

Assignment #7N: Online Help

Assigned: Tuesday, 6 November 2001

Due: Tuesday, 13 November 2001

Short description:

The assignment for this week is to convert a word document containing modular bits of information into a stand-alone help utility.

This assignment has come to us from the travel office. Our company (like most) has many rules about travel. In a meeting with them, I learned that the travel office has a travel information document that they have been giving to everyone in the company. However, the people in the travel office think no one is reading the document (e.g, they get questions that are clearly answered in the document). When the travel office team asked various employees about this – the employees have responded “it is not at my fingertips” and “I can never find what I am looking for.”

In light of these findings, the travel office is seeking a way to put the travel information at the fingertips of the employees and to make the information highly searchable. When the travel office came to me with my thoughts, I suggested that we turn the information into a standalone help utility that would sit on every employee’s computer desktop.

The people in the travel office quickly bought into the idea and almost immediately sent over a word document containing a portion of the travel information. Our job is to create a stand-alone help utility given the information that they sent over. In designing the help utility, we should strive to include a broad range of possible functionality – to illustrate to the travel office team what could be possible on a larger scale.

Requirements:

The document we have received contains 21 chunks of information (we are lucky that we aren’t being asked to develop the content as well as the help system). You should use RoboHELP and create a help system that satisfies the following minimum parameters:

- At least 21 topics
- At least 3 books
- At least 6 new index terms (at least 3 of which are linked to 2 or more topics)
- At least 3 inter-topic “jumps”
- At least 3 “popups”
- At least 1 embedded image

In developing the system, please use the text and labels that we have received from the travel office. Even with using the pre-specified information, there are still many decisions involved in creating the help system.

In addition, you should prepare a short memo (1 page max) that will accompany the delivery of the help system. In the memo, you should explain the following:

1. “Walk-through” Information: The approach taken in developing the help system, specifically
 - a. how you decided on number and content of books,
 - b. which index terms were added, and
 - c. where the image, jumps, and popups were added.
2. Next Steps: You should comment on the potential next steps for developing the complete travel system. You should include...
 - a. A list of major tasks to complete the system (e.g., creating the complete list of keywords. Usability test, etc.)
 - b. The time you think the major tasks will involve.
 - c. A list of additional topics/books for system.
 - d. A list of possible issues that may arise.

Objectives of this assignment:

- To gain familiarity with the processes of developing of online help systems
- To gain familiarity with the challenges of developing of online help systems
- To gain experience/practice with RoboHelp

Tips:

- One way to minimize difficulties in working with a program such as RoboHelp (essentially a programming environment) is to start small, relish small successes, and work up.
- The information to be included in the help system is located on the course website, at <http://faculty.washington.edu/jturns/tc310>.
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Submission:

This assignment is due on Tuesday, November 13 at 4:00 p.m. As with all assignments, this assignment is a team assignment. For this assignment, it is expected that the entire team will contribute to the creation of the two deliverables.

For this assignment, each team member should submit three files:

- One help system file (a file with a .hlp extension).
- One memo to the client.
- One debriefing document.