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An Overview of HelpColr

Welcome to HelpColr for Windows!   The HelpColr for Windows program supports the Microsoft Windows 3.x Operating System family.   This includes Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Windows for Workgroups, Microsoft Windows NT 3.1 and Windows for Pen Computing.

The HelpColr program allows you to modify the different colors that appear in the Windows Help System.   The color entries are stored in the [Windows Help] section of the "WIN.INI" file .   You can modify these colors manually by editing the "WIN.INI" file with a text editor and putting in the desired RGB color values in a "rrr ggg bbb" fashion.   However, unless you have a color chart readily available, or know specific RGB values, this is not a very practical way to set your Help colors.   This is where the HelpColr program can be of great assistance.   The HelpColr Program allows you to visually see your modifications that you are making and then save these changes to the "WIN.INI" by choosing the "OK" option.   If you do not like the new colors you have chosen, you can simply choose the appropriate setting and change the color again, or you can chose the "Cancel" option which will exit the HelpColr application and leave your original color settings intact.

When HelpColr starts, it automatically comes up with the colors that are currently set in the [Windows Help] section.   If the color entries are not present, it will use the default colors that Windows assigns to the individual entries.

Please feel free to distribute HelpColr to your friends and associates.   HelpColr is free of charge and is designed to be used by anyone who finds it helpful.   If you wish to distribute HelpColr to your favorite bulletin boards, which I encourage, please be sure that you have included the VBRUN300.DLL and HELPCOLR.HLP files along with HELPCOLR.EXE.   HelpColr needs the VBRUN300.DLL file to run, and the HELPCOLR.HLP file is useful to people new to Windows and/or the Windows Help color system.

If you should experience color problems, dithered colors, or any abnormal program execution problems with HelpColr, please refer to the Running the Debug Mode section of this help file.   It will describe the process of reporting information to me and a switch that can be run to produce a debug output file.

Help File Settings

Description of the different Radio Buttons used to choose a setting.

Jump - Selects the <u>Jump</u> Color.   Allows you to change the JumpColor setting.

Popup - Selects the <u>Popup</u> Color.   Allows you to change the PopupColor setting.

Macro - Selects the <u>Macro</u> Color.   Allows you to change the MacroColor setting.

IFJump - Selects the <u>IFJump</u> Color.   Allows you to change the IFJumpColor setting.

IFPopup - Selects the <u>IFPopup</u> Color.   Allows you to change the IFPopupColor setting.

JumpColor

Definition.

A word displayed in the JumpColor, when chosen, will "jump" you to a new section in the *same* help file. The most common use for the JumpColor text is to lead the user to a sub-category under a major topic. For example, if you have a topic called "Printing", you may have several sub categories under this topic such as "Adding a new printer", "Printing multiple copies", and "Printing Envelopes".   The "jump" method is usually used to navigate to these sub categories.

PopupColor

Definition.

A word colored with the PopupColor, when chosen, will allow you view the definition associated with that keyword or phrase in the *same* help file.   The most common use for the PopupColor text is to signify that the word contains a definition.   This is useful for new users, or users who may not be familiar with the language common to the application.   For example, the word "Icon" may   be a word that a user does not understand but is colored with the PopupColor.   The user could then click on the word and get a definition possibly saying "An icon is a pictorial representation of a application or file in the Windows Operating System."   The Popup window will stay "active" until the you click the left mouse button again to dismiss the window.

MacroColor

Definition.

Text that appears in the MacroColor will execute a macro when clicked on.   The macros can range from bringing up Copyright information, a common function in help files, to executing a complex macro designed to retrieve special information.   It is not uncommon to see graphics used now in place of macro text to run macros.

IFJumpColor

Definition.

The text that you see displayed in the IFJumpColor will have the same functionality as text in the regular JumpColor, except that it will lead you to a topic in a *different* help file.   It will do this by opening another help window and placing or "jumping" you to the related section.   For more information on the "Jump" concept, please refer to the "JumpColor" definition.

IFPopupColor

Definition.

The text that you see designated with the IFPopupColor will have the same functionality as text in the regular PopupColor, except that it will display the information that "pops up" in a *different* help file.   It will do this by first opening another help window and then displaying the related information.   For more information on the "Popup" concept, please refer to the "PopupColor" definition.

Saving or Exiting Options

Methods for saving or disregarding your changes.

OK

  This option will save out the color changes that you have made for the different text entries, and then notify the Windows Operating System of the modifications to your WIN.INI.   If you choose this option by accident and have not made any changes, it will simply exit the HelpColr application.

Cancel

  This option will simply exit the application.   It will ignore any changes that you have made since starting the HelpColr application.   This is a good option to exercise if you have made changes to see what the effects would be and then decide not to save your changes.

Additional References

How to find out more information about Microsoft Windows.

If you are interested in more information about the Microsoft Windows Operating System and the WINHELP program, you can purchase the Microsoft Windows 3.1 Resource Kit directly from Microsoft. This 500 odd page reference book contains a wealth of information about the way Windows 3.1 works, and many, many settings that you as a user can modify.   I would like to point out that this book is mainly of reference nature and not one of casual reading.   The kit also comes with a disk containing some useful programs for use in Windows.   For more information regarding the Microsoft Windows 3.1 Resource Kit, you may contact the Microsoft Product Support Services.

Message - The current video driver...

Explanation of system colors.

If you receive the message that your current video driver does not support the four extra system colors, DO NOT BE ALARMED.   This is perfectly normal behavior.   My program determines whether or not your driver supports the extra four system colors.   All Microsoft Windows 16-Color drivers that I have tested so far DO NOT support the four extra system colors.   To be quite honest, you are not really missing much.   If you have a driver that supports 256 colors or more, you will get the 20 system color choices in which to use for setting your text for the Help system.   If you have a 16 color video driver, you will get 16 choices.   A rather interesting note is that while you may have a driver that supports 32,000 colors or more, you can still only represent text in the 20 basic system colors.   The reason for this, to the best of my knowledge, is that Windows must use a "standard" solid color to display text.   To do this, it will match a "non-standard" solid or dithered color to the closest System Palette Color that is available in the System Palette.

Uninstalling HelpColr...

Process to uninstall HelpColr

If you would like to uninstall HelpColr, you can do so by removing the following files from your hard drive: HELPCOLR.EXE, HELPCOLR.HLP, and VBRUN300.DLL.   These are the files that make up the HelpColr program.   Normally the VBRUN300.DLL file should reside in the <drive>:\WINDOWS\ SYSTEM directory, however depending on whether or not you moved the files to that location will determine if you need to remove it from the SYSTEM directory.   It is probably a good idea to hold onto the VBRUN300.DLL file since there may be other programs that you will use in the future that will make use of this file.

About the Author

How you can send me feedback concerning HelpColr.

If you would like to send me feedback related to HelpColr, which I strongly encourage, please feel free to contact me through CompuServe or Internet.   My CompuServe ID number is 70162,176.   If you have Interenet access, I can be reached at "chado@microsoft.com".   Please feel free to send comments and suggestions to me about HelpColr.   I hope you enjoy using HelpColr!

Windows Defaults Option

Describes the function of the Windows Defaults Option

The Windows Defaults button allows you to set all the Help file color settings to the original state you are presented with after a normal installation of Microsoft Windows.   Note that choosing this option does not automatically save the settings.   If you desire to save your settings as the Windows Defaults, you must first choose the Windows Defaults button, and then the OK option.

Running the Debug Mode of HelpColr

Describes how to run in debug mode

If you should come across a bug or some problems in HelpColr, I have included a switch that will record some key information for me.   If you run HelpColr with the /d switch, it will create a file called "HELPDBUG.TXT".   One method of running with the debug switch is as follows: from File Manager, change to the directory that HelpColr is stored on your hard drive.   Click once on HELPCOLR.EXE to highlight the file.   Then choose File from the menu bar, choose Run from this pulldown menu.   Now you should have a window with HELPCOLR.EXE highlighted in it.   Using your right arrow key, or the "End" key on your keyboard, move to the end of the command line.   Once you are at the end, press the spacebar once, and then enter a "/d" without the quotes.   You should see in the command line window, something like the following: "C:\HELPCOLR\HELPCOLR.EXE /d".   This may not match exactly, but gives an example of what it may look like.   Depending on the directory that you have the HelpColr program located in will determine what you see.   Now click on OK.   The HELPDBUG.TXT file that is created in the HelpColr application directory contains some very useful information that will help me recreate the problem you are coming across.   This is not a substitute; however, for a description of the steps needed to reproduce the problem.   This file merely tells me some information about your video driver and the number of System Palette Colors it contains.   It also lets me know what was present in your WIN.INI before you started and what HelpColr wrote back out.   Please include this file in the mail (see About the Author in this help file) that you send to me along with information about your Video card, video driver version, your video resolution, and any other steps or special circumstances needed to reproduce your scenario.   With your help, I can make the HelpColr program as solid as possible!