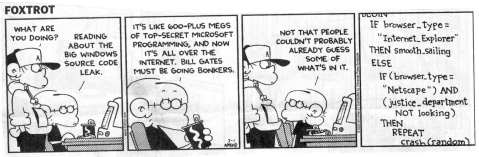
Lecture 10
User Documentation

(Chapter 8 Rosson & Carroll)

Cartoon for the Day



User Documentation

- Definition: Stored information about how to use a system
- One size does not fit all!
  - Needs vary with knowledge level and goals of user
    - new user trying to learn system
    - casual user trying to remember command
    - experienced user recovering from errors
    - experts needing advanced options
    - users needing confirmation that a function works properly

Universal Thought

- Nobody reads documentation, nobody writes documentation, but everybody needs documentation!

Paper vs. Online Documentation

- Paper Advantages
  - Highly portable
  - Easy to scan at varying levels of detail
  - Allows annotation
  - Familiarity
  - Quality of text best (25% more readable than on-line)
    - reading faster
    - can display more text
  - People like owning books
- On-line Advantages
  - Does not take physical space
  - Easy to find
  - Rapid search by keywords
  - Rapid page turning with links, scroll bar or table of contents

Overall Approaches

- Systematic documentation
  - Complete documentation of tasks
  - Sequential and explanatory
- Minimalism
  - Learning by doing
  - Work with familiar examples
  - Anticipate and manage errors

Types

- Information in the interface
- On-line help manuals
- Tutoring
- On-line user forums

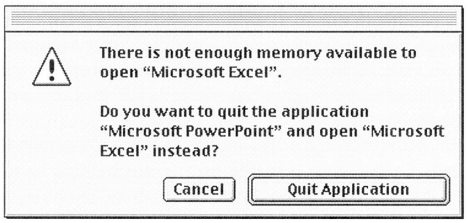
Information in the Interface

- Error messages & input prompts
- Short-cuts for commands
- Balloon help

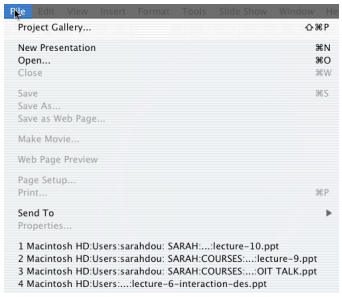
Advice to write better messages

- Make the message specific
  - Explain the error
  - Give the context
- Make the message action-oriented
  - Tell the user what to do
  - Use the labels on buttons in the message
  - Maintain consistency with similar functions

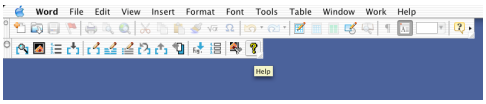
System message: Specific and action-oriented



Short cuts in menus



Balloon Help



On-line help Manuals

- Reference Manuals
  - System vs. application
  - User access
    - Search
      - Search by keyword
    - Browse
      - Table of contents
      - Index
  - Contents

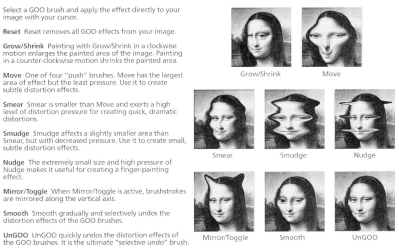
Advice to write better manuals

- Use consistent language between pages and within the same page
- Be concise in your language
- Use familiar language and images

  "Speak the user's language!!!!!"
- Coordinate text, labels, images & error management

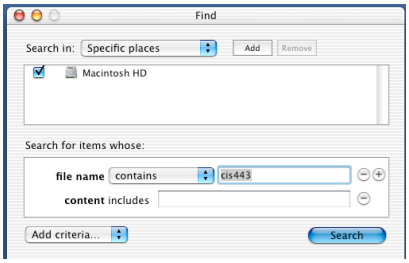
Coordinating text, labels, images & error management

(Kai's Power GOO)

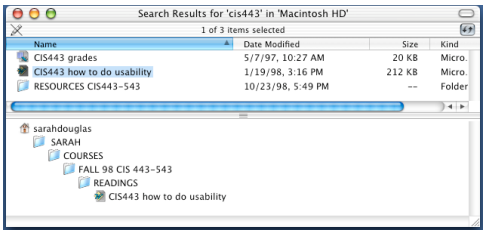


System level Help

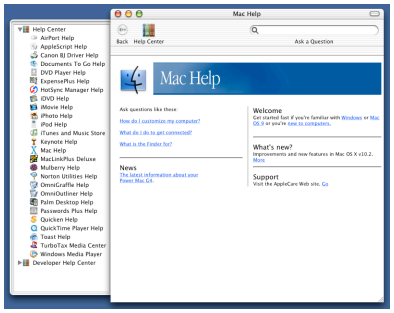
System search



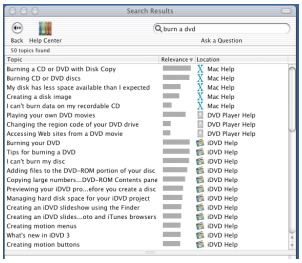
System search - results



System Help

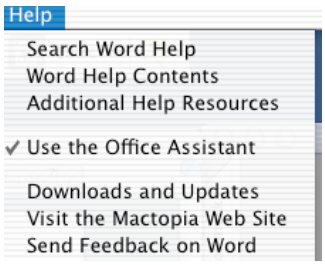


System Help results

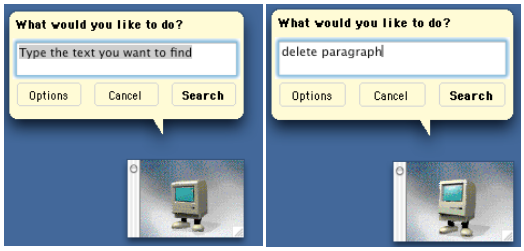


Application level Help

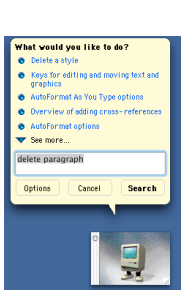
WORD Help Menu



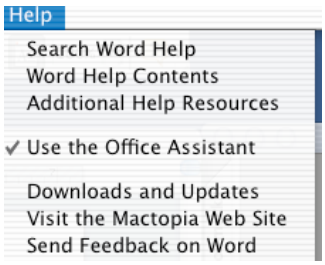
Search WORD help



Search WORD help -results

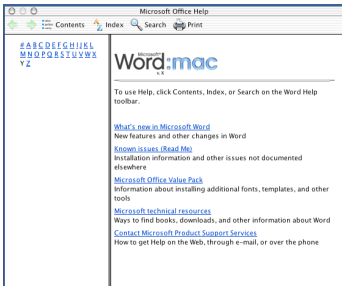


WORD Help Menu



WORD help contents

WORD help index

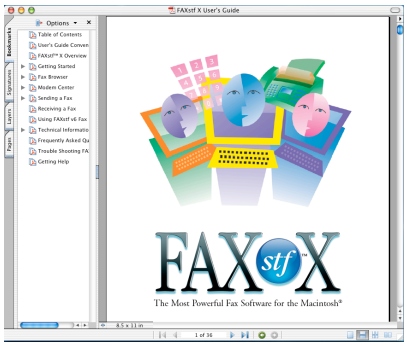


WORD help index - results

Acrobat pdf file Manuals

- ".pdf" file
- Universally read by Adobe Acrobat Reader
  - Free download from web
- Created by Adobe Acrobat from text files
- Functionality
  - Print
  - Available off-line from software
  - Search by keyword
  - Table of Contents
  - Index
  - Bookmarks

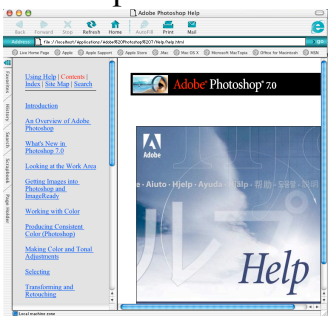
Acrobat pdf file manual



Web Browser html file Manual

- ".html" file
- Universally read by any Web Browser
  - Free download from web
- Created by applications from text files
- Functionality
  - Print
  - Available off-line from software
  - Search by keyword
  - Table of Contents
  - Index
  - Bookmarks

Internet Explorer html manual



On-line Manual Contents

- Table of Contents
- Overview of System
- Getting Started
- Major Functions explained by how to do it
- Technical Information
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Trouble-shooting FAQs
- Index

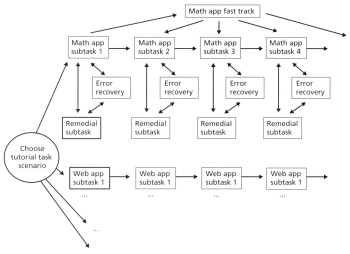
Tutoring

- Types
  - "Getting started" manual
  - Interactive tutorial
  - Embedded demonstration
  - Intelligent tutoring

"Getting started" Manual

- Overall picture of interface
  - "parts" description labeled with functions
- Procedural
  - Focus on core (most frequent and necessary) tasks
  - Step by step
  - Assumes no errors made
- List of common problems

Interactive Tutoring



Embedded Demonstration: Microsoft WORD agent

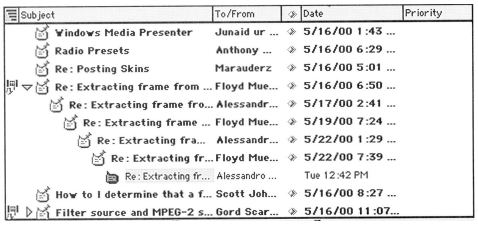
Intelligent Tutoring

- AI system
  - Expert's model
    - Representation of knowledge to teach
  - Student's model
    - Representation of student's knowledge
    - Difference between expert and student guides teaching
  - Heuristics about how to teach
    - Coach
    - Direct teaching
    - Drill and practice
- Experimental

On-line user forums

- Discussion groups
  - News groups
  - Chat rooms
- Frequently asked questions (FAQ)
- Web-based tech support
  - Email
  - Chat

Newsgroup Help



Subject	To/From	Date	Priority
Windows Media Presenter	Junaid ur ...	5/16/00 1:43 ...	
Radio Presets	Anthony ...	5/16/00 6:29 ...	
Re: Posting Skins	Marauderz	5/16/00 5:01 ...	
Re: Extracting frame from ...	Floyd Mue...	5/16/00 6:50 ...	
Re: Extracting frame fro...	Alessandr...	5/17/00 2:41 ...	
Re: Extracting frame ...	Floyd Mue...	5/19/00 7:24 ...	
Re: Extracting fra...	Alessandr...	5/22/00 1:29 ...	
Re: Extracting fr...	Floyd Mue...	5/22/00 7:39 ...	
Re: Extracting fr...	Alessandro ...	Tue 12:42 PM	
How to I determine that a f...	Scott Joh...	5/16/00 8:27 ...	
Filter source and MPEG-2 s...	Gord Scar...	5/16/00 11:07...	

Newsgroup Help

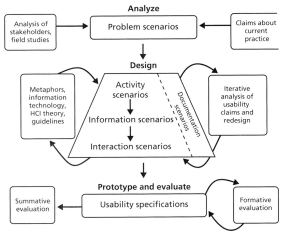
Subject: Re: Extracting frame from .asf file
Date: Tue, 23 May 2000 13:42:14 +0200
From: "Alessandro Angeli" <a.angeli@sogetel.it>
Newsgroups: microsoft.public.windowsmedia.sdk
References: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Actually I have never wrote a video rendered, so I can not be of much help in that.

Anyway you might try to write an in-place trasform filter which takes the uncompressed RGB frames as input and just passes them along. When you have got old of the frame bitmap, you can save the picture. You can attach one of provided video renderers to its output pin just to terminate the graph, or you might write a very basic rendered that just sinks the data without doing anything with it.

"Floyd Mueller" <mueller@pal.xerox.com> wrote in message news:027B9mBx$GA.208@cppssbbsa03...
> So far, I am trying to understand the sample video
> renderer that comes with the SDK. (The one that
> displays the video in the shape of the word "active!").
> I admit, for me it sounds all very complicated, and
> most of the time, it does not what I want it to do.

Issues in providing good help

- Relate to the user's context
  - What is the user doing?
- Help is often used while performing a task
  - User must switch between the help windows and the application
- Multiple formats for multiple needs and users

Integrating Documentation with UI Design