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6 Replies Last post: Dec 9, 2009 8:30 AM by robert-sfl

robert-sfl
133 posts since
Jul 3, 2007

Dec 8, 2009 1:55 PM

Information types - how to use?

Please excuse this basic question, I attempted to use the forum search but found nothing related..

I am not able to figure out how to use information types. I prefer to blame it on the bad translation of the online help rather than my own ignorance :)

Can anyone give me a hint on weather this feature works at all, and if so, how to apply? Even if I create categories and ITs over the Edit menu and assign them to TOC entries over the propierties, they do not appear to work in the CHM output. According to the help there should be a function accessible over a right-click on the TOC of the help but there is none.

Actually I admit that I do not understand the whole concept of ITs well. I assume they enable end user to filter the content of the online help..?

Reply

COMMUNITY EXPERT
Peter Grainge
8,362 posts since
Aug 31, 2004

1. Dec 8, 2009 2:07 PM in response to: robert-sfl

Re: Information types - how to use?

Rick Stone may be able to add more but I believe he has posted on a number of occasions that information types just do not work.

See www.grainge.org for RoboHelp and Authoring tips
Follow me @petergrainge

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COMMUNITY EXPERT
Captiv8r
13,181 posts since
Mar 14, 2005

2. Dec 8, 2009 3:09 PM in response to: Peter Grainge

Re: Information types - how to use?

Hi all

Did I hear someone call my name? Oh, yes! So THAT explains the buzzing in my mostly deaf left ear. LOL

Indeed Peter is spot on. Information Types are a feature that was half baked. They only apply to .CHM output. So if you are into WebHelp, FlashHelp, JavaHelp, OracleHelp, AIRHelp or HelpMeIfYouCanHelp, you are out of luck.

Okay, with that out of the way, let's assume that maybe you are doing HTML Help. In that case, assuming you get them configured, your end user needs to become aware that you have added an Information Types capability to the help because there is nothing that having them adds to your help that is immediately obvious to them. Actually, I think the ONLY thing that is different happens when they choose the Right-Click the Table of Contents. And that leads me to another point.

Assuming you have managed to get them up and running, and further assuming your end user is aware of the IT possiblity, they ONLY apply to the Table of Contents and how it presents to the end user!

Given all the "assumptions" that must be covered, for my money Information Types offer a huge negative ROI. Your time is better spent on other things. Perhaps put more help development effort into something that will provide a handsome payoff. Such as a better index!

Cheers and happy Tuesday from the Midwest in the US. Where we are snuggled in and waiting with bated breath for a big bad ole nasty winter storm.

Sincerely... Rick

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robert-sfl
133 posts since
Jul 3, 2007

3. Dec 8, 2009 3:20 PM in response to: Captiv8r

Re: Information types - how to use?

Thanks for the fast responses. Yes we do produce HTML Help (or CHM as I wrote). Evidently the IT feature is nothing to care about.

I did manage to set up categories and assigne some ITs to them as well as to TOC entries as the online help of RH describes. I did not really know what I was doing but you would assume that SOMETHING happens. Well as I descibed, after producing the CHM the feature never did work. Right-clicking the TOC of the help does not preveal the function described in the help of RH. I wonder weather ITs have ever worked for anybody.

Thanks for the feedback anyway, I assume this feature is simply a deadbeat. It would have been nice to provide sort of a filtering feature without working with separate CHMs. The right-clicking business would have been OK for this particular target group.

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COMMUNITY EXPERT
Captiv8r
13,181 posts since
Mar 14, 2005

4. Dec 8, 2009 4:10 PM in response to: robert-sfl

Re: Information types - how to use?

Hi again

One possibility would involve using a merged setup. With that setup you could achieve something along the lines of:

You have worker bees that only need access to 50 topics.
You have a few queen bees that need access to 10 more topics that the worker bees don't see. But they also need access to the 50 that the worker bees see.

This will sound a bit backwards, but here is how it works:
You create a merged file. The master would be the 50 topic project. It would include the 10 topic child. WHAT? You just said that the worker bees shouldn't see the additional 10! So how's that work Mr. Man? Won't the worker bees then see all the topics? Why not make the 10 topic project the master?

Here's where it will hopefully make sense. The 50 topic master includes a reference to the 10 topic child. ONLY if the master is able to find the child will the child be presented. So when you distribute the files, only the Master is given to the worker bees. they open it up and because the child isn't present, they only see the 50 topics they are supposed to see.

BOTH files are given to the queen bees. Because the Master also finds the Child, the queen bees see it all.

Just thinking out loud a bit... Rick

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Amebr
64 posts since
Jun 19, 2009

5. Dec 8, 2009 11:14 PM in response to: robert-sfl

Re: Information types - how to use?

Just in case you prefer to have explanations, like me , this is a rough guide on information types (in RH6, although the process shouldn't differ too much):

1. Set up the information types (and categories)
2. Assign to topics - the only way I could find to do this was through the TOC and it doesn't match the help in RH6.
   a. Right-click on a TOC book or page and select **Properties**.
   b. On the **Advanced** tab, tick **Use Information Types**.
   c. Click **Add** and select the topic you right-clicked on.
   d. Click the entry next to the (**1**) icon.
   e. Click the **Types** button and tick all the information types that apply to the topic.
   f. **OK** out of all the dialog boxes.
3. Generate the help.
4. Right-click on the TOC then select **Customize**.
5. Select **Custom**, then click **Next**.
6. For this step, you will get a number of pages, depending on how many categories you set up and whether they were inclusive, exclusive or hidden.
Tick or select each information type you want to view and click **Next**, repeating for all categories available.
7. Click **Finish**.
The TOC will only show the topics assigned the information types you selected.

Hopefully this is enough to get anyone through it who wants to persevere.

Oh, and if you want to remove the information types from a TOC page, once you untick the **Use Information Types** checkbox, you'll have to re-select the topic on the **General** tab.

Amebr

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robert-sfl
133 posts since
Jul 3, 2007

6. Dec 9, 2009 8:30 AM in response to: Amebr

Re: Information types - how to use?

Thanks for the helpful ideas, we will take the merhing into consideration allthough it would have been particularly convenient to let the user select his role himself in this case.

I repeated the entire procedure and took care to follow the steps as Amebr described them but the problem remains that the "Customize" button (or anything similar) does not appear. Maybe this is also a problem with non-english Windows versions. The help also mentions an activeX component that should be added to the "first" topic but doing this in either one or all topics does not change anything.

Thanks for the efforts, I think we will have to use another concept e.g. the merging business.

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