
Subject: Re: two windows helpfile reader for linux
Posted by [JD Smith](#) on Fri, 27 Aug 2004 01:44:20 GMT
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On Thu, 26 Aug 2004 19:26:14 +0200, Reimar Bauer wrote:

> Dear all,
>
> here are two fine routines to read the windows helpfiles with linux
>
> * gnochm is updated (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/gnochm/>)
> (GnoCHM is a CHM file viewer for Gnome2. It uses PyCHM, a set of Python
> wrappers around the C library libchm)
>
>
> * HelpExplorer (<http://www.kamasoftware.com/helpexplorer.php>)
> (HelpExplorer - is a full-feature system of help for OS Linux. It gives
> a
> wide range of capacities to customize the user's interface and it can
> be easily integrated into your applications. One of the main advantages
> of this system is 100% support of both MS-HTML Help 1.x (CHM) and
> WinHelp help file format widely used in OS Windows. It enables to use
> the same files of documents for applications of OS Linux and OS
> Windows.)
>
>
> At the moment I have some problems to get gnochm compiling because I have
> SuSE and as desktop KDE choosen. With RedHat and Gnome2 there should be no
> problem. It would be fine to see a complete rpm package for SuSE.
>
> HelpExplorer comes as 10MB tgz file with all needed sub routines and
> installs by default in the users \$HOME dir. It has all what you need for
> interactive access to the online help. For Linux Users it is free of
> charge, but closed source.
>
> For distributors there is a Deployment License necessary. With that and an
> additional library the HelpExplorer could be attached to an application.
>
> If JDs feature request for gnochm was sucessfully added (I believe yes)
> then this is with no additional fee implemented in gnochm. (License GPL)

I just had the GNOCHM developer test the new IDL v6.1 CHM file, and managed to get it working myself on a friend's workstation. It works well. To get it working yourself, you absolutely need to have gtkhtml2 version 2.6.1 or higher, or gnochm crashes when you access most topics (I had 2.6.0 -- what a difference .1 makes). I believe this comes with Fedora 2, or you can find it yourself. Note: gtkhtml3 is not used.

It's a bit slow to start, and internal links inside individual pages don't work, but the index and search feature do! As far as programmatic control (ala KEYHH on windows) for apps (like IDLWAVE) that like to pick help topics, this is in the works, but not yet complete. Everything is rendered pretty well (about as well as in Mozilla), and you can see a screenshots here:

turtle.as.arizona.edu/idl/gnochm_icontour.png

and

turtle.as.arizona.edu/idl/gnochm_convolver.png

Things are speedy once it starts up. You'll notice gtkhtml2 does not render Microsoft's illegal use of "Symbol" font in HTML documents, so certain (just a few) glyphs get messed up. You can trick Mozilla into displaying these characters; not sure if gtkhtml2 can be tricked as well. The major advantage over a pure HTML approach are the index and search features.

That said, it seems RSI has gotten the hint that PDF just isn't flexible, and will switching to a new HTML-based documentation system for UNIX users for the next release. But if GNOCHM works out its kinks and adds programmability by then, we might be able to use just the .CHM file for both Windows and Linux (not sure if there are similar programs for OSX).

JD
