

[When innovation is not real innovation: the WinHelp case.
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Microsoft didn't include the WinHelp32 application in Windows Vista. The official reason is its code does not meet Vista standards. Later it has been made available as a separate download (probably to avoid a lot of users complains!), anyway developers ["are encouraged to transition their Help experience to an alternative Help file format, such as .chm, .html, or .xml"](http://support.microsoft.com/kb/917607) (<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/917607>).

This is a clear case when innovation is not real innovation, instead is just adding bloated applications where noone needs them.

WinHelp has everything one could ask to an help system: loads very fast, is not intrusive, is easy to use yet powerful enough, is easy to develop.

Instead of updating it, the MS guys thought that HTML should have been a far better technology to develop a help system (probably they think that using a word processor to write documents is not innovative enough, it has no web\HT** word to sell), and came up with the HtmlHelp.

It is slower, it occupies more screen space, it is more complex to develop, and despite its meeting Vista standards it really opened security issues because it uses IE as its rendering engine. The latest help format, that one used by VisualStudio, is even worse.

The new "help" pages are adding so many not needed elements (diagrams, graphics, formatting just because it looks more pretty, etc.) that the real informations get hidden, or require a lot of scrolling to be reached. I do not want a "pretty" help. I want a **useful** help.

Worst of all, the suggestion above about "alternative Help file format, such as .chm, .html or .xml" suggests that we could not have a standard Windows help format any longer. Like old DOS apps, we could see a myriad of proprietary help systems, maybe accessible only through the application they are used by, or just a bunch of HTML pages loosely coupled by an index and some links.

Well, innovation looks to be a fifteen years step backward, this time.

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