NSHelpManager Class Reference

Cocoa > User Experience

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NSHelpManager Class Reference

Inherits from	NSObject
Conforms to	NSObject (NSObject)
Framework	/System/Library/Frameworks/AppKit.framework
Availability	Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.
Companion guide	Online Help
Declared in	NSHelpManager.h

Overview

The `NSHelpManager` class provides an approach to displaying online help. An application contains one `NSHelpManager` object.

Tasks

Getting the Help Manager

`+ sharedHelpManager` (page 7)
Returns the shared `NSHelpManager` (page 5) instance, creating it if it does not already exist.

Displaying Help

`- findString:inBook:` (page 8)
Performs a search for the specified string in the specified book.

`- openHelpAnchor:inBook:` (page 8)
Finds and displays the text at the given anchor location in the given book.

Configuring Context-Sensitive Help

`+ isContextHelpModeActive` (page 6)
Indicates whether context-sensitive help mode is active.

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+ setContextHelpModeActive: (page 6)
Specifies whether context-sensitive help mode is active.

- setContextHelp:forObject: (page 9)
Associates help content with an object.

- removeContextHelpForObject: (page 9)
Removes the association between an object and its context-sensitive help.

Displaying Context-Sensitive Help

- contextHelpForObject: (page 7)
Returns context-sensitive help for an object.

- showContextHelpForObject:locationHint: (page 10)
Displays the context-sensitive help for a given object at or near the point on the screen specified by a given point.

Class Methods

isContextHelpModeActive

Indicates whether context-sensitive help mode is active.

```
+ (BOOL)isContextHelpModeActive
```

Return Value
YES when the application is in context-sensitive help mode, NO otherwise.

Discussion
In context-sensitive help mode, when a user clicks a user interface item, help for that item is displayed in a small window just below the cursor.

Availability
Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also
+ setContextHelpModeActive: (page 6)

Declared In
NSHelpManager.h

setContextHelpModeActive:

Specifies whether context-sensitive help mode is active.

```
+ (void)setContextHelpModeActive:(BOOL)contextHelpActive
```


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Parameters

contextHelpActive

YES turns on context-sensitive help, NO turns it off.

Discussion

You never send this message directly; instead, the NSApplication method activateContextHelpMode: activates context-sensitive help mode, and the first mouse click after displaying the context-sensitive help window deactivates it.

When the application enters context-sensitive help mode, the help manager posts an NSContextHelpModeDidActivateNotification (page 10) to the default notification center. When the application returns to normal operation, the help manager posts an NSContextHelpModeDidDeactivateNotification (page 10).

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also

+ isContextHelpModeActive (page 6)

Declared In

NSHelpManager.h

sharedHelpManager

Returns the shared NSHelpManager (page 5) instance, creating it if it does not already exist.

```
+ (NSHelpManager *)sharedHelpManager
```

Return Value

Shared help manager.

Availability

Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared In

NSHelpManager.h

Instance Methods

contextHelpForObject:

Returns context-sensitive help for an object.

```
- (NSAttributedString *)contextHelpForObject:(id)object
```

Parameters

object

Object for which context-sensitive help is sought.

Return Value

Context-sensitive help content.

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Availability
Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also
- `setContextHelp:forObject:` (page 9)
- `showContextHelpForObject:locationHint:` (page 10)

Declared In
`NSHelpManager.h`

findString:inBook:

Performs a search for the specified string in the specified book.

```
- (void)findString:(NSString *)query inBook:(NSString *)book
```

Parameters

query
String to search for.

book
Localized help book to search. When `nil`, all installed help books are searched.

Discussion
To search for a string in your bundle's localized help book, you could use code similar to the following:

```
NSString *locBookName = [[NSBundle mainBundle] objectForInfoDictionaryKey:
@"CFBundleHelpBookName"];
[[NSHelpManager sharedHelpManager] findString:@"Hello"  inBook:locBookName];
```

This is a wrapper for `AHRegisterHelpBook` (which is called only once to register the help book specified in the application's main bundle) and `AHSearch`.

Availability
Available in Mac OS X v10.3 and later.

Declared In
`NSHelpManager.h`

openHelpAnchor:inBook:

Finds and displays the text at the given anchor location in the given book.

```
- (void)openHelpAnchor:(NSString *)anchor inBook:(NSString *)book
```

Parameters

anchor
Location of the desired text.

book
Help book containing the anchor. When `nil`, all installed help books are searched.

Discussion
To open an anchor in your bundle's localized help book, you could use code similar to the following:

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```
NSString *locBookName = [[NSBundle mainBundle] objectForInfoDictionaryKey:
@"CFBundleHelpBookName"];
[[NSHelpManager sharedHelpManager] openHelpAnchor:@"anchor1"  inBook:locBookName];
```

This method is a wrapper for `AHRegisterHelpBook` (which is called only once to register the help book specified in the application's main bundle) and `AHLookupAnchor`.

Availability
Available in Mac OS X v10.3 and later.

Declared In
`NSHelpManager.h`

removeContextHelpForObject:

Removes the association between an object and its context-sensitive help.

```
- (void)removeContextHelpForObject:(id)object
```

Parameters

object

Object to disassociate from its help content.

Discussion
If *object* does not have context-sensitive help associated with it, this method does nothing.

Availability
Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also
- setContextHelp:forObject: (page 9)

Declared In
`NSHelpManager.h`

setContextHelp:forObject:

Associates help content with an object.

```
- (void)setContextHelp:(NSAttributedString *)help forObject:(id)object
```

Parameters

help

Help content to associate with *object*.

object

Object to associate with *help*.

Discussion
When the application enters context-sensitive help mode, if *object* is clicked, *help* appears in the context-sensitive help window.

Availability
Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

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See Also
- `removeContextHelpForObject:` (page 9)

Declared In
`NSHelpManager.h`

showContextHelpForObject:locationHint:

Displays the context-sensitive help for a given object at or near the point on the screen specified by a given point.

```
- (BOOL)showContextHelpForObject:(id)object locationHint:(NSPoint)point
```

Parameters

object
: Object for which context-sensitive help is sought.

point
: Screen location at which to display the help content; it's usually under the cursor.

Return Value
`YES` when help content is successfully displayed. `NO` if help content is not displayed (for example, when there is no context-sensitive help associated with *object*).

Availability
Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

See Also
- `contextHelpForObject:` (page 7)

Declared In
`NSHelpManager.h`

Notifications

NSContextHelpModeDidActivateNotification

Posted when the application enters context-sensitive help mode. This typically happens when the user holds down the Help key.

The notification object is the help manager. This notification does not contain a *userInfo* dictionary.

Availability
Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared In
`NSHelpManager.h`

NSContextHelpModeDidDeactivateNotification

Posted when the application exits context-sensitive help mode. This happens when the user clicks the mouse button while the cursor is anywhere on the screen after displaying a context-sensitive help topic.

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The notification object is the help manager. This notification does not contain a *userInfo* dictionary.

Availability
Available in Mac OS X v10.0 and later.

Declared In
NSHelpManager.h

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Document Revision History

This table describes the changes to *NSHelpManager Class Reference*.

Date	Notes
2009-02-04	Removed all references to using Interface Builder.
2007-03-24	Made editorial improvements.
2006-05-23	First publication of this content as a separate document.

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Document Revision History

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