the WinHelp 4.0 bug list.

Paul Arnote's Page (www.sky.net/~parnote/)

Says Paul, "This site is a repository of Windows Help information and links to serve my fellow WinHelp authors."

Sageline Publishing (www.sageline.com)

William Meisheid's site has resources, links, and news for authors. It also features a WinHelp/HTML Help specific Bookstore.

STC Online Information SIG (stc.org/society/pics/online/www/)

Publishes a quarterly online newsletter, *HyperViews Online*, and provides contact information for chapter-level Online Information Special Interest Groups (SIGs).

TANSTAAFL Software (www.tanstaaf-soft.com)

Dana Cline (Wizop of the CompuServe HyperText forum) maintains this site, which includes a dictionary of WinHelp jargon, style guidelines, and discussion forums. If nothing else, stop by to find out what TANSTAAFL stands for (if you don't already know).

Weisner Associates (www.weisner.com)

Ben Weisner's pages, which include information about the Help Author's Resource Kit, a CD that contains many valuable and hard to find tools for WinHelp authors.

WinHelp List Home Page (www.humberc.on.ca/~byrnes/winhelp.html)

Home page for the WinHelp Listserv discussion group.

[7.2] Online Sources of WinHelp Related Software

I have not attempted to list specific files (as in the previous version of this FAQ) because there are simply too many to track down. Instead, I have listed the sites that contain excellent repositories, lists of links, and information for WinHelp Authors. Note that web sites for specific Help Authoring Tools are now listed in the Help Authoring Tool section.

Several web sites maintain lists of tools with links for downloading. Among the most useful are the collections at:

- > Weisner & Associates (www.weisner.com)
- > Josef Becker's HelpMaster pages (www.helpmaster.com)
- > Cub Lea's WinHelp Repository (www.sinterphase.com/winhelp.htm)
- > CompuServe's HyperText forum libraries (www.csi.com for information)

Microsoft's web site and FTP software library (<ftp://ftp.microsoft.com/softlib>) also contains many valuable files.

[7.3] General Information about WinHelp Compilers (all versions)

There are several versions of the help compiler out there. HC and HC30 are the same program, the 3.00 version of the help compiler. These are basically out of date and shouldn't be used anymore.

HC31 is the 3.10 version of the help compiler (build 445 is the most common, I believe). This is the non-extended memory version of the Windows 3.1 help compiler and the minimum you need for supporting WinHelp 3.1.

HCP is an extended memory version HC31. It basically takes care of out of memory errors caused by lack of memory (as opposed to out of memory errors caused by pasting bitmaps. See Q&A). If you have extended memory, this is the compiler you should be using.

HC505.EXE is actually a self-extracting .ZIP file that contains build version 3.10.505 of HC31.EXE (called HC in this version) and HCP.EXE. The main reason for the release was to support new font table information generated by Word 6.0. You must use the 505 build to generate help files from Word 6.0 .RTF files. This version of the compiler also extends some of the previous limits in the help file. The limit for the number of items in the [MAP] section of the .HPJ is increased to about 8000. The number of bitmaps allowed in an RTF file is now 2,970 (the previous number is unknown). The internal compiler limit, whatever this is, is increased from 32k to 64k. I assume that this may be for things like paragraph size, but I don't know for sure. If anyone has some insights, I'd like to hear them.

HC35 is a Macintosh version of the WinHelp compiler that can be used to create WinHelp for the Mac. It is part of the cross-platform development kit that Microsoft offers. Check with Microsoft for availability and pricing.

HCWSETUP.EXE is the installation program for the Help Workshop, which includes HCRTF.EXE (the 32-bit compiler for WinHelp 4.0), HCW.EXE (the graphical interface and test facility), HWDLL.DLL (a DLL that adds Help Author functions), HCW.CNT and HCW.HLP (the Help Authoring Guide for WinHelp 4.0). You can download HCWSETUP.EXE from Microsoft at <ftp.microsoft.com/softlib/mslfiles/hcwsetup.exe>.

Although some early documentation suggested that it could be used for compiling 16-bit help (WinHelp 3.1), this is not true. You can only produce WinHelp 4.0 files using HCRTF.EXE. HCRTF.EXE versions before 4.02 are not compatible with the RTF generated by Word 8.0/97. You should get version 4.03 from the Microsoft Software Library. You can get the latest version with some authoring tools. For example, it's included with the trial version of WexTech's AnswerWorks, available from their web site (www.wextech.com).

Note that if you have more than one HAT installed on a machine, you may have conflicting versions of the WinHelp 4.0 compiler and it's DLL (HWDLL.DLL). This can cause errors when compiling. Search your system for HCRTF.EXE and HWDLL.DLL, and make sure the time stamps match. Keep the most recent version of the DLL in your system directory.

[7.4] Limits

This section describes limits of WinHelp 3.1, not necessarily the compilers, however. The limits of the 32-bit compiler (HCRTF.EXE) are listed in the help file for Help Workshop (HCW.HLP), and so I am not including them here. Since the WinHelp 3.1 limits weren't widely published, I'm leaving them in the FAQ.

This information is adapted from Microsoft's knowledge base article Q85676 (by Pete Davis).

Paragraph: ~32,000 bytes - Includes any pasted bitmaps

Topic title string: 127 characters

Topics per RTF source: ~32,000

Topics per help file: ~42,000,000

Help file size: 2 gigabytes

By-reference bitmaps per help file: 32,767

Topic footnote (# chars): 1023 characters

Keywords per help file: Limited by file size

Keyword length: 255 characters

Topics per keyword: 32,767 (Large #'s will effect performance)

Browse sequence length: Limited by # of topics

Bookmarks per help file: Limited by file size

Annotations per topic: 1

Annotations per help file: 32,767

History List Length: 40 topics

Macro Length: 512 characters

Main windows per topic: 1

Secondary Windows per topic: 5

Items in [MAP] section: 4096

[8] Thanks

I'd like to thank the following people for assistance in this FAQ. If I've missed your name, it's due to my incompetence and not my lack of appreciation. Please let me know if I missed you.

Arthur Muller - Coming up with the original WinHelp version of the FAQ

Pete Davis - for carrying the torch through the second version.

Michael Malcolm Andersen for updating the Full Text Search in WinHelp 3.1 section.

Dana Cline, Bill Bledsoe, Scott Deloach, for editorial comments.

All those that offered suggestions for this update: Andrea Kenner, Becca Price, Christopher Kasic, David M. Brown, Dylan Bulseco, Eddie McHam, Betty Gravlin, John New, Josef Becker, Kelly Biernaskie, Charlie Kyle, Phil Morton, Pamala Wayne, Pat Gallagher, Paul A. O'Rear, Scott Miller, Susan Schionning, Susie Robson, Valerie Jachimowicz, and Virginia A. Williams.

All the members of the WinHelp List, CompuServe HyperText forum, and WinHelp newsgroup that have provided information, directly or indirectly, for this FAQ.