V7. Balloons (System 7)

The Help Manager chapter in Inside Mac V6 would lead you to believe that adding balloon help for controls in ViewIt windows would be exceedingly difficult due to the dynamic nature of these windows. The fact is that we have made this exceedingly simple by having ViewIt do most of the work.

Help Command Format

When in help mode under System 7, balloon help defined by "help commands" is automatically displayed by ViewIt as the cursor is moved over controls.   The help commands can be added to the "Instructions" string associated with each control (set in ViewIt's Control dialog), and have the form,

    h©[help type],[help data]

where "help type" refers to the type of help resource associated with the control, and "help data" is either the actual help text, an index number into an STR# string list, or a resource ID number.
   No more than one help command should appear in each control's instruction string, and it should be separated from any other commands (such as ViewBV 's "activate" and "show" commands) by a carriage return. The help type/data pairs supported by ViewIt are:

     Help Type   Help Data
        1   help text string
        2   PICT ID
        6   TEXT/styl ID*
        7   STR ID
     STR# ID   index into STR#
* The Help Manager has problems wrapping large blocks of text.   Use carriage returns to help format large TEXT blocks.

You can also base balloon help on the current control state.   This is done by specifying one or two additional "help data" parameters (separated by commas) that correspond to the "inactive" and "checked" states of the control (if these are not specified, then the first help data is always used).

Example Commands
h©1002,4
...use 4th string in STR# 1002 as help text
h©6,1020
...use TEXT/styl 1020 pair to display styled help text
h©1,This is my control
...use "This is my control" as help text
h©2,1051,1052,1053
...use PICT 1051 for active unchecked state, PICT 1052 when inactive, and PICT 1053 when checked

TIP: You might be tempted to simply use help type 1 to make the help text part of the control record, but this has three drawbacks: First, since commas are used to delimit successive help entries, and carriage returns denote the end of a command, neither commas nor carriage returns can be part of type 1 help text.   Second, help text saved as part of the control record is not purgeable from memory while the control is in use.   Third, such help text can never be shared between controls.   The logical thing to do in most cases will be to use STR# string lists, although type 1 help text can be useful when experimenting with the appearance of new help strings.