

## Recommended Software for Creating Online Help Without a Commercial HAT

**Note:** I recommend you get both the HTML Help Workshop and FAR. The workshop can be flakey about doing some things. When it doesn't work, FAR usually does. (Plus FAR makes some things much easier.) On the other hand, the workshop has better documentation.

- Microsoft HTML Help Workshop, from <http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/default.asp?url=/library/en-us/htmlhelp/html/hwMicrosoftHTMLHelpDownloads.asp>  
Downlad HTMLHELP.EXE (HTML Help Workshop) and HELPDOCS.ZIP (Documentation).
- FAR, from <http://www.helpware.net>.  
This is shareware, and will work for (I think) 60 days before you have to pay for it. (\$49). This is a great little tool, developed and provided by Robert Chandler, who is a very generous and responsive person in the online help world.
- KeyTools and KeyHelp, free utilities from <http://www.keywords.net>.  
Speaking of generosity...the dynamic team of Cheryl Lockett Zubak and Ralph Walden developed these tools. If you get hooked on developing HTML Help and want some more advanced effects for Windows, you might want to explore using these.  
Also, KeyTools has some very useful features for day-to-day work, including a utility for decompiling a CHM and creating an HHP (help project file) in the process.

## HTML and CSS Editors

You will need some tool in which to create your topics, and it must be able to create them as HTML. Here are some possible tools:

- DreamWeaver
- FrontPage
- HomeSite
- Notepad (for coding from scratch)
- Microsoft Word (makes terrible HTML and assigns weird style names, but it does work, if you "save as web page")
- FrameMaker also provides the ability to "save as HTML." (Also comes with the Standard Edition of WebWorks Publisher, for a different approach to help-authoring.)
- Netscape Composer (installed along with the Netscape browser)  
Even if you don't use the Composer, it may be useful to have both Netscape and IE on your computer, to see how topics look in two different browsers.
- HTML-Kit, from <http://www.chami.com/html-kit>  
If you don't already have an HTML tool, this is an excellent one that's free.
- Top Style Lite, from Bradsoft, at <http://www.bradsoft.com/topstyle/download/litedload.asp>  
A great little (free) tool for creating and editing CSS (style sheets). If you upgrade to and purchase Top Style Pro, you also get an HTML-editor.

## Learning about HTML and CSS

If you want to get started on the techy side of things, and you are not yet comfortable with HTML and CSS, take some time to learn the basics. There are many, many tutorials on the web. Some have very annoying banner and pop-up ads. Others don't, so if you find one that annoys you, keep looking. Here are a few places to start:

<http://archive.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/Internet/WWW/HTMLPrimer.html>

<http://www.w3schools.com/html/>

<http://www.w3schools.com/xhtml/> (You learn difference between XHTML and HTML - good to know!)

<http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/Guide/>

<http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/teachingtool/>

Also, most HTML editors have features that help you as you code, and pretty good documentation.

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