
Apple Help Reference

User Experience: Help Technologies



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Apple Help Reference

Framework:	Carbon/Carbon.h
Declared in	AppleHelp.h

Overview

Apple Help is an update and enhancement to previous versions of the Mac OS help system. It is available in Mac OS 8.6 and later, including Mac OS X.

This reference describes the application programming interface (API) for registering help books and calling the Help Viewer application.

Functions

AHGotoPage

Tells the Help Viewer to load the specified HTML page.

```
OSStatus AHGotoPage (  
    CFStringRef bookname,  
    CFStringRef path,  
    CFStringRef anchor  
);
```

Parameters

bookname

A string specifying the name of the help book that contains the page to be loaded. If the name of the help book (as specified by the `AppleTitle` meta tag) is SurfWriter Help, for example, you pass a string containing the value `SurfWriter Help`. You may pass `NULL` in this parameter.

path

A string specifying a path for the page to be loaded. Specify the path relative to the help book given in the `bookname` parameter. If you pass `NULL` in this parameter, the Help Viewer opens to your help book's title page. If you pass `NULL` in the `bookname` parameter, you must specify the value passed in the `path` parameter as a full URL in the form `file:///`.

anchor

An optional string specifying an anchor to which the Help Viewer scrolls after loading the specified page. If you do not specify an anchor, the Help Viewer scrolls to the top of the page.

Return Value

A result code. See ["Apple Help Result Codes"](#) (page 8).

Discussion

This function is synchronous. Calling this function opens the Help Viewer application, if required, and loads the specified HTML page.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Related Sample Code

OutputBins2PDE

OutputBinsPDE

Declared In

AppleHelp.h

AHLookupAnchor

Tells the Help Viewer to search for a specified anchor and load it.

```
OSStatus AHLookupAnchor (
    CFStringRef bookname,
    CFStringRef anchor
);
```

Parameters

bookname

A string specifying the name of the help book to search for the desired anchor. If the name of the help book (as specified by the `AppleTitle` meta tag) is `SurfWriter Help`, for example, you pass a string containing the value `SurfWriter Help`. If you do not specify a value in this parameter, the Help Viewer searches all available help books for the specified anchor.

anchor

A string specifying an anchor to load. You should ensure that each anchor name in your help book is unique. If you specify an anchor name that is not unique, the Help Viewer displays a list of links to all the anchors with that name.

Return Value

A result code. See [“Apple Help Result Codes”](#) (page 8).

Discussion

This function is synchronous. Calling this function opens the Help Viewer application, if required, and loads the specified anchor or the list of links to multiple anchors, as appropriate. You must specify anchor indexing when you index your help book to perform anchor lookup.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared In

AppleHelp.h

AHRegisterHelpBook

Registers a help book.

```
OSStatus AHRegisterHelpBook (
    const FSRef *appBundleRef
);
```

Parameters

appBundleRef

A file system reference for the bundle containing the help book you wish to register.

Return Value

A result code. See [“Apple Help Result Codes”](#) (page 8).

Discussion

Carbon applications must call this function in order to register a help book. If your Cocoa application provides appropriate key/value pairs specifying a single help book in your application’s property list, as described in *Providing User Assistance with Apple Help*, you only need to call `AHRegisterHelpBook` if you wish to call the Apple Help functions to access your help content yourself. If you install an additional help book that is not described in your property list, you must call the `AHRegisterHelpBook` function in order to have the new book appear in the Help Center. If you call this function and specify a help book that is already registered, the `AHRegisterHelpBook` function returns a result of `noErr`.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Related Sample Code

OutputBins2PDE

OutputBinsPDE

Declared In

AppleHelp.h

AHSearch

Tells the Help Viewer to search for a specified string in a given help book.

```
OSStatus AHSearch (
    CFStringRef bookname,
    CFStringRef query
);
```

Parameters

bookname

A string specifying the name of the help book to be searched. If the name of the help book (as specified by the `AppleTitle` meta tag) is `SurfWriter Help`, for example, you pass a string containing the value `SurfWriter Help`. If you pass `NULL` in this parameter, the Help Viewer searches all available help books.

query

A string containing the text to search for.

Return Value

A result code. See [“Apple Help Result Codes”](#) (page 8).

Discussion

This function is synchronous. Calling this function opens the Help Viewer application, if required, and displays the results of the search.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared In

AppleHelp.h

Constants

TOC Specification Constants

Passed to the AHGotoMainTOC function to identify the table of contents page to open.

```
typedef SInt16 AHTOCType;
enum {
    kAHTOCTypeUser = 0,
    kAHTOCTypeDeveloper = 1
};
```

Constants

kAHTOCTypeUser

Opens the Help Center.

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared in AppleHelp.h.

kAHTOCTypeDeveloper

Opens the Developer Help Center.

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared in AppleHelp.h.

Result Codes

The most common result codes returned by Apple Help are listed below.

Result Code	Value	Description
kAHInternalErr	-10790	The requested operation could not be completed. Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.
kAHInternetConfigPrefErr	-10791	There was an error while attempting to read Internet Config settings. Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Deprecated Apple Help Functions

A function identified as deprecated has been superseded and may become unsupported in the future.

Deprecated in Mac OS X v10.4

AHGotoMainTOC

Tells the Help Viewer to load the specified main table-of-contents page. (Deprecated in Mac OS X v10.4. Use [AHGotoPage](#) (page 5) to jump to different books or anchors.)

```
OSStatus AHGotoMainTOC (  
    AHTOCType toctype  
);
```

Parameters

toctype

A value specifying which Help Center page should be loaded. If you pass the `kAHTOCTypeUser` constant, for example, the Help Viewer loads the Help Center page.

Return Value

A result code. See “[Apple Help Result Codes](#)” (page 8).

Discussion

This function is synchronous. Calling this function opens the Help Viewer application, if required, and loads the specified Help Center page.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Deprecated in Mac OS X v10.4.

Declared In

`AppleHelp.h`

Document Revision History

This table describes the changes to *Apple Help Reference*.

Date	Notes
2006-07-12	Made minor formatting changes.
2006-07-24	Added deprecation information.
2003-01-02	Updated formatting.

REVISION HISTORY

Document Revision History