

WebWorks[®] Publisher --- WordHelp

The True Single-Sourcing Solution for Microsoft Word Users

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As the old adage goes, “Work smarter, not harder.” These days, technical writers and Help authors face perpetual pressure to produce an increasingly wide variety of information products, to deliver content in multiple formats and for multiple audiences, and to meet rapidly changing technical requirements. Authors must often deliver similar content in print or PDF, in HTML for the Web or enterprise intranet, and as online Help for software applications. With tight budgets and limited resources, authors must often find ways to do more with less. Single-sourcing solutions can play an increasingly important role in helping authors and organizations meet these challenging requirements.

In this white paper, we discuss the need for single sourcing, how single sourcing differs from other approaches, how WebWorks Publisher WordHelp can help you save time and money and improve the overall quality of your deliverables, and the benefits you can expect to achieve by implementing a single-sourcing workflow based on WordHelp. The white paper includes the following sections:

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Managing Content in the '90s

Before 1990, most technical documentation was delivered to customers in printed form. In the early 1990s, as the need for online Help began to emerge, dedicated Help authoring tools were introduced. Technical authors quickly adopted these tools because they simplified the process of creating online Help. In the mid-'90s, as Web technologies proliferated, dedicated Web authoring tools were introduced; authors responsible for Web or intranet content rapidly adopted these tools for similar reasons. By the end of the '90s, authors were using a wide variety of tools to produce and maintain content for different delivery media.

- Documents were often written using text applications like Microsoft Word and Adobe FrameMaker. Later, these documents were imported into Help tools like RoboHelp and ForeHelp and converted to WinHelp, HTML Help, and other online Help formats. Often, documents were converted for the Web or enterprise intranet using tools like FrontPage and Dreamweaver.
- In some organizations, the same workflow was implemented in reverse. Authors wrote online Help or Web content using a dedicated authoring tool and then laboriously converted the content to Microsoft Word or FrameMaker to produce documents in printed or PDF format.

Authors and managers alike have found that maintaining similar content in multiple applications is inherently inefficient. After converting a text document for online Help or the Web, both the original document and the online version must be separately maintained. The printed document must be updated in Word or FrameMaker, while the online version is maintained in RoboHelp, Dreamweaver, or some similar tool. Changes must be made in both places; updates must be kept in sync; and both versions must be individually reviewed, tested, and re-reviewed.

Alternatively, authors can export content from a Help authoring tool and then revise it as necessary to produce a printed document. Typically, however, it is not possible simply to “export” content from a Help authoring tool and then immediately distribute the exported document to customers. Rather, authors must invest substantial time and effort to adjust the appearance – and often the content itself – in order to produce a suitable printed document. This manual “tweaking” must be repeated each time the underlying content changes.

This approach, which requires that authors repeatedly write, export, convert, and tweak, is repetitive and time-consuming work. Whether you maintain separate source documents for printed and online output or convert the content from one format to another, the approach is labor-intensive, error-prone, and costly. It consumes resources that can be better spent on other, higher priority tasks.

The Single-Sourcing Revolution

As authors have struggled to maintain content in a variety of different software applications and to deliver it in a variety of different output formats, the cry has gone out for a streamlined solution that eliminates the need to maintain similar content in a hodgepodge of different applications and reduces the time and cost required to maintain these documents. Single sourcing is the solution that lets authors work smarter, instead of harder.

Single sourcing is an approach to creating, maintaining, and delivering content for multiple delivery media, multiple audiences, or multiple versions that eliminates the inefficiency, redundant effort, and high error rates associated with the traditional approach that was popular in '90s. Single sourcing enables content authors to create a single document (or set of documents) that contains all of the information required to produce printed documents, online Help, and Web content. Templates control every aspect of all versions of a document. Authors write a document once and can

then publish it anywhere, anytime, in any format. When the document must be updated, the author updates it once, in one place only. There is never a need to “tweak” the printed document or any online version prior to publication. Because the process is fully automated, the time and cost associated with producing each deliverable is dramatically reduced.

Some tools claim to offer a single-sourcing solution, while they actually support only the “export and tweak” approach. For example, you may have used a Help authoring tool that can “export” to a text application like Microsoft Word. If so, you have probably found it necessary to reformat, adjust, rewrite, and otherwise “tweak” the exported document before you can distribute it to customers. This process often takes considerable time and must be repeated each time you need to update the document.

True single sourcing means there is no need to adjust the format, appearance, or other characteristics of the documents you produce. Everything is controlled by the templates you create, and the conversion process is fully automated. You can publish your print and online deliverables immediately after creating them with no need to perform any manual edits.

Introducing WebWorks Publisher WordHelp

Early single-sourcing tools were often complex, unwieldy, and expensive. Some required authors to use complicated editors, understand the intricacies of complex languages like SGML or XML, or purchase expensive long-term consulting services. These high-end solutions were slow to catch on. In August of 2002, Quadralay Corporation introduced WebWorks Publisher WordHelp, the world's first industrial-strength true single-sourcing tool based on Microsoft Word.

Using only Microsoft Word and WordHelp, authors can produce online Help in four of the most popular online Help formats: Microsoft HTML Help, Microsoft WinHelp, Sun JavaHelp, and WebWorks Help. WordHelp is based on the same field-tested conversion engine featured in WebWorks Publisher, long the industry's leading single-sourcing tool for FrameMaker users. WordHelp extends the basic capabilities of Word, provides an easy-to-use template builder and a robust conversion engine, and enables Help authors to include all the features of a true online Help system while writing content in Microsoft Word.

WordHelp extends the capabilities of Microsoft Word

WordHelp adds a menu to the standard Microsoft Word interface. When you edit documents, you can use the commands on the WebWorks menu to control how your document will be converted to your online Help format.

- By defining and applying *media types*, you can include conditional content – that is, content specific to each of your output formats. For example, you can create media types named **PrintOnly** and **HelpOnly** and apply them to text, graphics, and other elements in a document. Apply the **PrintOnly** type to content you want to appear only in your printed document, and apply the **HelpOnly** type to content you want to include only in the online Help. When you produce the printed document or online Help, WordHelp automatically includes or excludes the content you have flagged with these media types.
- By inserting *WebWorks fields*, you can create context-sensitive Help, control the file names assigned to your output files, define imagemaps for HTML-based output, and control other aspects of your online Help.

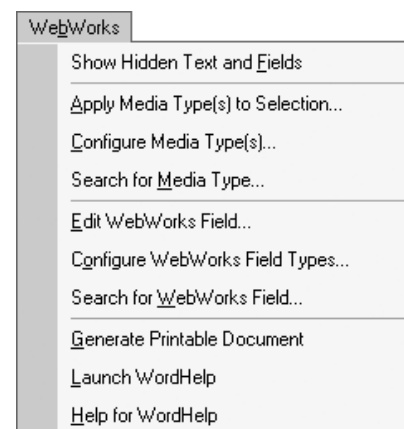


Figure 1: The WebWorks menu extends the capabilities of Microsoft Word.

- When you're ready to print your document, you can generate a printable version that excludes content you've flagged for inclusion only in online Help.
- You can launch WordHelp directly from Microsoft Word so you can quickly and easily generate online Help at any time.

WordHelp includes a robust template builder and conversion engine

Using WordHelp's point-and-click Style Designer, you define styles that control the formatting, appearance, and behavior of the individual elements in your online Help system. For example, you define styles for paragraphs, characters, tables, and graphics.

WordHelp includes a set of predefined styles you can use for such typical elements as body text, bulleted and numbered lists, figures and figure captions, and so forth. In addition, predefined styles let you create online Help elements like popups and related topics controls. You can customize the predefined styles, as well as define your own styles to meet the unique requirements of your projects.

You map each style or element in your Microsoft Word documents to a style defined in WordHelp. Mapping establishes a correspondence between the styles in your Word document and the styles in your WordHelp project. Then, using the styles and mappings you have defined, WordHelp's conversion engine automatically produces the online Help in whichever Help format you have chosen. Typically, the conversion process takes just a few minutes. The generated online Help is ready to publish or distribute. There is never a need to modify the output produced by WordHelp.

WordHelp supports all the features that define a true online Help system

WordHelp is not about “putting books online.” Rather, it is about creating professional printed documents and true online Help from a single set of source documents you create and maintain in Microsoft Word.

WordHelp does not require that you accept compromises or limitations in the functionality of the online Help you produce. Just as you can with a traditional Help authoring tool, you can use WordHelp to create hypertext links, popups, browse sequences, related topics controls, fully functional indexes, context-sensitive Help, and modular Help systems.

With WordHelp, you control the output and can customize it to suit your individual requirements.

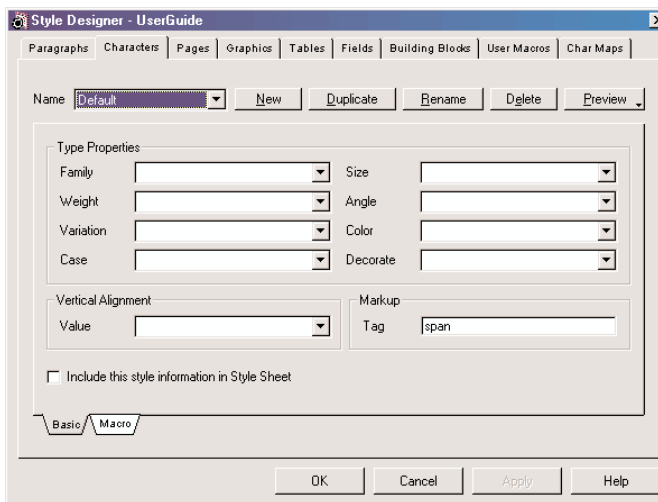


Figure 2: Using the point-and-click Style Designer, you can control every aspect of the appearance and behavior of your online Help.



Figure 3: Popups, related topics controls, and browse sequences are all possible with WordHelp.

Creating Online Help with WordHelp

WebWorks Publisher WordHelp is an end-user application that can be installed on each content author's machine and used to produce up-to-date output in any of the supported Help formats at any time. The process is simple. Authors create documents in Microsoft Word, using styles to control formatting and adding Help-specific elements using the “WebWorks” menu that WordHelp adds to the Word interface. Then, using pre-defined WordHelp templates, authors generate output in their chosen Help format with the click of a single button. The following steps describe the process in more detail.

1. Create a document in Microsoft Word. As much as possible, use styles to control the appearance and formatting of the text and other elements in your document.
2. In Microsoft Word, use the WebWorks menu to add Help-specific elements such as conditional text and topic identifiers for context-sensitive Help.
3. Start WordHelp and map each style in your Microsoft Word document to a pre-defined style in the WordHelp template.
4. Modify the styles in the WordHelp template to control the appearance of your generated output.
5. Click the Generate All button to produce finished output in your chosen online Help format.

Why Use WordHelp?

Implementing a true single-source workflow based on WordHelp can bring significant benefits to technical authors and to the organizations in which they work. Here are but a few of the reasons for moving away from the legacy approaches of traditional authoring tools and toward a streamlined, efficient, and cost-effective workflow based on true single sourcing.

Eliminate the need for costly Help and Web authoring tools

With WordHelp, you write all your content in Microsoft Word, the most widely used text processing application in the world. You can use any of the features in Microsoft Word to create your documents. There is no need for an external Help authoring tool or Web authoring tool. WordHelp automatically converts your content from Microsoft Word directly to the online Help format of your choice. There is never a need to modify or adjust the output produced by WordHelp.

With WordHelp, you can easily include content in your Word documents that is specific to each output format. You can include certain content in your printed documents, for example, but exclude that content from your online Help. Likewise, you can include Help-specific content that does not appear in your printed documents.

Ensure uniformity and consistency across all your projects

Create your Word documents using standard Word templates, and then use standard WordHelp templates to create HTML Help, WinHelp, JavaHelp, or WebWorks Help. Because everything is under control of the Word and WordHelp templates, all your documents and online Help systems have a uniform, consistent look and feel.

Keep all your deliverables in sync all the time

All of your content is stored in your Word source documents. Base your Word documents on a standard Word template and create a WordHelp template for your online Help. From then on, you can produce printed and online versions of your documents automatically at any time. As a result, your printed documents and online Help are always up-to-date and in sync, with no additional effort on your part.

Easily generate Web content directly from Microsoft Word

With WordHelp, you can easily produce output in WebWorks Help format. WebWorks Help is a cross-browser, cross-platform format suitable for online Help and online books. WebWorks Help can be published on a Web or intranet server or installed locally on an end user's machine. Many large organizations publish their entire technical libraries online using the WebWorks Help format.

Save time and money

WordHelp eliminates the need for tedious manual reformatting in order to prepare separate deliverables for print and online Help. Define your templates once – one Word template and one WordHelp template – and then produce printed or online output automatically at any time. With all the time you save, you can focus more on creating and maintaining content that meets the needs of your customers and other readers. Time is money, and WordHelp saves you time when you need to produce content in multiple output formats or for multiple audiences. Not only do you save by eliminating unnecessary labor, but you also no longer need to purchase and maintain costly dedicated authoring tools like RoboHelp or Dreamweaver.

Improve overall quality

Single-source workflows can lead to quality improvements for several reasons. First, because of the time savings that are a natural consequence of the single-source workflow, authors have more time available to focus on issues that directly affect document quality. Second, by eliminating the redundant, repetitive efforts involved in exporting and post-processing, the opportunity for errors is greatly reduced. Finally, because the single-source workflow is based on templates and automation, a uniform and consistent look and feel is easy to ensure.

Test Drive WordHelp with Your Own Documents

If you would like to try WebWorks Publisher WordHelp for yourself, you can download an evaluation version from http://www.webworks.com/products/wwwp_wh/default.asp. The evaluation version is fully functional, and you can use it to produce HTML Help, WinHelp, JavaHelp, or WebWorks Help directly from your own Microsoft Word documents.

About Quadralay Corporation

Quadralay Corporation is the world's foremost provider of comprehensive online publishing and Help system delivery capabilities for users of Adobe FrameMaker and Microsoft Word. Its WebWorks line of products and services constitutes the definitive single source for all your ePublishing needs.

WebWorks Publisher Professional and WordHelp are the leading software tools for distributing documents in standard electronic formats such as HTML, XML, and XHTML and delivering sophisticated online help systems. Thousands of authors in hundreds of commercial organizations around the world use WebWorks products to publish electronic versions of Adobe FrameMaker and Microsoft Word documents for their customers, employees, and business partners. WebWorks AutoMap, a server-side application, significantly enhances your productivity by greatly simplifying and streamlining conversion processing. With this enterprise solution tool, writers now have the freedom to manage

entire ePublishing environments and their attendant processes with scheduled, controlled, multi-functional workflows. Quadralay also offers consulting services, coaching, and comprehensive training, both domestically and internationally, through its WebWorks University affiliates.

About the Author

David Knopf is an independent consultant specializing in documentation, online Help, and other online information technologies. David is president and founder of Knopf Online, a San Francisco-based training and consulting firm that specializes in helping organizations implement effective single-sourcing solutions, including solutions based on Quadralay's WebWorks Publisher, WordHelp, and AutoMap products. You can contact David with comments about this article or other inquiries by writing to david@knopf.com. You can visit Knopf Online's web site at <http://www.knopf.com>.

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