



Visual Help

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Note this complete help file and all graphics where developed using Visual Help.

For Help on Help Press F1

Introduction

What is a Help file

A help file is a document file for the application "WINHELP.EXE" which is a part of Microsoft Windows. Help documents are organized into separate TOPICS, a topic is a single page in a help file. Within a Topic You can have TEXT, and/or Graphics. You can specify certain text and/or graphics to be HOT SPOTS, a HOT SPOT is linked to another topic, when the end user clicks on a hot spot area, the help document will jump to the specified topic. This type of document management is called HYPER TEXT.

What is Visual Help

Visual Help is a development environment for Microsoft Windows HELP documents. You can develop .hlp documents using Visual Help and the Help Compiler only, you do not need any word processing application to accomplish this task.

How Visual Help Works

You can develop the topics for the help file by dragging and dropping objects on a topic Window. These objects are Titles, Headings, Sub Headings, Paragraphs, Jump labels, and Images. After you define your topics you can specify the topic names to jump to for the jump labels and images. You also can attach notes to topics for future reference. An outline view of all topics is available to view the structure of the help file and it is also used to access the topics for editing.

Not only for Programmers

Visual Help can be used by any one to develop Windows Help Files, You do not need to be a programmer. Here are some Ideas you can use Help files for other than applications help.

Company Procedures Manual

Company Databases

Multimedia Authoring

Information Guides

Readme Files

Shared Network Information

Electronic Books

All the above can be shared on a network for all users to access and it is also portable, you need only one file and you can play it on any Windows based computer without the need for an application to run it, and with Visual Help ease of use and fast update these tasks will become a breeze.

System Requirements

Hardware Requirements

- n Personal Computer using an 80286 or higher microprocessor (80386 is recommended)
- n 2 MB RAM
- n EGA, VGA, super VGA, XGA, 8514/A or compatible video graphics card.
- n Mouse.

Software Requirements

- n MS DOS operating system version 3.1 or later.
- n Microsoft Windows version 3.1 or later.
- n Microsoft Windows Help Compiler version 3.1 or higher.

Getting Started

To plan your Help topics is the first step in authoring an effective Help system, so plan well and do take the time to organize an outline before starting to build your project.

[Planning](#)

[Graphics and sound](#)

Planning

If you are creating Help for a Microsoft Windows-based application, you may want to follow these guidelines.

Planning Contents Screens

The purpose of the main contents screen is to provide an overview of the contents of the Help system and to give clear, logical paths to information. It should work like the table of contents in a book.

Sub-Level Contents Screens

Sub-Level Contents screens open paths from the main contents to individual topics. Category entries on the main contents screen jump to sub-level contents screens that either list help topics in that category or display other sub-level contents screens.

Guidelines for Contents Screens

Entries can be listed under several different category headings. For example, reference entries and procedural entries can be separated.

Entries are presented by category, as either text jumps or graphic images. List entries in logical order (for example, by learning-path, by frequency of use, or alphabetically).

Your list should include no more than 10 entries. Avoid having more than 15 entries, if possible. If your list is longer than 15 entries, try to break it up with headings or into more than one contents screen.

Avoid deeply nested sub-levels so the user doesn't have to jump more than two or three times to display a help topic.

On contents screens with entries that jump to individual Help topics, avoid long scrolling lists of entries.

Planning Topics

Optimally, a Help topic is one, and at most two screens long. A Help screen is defined as approximately one half the width of a maximized window and 1520 lines long.

Avoid using too many pop-up hot spots on a single screen because they can make the screen hard to read.

Graphics and Sound

Graphics

Visual Help accepts Windows BMP images, if you have a non BMP format image you need to convert it to BMP file. Visual Help includes a utility called Image Design to convert Icons ".ICO" and Windows Meta Files ".WMF" and fonts to bitmaps ".BMP".

To optimize the size and speed of your help file, convert all 256 color bitmap files to 16 color.

Sound

Visual Help accepts Windows WAV sounds, if you have a non WAV format sound you need to convert it to a WAV file. Visual help allows you run Sound recorder from the Window menu. Note all sound files must exist in the same directory of the project to be able to assign them.

Procedures

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First Steps

[Creating a new Topic](#)

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Creating a New Topic

What is a Topic

A topic is a single page in the Help document.

Creating a Topic

n From the File Menu, select New Topic.

or

n From Visual Help Button Bar, click on the first button "T".

n Enter a Topic name in the text box at the upper left corner of the topic window then hit "TAB" Key.

Note when a new topic is created a Title Object is inserted at the top of the Topic, when you edit the Topic name, the title will automatically copy the same name. You can delete the title if you do not wish it be there.

Saving a Topic

Automatic saving

Topics are loaded in memory when created but are saved automatically in certain situations such as when the user hits the runtime button to simulate the help file.

Manual saving

n Click the first Button in the Topic Window Button Bar, (The Disk Icon).

or

n Close the Topic Window from the Control Menu Box.

Adding Objects

Objects

Valid Objects are Titles, Headings, Subheadings, Paragraphs, Bullets, Jump labels, and Images.

Adding an Object at the end of the Topic

- n Make Sure the Topic Window you want to add an object to is visible, then drag the Object Icon from the Tool Box and drop on the Topic Window when the Icon looks like a paper dropping.

Inserting an Object in the Topic

- n Make Sure the Topic Window you want to add an object to is visible, then drag the Object Icon from the Tool Box and drop on the object you want to insert before, an arrow Icon will show that you can insert.

Deleting Objects

Objects

Valid Objects are Titles, Headings, Subheadings, Paragraphs, Bullets, Jump labels, and Images.

Delete an Object

- n Click on the object you wish to delete.
- n Click on the trash button in the topic window button bar. "Button #7"

Editing Text Objects

Multiline Text Objects

Paragraph and Bullet objects are multiline Text objects. Pressing the Enter key will expand the object by one line.

Single Line Text Objects

Title, Heading, SubHeading, and Jump Label Objects are Single line Text Objects, all text must be entered on one line.

Tabs

Tabs are allowed in Text Objects, You can enter tabs in the Text by hitting "CTRL-TAB" combination keys, if you hit the "TAB" Key by it self the focus will go to the next Text Object in the Topic.

Putting it together

[Add Buttons](#)

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Add Buttons

What are buttons

You can add buttons to the default Winhelp buttons on the top of the help window, and assign Winhelp macros to these buttons.

How to Edit buttons

- n From the "Window" Menu select Button Design, a button design window will popup.
- n If no button exist you can start typing a button Caption, other wise select insert.
- n Enter Button Name Select Winhelp macro to execute when button is selected.
- n Repeat for all new buttons.
- n Click on OK to save and exit or Cancel to disregard changes.

Design Images

What is the Image design tool

Image design is a tool to help you create logo and button bitmaps to use in you help file.

How to create an Image

n From the Window menu select Image Design.

or

n From the Visual Help Window click on the Camera Icon Button.

n Enter a path and filename for an Icon, Bitmap, or Windows meta file in the image text box, or leave blank.

n Type in text in the text box, then select the attributes for the text from the window.

n Click on save to save the image, you will be prompted for a filename to save the bitmap under.

Now you can use this bitmap in your help file.

Define Jumps

- n Select a Jump Label or Image Object you want to define Jump for.
- n Click on the Action Button in the Topic Window (The second Button). This will open the Action Window.
- n Select the "Jump to Topic" from the Combo Selection Box.
- n Select the Topic Name to Jump to from the List.
- n Check the Popup Box if you want the jump to be a popup Jump, other wise leave unchecked.
- n Click on the OK button or hit Enter Key.

Define WinHelp Macros

- n Select a Jump Label or Image Object you want to assign Winhelp Macro for.
- n Click on the Action Button in the Topic Window (The second Button). This will open the Action Window.
- n Select the "Winhelp Macro" from the Combo Selection Box.
- n Select the Macro You want executed from the list.
- n Click on the OK button or hit Enter Key.

Playing Sound Files

- n Select a Jump Label or Image Object you want to assign file for.
- n Click on the Action Button in the Topic Window (The second Button). This will open the Action Window.
- n Select "Play Media" from the Combo Selection Box.
- n Select the Sound file you want to play on selection from the list. (All sound files must be in the same directory as the help file).
- n Click on the OK button or hit Enter Key.

Define Non-Scroll Area

What is a Non-scroll area

Non-scroll areas in help files always sticks to the top of the window, and will not scroll with the rest of the help contents if the scroll bars where used.

Setting Non-scroll areas

n Click on the last object to be included in the non-scroll area.

n Click on the Non-scroll toggle button in the Topic Window Button bar.(Button #4)

Clicking the Non-scroll button will reverse the previous action

Define Keywords

What is a keyword

Keywords are used by the end user to search for topics in the help file. Visual help automatically assigns all topic names as a keyword for the topic, you can disable this feature if you wish from the Options-Environment menu.

Editing Keywords

- n Activate the Topic window for the topic you wish define keywords for.
- n Click on the key Button in the Topic window button bar, a keyword list window will popup.
- n If the selected keyword is empty in the list you can start typing a keyword, other wise click on the insert button then type the new keyword.
- n Repeat previous process for all keywords.
- n Click on the OK button to save all changes, or cancel to disregard.

Define Context Id

What is Context Id

A topic context ID is used to link a topic to a context sensitive help in an application. Visual help will generate all context IDs for you if you wish, You need to make sure that the "regenerate context ids" option is set in the environment options, please note that this option will reset to false after the first build so you need to set it again to generate context ids automatically, (this is a precaution not to overwrite programmer defined context ids which can be set from the topic window or from the outline window).

From Outline or Browse Window

- n Click on the Context ID button, a context id edit window will popup.
- n Enter new context Id then hit OK button.

From Topic Window

- n Click on the context id button in the topic window button bar "Button #6", a context id edit window will popup.
- n Enter new context Id then hit OK button.

Note that if you enter a duplicate context id and hit ok, a beep will sound and you are allowed to re-edit the context id.

Attach Note

Why notes

You can attach notes to topics to help remind you of changes and updates that need to be done, and also it is useful if more than one person works on project you can leave notes to co workers to proof read, or check something for you.

Attaching a note

- n Activate the topic window you want to attach a note for, by clicking on its caption bar for example.
- n Click on the pin button in the topic window button bar, "Button # 8". a note edit window will appear and the time and date will be automatically stamped in the text.
- n Edit the note then click on OK to save or Cancel to disregard.

Notes will not be included in the help file.

Final Steps

[Testing the Help file](#)

[Making the Help file](#)

Testing the Help file

Runtime testing

- n Click on the play button on the visual help button bar, a window will popup emulating the help document
- n Click on the Stop Button when done.

Outline view test

- n Click on the Outline View button on the visual help window button bar "Button # 5"
- or
- n Select Outline from the view menu.

Making the Help file

Build

n From the Compile Menu, select Build.

Build will create all files necessary for the help compiler to compile the help file.

Compile

n From the Compile Menu, select Compile.

Compile will execute the help compiler to generate the help document.

Run

n From the Compile Menu, select Run.

Run will execute Winhelp with the generated help document.

All the above

n From the Compile Menu, select all the above.

Build, Compile and Run the final help document

Options

[Project Options](#)

[Define Styles](#)

[Environment Options](#)

Project Options

Why mess with these

If you want to optimize or edit a certain option from the help project file, this is where you need to do it. Do not use a text editor because the hpj file will be overwritten after every build. If you do not know what you are doing do not mess these options.

Editing project options

- n From the options menu select Project Options. A project edit window will popup.
- n From the combo box select the Project Options Category to edit. The [Options] category is the most common area to edit.
- n From the list select the option to edit, a text box or combo box will appear on top of the list indicating current value.
- n Edit the selection value.
- n Click Ok Button to save or Cancel to disregard and exit.

Startup Topic "Contents"

The first Topic to save is the topic to be assigned as the startup topic in the help file. You can change this to any other topic from the options section of the Project Options, the selection name is Contents. When selected a combo box with all topics will appear and you may change and save you selection then.

Define Styles

What are styles

A style is the look attributes of an object such as a title or paragraph, in the help document.

Editing styles

- n From the Options Menu select Styles, a style definition window will popup.
- n From the styles list select the style you want to edit.
- n Check, click, and select the attributes for the current style, a visual representation of the object will show in the preview box.
- n Click OK to save and exit or cancel to disregard.

Environment Options

What are the Environment Options

Environment Options are the options global to all projects.

Help Compiler

The name and path of the help compiler, if the help compiler exists in the dos path then just the name.

Regenerate Context Ids

If checked, Visual Help will regenerate all context ids in the .HH file. This Option will reset to false after the first Build, that is to ensure that user defined Context Ids are not over written on next Build.

Add topic name to Keywords list

If Checked, Visual Help will add the Topic name to the keyword list automatically. (Default is true)

How to edit the Environment Options

- n From the Options menu select Environment, a Window will popup to edit options.
- n Edit options.
- n Click on Ok Button to save or Cancel to disregard.

Reports

[Topics List](#)

[Topics Outline](#)

[Project Options](#)

Topics List Report

What is on the report

This report will generate a list of all topics in the project with Context Ids.

How to generate report

- n From the Report Menu select Topics List option. A report window will show.
- n From the report window Click on Print to print the report

Topics Outline Report

What is on the report

This report will generate an outline of the topics with the browse sequence numbers.

How to generate report

- n From the Report Menu select Topics Outline option. A report window will show.
- n From the report window Click on Print to print the report

Project Options Report

What is on the report

This report will print all current Project Options in the HPJ file.

How to generate report

- n From the Report Menu select Project Options. A report window will show.
- n From the report window Click on Print to print the report

Menu Commands

[File Menu](#)

[Edit Menu](#)

[View Menu](#)

[Compile Menu](#)

[Options Menu](#)

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[Window Menu](#)

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File Menu

New

Open

Save

Save As

New Topic

New Window

Remove Topic

Remove Window

Import

Export

Print

Print Setup

Exit

New

Create a new project file, and save existing project file if necessary.

Open

Open an existing project file. and save current file if necessary.

Save

Save Current project file.

Save As

Save Current Project under a different name.

New Topic

Create a new topic for the help document.

New Window

Feature Not Implemented.

Remove Topic

Delete current topic from help document.

Remove Window

Feature Not Implemented.

Import

Feature Not Implemented.

Export

Feature Not Implemented.

Print

Open Print Dialog box to print topics from the document.

Print Setup

Open Printer Setup Dialog Box.

Exit

Quit Application and save current changes if necessary.

Edit Menu

Cut

Copy

Paste

Delete

Find

Find Next

Find Previous

Cut

Remove selection and place on the clipboard.

Copy

Copy selection and place on the clipboard.

Paste

Paste selection from the clipboard.

Delete

Remove selection and do not place on the clipboard.

Find

Open Find Topic dialog box to find a topic name or text within.

Find Next

Find Next occurrence of text specified in the find dialog box.

Find Previous

Find previous occurrence of text specified in the find dialog box.

View Menu

[Outline](#)

[Browse](#)

Outline

Open outline view Window.

Browse

Open Browse view Window.

Compile Menu

[Build](#)

[Compile](#)

[Run](#)

[All the above](#)

Build

Build the help document .rtf and .hbj files, these are files necessary for the help compiler to generate the Help .hlp file.

Compile

Compile the .hpx and .rtf files using the help compiler to generate the .hlp file.

Run

Run the generated .hlp file, this will execute the file Winhelp.exe using the generated .hlp document.

All the above

Build, Compile, and run the help file.

Options Menu

[Project](#)

[Styles](#)

[Environment](#)

Project

Opens a dialog box for changing the .hpj (Help Project File) options.

Styles

Opens a dialog box for changing the styles attributes, such as font names, sizes, colors, etc.

Environment

Opens a dialog box for setting the environment options, such as the help compiler file name and location.

Reports Menu

[Topics List](#)

[Topics Outline](#)

[Project Options](#)

Topics List

Prepare a report of all topics listed in alphabetical order.

Topics Outline

Prepare a report of topics listed in an outline form according to hierarchy in the help file.

Project Options Report

Prepare a report of all project options, .hpj file contains most of the options listed in this report.

Window Menu

[Bitmap Design](#)

[Button Design](#)

[Tool Box](#)

Bitmap Design

Open Bitmap Design Window.

Button Design

Open Button Design Window.

Tool Box

Open Tool box Window.

Help Menu

[Contents](#)

[Search](#)

[Product Support](#)

[Introducing Visual Help](#)

[Register](#)

[About Visual Help](#)

Contents

Goto the contents of this help file.

Search

Open Winhelp search dialog box for this help file.

Product Support

Get product support channels information.

Introducing Visual Help

Goto introduction Topic in this help document.

Register

Goto Registration topic of Visual Help.

About

Open about Visual Help dialog box.

Tips and Tricks

Follow these tips for a more productive help development.

- n When adding a Topic Window, Click on the new topic button then go directly to the Topic name in the Topic window and type a new topic name, the title entry will automatically copy the same name.
- n Use the runtime testing instead of compiling the project to test jumps and sound files.
- n Give your Topics logical names that can be used as a keyword for the end user to find the Topic, Visual Help will include all Topic names as keywords by default.
- n Use the find Topic from the edit window to locate topics in large help files.
- n Try not open many Topic Windows at one time, (even there is no limit on topic windows, they are limited by your system resources).
- n Create Buttons for your help file, for example if you have a form you want the end user to print, create a print button for it.
- n Give Topic names the same name as in the jump label, this way it is easier to find when tracing large help files.
- n Save 256 color or higher bitmaps into 16 color bitmaps, this will make the execution of Winhelp faster.
- n Link images at the end of your development cycle, reason is, the help compiler executes faster when no images are included, this will accelerate the debugging process.

Registration

To register through Compuserve, GO SWREG, registration id 891.

To get a hard copy of the following form select file menu, Print.

Visual Help V1.0a

Please register my copy of Visual Help, I am sending a check or money order for the amount of \$49.00.

Sign: _____

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address1: _____

Address2: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Country: _____

Tel: _____ optional

Where did you here about Visual Help

Multi-User Registration

Single user	\$49.00
10 to 20 users	\$400.00
21 to unlimited	\$700.00

Amount inclosed

Please specify disk size: 3.5 inch 5.25 inch

Send completed form with payment to

WinWare
P.O. Box 2923
Mission Viejo CA 92690

Product Support

Product Support for Visual Help is available through the following channels:-

Compuserve

Please direct questions to:

Firas Bushnaq
70272,1656

WinSIG BBS

714-363-9802 2400/9600-N-8-1
From the Main Menu select Comment to SysOp.

What do you get

Latest Version of Visual Help

- n More Sample help projects on disk.
- n More extensive printing and reporting capabilities.
- n More extensive programmer support.
- n Import and Export capabilities.
- n Help to Manual features to convert your help files into printed Manuals.

Product Support

- n Through Compuserve. (CIS ID # 70272,1656)
- n Through 24 hour BBS support. (WinSIG BBS 714-363-9802)

New releases

- n Notification of new releases.
- n Minimal charges for upgrades.

