HelpMe

HelpMe is a tool for creating **Rich Text Format** files to be used with the Microsoft Windows Help Compiler.

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Topics

Create Topics
To create a help <u>Topic</u> :
- Select Topic Add or press ctrl+A
- Select the new topic in the tree
- Enter the Title
- Enter the Topic ID (optional)
- Enter one or more keywords seperated by a semi-colon
- Type the Browse sequence or leave the default gen
- Type the Topic Text
- Press F4 to update the topic tree

Please note that the *Topic ID* can be left blank. When HelpMe creates the topic it checks if the *Topic ID* field is blank. When it is blank HelpMe will create the Topic ID by taking the *Topic Title* and removing all the spaces. If you want to follow a certain numbering system like ID#001, ID#002 for the topic id's you may use the ID field.

When you create popup topics you have to leave the browse field **empty**.

Save your work with File Save or pressing the save button. The topic tree is now saved as a .txt file. At the same time HelpMe creates a .rtf file from your topic tree. You will see that the Compiler menu is now enabled.

You can add more topics with ctrl+A or do a first compilation.

Move Topics
You move topics in the topic tree simply by dragging the topic to the new position.

Delete Topic
Delete a topic with Topic Delete or ctrl+del

Insert Topic
Inserts a new topic before the current topic.

Links

Links
Links are for creating hypertext links to other topics. You can insert a link in your topic by right-clicking a topic name in the topic tree.

Popups
You can insert a popup in your topic by shift right-clicking a topic name in the topic tree.

That is all there is to it.

Insert

You can insert bitmaps in your helpfile. Please make sure that the bitmaps are in the **HelpMe\img** directory.

Character Aligned
Inserts the bimap just inline with your text. Like the image for the save ■ button.

Left Aligned
Inserts the bitmap left aligned.

Right Aligned
Inserts the bitmap right aligned

Bottom Border
Add a border at the bottom of the paragraph

Box
Draws a box around the paragraph

Small Caps
SHOWS TEXT IN SMALL CAPS

Window 2
Adds a reference to the Secundary Window.
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About

HelpMe is created by Jan Verhoeven;
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Although Windows 98 now comes with HTML-Help, I think there is still need for the old help files. HTML-Help is in its early stage and not every one will have the needed software installed.

Windows Help is good because it is easy to add keywords, browse sequences, annotations and bookmarks.

The first version of HelpMe did use RtfGen made by Dave Baldwin. Then I decided that HelpMe should do the rtf generation by itself.

HelpMe is not for huge help projects, but will do for the majority of intended users: those who write windows programs on their own and need a small and simple tool to create basic help files.

Most features of hcp31 are supported. I only left out the table format. You do have all the character formatting: bold,italic, underlined, small caps, font face, font size and font color.

Special characters

When you want to use the \ character in your help files you have to precede it with a second backslash: \\.

The same is valid for the **{** and **}** character. Precede them with a \ like this:
\{ and \}

Windows

Secundary Window
Sometimes it is convenient to display a topic in a seperate window.   With HelpMe this is easy. First insert the link to the topic and select *Insert Window 2* before the ending }.

Example:
{\uldb Secundary Window}{\v SecundaryWindow >window2}

<u>Secundary Window</u>

Headings

<u>HelpMe</u>

Headings

HelpMe generates a non-scrolling area at the top with the topic title as a heading in blue on a silver background.

Each time you create a new topic you see **\pard** allready entered in the editor. This is to mark the end of the non-scrolling area. If you want to include extra text or links in this non-scrolling area you have to insert them before the **\pard**. You see an example of that in this topic.

HotSpots

Hotspots
You can edit hotspots on an image with Shed.exe. Select Utilities Hotspot Editor from the menu to start Shed.exe.
Shed saves the files with .shg extension. In Shed you have to enter the context string in the attributes dialog of each hotspot. The context string is the same as the Topic Title that you enter in HelpMe, only with all spaces removed.

See below a snapshot of part of the HelpMe screen with some simple popup hotspots added. In Shed you can select if you want your hotspots to be jumps or popups. You can also select hotspots to be visible (with a bounding rectangle) or invisible.
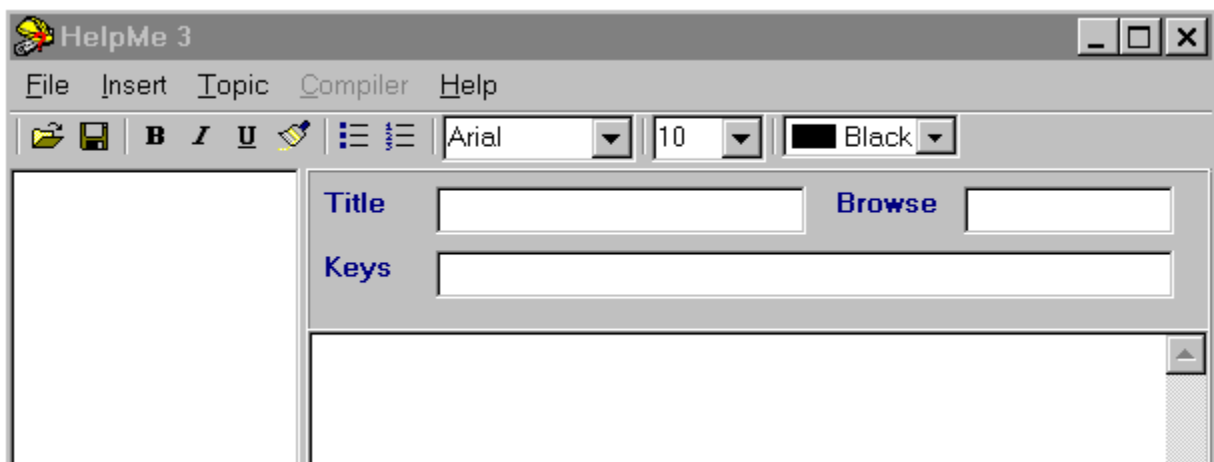
Content File

Content File
In Windows 95 you can have a content file with your help file. The content file has the same name as your help file, only with extension .cnt instead of .hlp.

New Content File
This will clear the contents editor and insert two basic lines. If you were working on a contents file you are asked for confirmation. The two basic lines are:
• :Base yourhelp.hlp

Replace the *yourhelp* by the name of your own helpfile.
• :Title yourtitle

Replace *yourtitle* by your own title.

Books
A contents file can contain several books. You will have noticed the book icon in the contents file of w95 help files. The entry for a book is simple:
1 Your Book
In this line *1* is the level number and your book the name that will appear behind the book icon.

Chapters
If you have a large help file with a lot of topics you may want to divide your book of contents in several chapters. This is no different from a book entry:
2 Chapter 1
2 Chapter 2
In these lines *2* is the level number. It must be higher than the book level number.

Topics
Finally you have your topics. A typical topic line could look like this:
3 My topic=mytopic
In this line *3* is the level number, the part before the equals sign is the topic description that will appear in the contents file as displayed by win95; the part after the equals sign is the topic ID. Entering topics in the contents file with HelpMe is easy. You can open the TopicTree with *File Open* and then just click the topic titles that you want to appear in the contents file. The little spinner at the top lets you set the level. When you click a topic title HelpMe creates a line in the contents file consisting of:
level topictitle=topicid
This saves you a lot of typing. Please note that the level of a topic does not have to be *3*; it must however be higher than the chapter or the book level. You can use chapters but you don't have to.

Select Multiple Topics
If you want to add all the topics of a topics file to the content file just right-click *All* in the topics pane.

Save the Contents file
To save your contents file just select *Contents Save*. Do not add the .cnt extension. HelpMe adds this automatically.

Load a contents file
Select *Contents Open* to open an existing contents file. Please note that you can create a content file with any text editor. It is just a plain text file. Using HelpMe gives you the

advantage of click-insert topics, avoiding typing errors and saving time.

Secundary Window

From within a secundary window you can jump back to the <u>main</u> window.

A Topic is a seperate help item.

The Topics Tree is where you add, select, delete and move your help topics

In the Title field you enter the title of your topic. When using the shed.exe shape editor you have to enter context strings.
The context string of a topic (with HelpMe) is the title with all spaces removed.

The keys field is where you enter your keywords or key sentences. Every word or sentence seperated by a semicolon .

The browse field is where you enter the browse sequence. every topic that has the same browse sequence code can be navigated through with the previous/next topic buttons. A browse sequence is not mandatory. Pop-up topics usually do not have a browse sequence. HelpMe provides *gen* as the default sequence.

Utilities

Utilities
From version 4 of HelpMe direct compilation is removed. You now have the option of using the HC31 compiler or using the latest version of Microsoft Help Compiler workshop.

HC31 Compiler
This brings up the HelpMe Project from.

Set Hotspot Editor
On first start-up HelpMe checks if shed.exe is in the HelpMe directory. If it is it will be added to the ini file and the Utilities Hotspot Editor menu option is enabled. If you have shed.exe in a different location and you want to leave it there you can set this location. It will be saved in the ini file.

Set Project Editor
On first start-up HelpMe checks if hcw.exe is in the HelpMe directory. If it is it will be added to the ini file and the Utilities Project Editor menu option is enabled. There are different version of the Microsoft Help Workshop. Here you can set a pointer to your version and location. The value entered is saved in the ini file. You only have to enter it once.

Utilities Hotspot Editor
Launches shed.exe for creating Hotspot Bitmaps.

Utilities Project Editor
Launches your favourite Microsoft Help Workshop.

Content File
Content File

HelpMe Project

HelpMe Project
With HelpMe Project you can create and save simple help project (.hpj) files.

Project New
Loads default.hpj in the project editor.

Project Open
Opens a file open dialog to open an existing help project (hpj) file.

Project Save
Saves the current help project. If you are working on a new project a file save dialog is displayed where you enter the file name. No need to enter the .hpj at the end. HelpMe will automatically add this .hpj extension.

Project Close
Closes the current project.

Exit
Closes the HelpMe Project form.

Edit Insert Root
Opens a dialog box where you can select a file. HelpMe will insert the path of that file at the cursor in the editor. You will typically use this for setting the ROOT (for rtf files) and the BMROOT (for bitmap files). Please note that when all your bitmaps are in the BMROOT you do not have to specify them under [BITMAPS].

Edit Insert File
Opens a dialog box where you can select on or more topic (rtf) files. HelpMe will insert these files as seperate lines in the editor at the cursor position with the path removed. You will typically use this to enter the topic files in the [FILES] section of the project file.

Compiler Compile
Will compile the current project file with Hcp.exe which is included with HelpMe.

Compiler Show Errros
Will load the error.log file in the errors pane.

Compiler Show Helpfile
Will show the Helpfile that is generated from the current project file.

HelpMe Library

HelpMe Library
When you find yourself re-using certain text blocks over and over in your topic files, you can store these blocks in the maroon colored *Library* above the editor. Any changes you make to the Library are automatically saved to HelpMeLib.txt.
On start-up *HelpMeLib.txt* is loaded (when it exists).

Add to Library
To add to the library select the text in the editor and right-click Add in the Library Combobox. You are asked for a name.

Use from Library
To use text from the library drop-down the Library combobox and click the entry name.

Delete from Library
To delete an entry from the library right-click delete in the Library Combobox.

Import CSV

Import CSV
A windows helpfile is very portable and can be used for more then the traditional program help. With HelpMe it is now possible to import a database file in comma seperated values format (CSV). Every record is treated as a new topic. The first field will be the topic header, the second field contains the keywords and the remaining fields contain the topic body.

Import TXT

Import Text Files
Plain text files can be imported in HelpMe as Topics. Select *File Import TXT* from the menu. You can select one or more text files from a directory and then click OK in the file open dialog. Every text file is now added as a topic.

Please note that the first line of the text file is treated as Topic Title and the second line as keywords. The remaining lines are inserted in the Topic Body. You may need to prepare your files before you import them. Remember that keywords shall be seperated by a semicolon.