

# Embedded Help Analysis

## *Microsoft Word 2011 Macintosh Version*

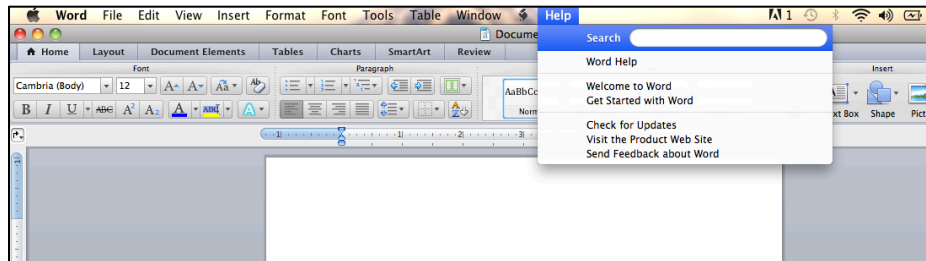
This is an analysis of the benefits of including embedded help in a computer product. Embedded help is valuable in computer programs because of 3 aspects:

- Obvious to Invoke
- Non-intrusive
- Usefulness

As an example of a successful embedded help system I have chosen Microsoft Word 2012 Macintosh version.

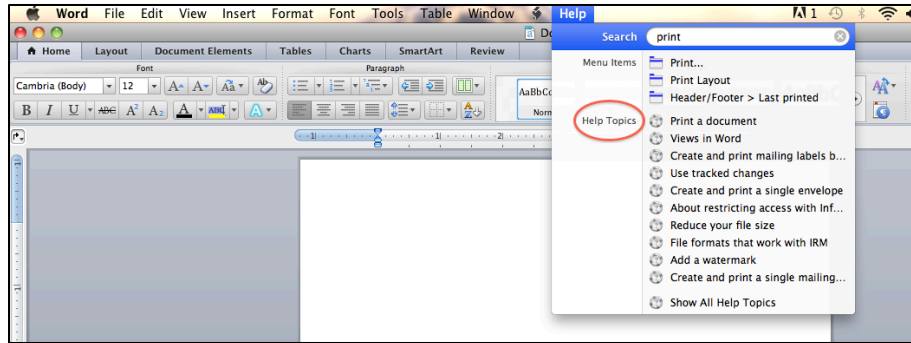
### **Obvious to Invoke**

Having the Help tab in the top toolbar maintains consistency for the user. Whenever a problem arises the user does not need to search for the help section.



### **Non-intrusive**

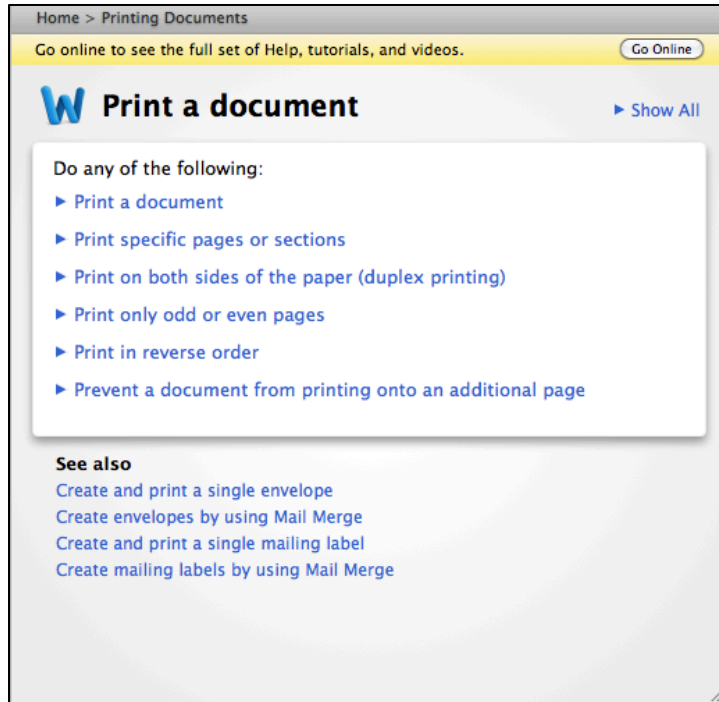
The help topics are not visible until the user needs them. Once the Help tab is clicked there is a Search function that finds menu items and help topics related to a keyword. From there the user decides on which procedure they need based on the titles. Once they choose a dialog box appears with the procedure.



## Usefulness

Instead of searching through a long table of contents a user can find the procedure needed after one click and an instant search. This is very useful because it saves the user time and allows them to continue on to solve their issue.

Once the user clicks on one of the search results a dialog box appears with a number of procedures on the same page. The example in the image below is of keyword search of print. There are 6 procedures that can be revealed by clicking on the arrow. This allows the user to navigate from procedure to procedure without much difficulty.



### **Interesting Discovery**

The Help tab in the top menu bar is the main difference I noticed between Microsoft Word 2010 PC version and Microsoft Word 2011 Mac version. In the 2010 PC version, clicking a small question mark icon accessed the help function. Initially finding this button can be difficult for an inexperienced user and once clicked a dialog box with two search boxes appears. Because both search boxes have the same functionality and produce the same results it can be a source of confusion for the user.

In my opinion, the 2011 Mac version of Microsoft Word has a more successful help system because it significantly improved its visibility, stayed non-intrusive and increased its usefulness.