



Example 1: Introduction to EasyHelp™

EasyHelp™ is designed for authors and programmers who want to make either **Microsoft Help files** or **HTML files** quickly and easily from Word documents. If you are familiar with Word you will be able to produce on-line **hypertext** versions of your paper based documents in minutes.

This is the first of a number of **example** files included with EasyHelp. Please take some time to read through these to see how EasyHelp works. Each example will ask you to perform some simple **tasks** to increase your familiarity with EasyHelp.

Use four simple steps to create Help files:

1. Create **Topics** containing chunks of information.
2. Create **Links** to those Topics.
3. **Process** your document.
4. **Build** your Help file and look at your results.

Use four simple steps to create HTML files:

5. Create **Topics** containing chunks of information.
6. Create **Links** to those Topics.
7. **Process** your document.
8. Browse your HTML files using a **WEB browser**.

What you need to do in this example

The *Topics* and *Links* have already been created in this example so you only need to *Process* this document and then *Build* the help file. This will prove whether you have installed EasyHelp correctly. You should read through and then do the following:

9. Click in the 'Process' button on the EasyHelp toolbar.

A configuration dialog will appear on the screen. For now you can just click the OK button and EasyHelp will process your document. Wait a few seconds ... it won't take long.

10. Click on the 'Build' button on the EasyHelp toolbar.

A configuration dialog will appear on the screen. For now you can just click the OK button and EasyHelp will build your help file by running the **Help Compiler** in a Window.

When the Help Compiler has finished the window will close and you can then click the OK button on the message that appears on your screen.



Note for HTML Users

11. Browse the help file that appears on your screen.

When you have finished with the help file, close it to return to this document.



Note for HTML Users

12. When you are ready you can close this document and open the next example.

The next example document is called EX2.DOC



Examples

That's it for this example but you might want to read the rest of the information in this file to familiarise yourself with some of the common terms used in later examples.

Notes for HTML users

- When you do the process step check the 'Generate HTML' option in the configuration dialog.
- You will not need to do the Build step mentioned in the examples just use your **WEB browser** to look at the files.
- Because there is no Build step you will not need the **Help Compiler**.
- Popup topics and links are not supported in HTML - these default to jump topics.
- When creating HTML files linked graphics should always be used as in the EasyHelp examples.
- Bullets and inline topics are not yet supported in this version of EasyHelp. Later versions will have this capability.
- The task of creating Help files and HTML files from a single source is difficult to achieve. Whilst EasyHelp can do most things, the use of complicated features such as tables and forms are not fully supported yet, but will be in future versions. Try to keep things as simple as possible until you are more experienced with using EasyHelp.

The EasyHelp Examples

EX1.DOC

A simple introduction to EasyHelp which will test if it is installed correctly.

EX2.DOC

Guidelines for using EasyHelp

EX3.DOC

About Topics.

EX4.DOC

About Links.

EX5.DOC

About Graphics.

EX6.DOC

About potential errors.

EX7.DOC

About other techniques.

EX8.DOC

About misalignment and bad formatting - the Microsoft bugs!

ATOZ.DOC

This is an example of a typical A to Z type index demonstrating the use of inline topics. You can use this as a basis for your own A to Z index.

What are Topics?

A topic is a chunk of information that is displayed on your computer screen. If the chunk of information is larger than the screen, scroll bars will appear. In your document the end of a topic is marked by the beginning of the next topic or the end of the document.

Tip Besides using the **'Topic'** icon on the toolbar to mark a topic you can use a keyboard shortcut by pressing **'Ctrl+Shift+T'**. And if you prefer to use the menus you will find the topic function on the Edit and Insert menu items.

Tip You will easily recognise the menu items added by EasyHelp - they all have a '©' to the left of the item text.

Tip Plan your document first, then format it using styles, then create topics, finally create links. If you are putting links in topic headings **always** mark the heading as a topic first!

With the topic function you can mark a new topic or edit an existing one. If your text cursor is in the title paragraph of an existing topic you will be able to edit the topic.

There are three types of topics:

13. A **jump** topic. This will be marked in a green colour in your document. A jump topic is the most common and can be thought of as a jump to another position in the hypertext file. *While you are learning EasyHelp stick to jump topics.*

14. A **popup** topic. This will be marked in a blue colour in your document. A popup topic is normally used to display a smaller amount of information, and is frequently used for definitions and glossary type items.

15. An **inline** topic. This will be marked in a dark cyan colour in your document. A demonstration of the use of inline topics can be found in the ATOZ.DOC example file.

Tip The colours can be changed by editing the EASYHELP.INI file. Read the EasyHelp help file for details.



Note for HTML Users

Remember... the shortcut key combination for making or editing a topic is:
'Ctrl+Shift+T'.

More about topics later.

What are Links?

A link is a branch to a topic. It is normally a word or phrase in your document. The words *hypertext links* or *hot spots* are often used to describe links.

Tip Besides using the '**Link**' icon on the toolbar to mark a topic you can use a keyboard shortcut by pressing '**Ctrl+Shift+L**'. And if you prefer to use the menu you will find the link function on the Edit and Insert menu items.

Tip Most of the shortcut keys used by EasyHelp use the same technique of holding 'Ctrl+Shift' down (use your thumb and finger) and pressing a single letter.

With the link function you can mark a new link or edit an existing one. If you have highlighted the text of an existing link you will be able to edit the link.

There are two types of link:

16. A **jump** link. This will be marked in a dark red colour in your document. A jump link is the most common and can be thought of as a jump to another position in the help file. A jump link should always link to a jump topic. Jump links are also used to link to an inline topic.

When viewed by Microsoft Help, a jump link will be underlined with a continuous line.

17. A **popup** link. This will be marked in dark yellow colour in your document. A popup link should always link to a popup topic.

When viewed by Microsoft Help, a popup link will be underlined with a dotted line.

Tip The colours can be changed by editing the EASYHELP.INI file. Read the EasyHelp help file for details.



Note for HTML Users

Remember... the shortcut key combination for making or editing a link is:
'Ctrl+Shift+L'.

More about links later.

What does the Process step do?

You can use EasyHelp to mark-up up your document with topics and links in such a way that you can print off your document exactly as you intended. The **Process** step takes your document and converts it into a format that can be used as hypertext.

- For Microsoft Help files your document is converted into an .RTF file that can be built into a help file using the **Help Compiler**. EasyHelp does this for you in the **Build** step.
- For HTML files you document is converted into a series of .HTM files (one for each topic with this version of EasyHelp). No **Build** step is required, just browse the file using your preferred **browser**.

Remember... the shortcut key combination for processing your document is:
'Ctrl+Shift+P'.

What does the Build step do?

For producing Microsoft Help files the **Build** step compiles your processed document into a Help file.

For producing HTML files the **Build** step is not required, nor is the Help Compiler. To browse the generated HTML files use your preferred browser. The starting file for all these examples is 'CONTENTB.HTM'. The reason for this name will be explained in later examples.

Remember... the shortcut key combination for build a help file is:
'Ctrl+Shift+B'.

Microsoft Help Files

Microsoft Help files provide hypertext capabilities to all Windows users since the Microsoft Help Engine comes with all versions of Windows.

Each Help file contains one or more topics a reader can select by clicking hot spots, using the keyword search, or browsing through topics in any order you define.

HTML Files

HTML files are ASCII files with embedded *tags* that can be used with a WEB browser. With EasyHelp you do not need to know the format of these complicated tags, simply use the features of Microsoft Word to author your documents.

What is a WEB browser?

You use a WEB browser to view your HTML files. It serves a similar purpose to the Microsoft Help Engine but can be used on UNIX systems and across the Internet.

Two of the most popular browsers are:

- Mosaic
- Netscape

What is Hypertext?

Ted Nelson, a guru of alternative uses of technology, picked up the concept of hypertext in the late 1960's. The term is used to describe 'non sequential text fragments linked together with hot spots called hypertext links'.

With the addition of multimedia capabilities, hypertext becomes hypermedia.

The Microsoft Help engine and the World Wide Web are examples of hypermedia browsing systems.

The Microsoft Help Compiler

For legal reasons the Microsoft Help Compiler cannot be supplied with EasyHelp. You are expected to source this yourself.

Note: The Help Compiler is normally included with language products such as Visual Basic and C compilers from Borland and Microsoft. So check your hard disk - you may already have the required files.

Note: Please use version 3.10.505 (extended) or later of the Help Compiler. The **COMPILER.TXT** file installed with EasyHelp describes how to obtain the upgrade to the latest version of the Help Compiler.