VB/Helpmaker makes it easy to write, compile, and test Windows helpfiles.

You don't need to buy an expensive word processor or learn any cryptic footnote commands!
With VB/Helpmaker, you will produce professional Windows helpfiles quickly and easily.
All you need is this progam and any Windows help compiler .

Made for VB programmers
If you program in Visual Basic, VB/Helpmaker can analyze your program to build a starting helpfile for you! Our Auto-Generate feature can read your VB code and create help topics with references to all VB controls and menu items. You describe the controls, use the mouse to add jumps between topics, and you're done!

Not Just for VB, programmers! (click here to continue...)

VB/Helpmaker Tutorial

Not Just for VB Programmers

VB/Helpmaker greatly simplifies all aspects of helpfile authoring.

Adding graphics, pop-up definitions, character formatting, color, and page layout couldn't be simpler! VB/Helpmaker will automatically create standard headers, footers, and a GLOSSARY to create the "professional" look users have come to expect.

Hooking it all together

VB/Helpmaker also writes the Windows API code to properly hook your application into the WINHELP system. A custom generated BASIC module contains everything you need to add help to your program.

This tutorial will lead you through a simple helpfile creation in less than 10 minutes.

Let's Get Started! (click here to   continue...)

VB/Helpmaker Tutorial

Before you start...

You need to make sure you own a <u>help compiler</u> !

There are several help compilers available, and you must be sure there is one installed on your system before continuing with the tutorial.

At the time of this writing, the available compilers are <u>HC.EXE</u> , <u>HC30.EXE</u> , <u>HC31.EXE</u> , and <u>HCP.EXE</u>

The default configuration uses HC31.EXE in C:\VB\HC, (the default for VB Pro 2.0 and 3.0).   If you installed all of the VB Pro files to their default directories, you can CONTINUE to the next step.

Otherwise, you will need to choose Setup | Edit HCP.PIF from the main menu before continuing.

(<u>click here to continue...</u>)

VB/Helpmaker Tutorial

AutoGenerating helpfiles

Select File|New from the VB/Helpmaker menu, and the   Autogenerate Helpfile dialog box should appear.

(displayed here for reference).

1. Press the Select VB Helpfiles button
    (Select HEXCALC.MAK file from the file list)
2. Press the Next>> button
3. Deselect the "Interactive" checkbox
4. Press the Next>> button again
5. Press then Generate Helpfile! button

VB/Helpmaker will now scan the **HEXCALC** program and generate a starting helpfile.

(click here to continue...)

VB/Helpmaker Tutorial

Creating a help topic

We should set the helpfile options before compiling.
Select **Setup|Helpfile** Options from the menu bar.   The following dialog should appear:

Helpfile Options Dialog Box
Enable the Helpfile always top window option.

Press the CLOSE button and continue to the next step.

(continue...)

VB/Helpmaker Tutorial

Adding a hypertext JUMP

Now, VB/Helpmaker has scanned the **HEXCALC** application source code and generated a helpfile framework. The "HexCalc" topic should be displayed.

Adding a JUMP
Scroll down in the "HexDisplay" topic to the **Menus** section, and highlight the word **HexDisplay** with the mouse.

While the word is still highlighted, click the right mouse button and drag 'n drop the "arrow" that appears onto an empty area in the VB/Helpmaker main window..

(click here to continue...)

VB/Helpmaker Tutorial

Setting the topic title

The following dialog box will appear:

Accept the default topic name of **HexDisplay** by pressing OK.

Enter the following text into the main textbox of the new   topic:

Press this button for HEX display mode!.

Saving, Compiling, and Testing is next.

(continue...)

VB/Helpmaker Tutorial

Compile and Test

Press the DISK icon on the button bar to save your work.

Next, press the "Computer button"   to compile your helpfile. A full screen DOS window will open and your help compiler should process the helpfile and return.

Glad you made it back!

Finally, press the "traffic light" button to *GO* ahead and test your new helpfile!

Congratulations!
You've made your first helpfile.

Advanced topics

VB/Helpmaker Tutorial

Advanced topics

(Adding Graphics)
No-one is satisfied with   text only helpfiles anymore. Next, we need to ad some graphics to give our new helpfile some pizzazz.

Move your cursor to the top of the **HexCalc** topic. Once the cursor is positioned, click the "eye" button to open the Bitmap dialog box.

Press the "Add bitmap" button and a dialog box will open. Select **HEXCALC.BMP** and press the OPEN button.

The file selection dialog box will close, and HEXCALC.BMP will appear in the listbox. The preview box will contain a representation of the bitmap.

Press the [Insert in topic] button to add the bitmap at the current cursor location in the HEXCALC topic.

Compile and test

your helpfile before proceeding to the next topic.

(click here to continue...)

VB/Helpmaker Tutorial

POPUP definitions

(Popup dictionary button)
One frequent hassle of writing helpfiles is keeping the user informed when a new "buzzword" or technical information phrase is encountered.   VB/Helpmaker attempts to lessen this burden by maintaining a "dictionary" of definitions.

The first occurence each dictionary entry is automatically tied to a pop-up window that will display the definition.

To see how this works, highlight the words **memory register** in the "HexCalc" topic and then press the Dictionary button .

The "Helpfile Dictionary" dialog will appear.
Press ENTER to add the word to the dictionary list, then enter the following definition:

A place to store temporary results.

Press to return to the "HexCalc" topic, then recompile   and test

 your changes!

Adding keyword search capability is next.
(continue...)

VB/Helpmaker Tutorial

Keyword searching

MostWindows users frequently use the **Search** button to find topics of interest.   You can easily add this Search capability to your helpfile by entering the appropriate keywords for each topic in the "Keywords" field of the topic information dialog.

Press the **Topic Information** button to open the topic information dialog.
Enter your keywords in the **keywords** text box, one word or phrase per line.

Add the following phrases to the keywords information of the **HEXCALC** topic

Top; Contents; Main Window

Our last subject in this tutorial describes linking your new helpfile to your source code.
Thanks for staying with this so far!

(continue...)

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Adding HELP

We have finished our helpfile, and we now need to link it to HEXCALC.EXE.   Since HEXCALC.EXE is a Visual Basic Program, VB/Helpmaker has done most of the work for us!

VB/Helpmaker (PRO EDITION) automatically generates a BASIC module called "**ContxtID.BAS**".   This module contains everything necessary to add HEXCALC.HLP to your program.

Open the HEXCALC.MAK example program in the Visual Basic design environment.   You will now add your new helpfile to HEXCALC.EXE in three easy steps...

First step:
Add **ContxtID.BAS** to your project.
Select "File|Add File..." from the Visual Basic main menu.   When the OPEN FILE dialog appears, add the file CONTXTID.BAS to your project.

Second Step:
Open Hexcalc and add the line **SetAppHelp Me.hWnd** to HEXCALC's Form_Load event.

Third Step:
Add the line: **QuitHelp** to HEXCALC's Form_Unload event.

Save and Run HEXCALC within the VB environment.
Press 'F1' to see your new helpfile.

(Other things to try...)

VB/Helpmaker Tutorial

More on ContxtID.bas

Here's a complete list of functions generated in "ContxtID.BAS" (Professional Edition ONLY). Try adding them to your program to customize your help support.

     o **SetAppHelp()** 'Called in the main Form_Load event to register your program with WINHELP.EXE

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

     o **QuitHelp()** 'Deregisters your program with WINHELP.EXE. Should be called in your main Form_Unload event

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

     o **ShowHelpTopic(Topicnum)** 'Brings up context sensitive help based on any of the following CONTEXT IDs

Thanks for staying with us through this tutorial!

VB/Helpmaker Tutorial

Glossary

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

H

HC.EXE
HC30.EXE
HC31.EXE
HCP.EXE
help compiler
help topics
hypertext jumps

S

setup HCP.PIF

HC.EXE
The help compiler usually shipped with Borland products.
Usually found in the same directory as the Compiler and linker executable files.

HC30.EXE

The Windows 3.0 help compiler shipped with Microsoft Products. For 'C' environments, this file is usually found in the xxx\BIN\ subdirectory with the compiler and linker *.EXE files.

For Visual Basic (professional version only), this file is usually located in the \VB\HC\ subdirectory.

HC31.EXE
The Windows 3.1 help compiler shipped with newer Microsoft Products. For 'C' environments, this file is usually found in the xxx\BIN\ subdirectory with the compiler and linker *.EXE files.

For Visual Basic (professional version only), this file is usually located in the \VB\HC\ subdirectory.

HCP.EXE
As far as I know, this file can only be aquired through Microsoft technical support services.   It is basically the same as HC31.EXE, except it can utilize the extra memory available through the DPMI interface to DOS sessions running under Windows.

This file is sometimes necessary for compiling VERY large helpfiles.   You probably already know where this file is located if you have it!

setup HCP.PIF

Select SETUP from VB/Helpmaker's main menu, then select the EDIT HCP.PIF menu option.

This will start the Windows PIF editor, where you can enter the location of your help compiler.

Remember to SAVE the edited PIF file before exiting the PIF editor.

help compiler
A DOS application that compiles Rich Text Format files into Windows helpfiles.   A help compiler supplied with most Windows programming languages.   The noteable exception to this rule is the "Standard Edition" of Microsoft Visual Basic.   The "Professional Edition" of Visual Basic does include a help compiler.

help topics

A Windows helpfile is basically as set of information pages linked together by hypertext jumps.   Each page of information is also known as a "help topic".

hypertext jumps

Green, underlined words or phrases in a help topic generally indicate a hypertext link (or jump) to another topic.   A single click of the mouse over one of these areas causes another related help topic to be displayed.