



DivX, Inc.

www.divx.com

Industry

Technology

Challenges

- Reduce cost of product support
- Improve Help system usability

Solution

- Help authoring system

Technical writers are improving the process of documenting products and reducing product support costs using Adobe RoboHelp solutions to build user-friendly Help systems.

Results

- Reduced product support costs
- Increased technical authors' productivity
- Improved workflow among engineers, product managers, and technical writers
- Eliminated previously difficult workarounds
- Improved usability of online and offline Help systems

Systems at a glance

- Adobe RoboHelp
- Adobe RoboSource Control
- Adobe FrameMaker®
- Adobe Captivate®
- Adobe Acrobat®
- Adobe Reader®

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Technical writers at digital media giant DivX agree that Adobe® RoboHelp® holds the heavyweight title for building and managing Help systems—headache-free

Universal need for good Help

If there were a single concept that all computer users might agree on, it would be that good Help systems are hard to find. One reason Help systems may be confounding is that documentation experts are sometimes constrained by the software they use. That's not the case at DivX, however, where technical writers are using Adobe RoboHelp software—the core of the Adobe technical communicator product line—to successfully publish useful and easy-to-use Help systems and knowledge bases.

DivX, (NASDAQ: DIVX, INC.) is among the world's most popular digital media formats, powering a worldwide ecosystem of content, software, and consumer electronics devices. From its headquarters in San Diego, DivX licenses technology to software and hardware manufacturers, content providers, and distributors.

"While we used to be a RoboHelp shop, we opted to purchase another solution that claimed to outperform it," says Charity Dominic, senior technical writer at DivX. "After a year of struggling with the other product and finally switching back to RoboHelp, I can honestly say that RoboHelp still holds the heavyweight title for ease of use, functionality, speed, and reliability."

Unlike other solutions, RoboHelp provides out-of-the-box support for Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)—eliminating the need for additional applications, add-ons, or downloads. DivX writers agree that RoboHelp is the most mature and stable solution on the market, and that the compiler is light-years faster than any other product.

Accurate data management

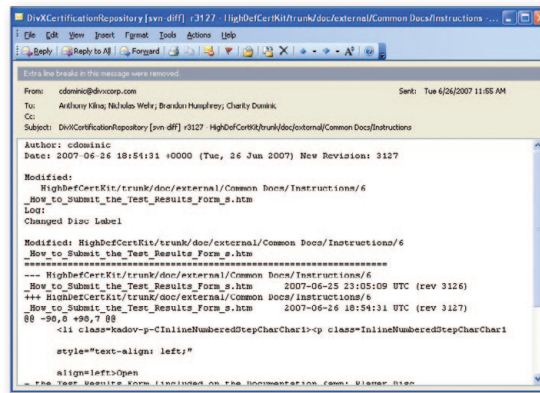
Technical writers face a myriad of challenges—such as documenting products that are still in development, revising documentation after deadlines have passed, and continuously revising the system based on end users' needs. Now, Adobe RoboHelp, RoboHelp Server, and RoboSource Control comprise a complete technical authoring and deployment solution that makes life much easier for technical writers and, in turn, for end users.

A key measure of success for technical writers is how effectively they can manage projects with regard to importing and exporting files. At DivX, writers typically pull content authored in Microsoft Word into RoboHelp and are assured that styles, tables, and templates will remain intact. "Previously, I had to manually identify all the properties in a Microsoft Word template to see what got lost during import," says Maureen Edmond, technical writer at DivX. Other file formats that are easily imported into RoboHelp include Adobe PDF, HTML and XML, as well as content created in Adobe FrameMaker software.

Flexible workflow

With RoboHelp, authors can write once and publish to a wide range of Help formats, including Adobe PDF, Adobe FlashHelp®, Compiled HTML Help, JavaHelp, OracleHelp, WebHelp, XML, and WinHelp—from the same source project. The integration between RoboHelp and other key Adobe products widely used by technical communicators—including Adobe Acrobat, Adobe Captivate, and Adobe FrameMaker software—enables professionals to engage with tools to produce rich, interactive technical documentation more easily than ever. Show-me demonstrations and software simulations created in Adobe Captivate software integrate seamlessly into Help systems.

The core of the Adobe technical communicator product line, Adobe RoboHelp software, helps technical writers such as those at DivX successfully publish useful and easy-to-use Help systems and knowledge bases. The integration between RoboHelp and other key Adobe products, including Adobe Acrobat Elements, Adobe Captivate, and Adobe FrameMaker software, also enables professionals to better engage with tools to produce rich, interactive technical documentation.



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Charity Dominic
Senior technical writer, DivX

“I save 60% of my time moving Word documents into online Help using RoboHelp,” says Edmond. “That is an amazing boost in productivity.” According to Edmond, the biggest time-saver is being able to create a bank of standard templates and single-source topics in RoboHelp and store them in one central place for other writers to pull in.

Writers like Edmond no longer need to spend hours working around undigested HTML files, recreating missing hyperlinks and mid-topic jumps, or eliminating topical redundancies. “RoboHelp automatically reads through a file, finds Heading Level 1, and deduces a title and table of contents location for that topic.”

According to Edmond, it was previously impossible to output content from online Help to a Microsoft Word template; “it was out of the question.” Now, using RoboHelp, she can pull content out of the DivX Help system back into her standard Word template without worrying about style, font, and format inconsistencies. “Before, I had to do a lot of XML editing to get there.”

Collaboration among technical writers, engineers, developers, product managers, and quality assurance staff is a continual process critical to the success of all technical documentation. With the tight version control and multiple author controls offered in RoboSource Control—the powerful content management application inside RoboHelp—the DivX team practices “single sourcing.” That is, all documentation—online, end-user booklet, or in a knowledge base—is organized by topic and originates from the same source file.

Timesaving techniques

According to Edmond, RoboHelp has an incredibly valuable linking function that provides a graphical view of what topics reference other topics, including dependencies and tendencies. She can easily identify problems, quickly navigate to a topic, and make the necessary edits.

Using other software, Edmond had no ability to create timed captures or partial screen captures. “The timed capture and the user-friendly cropping tool in RoboHelp make a huge difference in my productivity.” She adds that the reporting features in RoboHelp are terrific, as is the ability to add interactivity simply by adding ActiveX® controls.

Feedback improves web-based Help

The RoboHelp Server solution enables technical teams to improve the usability of Help systems and keep track of elements to be included in future product revisions. Most importantly, organizations like DivX can keep support costs in check by monitoring their Help system’s usage and obtaining quantitative information.

RoboHelp Server automatically collects data from 100% of the user base without bias—gaining insight into user problems in real time. Specifically, the server software reports out what kind of Help searches are being performed, what questions are remaining unanswered, how frequently topics are being addressed, and what browsers and operating systems customers are using. Using RoboHelp, RoboHelp Server, and RoboSource Control, accurate data is readily available to authors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, making it possible to create Help systems that are truly helpful.

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Adobe Systems Incorporated
345 Park Avenue
San Jose, CA 95110-2704
USA
www.adobe.com