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Tips: Converting WinHelp to HTML and HTML Help

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Tips : Converting WinHelp to HTML and HTML Help : Disclaimer

These tests and results are only applicable to a particular group of test files from a particular organisation. The original source documents were authored in Word, and a macro run on them to create a file for conversion to WinHelp by HDK 3.3. The resulting WinHelp files were the ones tested, unless stated otherwise. All results are relevant ONLY to these test files - they may not apply to any files that you wish to convert. Tests were only done to convert the WinHelp files to "vanilla" HTML, not to HTML Help. For the purposes of testing, little work was done to manipulate the test files or to tweak the help authoring tools - the aim was to see how "clean" the conversion could be done, with minimal human interference.

All tests were conducted in June 1999, unless stated otherwise. Some procedures may have changed since that date; likewise, some help authoring tools may have been upgraded since that date. All prices and versions quoted are as at June 1999, unless stated otherwise. All hyperlinks were valid as at June 1999.

CyberText Consulting Pty Ltd bears no responsibility for results of any conversions you may do using any of the help authoring tools.



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Overview

There are a number of different procedures which may be used to perform this task - none are perfect; some are better than others; all are dependent upon the state of the original source file (RTF).

Invariably most will involve decompiling the HLP file, unless the source RTF, CNT and graphics files are available.

The main options involve a combination of the decompiler (HelpDeco - free) and either HTML Help Workshop (free) or a commercially-available Help Authoring Tool (HAT). A "find and replace" tool (e.g. FAR) may also need to be used.

There are three main steps:

1. [Decompile the HLP file](#)
2. Convert the resulting RTF and associated files to HTML Help ([HTML Help Workshop](#); [EasyHTML/Help](#); for WinHelp to HTML only, see: [Conversion Tool Comparison: Overview](#))
3. [Check the results and clean up the errors](#)

No matter which method is chosen, the cleaning up is the time consuming part and requires the greatest amount of human intervention. It is more than likely that the conversion will not be 100% perfect - how much cleaning up is done depends upon how much the client is prepared to spend and what they may be willing to sacrifice (e.g. Table of Contents, Index).

[Checklist of issues involved in conversion](#)



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Conversion tool comparisons: Overview

There are a number of Help authoring tools which state they can convert a WinHelp document to HTML and/or HTML Help. There are also a number which state they can convert a Word document, particularly a long one, into HTML - either as one long document or as many linked documents. A number of the most common tools were investigated as to their degree of success in doing these conversions. It should be stated from the outset that NO tool will take a WinHelp file and convert it into HTML 100%. In all cases the existing full-text search capabilities in WinHelp will be lost, unless a proprietary solution is implemented. In many cases the index and Table of Contents (TOC) in WinHelp will also be lost.

The one common element in this investigation is that no matter which tool is used, ALL require some "clean-up" of the resulting HTML file(s). This will add substantially to the cost of the project, as much of the cleaning up of the files has to be done manually. Utilities such as [FAR](#) (Find And Replace) will assist in some of this, but the re-creation of extensive Tables of Contents etc. will take many hours of work.

In addition to manual clean up, every newly created HTML page, and its associated links, needs to be checked against the original files. This can be extremely labour-intensive, especially on a large project where many thousands of links may exist.

In the case of the test Help files, their creation in HDK means that the Table of Contents doesn't exist in a form that most tools can recognise. HDK creates a proprietary TOC and this does not translate as it is not a standard *.CNT file as used/created by all other WinHelp authoring options. Decompiling the HDK WinHelp files does re-create a standard WinHelp project file (.HPJ), but it does not re-create the *.CNT file. This results in almost every tool being unable to re-create a TOC, let alone one which looks vaguely like the one which currently exists. As a consequence it would be reasonable to state that a new TOC reflecting the structure of the old would need to be created manually.

HDK is excellent at creating master/slave WinHelp files, and this feature was used extensively in the test Help system. However, no tools have been tested which will preserve the existing master/slave relationship and so this will most likely need to be re-created manually. However, this should not be an onerous task in HTML - one HTML page should be sufficient to replicate the hierarchy, and a well-structured TOC should also help. However, the one advantage of a master/slave relationship will be harder to emulate - and that is the ability to remove a slave WinHelp file from the system and for the master help file to automatically reflect that by not displaying anything to do with that deleted slave WinHelp file. If this were to happen, the HTML page where the master/slave relationship is documented would need to be updated manually, and possibly the folder would need to be removed from the server (especially for search purposes).

So, what do the different tools convert successfully, and what do they leave out? This analysis should suggest which tool will be the most cost-effective in doing these conversions, if "pure" HTML is

chosen as the method of delivery. The cost of the tool needs to be added to the cost of the manual clean up/manipulation of the files. No matter which tool is chosen, the actual cost of the tool will be the smallest cost to be incurred in this conversion process.

HTML Help Workshop, Microsoft's own tool (free) is assessed first, and comments are made which are appropriate for the other tools, and are referred to in the assessment of the other tools where necessary. The remainder of the tools are listed in alphabetical order.

- [HTML Help Workshop](#)
- [Doc-to-Help](#)
- [EasyHTML Help](#)
- [ForeHelp](#)
- [HDK](#)
- [HyperText Studio](#)
- [RoboHTML](#)
- [WordToWeb](#)



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HTML Help Workshop v1.2.1

Manufacturer	Microsoft
Distributor	Microsoft http://www.microsoft.com/office/ork/xp/appndx/appc00.htm
Price	Free
Origin	US

After decompiling some HDK-compiled WinHelp files (using a free utility - helpdeco.exe [available from <http://www.helpmaster.com/zip/helpdc21.zip> [218kb]), they were run through the converter which comes with HTML Help Workshop. The decompiler created a standard project HPJ file, and all associated graphics files (as BMPs), but it was not able to translate the proprietary HDK contents file, so no *.CNT file was created. The HPJ file is mandatory for conversion via HHW; the CNT file is optional.

HTML Help Workshop is designed to create compiled HTML Help files (*.CHM). It can also create uncompiled HTML. The testing was done creating uncompiled HTML files. No testing was undertaken to convert to a compiled CHM file. It is unlikely that any of the issues raised below would be solved by compiling to a CHM file as the uncompiled HTML files are the exact same files used to compile a CHM.

The following results were obtained (listed alphabetically by problem area):

Problem area	Results	Solution

<p>Filenames</p>	<p>The filenames created in the conversion process for each unique topic's HTML page are not "user-friendly". In fact they are gobbledegook and would be extremely difficult to refer to at a later stage when creating future links as they would have no meaning whatsoever to future authors or intranet developers. For example: ams33n4x.htm.</p>	<p>This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually modify the filenames of thousands of topics to reflect the source document names. Once the filenames were changed EVERY hyperlink would have to be modified to reflect the new filename in order for the hyperlinks to work. Some HTML editing/authoring tools such as FrontPage may be able to do this in a more automatic way (as the filename changes, all associated links to the old filename are updated to reflect the new filename), but EVERY filename would have to be changed.</p>
<p>Font colours</p>	<p>The test Help files use different text colours to indicate different parts of transaction and scenario procedures. None of these colours is preserved.</p>	<p>If the colours are required, this is a serious clean-up issue. Separate classes for particular parts of content could be established in a style sheet to reflect different colours, formatting etc. for different procedures. The style sheet reference would have to be manually added to every page that was to display differently. And every page where these were currently used would have to have the HTML tags modified to ascribe the appropriate classes to each section.</p>
<p>Fonts</p>	<p>The Arial font used in the WinHelp file was not preserved. All text became Times New Roman.</p>	<p>A suitable Cascading Style Sheet could be implemented which would solve this problem. However, the style sheet reference would need to be added to every HTML page (there are thousands). FAR can do this automatically.</p>
<p>Headings</p>	<p>The heading styles for topic titles was not preserved and so the topic titles were hard to distinguish from the first heading within the body text.</p>	<p>This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually modify the heading styles of thousands of topics. FAR may be able to solve this automatically, but further investigation would be required.</p>
<p>Horizontal rules</p>	<p>All dividing lines used to separate scenarios have been lost in the conversion.</p>	<p>If these dividing lines are required, this is a serious clean-up issue. Every HTML page which is a scenario would need to be checked against the test WinHelp file and the horizontal rule added manually. The design of the horizontal rule (how wide, how long, what colour, etc.) can be described in a style sheet.</p>

<p>Images</p>	<p>Every BMP image in the WinHelp file is created as a unique GIF image. For one test file, over 350 images were created, about one-third of which were really unique. The other images were the same as those used earlier. But the conversion doesn't "know" that the images are the same and thus creates every one as a unique image.</p> <p>This overloads the number of files and the total size of the HTML and associated files on the server. For example: of the 348 files created for just one test Help file, the total size was 582KB (0.5 MB). If you assume that this is a similar pattern over the other help files, and knowing that there are approximately 28 help files, up to 14MB of server storage space could be taken up by graphics files alone. Paring these down to a collection of unique graphics would probably save about 13MB and greatly assist in download time across the intranet - many graphics (e.g. down arrow box) are repeated throughout many files - if only the one image for this down arrow was used, then it remains in the user's cache and doesn't have to be downloaded separately for every instance of it's display.</p> <p>The images created also have meaningless names, e.g. bm24.gif, and would be a problem for future authors/editors of the HTML.</p>	<p>This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually modify the filenames of the thousands of images. Once the filenames were changed EVERY instance would have to be modified to reflect the new filename in order for the graphics to display. Some HTML editing/authoring tools such as FrontPage may be able to do this in a more automatic way (as the filename changes, all associated links to the old filename are updated to reflect the new filename).</p> <p>In addition, removing duplicate image files and having a standard set of unique images would add enormously to the time overhead, but would result in faster display times for the end-user.</p>
<p>Indentation</p>	<p>Indentations are used a lot in the test Help files, especially in the scenarios. The resulting HTML loses all indentations, so the page is not displayed in a way which draws the eye to the salient points.</p>	<p>This is a serious clean-up issue. Every HTML page would have to be checked and modified to add appropriate "blockquotes" where the indentation used to be.</p>
<p>Index</p>	<p>None created. The current WinHelp files have an index of sorts, although it is fairly poor. The HDK "Find" list of keywords is not preserved at all - it is proprietary to HDK?</p>	<p>This is a serious clean-up issue, if an index is required.</p>

Links	Many links from the WinHelp file were missing in the resulting HTML file(s) and were created as plain text, not hyperlinks.	This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually recreate the thousands of links which are missing.
Master/Slave relationship	The master/slave relationship is not preserved.	This is a moderate clean-up issue. Re-creating a hierarchy of folders each of which represents the current set of WinHelp files is the easy part - ensuring the appropriate cross-folder links are established and maintained would require an enormous outlay of time. However, the apparent independent nature of most of the "slave" help files and the lack of cross-references to other help files, would mean that this may not be such an issue as long as the files were converted initially into appropriate folders.
Navigation buttons	WinHelp files have standard buttons for browsing through the file [>>] and [<<], as well as buttons for Contents, Find, Index, and, in the case of the test Help file, a button called [xxxx] which returns the Help user back to the main screen. No buttons are converted.	Standard browser navigation buttons can be used to go back to the previously displayed page, but if Next and Previous buttons, TOC, [xxxx] etc. were required, they'd have to be manually added to every file. This is a serious clean-up issue. TOC and [xxxx] could be added to every page globally, using FAR, but the Next and Previous buttons would have to be coded manually for EVERY page, if they were required.
Secondary Windows	The test Help files use a WinHelp convention known as "main" and "secondary" windows. The "main" window is usually where the bulk of the content is displayed, while a "secondary" window may display to show a procedure etc. In the case of the test files, secondary windows are used for every linked scenario. They do not convert as secondary windows to HTML - the content in the secondary window becomes a new HTML page.	There is no easy way that this limitation can be overcome. Having a separate HTML page should not be a problem for linked scenarios, although it would be ideal if it opened in a new browser window. If a different "look and feel" was required for these scenarios, this could be achieved by establishing a separate style sheet to reflect different colours, formatting etc. The style sheet reference would have to be manually added to every page that was to display differently. This is a serious clean-up issue.
Table of Contents	None created	This is a serious clean-up issue, as the entire Table of Contents with their associated links to the correct HTML page, must be created manually.

Tables	Tables seem to be reasonably well preserved where they were used; data which was missing in the test Help file is still missing in the converted table (e.g. tick symbols etc.)	As data is known to be missing, manual clean-up of these tables would be required, with the person doing this needing to go back to the original source documents. Tick symbols would be an issue if a standard symbol font was not used, and it may be better to indicate tick symbols with a tick graphic. This is a serious clean-up issue.
Tabs	Manually entered tab spaces were used in the original Word documents, and were carried through to the WinHelp files. HTML doesn't like tabs and invariably replaces them with a single space. This means that where tabs were used to visually separate pieces of data, they are now concatenated, sometimes with a space, sometimes not. In addition to manually entered tabs, any bullet lists and number lists have had their "indentation" tab replaced by a single space. At times the bullet symbol is very small and hard to read.	This is a serious clean-up issue. Every HTML page would have to be checked and modified to add an appropriate number of spaces where the tab used to be, or to re-create the section as a table without borders.

Ability of tool to be used to author future documents

HTML Help Workshop is a compiler. While you can author raw HTML code within it, it is not designed to be used as an HTML editor. Any HTML editor or word processor which can save files as HTML can be used to author documents. These documents can then be added to the appropriate file folders and links created manually to other existing documents, and a link to the new document manually created in the TOC.

Summary

Function	Notes
Future authoring	You can author raw HTML code but it is not designed to be used as an HTML editor.
Converting existing	All the content and images in the original test WinHelp file appear to have been converted. Major problems are: lack of a Table of Contents, many missing links, meaningless filenames, and very bad formatting.



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Converting a HLP file using HTML Help Workshop

Using HTML Help Workshop is the quickest conversion method (less than 5 minutes in most cases), but may result in the most errors to be cleaned up. The time saved using this form of automated conversion may be lost in the clean up time needed. It may be prudent to try HTML Help Workshop and other Help authoring tools ([HATs](#)) to see which gives the "cleanest" results. The extra time spent doing this could save many hours of clean up time.

1. Open HTML Help Workshop - available from <http://msdn.microsoft.com/workshop/author/htmlhelp/>).
2. Select **File | New**.
3. Select **Project**.
4. Select **Convert from WinHelp Project**.
5. Browse for the location of the HPJ file, and select it.
6. Browse to the location where the HHP file is to be stored (probably the same folder, or a sub-folder) and give it a name.
7. The conversion will now happen. Once it has completed, the HTML Help Workshop will display the project details. These can be left as they are or modified before compiling into HTML Help.
8. [Cleaning up](#) will no doubt be required!

If for some reason the conversion doesn't work, you may need to download and re-install HTML Help Workshop. Alternatively, Ralph Walden, the original Microsoft Help guru, offered me this suggestion:

"Here's an undocumented feature that might help you. Using Notepad or some other ASCII editor, create a file with the extension ".hcx" as in convert.hcx. The first line in this file should point to the full path of your HPJ file, and the second line should point to the full path of the HHP file you want to create, as in:

```
C:\TESTAREA\WIZARD\wizard.hpj  
C:\TESTAREA\WIZARD\wizard.hhp
```

Next, open that file in HHW -- you will probably see a quick flash as a dialog box comes and goes, and then no further messages -- however, your help project will be converted.

Note that you can use this to convert multiple projects at once -- each two-line pair contains the name of the HPJ followed by a line with the HHP.

Loading the .hcx file into HHW will convert every pair in the file."



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Doc-to-Help

Manufacturer	WexTech Systems http://www.wextech.com
Distributor	Writeworks http://www.writeworks.com.au
Price	\$799 US for Pro version; Doc-to-Help 4.0 - \$499 US; \$50 US P&P
Origin	US

This tool was not able to be tested using the sample file. However, earlier tests on another HLP file indicate that the following areas are problematic:

Problem area	Results	Solution
Filenames	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Font colours	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Fonts	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Headings	Not preserved	This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually modify the heading styles of the thousands of topics. FAR may be able to solve this automatically, but further investigation would be required.
Horizontal rules	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.

Images	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Indentation	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Index	Keywords in footnotes are not preserved	This is a serious clean-up issue, if an index is required.
Links	Not preserved	This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually recreate thousands of links which are missing.
Master/Slave relationship	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Navigation buttons	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Secondary Windows	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Table of Contents	Not preserved (in the test file the TOC was converted but the hierarchy wasn't preserved)	This is a serious clean-up issue, as the entire Table of Contents with their associated links to the correct HTML page, must be created manually.
Tables	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Tabs	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.

Ability of tool to be used to author future documents

Doc-to-Help has been primarily designed as a "single-source" authoring option. For new Word documents authored using its templates, it works well. However, there is the problem that its own templates must be used for a reasonable degree of success to be obtained. And converting existing documents which use different templates is fraught with problems.

Summary

Function	Notes
Future authoring	For new Word documents authored using its templates, it works well.
Converting existing	All the content and images in the original test WinHelp file appear to have been converted. Major problems are: lack of a Table of Contents which reflect the WinHelp files, missing links, and bad formatting.



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Easy HTML Help

Manufacturer	Eon Solutions
Distributor	Eon Solutions http://www.easyhtmlhelp.com
Price	\$220 US single user
Origin	UK

This tool was not able to be tested using the sample file. However, earlier tests on another HLP file indicate that the following areas are problematic:

Problem area	Results	Solution
Filenames	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Font colours	Font face, size, weight colours not correct	If the colours are required, this is a serious clean-up issue. Separate classes for particular parts of content could be established in a style sheet to reflect different colours, formatting etc. for different procedures. The style sheet reference would have to be manually added to every page that was to display differently. And every page where these were currently used would have to have the HTML tags modified to ascribe the appropriate classes to each section.

Fonts	Font face, size, weight colours not correct	A suitable Cascading Style Sheet could be implemented which would solve this problem. However, the style sheet reference would need to be added to every HTML page (there are well over 1000, likely over 5000). FAR can do this automatically. If the font sizes etc. which exist are embedded in the tags then a large clean-up would be needed - FAR can automate this process to a large degree.
Headings	Font face, size, weight colours not correct for headings	This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually modify the heading styles of the hundreds or thousands of topics. FAR may be able to solve this automatically, but further investigation would be required.
Horizontal rules	None preserved	If these dividing lines are required, this is a serious clean-up issue. Every HTML page which is a scenario would need to be checked against the test WinHelp file and the horizontal rule added manually. The design of the horizontal rule (how wide, how long, what colour, etc.) can be described in a style sheet.
Images	Some SHG graphics will not convert	This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually convert SHG images.
Indentation	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Index	Missing entirely	This is a serious clean-up issue, if an index is required.
Links	Links don't work	This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually recreate the thousands of links which are missing.
Master/Slave relationship	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Navigation buttons	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.

Secondary Windows	<p>Secondary window definitions are not removed (>secondary) and thus these "pages" do not work.</p> <p>Popups are created as new pages.</p>	<p>FAR can be used to remove the reference to >secondary across the files, thus allowing them to display correctly.</p> <p>If a different "look and feel" was required for the scenarios, this could be achieved by establishing a separate style sheet to reflect different colours, formatting etc. The style sheet reference would have to be manually added to every page that was to display differently. This is a serious clean-up issue.</p>
Table of Contents	Not preserved	This is a serious clean-up issue, as the entire Table of Contents with their associated links to the correct HTML page, must be created manually.
Tables	Unknown	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Tabs	Auto-numbering and bulleting indentations are removed and not replaced with a space - thus the bullet/number is concatenated to the text.	This is a serious clean-up issue. Every HTML page would have to be checked and modified to add an appropriate number of spaces where the tab used to be, or to re-create the section as a table without borders.

Ability of tool to be used to author future documents

Unknown.

Summary

Function	Notes
Future authoring	Unknown.
Converting existing	All the content and most images in the test WinHelp file appear to have been converted. Major problems are: lack of a Table of Contents, all links missing, secondary windows not dealt with satisfactorily, and bad formatting.



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Converting a HLP file using EasyHTML/Help

(EasyHTML/Help is available as a trial download for 30 days from: <http://www.easyhtmlhelp.com>)

Using EasyHTML/Help takes a little longer than HTML Help Workshop, but on the tests done, it gives "cleaner" results. Depending upon the size of the original RTF this process could take anywhere between 10 minutes and an hour. It may be prudent to try both [HTML Help Workshop](#) and EasyHTML/Help to see which gives the "cleanest" results. The extra minutes spent doing this could save many hours of clean up time. Some clean up will still be required, though.

EasyHTML/Help (EasyHH) does chew up an amount of memory while it is processing, so it may be wise to shut down other applications when it is running.

Note: All graphics files MUST be in the same folder as the RTF file, otherwise they will not be converted.

Note: If this sequence is NOT followed in this order, the conversion may not be successful.

1. Open the RTF file in Word.
2. You MUST save the RTF file as a different name - EasyHH won't work until you do this, so Save As now.
3. Select **Tools | Templates and Add-ins...** from the menu.
4. Click Attach.
5. Select **easyhh.dot** from the templates list and click Open.
6. Click OK. A new toolbar for EasyHH is now available. You can change the toolbar's style between text and icons by clicking the number 1 or 2 at the far left of the toolbar. The remainder of these instructions assume you have the icon style of toolbar active.
7. Select Easy HH Run Function from the toolbar (the icon with the two shoes).
8. Select **Convert RTF to HTML** from the list.
9. Click OK, then click OK again at the warning message.
10. The screen will go a little crazy while the conversion is happening - this is normal. When the conversion is complete a message is displayed indicating how many topics and links were converted. Click OK.
11. Select Easy HH Config from the toolbar. You need to establish the project settings - this is vitally important, otherwise the files are created in the wrong places and you end up with a mess.
12. Click New to define a new project.
13. Type the project's name (maximum of 8 characters).
14. A default PRJ file path will be specified which is the same as where the RTF files etc. are stored. Keep this path and click OK.

15. Give the new Help file a title (this will appear in the title bar of the HTML Help file).
16. Select the default (first) topic to be displayed when the HTML Help file is opened by the end-user (e.g. Contents, Index, etc.). If you don't know what the first topic opened is, then open the original HLP file and check it, then find that appropriate topic in the RTF file - this will give you the default topic. If you can't ascertain it, you can always change this setting later.
17. Check that the file paths for the Built Web Pages and Document Settings folders are correct - they should be the folder you have been using or a sub-folder within it (e.g. Webpages).
18. Click OK. If the sub-folder of Webpages doesn't exist, click Yes to create it.
19. Make sure the project you are working on is the one selected in the Projects list. Click OK.
20. Save the RTF document.
21. Select Easy HH Process HTML from the toolbar, then click OK. Processing is the most time-consuming part of the conversion process and can take 20+ minutes for a large help file. The screen will not show much activity - except the vertical scroll bar and the status bar, which will change as processes are run.
22. Once the processing has finished, select Easy HH Build from the toolbar to create the HTML Help. This takes about a minute or so.
23. Click OK to the message and view the compiled HTML Help (CHM file).
24. Save the RTF file.
25. Now the checking and [clean up](#) starts... Further builds may be required after changes have been made to the source HTML etc. file. If so, ensure that the earlier CHM file is deleted. When you select Build after deleting the CHM file you'll get an error message - click OK and select Build again - it will now recompile. If you don't delete the CHM file, you will not be able to see your changes.



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ForeHelp / InterHelp

Manufacturer	ForeFront (ForeFront went out of business in Jan 2002, so the product is no longer available from them)
Price	Some remaining copies of ForeHelp are available from http://www.hypertrain.com for \$99 US dollars each
Origin	US

The demo version of ForeHelp/ForeHTML was limited to the compilation of only 20 topics, so some results were unable to be obtained.

ForeHelp doesn't have an option to generate "vanilla" HTML code in the conversion - the choices are either HTML Help (requires Internet Explorer as the browser and creates a compiled CHM file), or InterHelp. InterHelp is reputedly cross-browser and requires certain files to be published to the web server to allow the Java applets etc. to be run. However, it appears that the end-user is only delivered those files they request, in addition to the contents, index, and search files. It is unknown as to how much happens locally and how much on the server, and thus how much time is taken for low bandwidth end-users to receive the information they need.

ForeHelp does produce "vanilla" HTML files and so InterHelp or CHM may not have to be used. But without these "compiled" versions you lose all TOC, Index and Search capabilities. These would have to be re-created manually.

A full text search is automatically created when InterHelp is built. This is then displayed in a frame via a Java applet. Unfortunately quotation marks in a topic title are displayed in the search results screen as ASCII HTML code (i.e. `“` Where Used`”` to represent "Where used"). This looks a little messy, but may be able to be corrected using [FAR](#) (not tested).

ForeHelp doesn't try and convert a HLP file - the procedure is to import an HPJ file and, providing the associated RTF file is in the same directory, the Help file will be displayed. It can then be output to either HTML Help (not tested) or InterHelp.

The HTML code generated for the InterHelp files is quite messy - almost all styles are embedded in tags. Style sheets can be created or attached, but it is unknown whether this will get rid of messy code. Messy HTML code is a problem for future authors/editors.

The biggest problem with ForeHelp and it's InterHelp functionality is that it adds proprietary code etc. to the Help files.

The whole idea of intranet delivery was to free [the organisation] from using proprietary-based add-ins which have to be run on the server or client machines. If this is not such an issue, then ForeHelp needs to be seriously considered as a conversion option, if only because it creates the "cleanest" files.

Problem area	Results	Solution
Filenames	Can specify to keep long file names. Doesn't concatenate them with other characters. Replaces spaces in topic titles with underscore in file name. File names are meaningful, e.g. Change_Document_Status_To_Inactive.htm	None needed
Font colours	Preserved	None needed
Fonts	Preserved	None needed
Headings	Preserved	None needed
Horizontal rules	Preserved	None needed
Images	Preserved, but created as separate image files. No meaningful filenames (e.g. bm5.gif).	This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually modify the filenames of the thousands of images. Once the filenames were changed EVERY instance would have to be modified to reflect the new filename in order for the graphics to display. Some HTML editing/authoring tools such as FrontPage may be able to do this in a more automatic way (as the filename changes, all associated links to the old filename are updated to reflect the new filename). In addition, removing duplicate image files and having a standard set of unique images would add enormously to the time overhead.
Indentation	Preserved	None needed
Index	Contents are as per the WinHelp file and are created in a Java applet window within the browser	None needed, if go with InterHelp
Links	Not all were created - this may have been a limitation of the 20 topics in the demo version. Perhaps only missing one or two?	This could be a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually recreate the links which are missing.
Master/Slave relationship	Unknown as to how this will be treated. 20 topic limitation in demo version.	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.

Navigation buttons	Can add your own or theirs. Allows Home, Next, Previous, TOC, Index, Search. Appears to emulate Browse sequence buttons in WinHelp.	None needed
Secondary Windows	Open as new HTML page, not in a new instance of the browser window.	There is no easy way that this limitation can be overcome. Having a separate HTML page should not be a problem for linked scenarios. If a different "look and feel" was required for these scenarios, this could be achieved by establishing a separate style sheet to reflect different colours, formatting etc. The style sheet reference would have to be manually added to every page that was to display differently. This is a serious clean-up issue.
Table of Contents	Unknown and unlikely as no CNT file available for these files. However can re-create the index relatively easily - do not have to manually code and link a new TOC. TOC can have book/page icons and is expandable as per WinHelp. Done via a Java applet.	This is a serious clean-up issue, as the entire Table of Contents with their associated links to the correct HTML page, must be created manually if InterHelp is not used.
Tables	Variable and in general unknown - unable to test the large tables as 20 topic limitation in demo version.	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Tabs	Appear to be preserved. Auto-bullet and auto-number are a little messy when they screen wrap if the content is lengthy - they don't align the text as per a word processor.	None needed

Ability of tool to be used to author future documents

You can author in ForeHelp - it has a basic word processing editor (similar to WordPad). But many Word features and functionality would be lost.

Summary

Function	Notes
Future authoring	Has a basic word processing editor.
Converting existing	The "best" choice if InterHelp is used. If InterHelp is not used then TOC etc. has to be re-created manually.



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HDK

Manufacturer	Virtual Media
Distributor	Virtual Media http://www.vmtech.com/
Price	HDK 3.3 was already owned by [the organisation]; HDK 3.4 (released May 1999) had an upgrade price of \$295 (all AUD). A free update to version 3.4 was made available to existing users in August 1999, thus enabling Cascading Style Sheets to be successfully used in converting to HTML.
Origin	Australia

HDK 3.3 is owned by [the organisation]. It is the tool which is currently used to convert the existing Word documents into WinHelp.

HDK Intraweb was a separate purchasable option in Version 3.3 - it was not purchased by [the organisation] and cannot be tested. Intraweb is part of HDK 3.4 which was released in May 1999. Unfortunately the Intraweb demo version is limited to generating 20 topics - and in the case of the test file it converts no topics as the number of topics exceeds 20. Even when the number of topics is manually reduced to less than 20, the conversion does not happen. **Therefore it cannot be tested.**

Note: Since running these tests in June 1999, I have had more recent experience with HDK 3.4 (August 1999 update installed), and have found that the conversion of any existing HDK WinHelp file to HTML Help has been almost trouble free. This more recent experience (October/November 1999) is with a different client, and with help files which are authored within HDK itself, not in Word. The following table reflects the HDK 3.3 conversion results. Where applicable, HDK 3.4 results are documented in **blue**. Please note that the files used in HDK 3.4 were different to those used when the original HDK 3.3 tests were done.

Problem area	Results	Solution

<p>Filenames</p>	<p>Not able to be tested, but based on earlier versions, HDK converts the filenames into meaningless codes.</p> <p>There is an option in HDK to create filenames which reflect either the full title of the topic or an abbreviated (8 character) title.</p>	<p>This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually modify the filenames of the thousands of topics to reflect the source document names. Once the filenames were changed EVERY hyperlink would have to be modified to reflect the new filename in order for the hyperlinks to work. Some HTML editing/authoring tools such as FrontPage may be able to do this in a more automatic way (as the filename changes, all associated links to the old filename are updated to reflect the new filename).</p>
<p>Font colours</p>	<p>Not able to be tested</p> <p>Topic titles can have a font colour specified; other font colours are preserved.</p>	<p>Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.</p>
<p>Fonts</p>	<p>Not able to be tested</p> <p>The standard font in Normal.dot is converted to Times New Roman. However, the use of CSS can correct this simply. Other workarounds are possible, though time-consuming.</p>	<p>Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.</p>
<p>Headings</p>	<p>Not able to be tested</p> <p>Are converted to a relative font size as versus <h1>, <h2> etc. so have the appearance of being headings.</p>	<p>Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.</p>
<p>Horizontal rules</p>	<p>Not able to be tested</p>	<p>Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.</p>
<p>Images</p>	<p>Not able to be tested</p> <p>Standard Windows grey for button graphics etc. are poorly converted and can come out as GIFs varying in colour from a khaki through to light blue.</p>	<p>Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.</p>
<p>Indentation</p>	<p>Not able to be tested</p>	<p>Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.</p>

Index	Not able to be tested Can be automatically created by HDK.	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Links	Not able to be tested Links to URLs are preserved; links within a help file are preserved; links to an external help file can be preserved though they require a lot more work to get them to work satisfactorily.	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Master/Slave relationship	Not able to be tested	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Navigation buttons	Not able to be tested	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Secondary Windows	Not able to be tested Are preserved as secondary windows. Popups can either be located underneath the topic which refers to them or be displayed in another HTML page.	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Table of Contents	Not able to be tested Preserved in full.	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Tables	Not able to be tested Preserved.	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Tabs	Not able to be tested Depending on number of tabs, can become borderless tables.	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.

Ability of tool to be used to author future documents

Unknown

Summary

Function	Notes
Future authoring	Unknown until product is purchased
Converting existing	Unknown until product is purchased. Probably has meaningless filenames. Very successful at converting existing HLP files created by HDK.

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HyperText Studio

Manufacturer	Olson Software
Distributor	Olson Software http://nz.com/olson/
Price	\$299 US (Professional Edition)
Origin	New Zealand

HyperText Studio 3.0 is still in Beta, and the demo version used to do the conversion was limited to converting only 10 topics, so some aspects were impossible to test.

The resulting HTML code created is VERY messy and virtually every style change is embedded within HTML tags, not within a style definition or an external style sheet. This would make future authoring/editing very difficult to maintain as the author/editor would need to be able to reproduce the current formatting.

When the WinHelp file is imported into HyperText Studio, the individual topics can be edited prior to conversion to HTML - this could save a lot of time editing in HTML (e.g. font colours, tab spaces, etc.), but wouldn't solve the embedded styles problem.

Problem area	Results	Solution
Filenames	The filenames created in the conversion process for each unique topic's HTML page are not "user-friendly". They would be extremely difficult to refer to at a later stage when creating future links as they would have no meaning whatsoever to future authors or intranet developers. For example: index8.htm, bm5.gif	This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually modify the filenames of the thousands of topics to reflect the source document names. Once the filenames were changed EVERY hyperlink would have to be modified to reflect the new filename in order for the hyperlinks to work. Some HTML editing/authoring tools such as FrontPage may be able to do this in a more automatic way (as the filename changes, all associated links to the old filename are updated to reflect the new filename).

Font colours	Text colours are preserved, but probably too well! It appears that closing tags haven't been used consistently and the colour continues until the next colour change occurs, even if the colour should've returned to black in the interim.	If the colours are required, this is a serious clean-up issue. Separate classes for particular parts of content could be established in a style sheet to reflect different colours, formatting etc. for different procedures. The style sheet reference would have to be manually added to every page that was to display differently. And every page where these were currently used would have to have the HTML tags modified to ascribe the appropriate classes to each section. The existing "overdone" HTML code would need a lot of cleaning up (FAR may be able to be used for this to help automate the process).
Fonts	The Arial font used in the WinHelp file was mostly preserved. Some text/headings became Times New Roman.	Embedded fonts would need to be removed if style sheets were to apply. FAR can automate this process to a large degree.
Headings	Headings seemed to be OK.	None needed
Horizontal rules	All dividing lines used to separate scenarios have been lost in the conversion.	If these dividing lines are required, this is a serious clean-up issue. Every HTML page which is a scenario would need to be checked against the WinHelp file and the horizontal rule added manually. The design of the horizontal rule (how wide, how long, what colour, etc.) can be described in a style sheet.
Images	<p>Every BMP image in the WinHelp file is created as a unique GIF image.</p> <p>The images created also have meaningless names, e.g. bm5.gif, and would be a problem for future authors/editors of the HTML.</p>	This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually modify the filenames of the thousands of images. Once the filenames were changed EVERY instance would have to be modified to reflect the new filename in order for the graphics to display. Some HTML editing/authoring tools such as FrontPage may be able to do this in a more automatic way (as the filename changes, all associated links to the old filename are updated to reflect the new filename). In addition, removing duplicate image files and having a standard set of unique images would add enormously to the time overhead.
Indentation	Indentation was mostly OK in the small set of test files created.	None needed

Index	Unable to test because of the 10 topic limitation in the demo version	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Links	All appeared to be there.	None needed
Master/Slave relationship	Unable to test because of the 10 topic limitation in the demo version	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Navigation buttons	WinHelp files have standard buttons for browsing through the file [>>] and [<<], as well as buttons for Contents, Find, Index, and, in the case of the test Help file, a button called [xxxx] which returns the Help user back to the main screen. No buttons are converted.	Standard browser navigation buttons can be used to go back to the previously displayed page, but if Next and Previous buttons, TOC, [xxxx] etc. were required, they'd have to be manually added to every file. This is a serious clean-up issue, TOC and [xxxx] could be added to every page globally, using FAR, but the Next and Previous buttons would have to be coded manually for EVERY page.
Secondary Windows	The content in the secondary window becomes a new HTML page, and this tool automatically finds secondary windows and forces them to open in a new browser window, thus emulating a secondary window in WinHelp.	None needed
Table of Contents	Unable to test because of the 10 topic limitation in the demo version; presume none created as no CNT file available.	This is a serious clean-up issue, as the entire Table of Contents with their associated links to the correct HTML page, must be created manually.
Tables	Unable to test because of the 10 topic limitation in the demo version	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Tabs	Manually entered tabs are stripped out altogether and the previously visually separated text is now concatenated. Bullet lists and auto-number lists have had their "indentation" tab replaced by a single space.	This is a serious clean-up issue. Every HTML page would have to be checked and modified to add an appropriate number of spaces where the tab used to be, or to re-create the section as a table without borders.

Ability of tool to be used to author future documents

HyperText Studio can also be used to author new files - it has a word processing editor similar to Word's but with minimal functionality limited to basic HTML styles, colours, bold, italics, indentation, auto-bullets, and auto-numbering (similar to WordPad). Many features/functionality of Word would be lost.

Summary

Function	Notes
Future authoring	Has a basic word processing editor

Converting existing

All the content and images in the original test WinHelp file appear to have been converted. Major problems are: lack of a Table of Contents (assumed), meaningless filenames, and embedded HTML styles.



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RoboHTML

Manufacturer	eHelp (was Blue Sky Software) http://www.ehelp.com
Price	RoboHTML: \$999 AUD (single user); RoboHelp Office (includes RoboHTML) \$1545 AUD (single user)
Origin	US

In addition to converting a WinHelp project, RoboHTML has an option for converting a Word document. One of the Word documents created by the macro (and prior to the HDK process being run on it) was imported into RoboHTML. The DOC file was originally 2.2MB in size. The resulting single HTML page was 566KB so the file size decreased dramatically. However, having a complete WinHelp file as one HTML document is not an option - end-users want to get to the bit of information they need now, and don't want to have to scroll through an enormously long page of information. All links in the resulting HTML page were preserved, but the names weren't - so every link was titled "1" and the end-user would have no idea where the link went, or what the scenario options were. The only positive was that the large tables were converted better than even in WinHelp, where they sometimes lost characters such as tick symbols. **Assessment:** Using RoboHTML to convert a long Word document, such as those used to create the WinHelp files, is not an option.

Like ForeHelp and HDK, RoboHTML has a proprietary cross-browser solution called WebHelp. This adds functionality such as full-text search, Java applet TOC etc. but its biggest problem is that it adds further proprietary information to either the client or the server, thus defeating the purpose of a non-proprietary intranet delivery mechanism. WebHelp output was not tested.

Problem area	Results	Solution
Filenames	<p>Become quite long as they are prefixed by the name of the original WinHelp file and have as their suffix, the topic title (up to a certain character length). For example, the topic "Create General Task List" in the ams1.hlp file becomes: "ams1Create_General_Task_List.htm". However, they are logical filenames and should have meaning for future authors/editors.</p> <p>Image filenames are prefixed by</p>	<p>None needed for HTML filenames.</p> <p>Graphics filenames are a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually modify the filenames of thousands of images. Once the filenames were changed EVERY instance would have to be modified to reflect the new filename in order for the graphics to display. Some HTML editing/authoring tools such as FrontPage may be able to do this in a more automatic way (as</p>

	<p>the WinHelp file name and suffixed by an 8 character sequential number. For example: the second graphic found in the ams1.hlp WinHelp file becomes: "ams100000002.gif". These filenames do not have meaning.</p>	<p>the filename changes, all associated links to the old filename are updated to reflect the new filename). In addition, removing duplicate image files and having a standard set of unique images would add enormously to the time overhead.</p>
Font colours	Not preserved	<p>If <embedded> is selected as the option for the styles when the WinHelp file is initially converted, then the font colours are preserved. However, they are then embedded into the HTML tag and would not respond to later style sheet changes. FAR could be used to globally modify these.</p> <p>Style sheets can be applied across the project, but the style sheet reference may need to be added to each HTML page manually (FAR can do this globally).</p>
Fonts	Not preserved	<p>If <embedded> is selected as the option for the styles when the WinHelp file is initially converted, then the font styles are preserved. However, they are then embedded into the HTML tag and would not respond to later style sheet changes. FAR could be used to globally modify these.</p> <p>Style sheets can be applied across the project, but the style sheet reference may need to be added to each HTML page manually (FAR can do this globally).</p>
Glossary	Glossary definitions in a master file are created as separate HTML pages - one for each definition. No links are created to/from them.	<p>Would need to be re-created as a single HTML page for an area (e.g. one Glossary page for Asset Management, one for Managing People etc.). Popups are not a simple process in HTML (fortunately rarely used in the original test Help files).</p>
Headings	Non-scrollable heading shows clearly as a heading. Other headings are preserved in their appropriate heading hierarchy.	None needed
Horizontal rules	OK	None needed

Images	<p>OK, but created as separate image files. (see information in HTML Help)</p> <p>BMPs converted successfully to GIFs.</p>	<p>This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually modify the filenames of the thousands of images. Once the filenames were changed EVERY instance would have to be modified to reflect the new filename in order for the graphics to display. Some HTML editing/authoring tools such as FrontPage may be able to do this in a more automatic way (as the filename changes, all associated links to the old filename are updated to reflect the new filename). In addition, removing duplicate image files and having a standard set of unique images would add enormously to the time overhead.</p>
Indentation	<p>In the scenarios, most indentation is preserved.</p>	<p>None needed</p>
Index	<p>Not preserved</p>	<p>RoboHTML has an excellent feature whereby you can create an index from all keywords in a topic and the topic title. If you want, there is the ability to check the keywords which will be created on every page and modify the list to reflect the needs of the end-users (remove those which don't make sense or aren't required, rename those which are spelt incorrectly, etc.)</p>
Links	<p>All links appear to be preserved.</p>	<p>None needed</p>
Master/Slave relationship	<p>Not preserved</p>	<p>This is a moderate clean-up issue. Re-creating a hierarchy of folders each of which represents the current set of WinHelp files is the easy part - ensuring the appropriate cross-folder links are established and maintained would require an enormous outlay of time. However, the apparent independent nature of most of the "slave" help files and the lack of cross-references to other help files, would mean that this may not be such an issue as long as the files were converted initially into their appropriate folders.</p>
Navigation buttons	<p>Unknown</p>	<p>Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.</p>

Secondary Windows	Created as a separate HTML page. Non-scrollable heading style not preserved - displayed as bolded normal size font.	There is no easy way that this limitation can be overcome. Having a separate HTML page should not be a problem for linked scenarios. If a different "look and feel" was required for these scenarios, this could be achieved by establishing a separate style sheet to reflect different colours, formatting etc. The style sheet reference would have to be manually added to every page that was to display differently. This is a serious clean-up issue.
Table of Contents	Missing entirely	<p>RoboHTML can create a Table of Contents but it is based on an alphabetical list of the topic titles. It is therefore not hierarchical.</p> <p>This is a moderate clean-up issue, as the entire Table of Contents with their associated links to the correct HTML page, must be created manually. In the case of RoboHTML, the TOC items can be rearranged to replicate the existing hierarchy.</p>
Tables	The Control Requirements Matrix tables become graphic images, so anything missing in the original file will be missing in the converted file.	<p>Adding missing symbols or text to the graphic is not usually a simple process, although it can be done.</p> <p>The problem with creating the tables as graphics is that if the HLP file has a corrupt table, then that corruption will carry over to the graphic.</p>
Tabs	Indentations in auto-bullets and auto-numbers are OK. Other tabs replaced by a single space.	This is a serious clean-up issue. Every HTML page would have to be checked and modified to add an appropriate number of spaces where the tab used to be, or to re-create the section as a table without borders.

Other	<p>Topic titles which have "&" in them have the ampersand replaced by a question mark, so the resulting pseudo Table of Contents has ? through it.</p> <p>When multiple test Help files are converted and they are placed in the same directory, some files are overwritten by the later output (e. g. TOC, Index).</p> <p>Bookmark links (references) get created which don't appear to have any purpose except adding bytes to the file sizes.< /p>< /p></p>	<p>These can be removed manually by renaming the TOC topic title.</p> <p>This has implications for how the directory tree is structured for these HTML files.</p> <p>Removing them manually doesn't appear to affect any functionality, but will take many extra hours of time.</p>
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Ability of tool to be used to author future documents

RoboHTML has a simple word processing editor (similar to WordPad). Many features and functionality of Word are lost.

Summary

Function	Notes
Future authoring	Basic word processing editor. Very expensive if to be used by multiple authors (site license fees are expensive, as are upgrade prices and subscription plans).
Converting existing	All the content and images in the original test WinHelp file appear to have been converted. Major problems are: lack of a Table of Contents, meaningless filenames for graphics, and bad formatting. This would be the "second best" choice.



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WordToWeb

Manufacturer	Solution Soft
Distributor	Solution Soft http://www.solutionsoft.com
Price	\$299 US, single user
Origin	US

WordToWeb is a tool used to convert Microsoft Word documents (NOT WinHelp files) to HTML or HTML Help. It is especially useful when the original Word documents are long, have numerous cross-references, and have used styles, particularly heading styles. There are innumerable options in creating HTML output from the Word document, including whether or not the document is to be one HTML page or many (the user can choose whether to create separate pages at every Heading 1, 2, 3 etc.). A TOC can be created automatically based on the separate pages created and their topic title is based on the heading. Navigation buttons can be placed at the top and/or bottom of every page. Frames can be established whereby the TOC displays in a separate frame to the main body text and is therefore visible at all times.

For this test a DOC which had been processed by the Word macros, prior to the conversion by HDK into WinHelp, was used.

Problem area	Results	Solution
Filenames	The number of separate filenames created was dependent upon whether or not a single HTML page was requested, or multiple pages. If multiple pages were requested and the decision was made to break at Heading 1 styles, then in the test file, 6 HTML pages were created. The filenames reflected the Heading 1 titles where the split occurred.	None needed

Font colours	Preserved, but embedded within tags within the HTML pages.	Can use external style sheets or could set up a style definition to be added to each page created. This must be done at the time of converting. Embedded tags could be removed/replaced using FAR thus automating part of this process.
Fonts	Preserved, but embedded within tags within the HTML pages.	Can use external style sheets or could set up a style definition to be added to each page created. This must be done at the time of converting. Embedded tags could be removed/replaced using FAR thus automating part of this process.
Headings	Preserved	None needed
Horizontal rules	Missing	If these dividing lines are required, this is a serious clean-up issue. Every HTML page which is a scenario would need to be checked against the WinHelp file and the horizontal rule added manually. The design of the horizontal rule (how wide, how long, what colour, etc.) can be described in a style sheet.
Images	Creates each one found as a unique image.	This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually modify the filenames of thousands of images. Once the filenames were changed EVERY instance would have to be modified to reflect the new filename in order for the graphics to display. Some HTML editing/authoring tools such as FrontPage may be able to do this in a more automatic way (as the filename changes, all associated links to the old filename are updated to reflect the new filename). In addition, removing duplicate image files and having a standard set of unique images would add enormously to the time overhead.
Indentation	Preserved	None needed
Index	Index is created based on the index cross-references in the Word document. Similar to that in WinHelp.	This is a serious clean-up issue, if an index is required.

Links	<p>Links to different headings/topics within the file were all preserved.</p> <p>Links to new topics created by the Word macro were not labelled correctly - they were represented by the number 1 and would be meaningless to the end-user.</p> <p>Links in the main process topic to the sub-processes are missing.</p> <p>Links to scenarios were either missing or represented by the number 1.</p>	This is a serious clean-up issue, requiring a major expenditure of time to manually recreate the hundreds or thousands of links which are represented by the number 1.
Master/Slave relationship	Not tested as only one file was tested. Their "Batch process" option MAY preserve this, but unknown at this time.	Unable to estimate the severity of the problem.
Navigation buttons	Added to top/bottom of every page if required. Can specify which buttons you want, what graphic style, and in what order. Includes buttons for Back and Forward as well as TOC, Index, Home, etc. If you have your own set of buttons, you can specify to use those instead of the ones supplied.	None needed
Secondary Windows	Not applicable as not an issue in Word	None needed
Table of Contents	Excellent TOC created based on the heading topics and the heading styles. TOC is within each HTML page created for the area and between each of the pages. There is a batch conversion option (not tested) which may create an entire TOC for a complete project.	This is a moderate clean-up issue, as the master Table of Contents with their associated links to the correct HTML page, must be created manually.
Tables	Very clean conversion of all elements of the tables, including elements which were missing from the large tables, even in the WinHelp files.	None needed
Tabs	Replaced with a single space	This is a serious clean-up issue. Every HTML page would have to be checked and modified to add an appropriate number of spaces where the tab used to be, or to re-create the section as a table without borders.

Ability of tool to be used to author future documents

Not applicable - it is a conversion utility only.

Summary

Function	Notes
Future authoring	Not applicable
Converting existing	All the content and images in the original test WinHelp file appear to have been converted. Major problems are: lack of a master Table of Contents, and many links (bookmarks) referenced incorrectly.





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Issues

Issue	Notes
What end-result is required?	
(Printed doc, PDF, WinHelp, HTML Help, pure HTML, etc.)	
Single-sourced documents	
(master in Word, HTML??)	
Who will do editing in future?	
HTML knowledge? Use WYSIWYG editor - which one? FrontPage? Dreamweaver? HomeSite? other?	
How "true" to original style does the HTML have to be?	

Extent and nature of links, jumps, popups?

How are popups to be displayed in HTML?

Use of KLinks for index?

Use of ALinks for related topics?

Glossary?

Are there OLE objects which need to be converted? Source?

Graphics - BMP, SHG, GIF, JPG?

Colours of graphics/ screen shots?

Context sensitive help
used? Map IDs?

What's This help used?

Heading styles and
other styles used in
original source
document?

Secondary windows
used? how many?
what variety?

Non-scrollable headers
used?

Auto numbering for
browse sequence used?

Bullets - auto
generated? graphic?

Numbers - auto-
generated? field code?
manually included?

Use of background and
other colours?

Fonts used?



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Decompiling a HLP file

This process uses a free utility, helpdeco.exe (available from <http://www.helpmaster.com/zip/helpdc21.zip> [218kb]), to decompile a HLP file into its original RTF and graphics files. Depending on the structure of the original file, other files may also be created. The process takes a few minutes only.

If the original files (RTF etc.), are available, then you DO NOT need to decompile - you can go straight to converting to HTML Help via [HTML Workshop](#), [EasyHTML/Help](#), or another Help authoring tool (see [Help authoring tool comparisons](#)).

Note: Helpdeco.exe is a DOS program and therefore must be run from the DOS prompt. However, there is a small utility that adds a Windows interface that you may like to try, at: <http://www.featurecreeps.com/software/helpdecompilershell/>. The instructions below are for running Helpdeco from a DOS prompt.

1. Create a new folder which will store all files for this conversion project (note its name and path - this will be needed for the DOS command line).
2. Make a COPY of the HLP file to be converted (and its associated CNT file, if it exists), and put into this new folder. DO NOT work with the original files.
3. Make a COPY of helpdeco.exe and put into the new folder.
4. Go to the MS-DOS prompt and change directories to the new folder.
5. Type: helpdeco.exe filename.hlp
6. This will extract the RTF and HPJ files; the BMP, WMF, SHG (and other graphics files); and any other associated files. It will not extract a CNT file, and if one doesn't already exist you can extract it by typing helpdeco.exe filename.hlp /c
7. Once the files have been extracted, exit back to Windows. The extracted files should now be displayed in the project's folder.
8. You are now ready to convert these files into HTML Help using [HTML Workshop](#), [EasyHTML/Help](#) or another Help authoring tool (see [Help authoring tool comparisons](#)).



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Cleaning up a HLP file conversion

Be prepared for a lot of work! Thus far, no conversion method tested has been able to fully translate the WinHelp features into HTML Help. How much cleaning up is to be done can only be ascertained by comparing the CHM file with the HLP file - and by checking EVERYTHING! Every link, every bullet/number, every graphic, every popup, table of contents, index, etc. Suggestion: Open the files side by side and match page by page.

In all cases, how much work is done will be up to the client and what they are prepared to sacrifice if they aren't prepared to pay for a 100% conversion.

Areas which are notoriously suspect in the conversion are detailed below:

Area	Problems	Solution
Table of contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• missing entirely• one long list with no hierarchy• a listing of all topics in the RTF file (in the order in which they appear, not necessarily the order displayed in the HLP file)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is almost certain that the TOC will need to be re-established manually.
Index	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• missing entirely• "interesting" main and sub-entries and relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keywords may need to be re-entered to re-create the index.

Headings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • font face, size, weight etc. not correct • no horizontal rules to separate from the body text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use FAR to add <code><h1></code> etc. for headings. • Run FAR again to add <code><hr></code> after <code></h1></code> to add a horizontal rule after each <code><h1></code> • Use a style sheet to set heading styles
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Body text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fonts, sizes, colours, etc. not correct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use FAR to find/replace incorrect fonts • Use a style sheet to set font information for the body text
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Bullets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no space between bullet and text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use FAR to find/replace old bullet with <code></code>
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Numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No space between number and text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can use FAR to find/replace but as the numbers vary, this may not be a satisfactory solution
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Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy HH does not remove any Window definitions (e.g. <code>>secondary</code>) so these may be created as part of the HTML file name - they will not work when you try to link to them • colour, underlining etc. not correct • Links not working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use FAR to find/replace <code>>secondary.htm</code> with <code>.htm</code> - the links should now work • Use style sheet to define link colours, text-decoration etc. • Re-establish links manually
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Missing pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obvious! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-create a new HTML file from the RTF and re-establish the links
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Missing graphics

- Some SHG graphics will not convert
 - Converting back to BMP via SHED won't allow them to be opened in PaintShop Pro, so you may need to capture the graphic from SHED using PSP. You may need to include image maps for previous hotspots in the SHG graphic.
-

Background colours

- missing
 - Use style sheet to specify if required
-

Popups

- often created as new pages in their own right
 - Can leave as is, or if client REALLY wants "proper" popups, can re-create in the appropriate HTML file using JavaScript etc.
-

For a full analysis of each Help authoring tool (HAT) and what it does/doesn't convert to HTML (NOT HTML Help) on a group of sample WinHelp files, see: [Conversion Tool Comparison: Overview](#) on this web site.





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Using FAR on web pages

FAR (Find And Replace) is an excellent tool for globally finding and replacing data within web pages. It comes from a fellow Australian, Robert Chandler, and is available for download from <http://www.helpware.net> or Josef Becker's site: <http://www.helpmaster.com/hh-musthave.htm>.

Some uses I found for FAR in the first hour of using it:

- globally added a cascading style sheet reference to the <HEAD> of every page
- changed <p> syntax (and associated </p>) to <h1> (</h1>) etc.
- found all instances of </h1> and added <hr> after each to add a horizontal rule under all <h1>s
- removed and replaced with nothing so that the style sheet applies (don't forget the ending tag too - make sure matching is on); FAR is particularly useful at ignoring all those line breaks that Front Page takes notice of and which prevent you from doing a full find/replace in FP when the syntax wraps to a second line!
- found all italicised procedural titles (<p><i>) and made them red (I made them <h4> and adjusted the style sheet so that <h4> was red and italicised) - make sure matching is on, so you can check that you only replace those which are legitimate procedural titles, not EVERYTHING that is italicised!
- found all instances of references which included a secondary window definition (e.g. filename>secondary.htm) and removed the >secondary.htm, replacing it with .htm

No doubt FAR has many more uses, but the hours it saved me in just the Find/Replace function were enormous.

2001 update:

From a post I submitted to the ForeHelp mailing list, October 2001:

"...I'd like to add my praises for FAR. I use it primarily for its Find and Replace functionality across an entire set of HTML files. I'll share some very recent examples:

Example 1: 998 topic help file done in ForeHelp (FH), but the content was sourced from other files, so there were an unknown number and variety of tags lurking inside the HTML code. As I am a 'preacher' for CSS, I wanted to clean up the tags. I used FAR to do about 30 passes over the files, hunting out and 'killing' the nasty s. In about 1 hour I removed all tags - some 8500 of them! I reduced the total HTML file size from 3.2mb to 2.7mb. Remember, this was 998 HTML files cleaned up in 1 hour! To do that manually in FH (or any other HTML editor, even those with a global find and replace) would have taken days, if not weeks.

Example 2: Just last week I was working on a contract where the HTML Help files (NOT created

using FH or any other HAT) were full of remnants of tags etc. from an even earlier HDK conversion. They now author in FrontPage and compile using HTML Help Workshop. Even though they use a CSS, it was next to useless as there were so many tags at code level that were overriding the CSS. In 10 hours using FAR, I cleaned up 43000 (yes, that's 43 thousand!) excess and unwanted HTML tag snippets from the 1750 HTML files, reducing the total file size by another 0.5mb. Sure, it took 10 hours, but I made hundreds of passes of the files using FAR to 'hit' every variety of these extraneous tags. To have gone through every file, one by one, and clean up the crud would've taken months. The client was so impressed, that starting tomorrow I work on the next set (they have about 10 sets of similar size!). BTW, in most cases, the time that FAR spent on a file cleaning up the crud was less than 0.5 SECONDS! I can't click that fast to open the file in FrontPage, let alone click the HTML tab, then visually check for the dirty code and make the changes (even if I used FP's Find/Replace facility).

It would be the best shareware I have EVER purchased, and as far as value for money goes, worth every cent and more of its \$44 US. If you have anything at all to do with HTML files, FAR is a wonderful tool to have in your toolkit. And, yes, you can compile CHMs in it, though I've hardly used it for that..."



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