Welcome to VB HelpWriter!

Introduction

Button Bar Commands

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Press F1 for help on using help.

Introduction
Welcome!

We created **VB HelpWriter** especially for the Visual Basic programmer.

You can now do in hours what used to take weeks to accomplish. Your customers will still get the high quality helpfiles they demand, and you can spend your time where it counts the most... on your application!
(C programmers , take notice.)

VB HelpWriter automates your helpfile creation...

- **Reads your VB program and creates a helpfile framework**
- **Automatically links to your program's forms**
- **Real WYSIWYG editing environment**
- **Easy creation of hypertext jumps and popups**
- **Automatic GLOSSARY generation**
- **Checks for "unreachable" topics**
- **Reads and Writes standard RTF files (PRO version only)**
- **Automatic topic formatting for a professional look**

Helpfile overview
Easy to use, but not easily outgrown...
Getting Started
Automatic helpfile creation...

Feature checklist...

Topic Creation
- Built in <u>CASE</u> function creates helpfiles from VB/Source Code
- Generates VB code to link to WINHELP API calls.
- Drag'n drop creates <u>hypertext links</u>
- Full <u>WYSIWYG</u> editing
- Add graphics to your helpfile simply
- Test without compiling
- Popup, bordered and shadowed paragraph support
- Non-Scrolling regions and NO-WRAP regions
- Automatic formatting of titles and footers
- Automatic   GLOSSARY creation
- Flexible BROWSE sequencing
- Copyright notices
- Cross checking for "orphaned topics" and bad jumps!

Environment
- Imports/Exports text and RTF files
- Works with your favorite bitmap editor
- Works with your favorite text editor
- Prints Detailed topic reports
- Provides an overview of topics and jumps

<u>Overview</u>

Getting Started

System Requirements

Before using VB HelpWriter, you should...
- Tell VB HelpWriter where to find your windows help compiler
- Add HelpContextIDs to your code

Creating your first helpfile...
- Select **File|New** from the main menu.
  (VB HelpWriter's helpfile wizard will create a helpfile skeleton for you)

Add descriptions and JUMPS between topics.

Add graphics and text formatting

Compile your new helpfile and...

View your new helpfile by pressing the "traffic light" icon.

Advanced features... Graphics, formatting, and GLOSSARY

Automatic help generator

The "**Automatic helpfile generator**", reads your Visual Basic files and automatically creates a help topic for each form. The help topic will list all COMMAND BUTTONS, MENUS, RADIO/CHECK buttons, and TEXT/LIST boxes, or just those controls you select interactively, or by entering values into the Tag and HelpContextID properties.

VB HelpWriter is smart enough to link the new helpfile to your program!   Each topic in the new helpfile is linked to a specific VB form, so "F1" will take your users directly to the help topic of interest.

Preparing your VB code
Using the help wizard...

Autogenerating help files!

Using the helpfile wizard...

You can call the "autogenerate" feature of VB HelpWriter in one of two ways:
    1. Select File | New from the main menu   (start with all new topics)

    2. Select File | Autogenerate, or press the "magic wand" icon (add topics)

Using the Autogenerate feature

The above dialog box will appear, with the following options...

TAB GROUPS

Source Files - Select which VB files to generate help for.
Control Selection - Pre-select controls on each form to include in helpfile
HelpText - Select which attributes of controls to import to helpfile

SourceFiles (Tab)
    Select VB Source Files - Press this button to open a file dialog to select VB source files
    The **Delete** and **Remove All** buttons allow files to be removed once selected

Control Selection (Tab)
Select controls with non-empty TAG properties:
    Selecting this option instructs VB HelpWriter to include only controls with a TAG property in the
    initial helpfile.   This is helpful when you wish to pre-select controls for HELP while designing. Put
    a short text string in each important control's TAG property that briefly describes the control's
    function.
    This is one easy way to remember what information to include in your helpfile.

Select controls with non-zero HelpContextID property
    Another way of pre-selecting controls to list in a helpfile.

Select ALL controls on each VB form
    Setting this options disables the two options above.   When this checkbox is selected, VB
    HelpWriter will mention ALL controls in your program in your starting helpfile.   This is useful when
    you don't wish to go back into your program to add descriptions or HelpContextID's to your
    controls.
    You'll almost certainly want to use the "Interactive" control selection when using this option.

Interactive Selection
    When this listbox is checked, VB HelpWriter will open a dialog after processing each topic and allow

you to interactively select which controls will be included in the helpfile.   Selected controls will either go on the parent form or be given a help topic of their own.   See <u>Interactive Control Selection</u> for more information.

Help Text

<u>Show Tag Contents of each control</u>
(default=ON) VB HelpWriter imports the TAG property of selected controls into the helpfile.

<u>Show VB Name (example: Text1)</u>
(default=OFF) VB HelpWriter will include the VB variable name of each control in your starting helpfile. This is sometimes useful when using printed source code as a reference while writing your helpfile, or if there is no TAG description for each control.

<u>Show control Type (example: TextBox)</u>
(default=OFF) Also useful when using code reference for creating a helpfile.
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Preparing your VB code to work with VB HelpWriter

Step 1: Set the HelpContextID property of each FORM in your program to a unique number.

Step 2: For each control that you wish to mention in your helpfile, enter a short description of the control's function in the control's Tag property.   VB HelpWriter will use this description when generating your help topics.

 Next Step...

Notes:

System Requirements

This program runs under Windows 3.1.

To generate helpfiles with this program, you will need the following:
- A PC running WIndows with at least 2 MB of RAM (4   MB recommended)
- A Windows help compiler
- At 386 processor or better.

Help Compiler

Start the DOS session that runs the Help Compiler.

The help compiler is a DOS application that processes VB HelpWriter's output files to create a Windows compatible help file (*.HLP).   Since Microsoft has not yet published the Winodows helpfile format, no third party tools are available to create helpfiles without Microsoft's own Help Compiler program.

VB HelpWriter creates all source files for you, but you will still need a help compiler to generate your windows help file. If you own a "Professional" edition of Visual Basic, or nearly any 'C' or 'C++' compiler that generates Windows programs, you probably already own a help compiler!

The Visual Basic Professional Edition help compiler program can be found in the C:\VB\HC\ directory as "HC30.EXE" or "HC31.EXE".   VB HelpWriter comes configured to support the HC31.EXE version of the help compiler.

Setting up your help compiler PIF file
 Currently, all available Help Compilers are DOS programs. To compile your helpfiles you must run the help compiler in a DOS window. VB HelpWriter uses a PIF file called "HC.PIF" to define the help compiler type and directory. You may need customize this PIF file to reflect the help compiler location and memory capabilities of your system.

Although we are not aware of any published specification, we have found some versions of the help compiler work in as little as 415K of conventional memory.

The SETUP menu of VB HelpWriter contains an entry labeld "Edit HC.PIF " that will invoke the PIF editor with the correct PIF file loaded.   We recommend you use this option to setup your PIF file before compiling.

The HC.PIF shipped with this program is pre-configured to work with the default programs and directories of Visual Basic versions 2.0 and 3.0 (Professional edition).

Here are some tips to help you get started sucessfully:

Tip 1: Free as much conventional memory as possible
Tip 2: Run in 386 enhanced mode with Virtual Memory Enabled
        (Check the "386 enhanced" options in "Control Panel" to insure you have Virtual Memory enabled)
Tip 3: Use a Windows   "resource monitor" utility to to show memory availability.

NOTES:
There are currently four help compilers available. Borland language products ship with HC.EXE. This program gernerates helpfiles in the Windows 3.0 format (Windows 3.1 can display 3.0 helpfiles!)

Another three compilers have been supplied with Microsoft products.
HC30.EXE is the help compiler for Windows 3.0.
HC31.EXE is he help compiler for Windows 3.1
HCP.EXE is a help compiler for Windows 3.1 that can operate in a Windows DOS session and take advantage of expanded memory to compile large helpfiles.

The help compiler is a DOS application. Unfortunately, we must live with the limitations above. The 386 enhanced mode/HCP.EXE combination is the best available combination we know of. We strongly recommend you get this program from Microsoft if you are a registered user of   another Microsoft help compiler.

At the present time, the **HCP.EXE** program is **FREE** to current owners of Microsoft help compiler products.   Contact Microsoft today for your upgrade!

Button Bar Commands
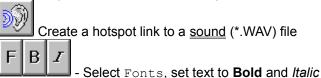
File/Topic commands

Retrieve file from disk

Save file to disk.

Autogenerate helpfile topic(s) from a VB program

Manual topic creation

Helpfile effects commands

Create hypertext jumps

The DEFINITIONS dictionary (Automatic Glossary)

Add Graphics at the current cursor position

Create a hotspot link to a sound (*.WAV) file

F B I - Select Fonts, set text to **Bold** and *Italic*

Compile/Test commands

Run the Help Compiler

Go ahead to test your newly generated helpfile!

Navigation commands

Return to previous topic after testing a hypertext link.

and

Select previous and next topic in the topic list.

Topic List

Use this dropdown list box to select and open a topic for editing

Topic Info button

Press this button to open a dialog to examine or edit the current topic's Title, Context String, keywords, or display attributes (Window number or startup topic). See Topic Information Dialog for more information

Jump Navigation

These buttons move the cursor back and forth to the jumps in the currently open topic.

Bullet list

Select text, then press this button to create a "bulleted list"

Editor Button Bar

Topic Bar

The topic bar contains a list of the topics currently in the helpfile.   It would be   too much a drain on Window's system resources to have all topics open at once (not to mention a cluttered desktop)!   Select a topic from the **Topic Bar** when you need to view or edit it.

Closing a topic window does NOT delete the topic!   To delete a topic, open it's window, then select Topic| Delete from the main menu.

File Menu

New - Clear all work in progress. Starts <u>Automatic helpfile generator</u>.
⬖

Open - Retrieve file from   disk.

Save - Save file to disk

Save As - Save to disk under a new filename.

Close - Unload current project without saving
⬖

Autogenerate help topics...   Create help topics based on VB source code

Print Current Topic
> Prints the currently open topic.This printout is primarilly a debugging tool, since the printout also includes information on the topic title, context ID, <u>context string </u>, and keywords.

Print All Topics
> Same as print, but ALL topics are sent to the printer

Import File
> **To current topic** - Import an RTF file into the currently open topic
> **To separate topics** - Import an RTF file, creating a separate topic for each page

Export RTF file
> This option saves all topics to a single file in Rich Text Format. This is useful when you want to import your finished helpfile into a high powered word processor to add finishing touches or to create a manual.

DOS Shell
> Temporarily exit VB HelpWriter to run commands in a DOS window.

Exit
> Leave this program!

Edit

When working in VB HelpWriter, you can cut, copy and paste formatted text between topics. In order to share information with other Windows applications, VB HelpWriter also supports non-formatted text cut/copy/paste to the Windows clipboard.

UNDO - Undo all changes to this edit window since last save.
Cut - Standard (Shift-Delete) function to cut formatted text
Copy - Standard (Cntrl-Insert) function to copy formatted text
Paste - Standard (Shift - Insert) function to paste text formatted into edit area
Select All Text - Select all text in the currently open edit window.
Search and Replace - Find or replace text in a single or multiple topics.
Spell Check - Spell check current or multiple topics. (PRO version only)

Shortcut keys
Cut - Ctrl-Del or Ctrl-X
Copy - Ctrl-Ins or Ctrl-C
Paste - Shift-Ins or Ctrl-V

Editor keys

Topic

New

Creates a new (empty) help topic. Will automatically load the topic template named "DEFAULT.TPL" if it exists in the current project directory.

Load Topic

Select this option when creating a new topic manually.   You can load any of several predefined RTF topic templates to simplify topic formatting and provide a consistent look and feel. Any RTF file can be loaded via this dialog. (Just change the default file extension to *.RTF).

Save Topic

Save the currently open topic to disk as in RTF format. You can use this feature to create your own topic templates, or to export or save the currently open topic to disk in RTF format.
Tip: Any topic saved with the name "DEFAULT.TPL" will automatically be loaded when creating new empty help topics.

Delete Topic

Permanently delete current topic text
(Be careful! Cannot be undone!)

Browse Order: Overview

Opens the Browse order dialog to create browse sequences

Topic Information

Open a topic information dialog for the current topic edit window Allows viewing and editing of the topic title, context string , context id, keywords and display window.

Ruler

Toggle tab/margin ruler in current edit window.

Icon Bar

Toggle Icon Bar for editor (on MDI main window)

Automatic Title Formatting

Toggles Automatic Topic Title formatting.   When this option is ON, the font size and color of the first line of every topic is assumed to contain the topic's title, and is formatted automatically to provide a consistent look throughout the helpfile.   Under **Setup | Helpfile Options** on the main menu, there is a command button labeled "Topic Title Font".   This button controls the font size, formatting, and color automatically applied to topic titles.

Format

This Menu allows you to set the font, fontsize, and font colors of your helpfile text.
In addition, you can create hypertext jumps, create definitions, and insert bitmaps.

Font - This option brings up a `font` selection dialog.
Color - Set selected text color
Bold - Set selected text **BOLD**
Italic - Set selected text *Italic*
Underline - Set selected text *Italic*
Bullet List   -   Place a "bullet" at the start of the selected text.
Paragraph Effects -

Paragraph

Effects

Boxed	Surround paragraph with a box line drawing
Double Border	Surround paragraph with a double line box
Shadowed	Surround paragraph with a shadowed box
Top Border	Add line above paragraph
Bottom Border	Add line below paragraph
Thick Border	Add thick box around paragraph
No Word Wrap	Turn off word wrapping at right edge of help window
Non-Scrolling Region	Area above this point will not be affected by scroll bars

Window

Minimize ALL -   Set all MDI child windows to icon state.
Close ALL -   Close all MDI child windows.
Cascade -   Normal Windows Cascade MDI function
Tile -   Tile MDI child windows vertically or horizontally.
Arrange Icons -   Rearranges all minimized topic icons on the desktop

Utility

Run Help Compiler

Runs help compiler (defined in HCP.PIF)

Test Helpfile

Runs WINHELP.EXE to view current project (must run compiler first!)

Project file

Runs external text editor with the current project file

RTF file

Runs external text editor with the current *.RTF file

ERROR log

Runs external text editor with last help compiler ERROR file

Jump Report

Creates a Jump report and loads it into the default text editor.
The Jump Report provides an overview of all help topics, their IDs and context strings, and
keywords. It also shows all jumps To and From each topic.   If a topic is unreachable, this report
will print a warning.   If there are jumps to unreachable topics, a warning is generated as well.

Project Notes

Runs external PIM (todo list). Default is NOTEPAD.EXE

HotSpot Editor

Runs SHED.EXE, the Windows segmented graphics editor

Find Compiler Error

Checks the output of the last compile cycle for errors. Opens the appropriate topic if any character
errors are discovered.

Verify Topics

If a crash occurs for some reason, your topic data may get corrupted.   This function finds and
repairs (or lets you edit) any topics that are identified as being corrupt.   Usually a corrupt topic
will cause a "Violated System Integrity" error when the help compiler runs.

Setup

HelpFile options - Open <u>Helpfile Options Dialog</u>
   Define helpfile and compiler attributes

Program options - Call <u>Program Options Dialog</u>.
   Define external programs to use for editing text and bitmaps

Edit HCP.PIF - <u>Setup Help compiler</u>

Editing and testing jumps

Editing and Deleting Jumps
Once your jump is established, you may examine or delete it by positioning the cursor in the jump and pressing the right mouse button. You may also retype the jump text if you wish.   The status bar at the bottom of the screen will indicate what type of jump is there, and the destination topic.

Testing Jumps
You can test your jumps just like in your finished helpfile.   Double click on the Jump text, and the destination topic will be opened.   After this operation, you can return to the original topic by pressing the "Back" button on the button bar:

Creating Hypertext Jumps and Popups

Second only to typing in help text, establishing hypertext jumps is a critically important part of creating your helpfile.   VB HelpWriter provides several methods of creating these jumps to help you finish your work quickly.   Here are the procedures to create the three common type of hypertext jumps:

To create a Jump to a non-existing (new) topic:
    1. Select some text
    2. Press and hold the right mouse button, and drag the icon onto an empty portion of VB HelpWriter's main window (the Jump Arrow icon should appear).
    3. A window should open, prompting you for a title for the new topic.

To create a Jump between two open topics:
    1. Select some text
    2. Press and hold the right mouse button, and drag the icon onto the other (open) topic.

To create a Jump or popup jump to another (closed) topic:
    1. Select some text
    2. Press "Jump Arrow" button on the button bar
    3. Select a topic from the list presented, then select JUMP or POPUP.

To create a Jump or popup jump to any existing topic:
    1. Select some text
    2. Press "Jump Arrow" button on the button bar
    3. Select a topic from the list presented, then select JUMP or POPUP.
        (Alternative 1: Select Format | Insert Jump from the main menu)
        (Alternative 2: Press **Ctrl-J**)

Editing and testing your jumps

Graphics, formatting, and GLOSSARY

Once you have a basic helpfile, you will likely want to add graphics and special text formatting.   Another handy feature users have come to expect is a GLOSSARY.

VB HelpWriter can assist you with all of these tasks!

Adding Graphics
Adding special text formatting
Developing a GLOSSARY

Load A Bitmap into the Help File

Pressing the "eye" button on the toolbar opens a dialog box that allows you to locate, edit, and insert bitmap images into your helpfile.

To add a bitmap:
- Select "Add New" button
- Select a bitmap from the file dialog
- Select the orientation (character, left, or right)
- Press the "Insert in topic" button

To use a bitmap already in the list:
- Select any bitmap from the listbox
- Press the "Insert in topic" button
- (Alternative) Double-click on any item in the listbox

To edit a bitmap:
Select an item in the list, then double click on the bitmap image in the bitmap preview box.

To delete a bitmap:
select an item from the list and press the delete key or the delete button.

Bitmap Orientation:
Right   Keep on right side of page with text wrapping to the left
Left   Keep on left side of page with text wrapping to the right
Character Insert as a character in the current paragraph.

Using a bitmap as a hotspot:
Create the bitmap normally, then highlight the entire bitmap entry (including curly brackets **{}**) and press the Jump Arrow on the button bar (or select Format|Insert Jump).   Select a Jump destination. If all goes well, the bitmap entry string should darken, indicating the text has been turned into a hypertext jump field.

Adding a bitmap with multiple hotspots

The DEFINITIONS dictionary

The "Definitions Dictionary" is where you maintain a list of common terms that require popup definitions and GLOSSARY entries.

The first occurrence of each term in a topic is automatically linked to your definition text by a popup jump. For example, the phrase "popup jump" is linked earlier in this topic, but not here. This is an example of how Data Dictionalry terms appear to the user.

Terms added to the dictionary are also used to automatically create a help GLOSSARY topic. The automatic help glossary may be disabled by deselecting the "Automatic glossary" checkbox in the "Setup | Helpfile Options" dialog box.

Instructions:

Adding a definition:
    1. Highlight the word or phrase that you wish to define and click the "open book" icon.
    2. A dialog box will open with the term's definitionin the top textbox. Press return.
    3. Enter the definition text in the data entry box at the bottom of the dialog.

Changing a definition:
    1. Click the "open book" icon on the main toolbar
    2. Select an entry from the definitions listbox
    3. Edit the text in the data entry box at the bottom of the dialog

Deleting a definition:
    1. Click the "open book" icon on the main toolbar
    2. Select an entry from the definitions listbox
    3. Press the "<<Delete" button

Topic Edit Window

This is where most of your work in VB HelpWriter will take place.

Editor toolbar and control keys
Topic Info Window

Editing the help topic text
The edit box in this dialog is where you will enter the help text. Just type the text pertaining to your topic.
While you are editing your text, you can:
- Establish hypertext links between topics (jumps)
- Insert bitmap graphics
- Format your text
- Create new entries in your helpfile's dictionary.

All of these operations (except inserting bitmaps) start with highlighting the text you wish to operate on.

Tip: Don't enter a formatted title at the top of the page. VB HelpWriter automatically insterts a title at the top of each topic.   You can set the title font, size and color in the helpfile options dialog.   You may also disable automatic titles entirely in the same dialog if you wish.

Having VB HelpWriter create topic titles for you has a couple of advantages.
First, your helpfile will contain common formatting between all topics.
Second, your topic titles will carry the same text as the title displayed when the user opens a "SEARCH" dialog (search topics by keywords).

Testing your hypertext jumps

Helpfile Options Dialog

Text Tab
Copyright:
Define's the helpfiles copyright notice under Windows

Page footer:
Text to be appended to the bottom of each help screen.

Default topic font:
Default font type for new topics.

Compiler Tab
Compression:
Sets the compression level of the finished helpfile

Compiler Warning level:
You should probably leave this set to HIGH

Optimize for CD-ROM:
OK, so a lot of you won't use this, but it sure *sounds* cool, doesn't it?
Automatic Topic Titles:
Deselect this checkbox if you wish to add and format titles individually for each help topic.
Create compiler HPJ file:
Do not deselect this checkbox unless you are very familiar with helpfile creation.   Deselecting this checkbox inhibits VB HelpWriter from automatically creating an HPJ help project file before compiling your helpfile. This may be necessary if you wish to add unusual features to your helpfile such as multimedia baggage or complex macro/window arrangements. Generally you should NEVER use this option.

Tip: If you wish to execute any macros when your helpfile is first displayed, create a text file containing the macros in the project directory called "MACROS.INC". VB HelpWriter will automatically add this file into your helpfiles project file under the appropriate project section.

Display TAB
Icon while minimized:
Specifies the icon to be displayed when the helpfile is minimized

Set Window size and position:
Press this button to open the "screen layout" dialog.   This dialog allows you to set the opening position of your helpfile window, enable Print, Browse, and Copy buttons, and also specify whether the screen should always load in the same position.

Helpfile "on top" button: Press this button to make all help windows stay "on top" by default.

MacrosTAB
Any WINHELP macros entered into this box will be added to the projects [CONFIG] section before compiling.   This is the place to enter macros for the entire helpfile.

Make sure your Help Compiler is installed and in your path! Select OPTIONS | EDIT <u>HC.PIF</u> to setup your system for the appropriate help compiler. HCP.EXE is the preferred compiler for this environment. I understand it is free to current owners of other Microsoft help compilers, and is available through Microsoft's technical support group.   Be sure and get a copy of HCP.EXE if you qualify!
More about the <u>help compiler...</u>

Open your program in Design mode and set the HelpContextID for each form to a unique number. Setting the numbers 100 units apart will make it easier to keep your numbers grouped according to subject as you add more topics.   A typical, small application might have the following settings:

    Form1: HelpContextID =100
    Form2: HelpContextID =200
    Form3: HelpContextID =300
    Form4: HelpContextID =400

Note1: This does not prevent you from using the Tag property of the control while the program is running! You may set this property to any value you wish at run-time without affecting the generated helpfile.

Note 2: Make *** **SURE** *** you have saved your VB forms in **ASCII** format. This is done by selecting the "save as ascii" checkbox under Visual Basic's FILE | SAVE AS menu. VB HelpWriter cannot generate help topics from your code unless it is saved in ascii format!

CntxtID.BAS

With every helpfile, VB HelpWriter generates a VB module that can be added to your code to more easily access the Windows help API.   In the "Lite" and "Standard" editions, this file contains Global Const defintions for all of your help topic context IDs.

The default filename for this module is "contxtid.bas", and can be changed in the "Setup | Helpfile Options" dialog.

The professional edition of VB HelpWriter goes further by providing a set of customized access routines to provide your application with easy access   some of the more useful features of WINHELP.EXE (the WIndows helpfile display program).

Here's a complete list of functions generated by VB HelpWriter (professional edition)   in "ContxtID.BAS".

> o **SetAppHelp()** 'Called in the main Form_Load event to register your program with WINHELP.EXE. This will inform WINHELP to close any active help window associated with your program when your program terminates.

> o **QuitHelp()**   'Deregisters your program with WINHELP.EXE. Should be called in your main Form_Unload event. This is the mate to the SetAppHelp() function described above.

> o **HelpWindowSize(x,y,dx,dy)** ' Position help window in a screen independent manner

> o **SearchHelp()**   'Brings up the windows help KEYWORD SEARCH dialog box

> o **ShowHelpTopic(Topicnum)** 'Brings up context sensitive help based on any of your helpfile's context strings. This function is especially usefull for tying context sensitive help to "HELP" command buttons or menus.

Menu Commands

| File | Edit | Topic | Format | Insert | Window | Utility | Setup | Help | Preview |

File Open, Save, ect...
Edit Cut, Copy, Paste ...
Topic Delete, New, Reorder, print...
Format Fonts & colors
Insert
Window Workspace management
Utility External programs & reports
Setup Helpfile and program options
Help Call this helpfile
Preview Compile and preview the currently active topic.
Upgrade

Quick Reference

Installing and using VB HelpWriter
- Overview of Windows helpfiles
- The helpfile authoring process
- How to create a starting helpfile
- Setting up your HELP COMPILER
- Using Automatic topic titles
- VB HelpWriter limitations
- Lite Edition Limitations
- Technical support

Adding the helpfile to your application
- Calling your new helpfile from VB code
- Creating a users guide (Export manual)
- Distributing your helpfiles

Using VB HelpWriter's text editor
- Cursor controls and hotkeys
- Displaying the tool bar and tab ruler
- Adding copyright and trademark symbols
- Defining and using topic templates

Advanced Windows help issues
- Using multiple hotspot graphics (segmented graphics)
- Creating a GLOSSARY for your helpfile
- Creating "non-scrolling regions"
- Displaying 256 color bitmaps
- Creating and using browse sequences
- Controlling the help window size and colors
- Controlling footnote and definition fonts

Working with other programs/users
- Importing and exporting RTF files
- Using your favorite text/graphics editors
- VB HelpWriter in a multi-user environment

Errors and Warning messages
- "No default printer" error
- "Not Enough Memory" or "Cannot Paste Data" error
- "Cannot find bitmap" warning

Overview

VB HelpWriter Overview

By following a few easy steps, you can create a basic helpfile framework for any VB program.

Here are the steps necessary to create a helpfile:
1. VB HelpWriter will read your application's source code and generate a helpfile framework
2. Add details to explain your program
3. Use the mouse to create jumps between help topics
4. Compile and test your new helpfile!

Before you begin, you *must* setup the help compiler for your system.

Next, you should:
- Install and setup the program
- Save your VB code in <u>ASCII format</u>
- Add comments to the TAG property of important controls

The next topic, <u>Getting Started</u>, will help you get off on the right foot!

Sound Support

You can create hotspot links to any Windows compatible audio file (*.WAV) file by using this feature.

To create an "audio" hotspot:
1. Select some text
2. Press the "ear" icon
   (Alternative: Select **Format | Insert** Sound from the main menu)
3. Select the audio file to insert
4. Press "OK" to insert the sound, or "CANCEL" to discard it

Important:
Be sure and distribute these audio files with your helpfile. The Windows help compiler does not automatically bind audio files into your helpfile in the same manner as graphics files.

Browse order dialog

When viewing your helpfile, the user can select the "<<" and ">>" buttons on the Windows help button bar to navigate to the previous and next topic in a group of related topics.   This feature is known as "browsing".

By selecting TOPIC|Browse Order... from the main menu, you can change the topic browse order to almost any sequence you wish.

The Browse order dialog consists of two listboxes, a text box (GROUP NAME) and several command buttons.

To create a browse sequence:
> 1. Enter any name for the browse sequence in the "GROUP NAME" text box
>
> 2. Double click on topic in the leftmost list box to move them into the righ listbox.
>   (Alternative: Select an item, then press "ADD>>" button)
>
> 3. Press OK to save your changes.
>   (Alternative: Press RESET to start over again)
>
> **Tip**: You can create several browse sequences by changing the GROUP NAME property at any time.

Topic Information Dialog

Topic Title:

> Change the topic title by editing the value in this text box. You must press RETURN to save any changes. Used to identify the topics when a Winhelp SEARCH is performed. A topic title is needed if the topic has any SEARCH keywords.

Keywords:

> Windows help uses the topic keywords to build it's SEARCH database. Enter short words or phrases by which the user can identify this topic. You should present at least one keyword for every major help topic.

Context String:

> The context string is used by external programs to call specific topics within your helpfile to provide context sensitive help. A list of these context strings is automatically generated in a CntxtID.BAS file you can load into your project!

Context Number:

> This number is used internally by the help compiler to map topics. It must be a unique number between 0 and 65535. This number is automatically set to your VB program's forms ContextIDduring automatic help generation if the forms have a HelpContextID property.

Browse ID:

> The Browse ID controls the order topics are displayed when the user presses the "browse buttons" (<< and >>) from within Winhelp. The easiest way to change the browse order is to select "Topic |Browse Order..." from the main menu. You may also manually edit the topic browse sequence here, if need be.

Topic Macro:

> Enter any help macro you wish to execute when this topic is displayed

> **>**   Advance to next topic
> **<**   Go to previous topic
> **Help**   Calls this dialog

> **Min**: Minimize the Topic Information Dialog
> **Edit**: Open the current topic for editing
> **Close**: Close the Topic Information Dialog
>   (VB name=   LTitleCombo)
> **Undo**: Undo changes to topic information

> **Startup topic**: Check this box to select the topic as the starting topic in your helpfile
> **Display Window**: VB HelpWriter allows you to define and place three separate help windows
>   **Third**   Display topic in the third HELP window
>   **Second**   Display topic in the secondary HELP window
>   **Main**   Display topic in the normal HELP window

Program Options Dialog

Text Defaults Tab -
Default Helpfile Title:
Specify default title of helpfile window

Default Copyright Notice:
Specify default copyright notice that appears in Windows help "About" dialog

Glossary Title Text:
Specify default text to appear in the GLOSSARY window

Other Programs Tab -
Text Editor:
Specify your preferred text editor (default is NOTEPAD.EXE).

Graphics Editor:
Specify your preferred bitmap editor (default is PBRUSH.EXE).

RTF Text Editor:
Specify your preferred RTF editor. This editor can be used to display formatted text (Word or Ami Pro for example) or can be used to display hexadecimal data.   The hexadecimal display can be useful when trying to debug strange help compiler errors.

Project Notes (to-do list):
The default here is Cardfile.exe, but this can be used for any program you need to access easily while building your helpfile.

Editor Defaults Tab -

Default Editor Font:
Specify which font/size is to be used when creating new topics.

Topic Editor Options:
Specify scroll bars, icon bars, and TAB ruler settings for new edit windows.
.

Misc. Tab -

Common bitmap directory:
If you use a lot of graphic images and frequently keep the in the same place, this option will allow the help compiler to find your bitmaps at compile time.   It is also useful in network environments, where each user may have a slightly different path defined for his particular workspace.

GDI Resource Limit:
Specify the lower limit for GDI resouces. Whenever Windows drops below this limit, VB HelpWriter will close the oldest open topic before opening new topic windows for editing..

Spell Checking Options:
Opens a dialog to adjust the spell checking options.(PRO version only)

Distributing your helpfiles

Distributing helpfiles with the "Lite" version:
You may freely distribute helpfiles generated with the "Lite" version of VB HelpWriter as long as the built-in limit of 30 topics has not been violated, and the standard topic footer is not removed.

Note on FONT support:
It is a good idea to restrict your use of fonts to those shipped with Windows. (Arial, Times Roman, MS Sans Serif, Times New Roman).   Any other fonts should be installed by the user before the helpfile is viewed. Otherwise, Windows will attempt to substitute for the closest available font.

Note on BITMAPS:
Bitmaps used in your helpfile are automatically bound into the *.HLP file.   You do **not** need to distribute bitmap files with your helpfile.

Note on sound support:
If your helpfile includes WAV file support, be sure and distribute the required WAV files with your helpfile!

multiple hotspot graphics

To add segmented hotspot graphics to your helpfile, you must own a copy of Microsoft's SHED.EXE program.

To use SHED.EXE with VB HelpWriter:
1. Create the bitmap you wish to work with
2. Select "Hotspot Graphics Editor" from the "Utilities" menu
   (This should execute SHED.EXE if it is in your PATH)
3. While working with SHED.EXE, keep VB HelpWriter open.
   Use the <u>Topic information dialog</u> as a reference to provide SHED.EXE with
   context IDs and context numbers
4. After the image is saved, load the *.SHG graphic into VB HelpWriter's bitmap list.
5. As long as you don't change your context IDs or context numbers, your compiled
   helpfile should work seamlessly with your new "segmented hypergraphic image"!

Purchasing VB HelpWriter

Don't ever go through the pain of manually creating helpfiles again!
VB HelpWriter creates helpfiles the quick and easy way (and even makes it fun).

We have priced VB HelpWriter to fit almost any budget.
You will be glad you ordered! Your *full satisfaction* is guaranteed!

Standard Edition $69   + S&H
Professional Edition   Only $99   + S&H
Order now...
Technical Support
Distribution Policy

Professional Edition

In addition to the "Standard Edition" features, VB HelpWriter "Professional" edition allows you to...

Purchase VB HelpWriter Professional edition to get these great features:
- Import existing documents into your helpfile
    - Define standard <u>topic templates</u> for easy helpfile formatting
- Save/Retreive Topic files in RTF format
- Output your helpfile in RTF format (without embedded help codes) for creating users guides.
- Limited telephone support
- VB code generator to simplify adding HELP to your program
- 65 page users guide
- Unlimited helpfile size
- 90 day version upgrade protection
- Special upgrade offers and release notifications
- Free minor version upgrades
- Quality technical support

Purchase now... Your *will* be 100% satisfied.
If you aren't completely satisfied, just tell us why, and we'll give you a full refund.   We're *that* sure you'll like it!

Why keep struggling to create helpfiles the old fashioned way?
<u>Order now</u>!

Professional Features explanations:

1. Export helpfile to RTF file without embedded helpfile footnotes.
   This function allows you to export your helpfile to create printed documentation using any Windows word processor that can handle RTF files.

2. Import RTF files into your helpfile.
   This function allows you to import existing RTF documents into your helpfile.   These RTF documents can be imported to separate topic pages, or imported into a single topic page.

3. Support for Topic Templates
   Predefine any number of "templates" for the formatting of individual topics.   When creating a topic, just read in a predefined "template" and enter your topic text.   This approach to helpfile writing insures completeness and consistency between topics.

4. Automatically generates Visual Basic interface code.
   The professional edition of VB HelpWriter automatically generates a custom VB code module you can use to control the Windows help engine. These fully tested functions register your helpfile with Windows Help API calls, support "help buttons", automatically calls the Windows help "Search" dialog, adds context sensitive help to any VB control, and   gives you control over the help window's size and position.

Note: Site licences are available for VB HelpWriter Professional edition. Please contact <u>Teletech Systems</u> for details.
<u>Prices</u>

Standard Edition

VB HelpWriter Standard edition is an "industrial strength" tool for creating helpfiles.   Almost any feature of the Windows help system is readily accessible and easy to use.

VB HelpWriter Standard Edition includes these important benefits:

- VB code generator to simplify adding HELP to your program
- 65 page users guide
- Unlimited helpfile size
- 90 day version upgrade protection
- Special upgrade offers and release notifications
- Purchase applies towards price of the Professional Edition
- Free minor version upgrades
- Quality technical support

       Purchase now... You *will* be 100% satisfied.

       If you aren't, just tell us why the program didn't live up to your expectations, and we'll give you a full refund.   We're *that* sure you'll like it!

       Why struggle with creating helpfiles the old fashioned way?
       <u>Order now</u>!

<u>Professional Edition</u>
<u>Prices</u>

Overview of Windows helpfiles

Helpfiles are information pages

A Windows helpfile is perhaps best thought of as a collection of "information pages".   These pages are commonly referred to in technical literature as "**topics**" or "help topics".   A single topic usually describes a short concept or user interface feature.

Ideally information pages should be kept as short as possible, due to the PC's current limitations in displaying large windows.

Navigating between help topics

The Windows help display program (Winhelp.exe) does not automatically allow the user to browse sequentially through these "topics".   Instead, the helpfile author must create explicit links between topics. These links appear as underlined green text to the user.

Links that cause the current contents of the main help window to be replaced with a new topic in the main help window are commonly known as "**hypertext jumps**", "**hotspots**", or simply "jumps". Links that cause short descriptions to appear in a smaller child window are commonly known as "**popup jumps**" or "**popup definitions**".

Context IDs and numbers

In order to establish jumps between topics, each topic page must have a unique identifier.   Windows helpfiles have two such identifiers; 1) a ContextID, and 2) a Context number.

Internally, Winhelp.exe uses the Context number to construct the helpfile. Technically, context numbers are integer values.   Each context number has a corresponding "ContextID" or "Context string". This string is used to refer to topics in the intermediate data file (RTF file), and also serves as a "bookmark" so individual topics can be called from a controlling application.   These context strings are commonly used to provide context sensitive help.
Note: The Visual Basic "ContextID" property exactly refers to a helpfile's context number.

Keywords and search

Each topic also has an associated "topic title" and "topic keywords".   Winhelp.exe uses the topic keywords to construct the SEARCH table for windows helpfiles.   Assigning several keywords to each topic so the user can more easily locate the information he is looking for.   When the user selects a keyword from the search list, the corresponding topic title is displayed.   Typically, the topic title and the topic keywords work hand in hand to provide Winhelp.exe with the necessary information to create a SEARCH table for each individual helpfile.

VB HelpWriter also uses the topic title to create standardized title headings at the top of each topic. This approach has several advantages: 1) Automatic consistency in topic formatting, and 2) Topic headings will match the SEARCH results to avoid unnecessary confusion.

Other issues

Helpfiles can also contain graphics, special paragraph formatting, multiple windows, command macros, and more, but these items are only "icing on the cake".   Once you understand the concepts of "topics", "jumps", and "keywords" the rest will come naturally.

In conclusion, **DONT WORRY!** Just relax, experiment, and enjoy!

Editor Toolbar and Hotkeys

Cursor control arrow keys

Up arrow, down arrow, left arrow, right arrow moves one **character** in the desired direction.
Ctrl-left arrow and Ctrl-right arrow move one **word** at a time left or right.

Key	Action
Home	Move to beginning of a line
Ctrl+Home	Move to top of the topic
End	Move to end of current line
Ctrl+End	Move to end of topic
Ctrl+B	Toggle **BOLD** setting
Ctrl+I	Toggle *Italic* setting
Ctrl+U	Toggle Underline setting
Ctrl+C	(also Ctrl+Ins) Copy current selection to clipboard
Ctrl+X	(also Shft+Del) Cut current selection to clipboard
Ctrl+V	(also Shft+Ins) Paste from clipboard
Ctrl+Alt+I	Toggle display of icon bar (button bar)
Ctrl+Alt+T	Toggle display of Tab ruler
Ctrl+Alt+C	Insert copyright (©) symbol
Ctrl+Alt+R	Insert registered trademark (®) symbol

Browse sequences overview

The "browse buttons" shown above allow the helpfile author to present a series of related topics to the user in a method closely resembling a book.   This method of presenting information is ideal in a situation where a user would like to learn all information on a subject without "jumping around" in the helpfile.

The help author (that's you) can control the ordering of the topics in this browse sequence, with the following limitation:
> **o** Each topic may be included in only one browse sequence
> (since there is only one browse ID per topic)

Each topic you wish to include in a browse sequence must be given a unique "browse ID" string. For example, topics concerning cut and paste operations might be given a series of browse IDs as follows:

Topic name	Browse ID
Cutting to clipboard	CUTPASTE:0000
Copy to clipboard	CUTPASTE:0001
Paste from clipboard	CUTPASTE:0002

The three topics above would form a single browse sequence, starting with "cutting to clipboard" and ending with "Paste from clipboard".   The beginning string is what identifies the browse sequence. The numbers following indicate the topic display order.

Tip: It is important to include leading zeros in order for WINHELP to sort the browse sequences properly

See also: Browse order dialog

RTF files

RTF stands for "Rich Text Format".
An RTF file is a standardized format for saving formatted ASCII text files. RTF differs from simple ASCII in the fact that both the text *and* it's formatting is saved to disk.

This format is commonly used to share word processing documents between word processors.
It is also used to create helpfiles!

The professional edition of VB HelpWriter can read and write RTF text files in four different ways:

1. Import RTF to separate topics
   Create a separate help topic for each page of the imported RTF file

2. Import RTF to a single topic
   Import the entire RTF file into a single help topic. (page breaks are removed)

3. Export single topic to RTF file
   Save a single help topic to disk in RTF format. The default file extension in this case is "TPL", which is short for "template". Using templates is a good way to standardize on a helpfile format and reduce tedious formatting tasks. When a "DEFAULT.TPL" file is in your project directory, it is automatically loaded whenever you create a new (empty) topic.

4. Export RTF file for manual creation
   Save the entire helpfile in RTF format without embedded helpfile commands. This option is useful for converting your online documentation into a printed user's guide.

   See also: Recommendations for using VB/Helpmaker

Recommendations for using VB HelpWriter

To get the most value from VB HelpWriter, we recommend you take the following approach to creating online help and printed documentation:

1. Complete your program (at least at the menu and dialog level)
2. Add descriptions to the TAG property of all important controls
3. Use VB HelpWriter's Autogenerate function to create your help topic framework
4. Complete each topic and add jumps between topics
5. Add graphics, formatting and other effects
6. Compile your helpfile!
7. Export your finished helpfile in RTF format to create your user's guide.

As you can see, our recommended process reverses the usual order of things by starting with a finished application.   This approach insures all   controls, menus and dialogs are covered in your finished helpfile, (and eventually) in your users guide.

registration form
VB HelpWriter   Order form

Name:_____

Company Name: _____

Mailing Address:_____

City:_____   **State:**____   **Zip:**_____

Daytime phone #:(**)**   **-**
FAX #:(**)**   **-**
Your Compuserve ID:
Your Internet Address:

Product   Price
[ ] VB HelpWriter "Standard" edition
[ ] VB HelpWriter "Professional" edition

If ordering from within Georgia, please add 5% to the above prices to cover GA sales tax.

How did you obtain your copy of VB HelpWriter?

What would you like added to the product?

Instructions:

Complete this form and mail it (along with cash, check, or money order) to:

Teletech Systems
750 Birch Ridge Dr.
Roswell, GA   30076

Your order will be processed as soon as it is received. Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery when ordering by mail.

Thanks for your business!

Sincerely,

Fred Bunn, President/Teletech Systems

Distribution Policy

Helpfiles generated with VB HelpWriter may be distributed royalty free in any form the owner chooses.

Helpfiles generated with this evaluation copy of VB HelpWriter must not exceed a maximum of 20 topics, and must include the default "Helpfile generated by VB HelpWriter" footer that is automatically added to every help topic generated with the evaluation version.

Standard and Professional edition versions of VB HelpWriter give the user complete control over topic footers.

Technical support

"Lite" Edition users receive no official promise of technical support. Please direct your questions to Compuserve's MSBASIC forum (Go msbasic) or to Internet's "comp.languages.basic.visual" newsgroup. We often monitor these forums and will reply directly when possible.

Standard Edition Owners of VB HelpWriter are given full technical support via EMAIL and US Mail, as outlined in your user documentation.

Professional Edition Owners of VB HelpWriter will receive support via EMAIL, US Mail, and limited telephone support.

Please use EMAIL for support whenever possible!
Our support department is a "one man shop" right now, so that's usually the easiest way to reach me!

Please send EMAIL support requests to: **fbunn@netcom.com**
(If you're on COMPUSERVE, the correct format is: **INTERNET:fbunn@netcom.com**)

For time-critical/emergency problems , owners of the Standard or Professional edition of VB HelpWriter can try to reach us by phone at:
(404) 475-6985   (between the hours of 6-10 pm EST, and during the day on Sat or Sun)

Coming later this year (hopefully)...
BBS dedicated to VB HelpWriter users, with the latest version of code online
FAX lines for support requests
FAQ lists/helpfiles
and more!!!

256 color bitmaps

If you are experiencing diffuculty with incorrect bitmap translation in your helpfile, be sure your are running Windows using a 16 color video driver.   This is only necessary if you are "embedding" bitmaps in your VB HelpWriter document.

Bitmaps "by reference" (INSERT BITMAP in the bitmap dialog box) are automatically translated correctly by the help compiler if they are standard 16-color BMP files.

How to Order...

You can purchase VB HelpWriter with your Visa, Mastercard, or American Express card!

Standard Edition $69   + S&H
Professional Edition   Only $99   + S&H

Credit Card Orders Only
PSL Product **#11368   Call:(800) 242-4775**
You can order with MC, Visa, Amex, or Discover from Public (software) Library by calling (800) 2424-PsL or (713) 524-6394 or by FAX to (713) 524-6398 or by CIS EMAIL to 71355,470. You can also mail credit card orders to PsL at P.O. Box 35705, Houston, TX 77235-5705.

The above numbers are for ORDERS ONLY!

To insure that you get the latest version, PsL will notify us the day of your order and we will ship the product directly to you.

To charge your order to your Compuserve account
GO SWREG, and select product **#2743** (Professional Edition), or   **#2742** (Standard)
Your purchase will be billed to your Compuserve account.

Ordering by MAIL
Select Upgrade from the VB HelpWriter's main menu. Fill out the form, print it, and mail it to Teletech Systems .

Any questions about the status of any orders, refunds, registration options, product details, technical support, volume discounts, dealer pricing, site licences, etc, must be directed to:
        Teletech Systems
750 Birch Ridge Dr.
Roswell, GA 30076.

Insert

Insert Jump
This option can be selected to add a hypertext jump. It is the same as the JUMP ARROW command.

Insert Bitmap
This option is the same as the "eye" icon. It brings up the bitmap dialog, from where you can select and insert bitmaps at the current cursor position.

Insert Sound
This option is the same as the "ear" icon. It brings up a dialog, from which you can select and audio files to be linked to a hypertext hotspot. (looks just like a regular hypertext jump in Windows help).   Be sure and distribute any "WAV" files with your finished helpfile!

Insert Macro (Advanced feature)
Select this menu option to execute a helpfile macro when the currently selected text is double-clicked by the user. (looks just like a regular hypertext jump in Windows help).

Add Definition
This option brings up the definitions dictionary dialog (GLOSSARY). It is the same as the "open book" command button

Manual Jump Destination
This feature allows you to create a mid-topic jump. This jump will NOT appear in the jump destination list. It must be accessed using the 'JI' help macro.

Symbol
This feature allows you to insert various non-standard ascii characters into your helpfile text.

Use these combo boxes to set the editor font style and size of the selected text, or at the current cursor position.

Use this group of four buttons to set the paragraph justification.
Note: FULL justification is not supported in Windows help.

Use this group of four buttons to toggle the currently selected font style to **BOLD** *Italic* <u>Underlined</u> or ~~Strikeout~~.

Use these three buttons to set the space between lines in your helpfile.

Select the top button (H) for superscripts, or the lower button (T) for subscripts.

These four buttons select the tab type in the editor. These settings do not always work with the help compiler, so consider this an "editor only" feature.

Press this button to toggle the display of "invisible" characters, like tabs, spaces, and CRs.

Press this button to bring up a color selection dialog to apply to the currently selected text.

(Or at the current cursor position)

Interactive Control Selection

Clicking an item in the list causes it to cycle between selected and unselected states. Selected files can either be included in the parent topic (✔), or be given it's own topic (▣).

Controls given their own topic will automatically be linked to the parent form.

Search and Replace

Use this dialog to find and replace words in the current or multiple topics.

Search String:The ASCII string you wish to find (* wildcards OK)
Replace String: Substitute string for the Search String (valid only when the Replace checkbox is checked)

Scope: Either the current (displayed) topic or ALL topics

Options:
Forward - Search text after cursor
Backward - Search text previous to cursor
Ignore Case - Usefull when you want to ignore capitalization
Whole Words Only - Account for spaces and whitespace

Find First - Find first occurence of "Search String"
Replace - Finds the next occurence of "Search String" and replaces it with "Replace String"
Cancel - Close dialog and exit

Manual topic creation

When creating topics manually, this dialog box will appear to allow entry of the new topic name. Once the topic is being edited, choose the <u>Topic Information button</u> ✪ to edit the new topics Context String, Keywords, and display attributes.

Calling your new helpfile from VB code

VB HelpWriter automatically creates a code module called CONTXTID.BAS whenever a helpfile is compiled. This BAS module contains all of the **Const** definitions for the individual help topics. It also contains several support routines which can be called from your VB code to access the Windows help engine.

To setup your applications helpfile and register with WINHELP.EXE:
The **SetAppHelp()** function should be called in the Form_Load event of your program's main form. It registers your application with the Winhelp engine and sets the VB application's context sensitive help to the proper file/directory. The **QuitHelp()** function should be called in the Form_Unload event of the same form.

To call your helpfile from a Menu (or any other control):
Call the **ShowHelpContents** subroutine in CONTXTID.BAS module.

Individual help topics can be displayed in the same manner by calling **ShowHelpTopic()** function using one of the Const topic definitions at the beginning of CONTXTID.BAS.

Glossary

A
ASCII format
Automatic topic titles

C
C programmers
Cannot find bitmap
Cannot Paste Data
CASE
context mapped
context number
context string

D
Definitions

F
footnote and definition fonts

H
HC.PIF
help coverage
Helpfile overview
hypertext links

K
keyword list
KEYWORDS

L
Lite Edition

M
multi-user environment

N
No default printer
Not Enough Memory

P
popup jump

T
Teletech Systems

Definitions

Selecting "Open Book icon" from the button bar opens the Definitions dialog, where terms can be defined for the project.   Once a definition is defined, the first occurence of the definition keyword in a topic is linked to the definition popup.

workfiles

You can save your current project in a workfile whenever you wish by selecting FILE | SAVE, or pressing the floppy disk icon on the button bar.

HC.PIF

The HC.PIF file is where you specify which help compiler you are using for your project. There are currently four versions of the help compiler available.

"HC.EXE" is supplied with Borland compilers.   "HC30.EXE" is the help compiler for Windows 3.0 supplied with early Microsoft products.

"HC31.EXE" is the help compiler for Windows 3.1 supplied with the new Microsoft language products.

"HCP.EXE" is the preferred choice in help compilers. It is a recently released help compiler from Microsoft that is tailored to work in a DOS session under Windows 3.1.   This file is available on Compuserve for free (to registered users of earlier Microsoft help compiler products!)

hypertext links

When a word in a helpfile is underlined and GREEN, clicking the mouse on the word moves you to the related TOPIC. This movement between pages is known as a hypertext link.

ASCII format

Visual Basic version 2.0 and higher has the option of saving all *.FRM files in ASCII format. Check under FILE|SAVE AS menu in your copy of Visual Basic and make sure the Save as ASCII checkbox is checked.

keyword list

A keyword list is a list of words or phrases used to locate topics of interest.   This list of words and phrases is used by the SEARCH feature of the Microsoft windows helpfile display program (WINHELP.EXE).

KEYWORDS

The KEWORDS.DAT file contains all the keywords used by VB HelpWriter to identify all the Visual Basic controls in the ascii FORM file.

Each control keyword is followed by the verbose text that will be inserted in the helpfile when that control is encountered. This file is an ascii text file, and may be edited to add new controls or change control description text.

WYSIWYG

"What You See Is What You Get"...

This term is used to describe text editors that allow you to see exactly what your document will look like while you are editing.   Unlike most other helpfile tools, VB HelpWriter let's you see exactly how your text will appear to the end user.

C programmers

HelpWriter can be used to develop helpfiles for any windows application!

Even if you cannot take advantage of the automated help topic creation, you can still use VB HelpWriter's OUTSTANDING helpfile creation environment.

VB HelpWriter can be customized to link with your favorite text editors, bitmap editors and project organizers to allow you to work with your best tools!

VB HelpWriter supports import and export of RTF files, so you don't have to work in a vacuum!

Additional reporting capability checks your helpfile for "orphaned" topics and invalid jumps.

Helpfile overview

A helpfile is made of many separate pages of information a linked together by hypertext jumps. A professionally done helpfile also includes keyword search capability, a glossary for technical terms, and bitmapped graphics to aid in comprehension.   VB HelpWriter makes all of these tasks as easy as a "click of the mouse".   With VB HelpWriter you will generate professional results!

CASE

Computer Aided Software Engineering

We have built intelligence into VB HelpWriter so it can actually analyze your Visual Basic program and extract controls from each form as a basis for your helpfile.

This feature alone will save countless hours of planning and research!   With VB HelpWriter on your side, you'll NEVER forget to include an important control in your helpfile.

context mapped

A helpfile is context mapped when the user can press "F1" to get help on the area of the program currently active.

Since VB HelpWriter reads your source code to create the helpfile, your initial helpfile is AUTOMATICALLY mapped to the proper VB Forms!

popup jump

A regular Jump causes the current topic in the help window to be replaced with a new topic.

Sometimes you will want to present a short piece of information without leaving the current topic. This is the case where a POPUP jump is most appropriate.

A popup jump creates a temporary window to present the short information screen to the user.   You are reading a popup definition now!

context number
This number corrsponds to the visual basic HelpContextID property.

If you assigned HelpContextID properties to each of your VB forms before autogenerating your helpfile, this number should already be correct.

context string
This string is assigned as a Const Integer, holding the value of this topic's context number.

The context string is used when referencing a help topic in code. It is more descriptive than a simple context number, and allows easy changing of the context number without changing all code references to the help topic.

topic templates

A topic template is simply an RTF file saved with a file extension of "TPL".

Use topic templates to bring in preformatted topic examples that conform to Microsoft's help authoring guidelines.   Three example topic templates are included to get you started.

Automatic topic titles
VB HelpWriter automatically generates a topic heading at the top of each topic page.   This heding is based on the Topic Name given when the topic is created.

This feature helps maintain consistent topic formatting, and consistency between the "search" topic descriptions and the actual topic text.

To disable automatic topic generation, deselect the "Automatic topic" checkbox in the "Setup | Helpfile options" dialog.

No default printer

Since VB HelpWriter uses the default installed printer fonts to identify the fonts loaded onto your system, it is important that a default printer is installed on your system.

window size and colors
Select "Setup | Helpfile Options" from the main menu, then press the "Window Layout" button.

You can then set the size, position, color and command button options for all three helpfile windows.

Teletech Systems
Contacting teletech Systems:

Teletech Systems
750 Birch Ridge Dr.
Roswell, GA, 30076

Compuserve ID: 72260, 2217
Internet address: fbunn@netcom.com

text/graphics editors

You can configure VB HelpWriter to work with your favorite tools!   Choose "Setup | Program Options" from the main menu.   You can then configure VB HelpWriter to work with your favorite:

Text Editor
RTF text Editor
Graphics Editor
and Project Notes program.

Lite Edition
If you downloaded VB Helpwriter from a bulletin board service or shareware publisher you are using the "Lite" edition.

VB Helpwriter "Lite" edition is limited to 30 topics (adequate for most small helpfiles).
The "Lite" edition also automatically includes an advertisement in the helpfile topic footer area.

multi-user environment
If using VB Helpwriter in a networked environment, it is advisable to use a common directory for all bitmaps. Each user should connect to this common bitmap directory and tell VB Helpwriter where to find the bitmaps by setting the COMMON BITMAPS settings in the "Setup | Program Options" dialog.

IMPORTANT!
Multiple users may NOT share a single copy of VB/Helpwriter. Contact Teletech Systems to arrange site licensing (including upgrade services).
THANKS!

Not Enough Memory

Try closing some other windows applications, then try the operation again.

If this error occurs, it might be a good idea to exit to DOS using the "File | DOS" menu and copy the current datafile to a safe location before proceeding.

Cannot Paste Data
The topic you are working with has become too large.
Reduce the size of the topic and try again.

It is a good idea to keep your topics small, since the help compiler is limited to a maximum topic size of 64K. Also, large topics tend to be difficult to read.

Cannot find bitmap

This warning occurs when VB Helpwriter is loading a file and cannot find the associated bitmaps.

Open the bitmap dialog (eye icon) to get the list of bitmaps used in the helpfile.   Make sure these bitmaps are on your computer or the helpfile will not compile properly.

In a multi-user environment your might want to create a common bitmap directory shared by all developers to avoid this problem.

help coverage
A good rule of thumb is to provide 1-5 help topics for the main menu, plus one or two topics per VB form.

VB HelpWriter limitations

Theoritical limits on helpfiles generated with VB Helpwriter are:

32000 Topics
64000 Jumps
Max Topic size of 32K
Max Helpfile size of 16Megabytes

In-house testing has created a 250 topic, 2.8Megabyte helpfile.

For comparison:
This helpfile is contains approximately 50 topics, and compiles to about 80Kilobytes.

footnote and definition fonts

The footnote and definition fonts are selected by choosing "Setup | Program Options..." from the main menu.

The Default topic font is also used to create footnotes and definition popups.