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Help Files are often thought of as only relating to software products, however the help file is a far more flexible and useful publication developed by thousands of individuals, companies, and organizations who wish to provide documentation, manuals, and guidance about their products and services.

We take a look at the benefits to your audience of making Help Files, and show how InfoHesiveEP is ideally suited to the task.



What is a Help File?

A digital Help File provides information, explanations, and guidance about how to best take advantage of a product or service. The Help File is either downloadable via an intranet or website, or is presented as a digital file on CD or DVD which is shipped with the product.

The days of the printed manual are numbered. More and more companies are switching to digital documentation, not only to support software but for general manufactured products and services. Producing digital Help Files not only reduces design and manufacturing costs significantly as compared with traditional printed manuals, it is also far better for the environment.

Help files provide topic-oriented, procedural and reference information that assists the user in their use of products and services. Let's say for example you buy a new mobile phone. The manufacturer will likely provide a printed quick start guide, but the detailed documentation can be delivered via the manufacturer's website as a file that can be downloaded. This has great advantages for both the customer and producer which we'll now review.

The Advantages of using Help Files

Good communications between your organization and users is essential. Providing up to date help files on your website not only encourages your audience to more fully explore your products and services, they also act as "soft marketing" materials that assure potential customers of the quality of your after sales/membership support.

Some of the advantages of using digital help files over printed manuals and support documentation follow:

- Digital Help Files are ideally suited to providing assistance as compared with printed manuals as they can be easily searched, annotated, and copied for multiple users.
- Publishing help files supports your user community. This has a positive impact on the way your audience view your organization. Providing professional high quality support resources shows you care about your customers/clients/audience/ community.
- Providing Help Files for your products and/or service decreases the demands on your support staff allowing you to allocate more resources to areas like R&D.
- Printed support materials require postal distribution which is both expensive and has a negative environmental impact.
- Digital Help Files can be produced and distributed by an individual. In contrast, print manuals require many people including authors, packaging designers, and distributors.
- Digital Help Files are easily distributed via email, intranet, and websites as compared with printed support materials that require postal distribution.
- Printed support materials are more expensive to distribute and have a negative environmental impact.
- Digital Help Files are easily updated ensuring customers have the very latest advice about your product or service.
- An archive of digital Help Files can be provided on the producer's web site that relates to previous versions or models of your products. Digital archives are easy to produce and are not a drain on shelf space as printed materials are.
- Digital Files are easily updated ensuring customers have the very latest advice.

Publish Help Files and More

InfoHesiveEP is designed to deliver high quality presentational help files. While the program does not deliver all the functionality of some specialist software like [Adobe's RoboHelp](#) and [ECSoftware's Help and Manual](#), it is much easier to use, and costs a great deal less for a license (around a tenth of the price).

[InfoHesiveEP](#) allows you to not only develop your publications in a familiar word processor-like environment, the program exports to a wide range of formats in addition to .CHM including HTML (required by DTP), PDF, .Mobi, ePub and more. Not only will you be able to make Windows Help Files, you'll also be able to develop materials that can be read across platforms and operating systems (PC, Mac, iPhone, Kindle, the Sony eReader etc.).

If you have an existing .CHM Windows Help File you even import that into InfoHesiveEP. Make sure the layout and content is appropriately edited, then export to the file type you wish.

InfoHesiveEP also builds eBooks, PDFs, digital brochures and other digital promotional materials.

InfoHesiveEP is not only a software tool that allows you to deliver great help files for your users, it provides a rich feature-set that gives you an easy path to deliver Digital Help Files for your readership.

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