

MiniHelp Plus v3.1 Shell Help

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How To Run MiniHelp Plus v3.1 Shell



Click on the buttons in the graphic above to see a brief definition of each.

FINALLY, it's here! MiniHelp Plus v3.1 now has a bona fide, full-fledged Windows® front end shell/user interface. And nothing could be simpler to use while still allowing you the ability to use the text editor of your choice, one that you already feel comfortable with. Now, with the MiniHelp Plus v3.1 Shell (a.k.a. ToolPad), you can compile your MiniHelp Plus v3.1 source files and run the Help Compiler (hcp.exe) without ever having to go into File Manager or look at the DOS command line. And you can do it all with just a "click" on a couple of buttons specifically designed to carry out these tasks. What follows is a step-by-step guide on how to take advantage of the built-in, "easy-to-use," functionality.

STEP ONE:

After you finish typing in your MiniHelp Plus v3.1 source text, open the ToolPad and click on the **"Configure..."** button. The filename you entered when you last configured MiniHelp Plus v3.1 appears in the top edit control box to let you know your *current* "configuration." If you are working on a new project, type in the name of the new source file ***without a file extension***, replacing the current configuration. If, however, this is the first time you run MiniHelp Plus v3.1, the top edit control box will be empty. If you click on the **OK** button or press **ENTER**, MiniHelp Plus v3.1 *automatically* creates its own INI file (called mhplus31.ini) in the Windows directory with all the information it needs to carry out its various functions. If you wish to exit the Configuration dialog box without making any changes, click on the **Cancel** button. The bottom edit control box allows you to configure the default ASCII text editor that is launched by MiniHelp Plus v3.1. Simply type in the ***full path and filename***, up to 150 characters, you want to use with MiniHelp Plus v3.1. If you choose not to make an entry here, Windows® Notepad is launched by default when you click on the **Text Editor** button. Here is a sample mhplus.ini file:

```
[Root]
File=test

[MiniHelp]
MHP=test.src

[Help Compiler]
HPJ=test.hpj
```

```
[Errorlog]
ERR=test.err

[Help File]
HELP=C:\MHPLUS31\test.hlp

[Text Editor]
EDITOR=c:\textedit\notebk\notebook.exe
```

As you can see, your source file **MUST** have the file extension of **.src**. The filename specified under the **[MiniHelp]** section of the INI file is what MiniHelp Plus v3.1 looks for to generate the RTF, HPJ, and Header files. Similarly, when you run the Help Compiler, MiniHelp Plus v3.1 seeks out the name defined in its INI file under the **[Help Compiler]** section before running the Help Compiler. This specifies what file MiniHelp Plus v3.1 is to use to launch the Help Compiler. The **[Errorlog]** section specifies the name of the errorlog file to insert into the generated HPJ file. The **[Help File]** section specifies the path and filename of your newly-created Help file to view when you click on the **View Help** button. The **[Text Editor]** section defines the path and filename of your favorite/default ASCII text editor MiniHelp Plus v3.1 launches when you click on the **Text Editor** button.

STEP TWO:

Click on the **Compile RTF** button. MiniHelp Plus v3.1 will begin to process your source file, generating the RTF, HPJ, and Header files. After a brief pause (depending on the size of your file), a message box will appear either telling you of a failure or if the files were generated successfully.

STEP THREE:

Click on the **Help Compiler** button. MiniHelp Plus v3.1 will launch the Help Compiler, using the HPJ file generated by MiniHelp Plus v3.1 in the last step. When the Help Compiler is finished, control will be returned to the ToolPad and the project error file will be written. You may view this file simply by clicking on the **Error File** button. Windows® Notepad will open with a list of error messages generated during the build with the Help Compiler. You can view this list at any time, at your leisure.

There...that's all there is to making your Help file using MiniHelp Plus v3.1! To learn about the other buttons, click on them in the graphic at the top of this screen.

Compiling Your MiniHelp Plus v3.1 Source File

Click on the **Compile RTF** button to compile the source file you specified when you configured MiniHelp Plus v3.1. The process is relatively quick and depends on the size of your file. A 16K source file will compile in just a few seconds, while a source file that is 850K may take 30 seconds to a minute, depending on the processor speed of your computer. When it is finished, a message box will appear notifying you of success or failure.

Running The Help Compiler

Click on the **Help Compiler** button to run the Help Compiler. Control will pass from the ToolPad to the Help Compiler, and back again when the Help Compiler is finished. Just as with the previous button, the compilation time depends on the size of your file **and** how many graphics you include in the Help file **and** the degree of compression you choose to use. No message box appears to let you know of success or failure. Instead, I strongly urge you to check the project error file (*filename.ERR*) by clicking on the **Error File** button to view any error generated by the Help Compiler during its build or compilation. This is the reason I added automatic generation of the project error file.

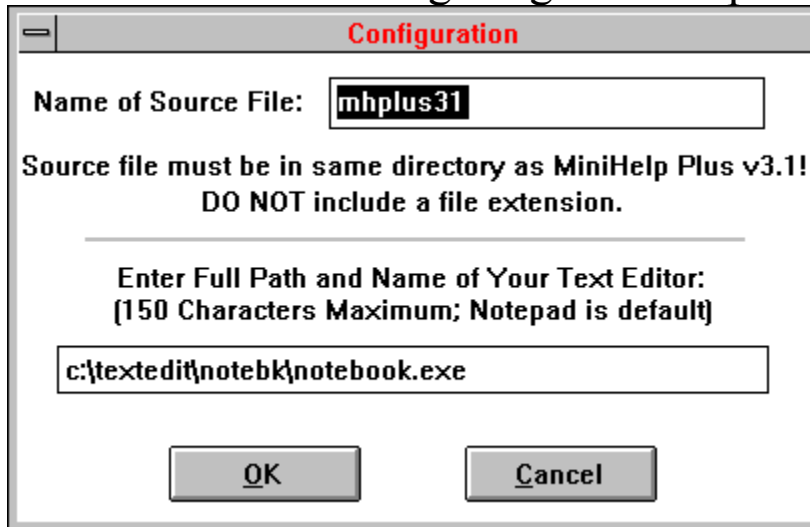
Viewing MiniHelp Plus v3.1 Help

Click on the **MiniHelp Help** button to view the Help file for MiniHelp Plus v3.1. This is where you will find all the information you need to construct your MiniHelp Plus v3.1 source file. This selection is also available from the system/control menu.

Viewing MiniHelp Plus v3.1 ToolPad Help

Click on the **ToolPad Help** button to view **this** Help file, MiniHelp Plus v3.1 ToolPad Help. This is where you will find all the information you need to run and configure the MiniHelp Plus v3.1 shell. This selection is also available from the system/control menu.

Configuring MiniHelp Plus v3.1



The image shows a Windows-style dialog box titled "Configuration" in red text. It has a standard Windows window frame with a minimize button. Inside the dialog, there is a label "Name of Source File:" followed by a text input box containing "mhplus31". Below this, a message states: "Source file must be in same directory as MiniHelp Plus v3.1! DO NOT include a file extension." A horizontal line separates this from the next section, which has the label "Enter Full Path and Name of Your Text Editor: (150 Characters Maximum; Notepad is default)". Below this label is another text input box containing "c:\textedit\notebk\notebook.exe". At the bottom of the dialog are two buttons: "OK" and "Cancel".

Click on the **Configure...** button to configure MiniHelp Plus v3.1 to process your latest project. Simply enter the filename *without a file extension* in the top edit control box. For example, if your source file is called "myhelp.src", you would only enter "myhelp" in the top edit control box. In the bottom edit control box, enter the **complete path and filename** of your favorite ASCII text editor (Notepad is the default). Click on the **OK** button to accept what you have typed into the edit control boxes and the MiniHelp Plus v3.1 INI file (mhplus31.ini) will be written. Click on the **CANCEL** button to exit the dialog box without accepting the changes and without changing your MiniHelp Plus v3.1 INI file.

About MiniHelp Plus v3.1



Clicking on the **About...** button displays the dialog box at the left, telling you about MiniHelp Plus v3.1. This selection is also available from the system/control menu.

Quitting MiniHelp Plus v3.1

Click on the **Exit** button to quit MiniHelp Plus v3.1. You will be prompted with a message box asking you if you are sure you want to quit, just in case you clicked on it by mistake. Click on the YES button in the message box if you indeed do want to quit, or click on the NO button if you do not want to quit.

Viewing YOUR Help File

Click on the **View Help** button to view your newly-created Help file. You can avoid any problems (i.e., Windows® Help not being able to find your Help file) by keeping the Help Compiler and all your source files in the same directory. MiniHelp Plus v3.1 uses your current working directory as the path to your new Help file. If you should happen to experience such a problem, try the solution mentioned above.

Viewing the Project Error File

By clicking on the **Error File** button, you can view the most recent Project Error File containing the errors encountered by the Help Compiler during its most recent build of your Help file. If nothing but the Help Compiler screen heading is present in the file, it means no errors were encountered while compiling your Help file.

Launching Your Favorite ASCII Text Editor

By clicking on the **Text Editor** button, you can launch your favorite ASCII text editor you specified when you configured MiniHelp Plus v3.1. If you do not specify a default, Windows® Notepad is launched by default. **TIP:** if you want MiniHelp Plus v3.1 to be able to launch your favorite text editor with your currently configured source file already loaded, append the complete path and filename to your source file to the end of your text editor's path and filename. For example:

c:\textedit\notebk\notebook.exe c:\mhplus31\mhpshe11.src

would automatically open my favorite text editor (Notebook) with the source file for this Help file (mhpshe11.src).

Rules Of The Road For MiniHelp Plus v3.1

There are a few things you must do in order for MiniHelp Plus v3.1 to run properly. Here they are:

- Make sure all your source files and related files are in the same directory as MiniHelp Plus v3.1.
- Make sure the Help Compiler and its error code file (hcp.err) are in the same directory. They may be either in your Windows® directory or in the same directory as MiniHelp Plus v3.1.
- The **only** Help Compiler supported by MiniHelp Plus v3.1 is called **HCP.EXE**. If you wish to use a different Help Compiler, you must rename the Help Compiler HCP.EXE. Perhaps I will change this in a future, minor upgrade version. That really wouldn't be all that difficult, but I chose HCP.EXE because there are some files that HC31.EXE can not or will not compile (e.g., Help files with lots of graphics). HC31.EXE does **not** take advantage of Extended Memory, while HCP.EXE is designed to take advantage of the extended memory on your system.
- If you wish to be able to view this Help file and the MiniHelp Plus v3.1 Help file, make sure they are in the same directory as MiniHelp Plus v3.1 or in your Windows® directory.
- Any time you want to find out what current project MiniHelp Plus v3.1 is currently configured for, click on the **Configure...** button. The text highlighted in the top edit control box is the current configuration for MiniHelp Plus v3.1. To make no changes and exit the dialog box, click on the **Cancel** button. Or, you can make any necessary changes by replacing the current selection with the filename (remember...no file extension) of your new project. Click on the **OK** button and the new configuration will replace the old one. Same thing goes for the bottom edit control box where you specify your default ASCII text editor.

MiniHelp Plus v3.1 Registration Form

Click on the "Print" button above (on the button bar) to print out your order form.

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Where did you obtain MiniHelp Plus v3.1?

If from America Online, please include your screen name.

How do you rate MiniHelp Plus v3.1 as meeting your needs? (Circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What size disk media do you want your FREE upgrade sent on? (Circle one)

3½"

5¼"

Comments:

Thank you for registering your copy of MiniHelp Plus v3.1. The addition of a Windows® front end shell should make it easier to use and perhaps help prompt others who haven't used it to give it a try.

Please send a check or money order for \$15.00 to:

Paul Arnote
1208 Randolph
Leavenworth, KS 66048

You may E-Mail me your questions, comments, or suggestions on America Online. Address mail to **AerosolMan**. I will attempt to answer all questions and will take your comments and suggestions into consideration for future upgrades.

MiniHelp Plus v3.1

License Agreement

MiniHelp Plus v3.1

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Just a little note...

I am releasing this version, MiniHelp Plus v3.1, without **ANY** restrictions. But, whether future versions will be similarly released without restrictions...is up to you. Registrations for MiniHelp Plus v2.3 were dismal, to say the least. I know that there are thousands of copies of the different versions of MiniHelp Plus v?.? out there and in use. A lot of time has gone into offering you what I feel is a quality software product at a very minimal cost. If the registrations for MiniHelp Plus v3.1 pick up **significantly**, then future versions will also be released without restrictions. However, if the registrations for MiniHelp Plus v3.1 remain as dismal as they currently are, I will be forced to present future versions with reasonable restrictions and you will have to send me the payment, at which point I will send you the full-functioning version. I would really hate to have to do this but my time and energy should be worth something. And \$15.00 is not all that much to ask.

Remember, this is SHAREWARE, not freeware or anything else considered free. Plus, as a registered user, you will receive, free of charge, one upgrade when it becomes available, mailed directly to your door. I'm not trying to get rich off this thing, but it would be nice if some of you regular users out there would let me know my efforts weren't for nothing by registering your copy. Come on now, this is, afterall, the HONOR system...do the honorable thing and register your copy!

This Help file was created with

MiniHelp Plus v3.1

Written by Paul Arnote
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Derived from the original MiniHelp that appeared
in the January, 1994 issue of Compute Magazine.

Written by Tom Campbell
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If you would like to use MiniHelp Plus v3.1 to create
your Help files, you may obtain your SHAREWARE copy
by either downloading it off of America Online or a
local bulletin board (depending if it has made it there yet).

Or you may write to:

Paul Arnote
1208 Randolph
Leavenworth, Kansas 66048

Send \$15.00, plus \$2.50 to cover shipping and handling,
the disk, and duplication costs. Be sure to specify disk size,
density, and program name, as well as your
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