## Subject: Re: Online Help ideas
Posted by Liam E. Gumley on Fri, 10 May 2002 18:11:52 GMT
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Ben Tupper wrote:
>
> Howdy,
>
> I have recently done some work in Labview from National Instruments
> (www.ni.com). It's really nice software - but the thing I was most
> impressed by was the online help. **Very very** nice. NI provides
> fantastic hyper-help as well as hosting seemingly endless
> tips/code/howto/user_contribution web pages.
>
> It occured to me that I really wish IDL had decent online help (well,
> duh!) I think this might be a great time to develop a wish list for
> RSI as it heads toward the next release of IDL. I think we all know
> how limited the present system is; so we don't need to drag up old
> stuff. Rather, I invite readers to offer suggestions for a
> constructive wish-list. If you email me your ideas (as well as
> posting them here) I will assemble them all and deliver to RSI. Email
> address is pemaquidriver@tidewater.net
>
> So here's the question:
>
> What would you like to see for online help resources from RSI?
>
> Here's mine... place links to related topics at the *top* of the
> hyperhelp page. Once I have read the description of the
> function/procedure I usually know if I need to keep looking. It
> would be handier to have the links available without having to scroll
> down the page.

Something like this (on the web or CD-ROM) would be very nice:

 http://www.mathworks.com/access/helpdesk/help/techdoc/matlab .shtml

Cheers,
Liam.
Practical IDL Programming
http://www.gumley.com/

## Subject: Re: Online Help ideas
Posted by Pavel A. Romashkin on Fri, 10 May 2002 20:30:11 GMT
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I am not sure making yet another wish list is something useful. We know

as well how warmly our previous wish lists were met.
How about we take the issue in our own hands? David has a lot of info in
his book. I think he ought to convert that all to Hyperhelp and publish
it on the web for free, now that he's got a high paying job as a tennis
coach :-)
Cheers,
Pavel

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## Subject: Re: Online Help ideas
Posted by David Fanning on Fri, 10 May 2002 23:55:16 GMT
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Pavel A. Romashkin (pavel_romashkin@hotmail.com) writes:

> I am not sure making yet another wish list is something useful. We know
> as well how warmly our previous wish lists were met.
> How about we take the issue in our own hands? David has a lot of info in
> his book. I think he ought to convert that all to Hyperhelp and publish
> it on the web for free, now that he's got a high paying job as a tennis
> coach :-)

One of the reasons I like you Pavel is that you always
have so many, uh, good ideas. :-)

Cheers,

David

P.S. Let's just say the team's rather mediocre finish
in the State Championships was *not* due to the coach
being distracted by how much money he was NOT earning,
despite what you may have heard. :-(

--
David W. Fanning, Ph.D.
Fanning Software Consulting
Phone: 970-221-0438, E-mail: david@dfanning.com
Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.dfanning.com/
Toll-Free IDL Book Orders: 1-888-461-0155

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## Subject: Re: Online Help ideas
Posted by btupper on Mon, 13 May 2002 13:27:39 GMT
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On Fri, 10 May 2002 14:30:11 -0600, "Pavel A. Romashkin"

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<pavel_romashkin@hotmail.com> wrote:

> I am not sure making yet another wish list is something useful. We know
> as well how warmly our previous wish lists were met.
> How about we take the issue in our own hands?

Hi Pavel,

I don't agree with you; I believe that this is a useful and maybe
effective maneuver.  We have no control over the RSI products if  we
don't get involved in a constructive manner (excepting the power of
the purse.)  I think this *is* taking the issue into our own hands
(ala 'Do not abandon the Mac OS') - and placing it squarely in the
hands where it rightly belongs, in RSI hands.   I wouldn't want to
give up my copies of David's, Liam's or Ronn's books for the anything;
but they don't and shouldn't replace a decent documentation/help
system provided by the vendor.

It doesn't matter how slick software is if it is difficult to access,
and access *always* comes down to documentation.

This party is pretty small so far so I hope it is allowable that I
toss in another idea.  I think there should be a simple was to
determine when (in terms of release version) a particular feature was
introduced or obseleted.  (Quick: when was the built-in WATERSHED
function  introduced?)


 Regards,

Ben

## Subject: Re: Online Help ideas
Posted by Rick Towler on Mon, 13 May 2002 16:57:00 GMT
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I tend to learn by example.  Thus I spend a lot of time looking at other
people's code.  Early on, I never really spent much time poking around the
"Examples" directory.  There is some good stuff in there and not just the
obvious.

In the example section, there could be links to example .pro files.
Obviously many functions and procedures don't need further explanation, but
many do (thinking object graphics).  There could be other ways to do this
but the idea is to make the example code more accessible.

An example (maybe not the best) is the MSDN Visual Studio Documentation.

-Rick

If there exists an example program that
"Ben Tupper" <btupper@bigelow.org> wrote in message
news:3cdbe693.9326200@news.tidewater.net...
> Howdy,
>
> I have recently done some work in Labview from National Instruments
> (www.ni.com).  It's really nice software - but the thing I was most
> impressed by was the online help.  **Very very** nice.   NI provides
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> down the page.
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> Thanks!
>
> Ben