

Helptrix Author



by Oy Winpos Ab

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Chapter 1. Getting Started

1.1. What Is Helptrix Author

Helptrix (www.helptrix.com [<http://www.helptrix.com/>]) is a help authoring system for creating professional help and manuals in several formats from a single source. Helptrix strongly supports multi-language manuals and therefore provides possibilities for translating help or manuals to additional languages and maintaining multi-language help systems.

Helptrix consists of two separate applications:

1. **Helptrix Author** is the application where you create chapters and topics of your manual, create content of topics, write texts or insert images.
2. **Helptrix Translator** is the place where you translate your help or manual to additional languages and maintain multi-language help systems.

With Helptrix you can publish manuals in several formats:

- **HTML Help** is a standard online Windows help format since Windows 98. Provides three pane user interface with help ToC on the left, indexes, quick search and context sensitive help for your users. It is an ideal choice to distribute along with your Windows applications.
- **PDF** is a open de facto standard for electronic document distribution with great printing abilities. You can distribute PDF manual electronic way and your users can print it themselves, or you can print it immediately and ship it.
- **HTML** is used for browser based help. Placing your manual on Internet or intranet is perfect solution for multiplatform environment. It comes as a simple HTML page or sophisticated version with frames and JavaScript functionality, which it makes look like HTML Help in three pane style, and it also provides context sensitive help.
- **DocBook XML**. XML is markup language designed to describe and carry data. DocBook is a very popular XML vocabulary for writing technical documentation, any kind of manuals or books. With your help in DocBook standard you have more opportunities to work with it further.

Lot of features make Helptrix extremely useful:

- **Single Source**. All outputs are created from the same single source. Write only once and publish many times. Single sourcing keeps content of your help system or manual perfectly consistent and keeps all your outputs up to date.
- **Multilanguage**. Full multilanguage support allows you to translate your manuals and maintain them in several languages and preserves, that all languages have the same content.
- **Focus On Content**. You can focus only on content you are writing instead of annoying formatting. Set formatting rules when you create outputs.
- **Creating Outputs**. Graphic user interface for creating outputs. Just select language and type of output.
- **United Look**. Layout of your outputs is done automatically, which means that your manual is looking same way in each output and for each language version.
- **Automation**. When producing output, chapters and topics are numbered, table of content with page numbers is created, figures and tables are numbered, description for links are created. All of this and more is in proper language and is done automatically for you.
- **Intuitive User Interface**. Editor window is designed in three pane style. User interface looks like HTML Help output. Use WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) user interface for very easy topic editing.
- **Conditional Output**. Conditional output allows you to assign parts of your manual only to online or printed output. This is perfectly suitable for images, when you can assign color image in low quality to appear only in online output and grayscale high quality image to appear in printed version.
- **Context Sensitive Help**. Allows you to connect parts of your application with certain topics. Really easy, fully graphical assigning context help IDs from your application to topics in your help system. Context sensitive help is present in HTML Help output and with Helptrix also in browser based output in HTML format!

- **Topic Status.** Topics include date and time stamp, and can be marked with status of completion. All this helps you to keep track of topics, where some work left.
- **Links And Images.** Easy visual inserting of links to another topics and inserting of images. Using proper version of images for each language is preserved.
- **Index Words.** Each topic can include index keywords, that in final output provide user of your help with quick access to desired information.
- **Collaborative Work.** Export your projects into ZIP archive and send it to all your translators via e-mail. When translated projects are back, import languages directly from ZIP file.
- **Quick Backup.** One-click backup of your project directly to ZIP file.
- **Open Solution.** Helptrix is based on XML technology. All help content is stored in plain XML files, so it can be reused by another applications or created by another application from scratch as well. DocBook standard is supported, which means possibility of adding more output formats due to your needs.

1.2. How to Use It

Helptrix consists of two separate applications:

1. **Helptrix Author** is the application where you create chapters and topics of your manual, create content of topics, write texts or insert images.
2. **Helptrix Translator** is the place where you translate your help or manual to additional languages and maintain multi-language help systems.

In fact you are using Helptrix Author to write help or manual in one language you have chosen (main book language). As soon as help or manual is done, it could be translated to additional languages using Helptrix Translator.

Helptrix is based on **single-sourcing**, which means, that you write content of help or manual only once, and then publish it in several different outputs (HTML Help, PDF, HTML) from the same source. This features helps you to keep all different formats of your help or manual in consistent state.

Helptrix Author allows writer fully focus on **content instead of formatting**, because you can use only several pre-defined elements in your topics. Let's assume a note in the text: you don't to have remember how you have formatted note before (font, indentation, background color) - in this editor you just insert note element, and you are sure, that all notes will look exactly same way in every output. Of course you can adjust output appearance, when creating it. This approach preserves **united look** of your help systems and manuals.

Chapter 2. Editor Environment

2.1. General

Helptrix Author window has menu and toolbars on the top, the rest of the window is divided to two parts - table of content (ToC) on the left and editing pane on the right. At the very bottom of the screen is the status bar.

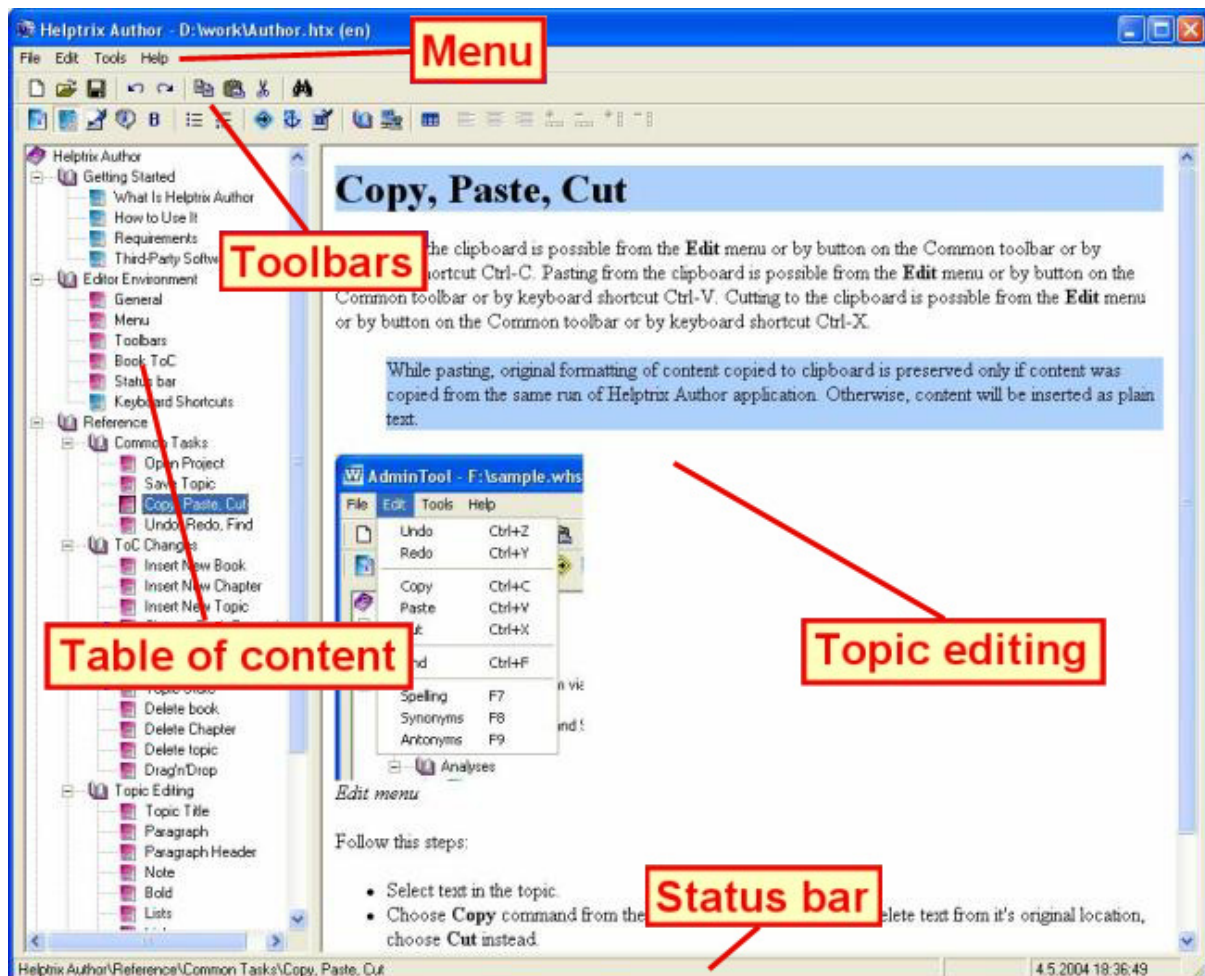


Figure 2.1. Helptrix Author window

All changes to the book structure (inserting and deleting chapters or topics, changing their properties) take place on left side in table of content (ToC). Editing of the topic content (writing texts, inserting images, etc.) takes place on the right side.

2.2. Menu

Menu consists of four items: File, Edit, Tools and Help. First two and last one are common for almost every Windows application, third includes tools specific for Helptrix Author.



Figure 2.2. Menu

File menu includes operations for Helptrix project file manipulation.



Figure 2.3. File menu

- **New** command closes opened project and prepares application for creating new one.
- **Open** command opens already existing project.
- **Save** command saves content of currently opened topic. By this command is saved only topic, changes to book structure are saved immediately without prompting.
- **Exit** command exits application.

Edit menu includes common utilities as undo and redo actions, clipboard operations, searching and spelling tools.

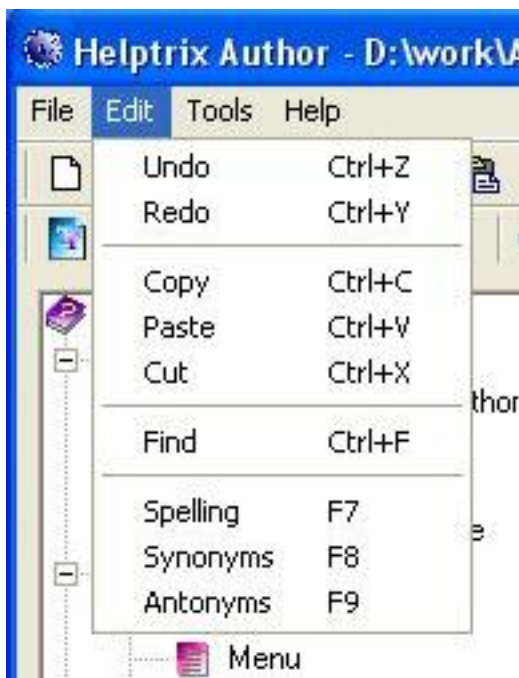


Figure 2.4. Edit menu

- **Undo** command takes back last change made in the topic.
- **Redo** command repeats last undone change made in the topic.
- **Copy** command saves selected text to clipboard.
- **Paste** command inserts text from clipboard into the topic.
- **Cut** command saves selected text to clipboard and removes it from topic.

- **Find** command searches for text in topic.
- **Spelling** command provides spell checking of the topic content.
- **Synonyms** command provides dictionary of synonyms (words with the same meaning).
- **Antonyms** command provides dictionary antonym (words with the opposite meaning).

Tools menu is specific for Helptrix Author application and provides several very useful tools to working with.

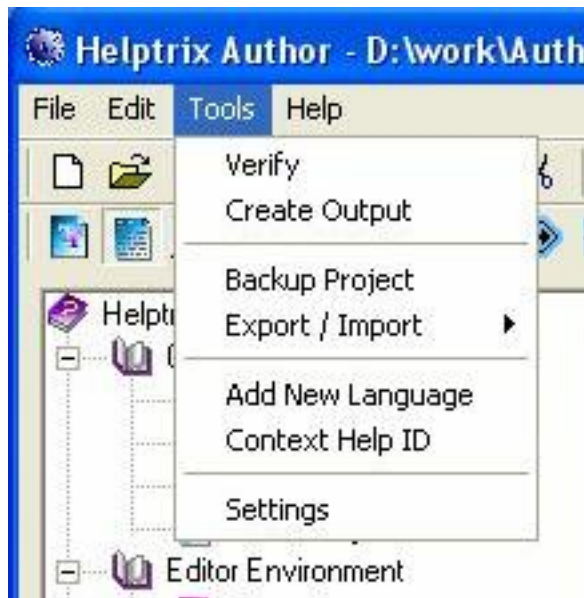


Figure 2.5. Tools menu

- **Verify** tool creates reports on unfinished topics, missing images or all used images in project.
- **Create Output** tool provides graphic user interface for publishing help or manual.
- **Backup project** allows one-click backup of project into ZIP archive.
- **Export / Import** submenu is designed for collaborative work on translation of the project.
- **Add New Language** adds to book new foreign language version.
- **Context Help ID** tool provides graphic user interface for assigning context sensitive help ids from application to topics in the book.
- **Settings** includes some application settings.

Help menu provides help for application.



Figure 2.6. Help menu

- **Contents** command displays application help.
- **About** command displays About box, which provides basic information about Helptrix Au-

thor application.

Chapter 3. Reference

3.1. Tools

3.1.1. Backup Project

Backup tool provides easy one-click backup of your project. Tool adds all project files (book, images) to ZIP archive. This is perfectly suitable for making quick backups of your project or for sending your project via e-mail as well. Choose **Backup Project** item from the **Tools** menu.

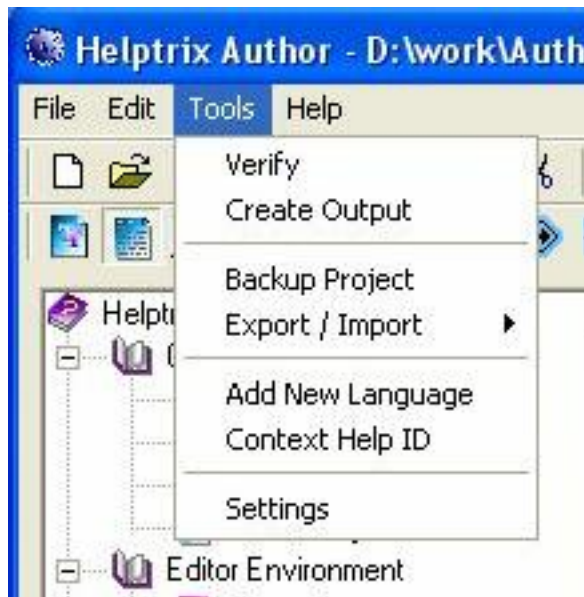


Figure 3.1. Tools menu

First choose placing of result of ZIP archive file from Save As dialog.



Figure 3.2. Save as dialog

You are informed about progress of operation with the **Backup** window.

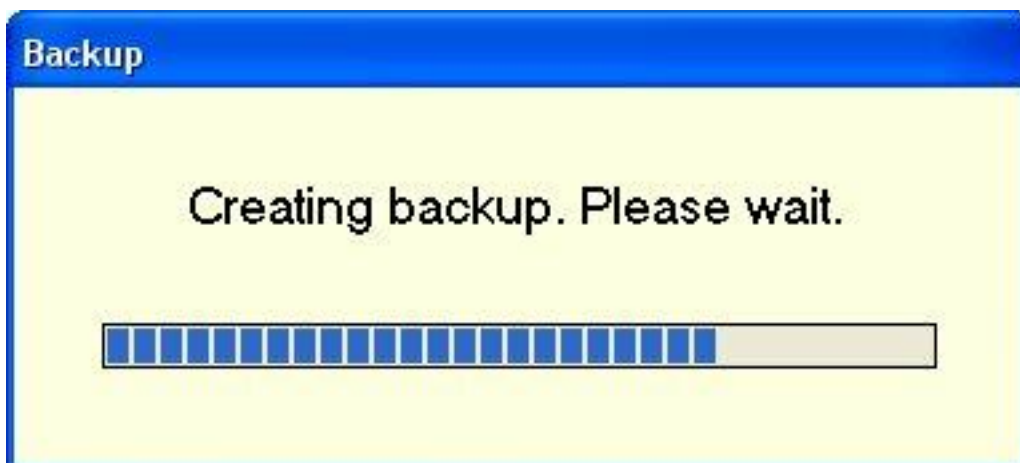


Figure 3.3. Backup progress

Now, project has been backed up successfully.

3.1.2. Import Language

Intention of three tools in **Export / Import** submenu is to provide possibility of collaborative work on translation of the book (see “1.2. How to Use It” [page 2]).

To import translated languages into the project, select **Import Language** from the **Tools -> Export / Import** submenu.

Note

Import languages is possible only when project has been exported before and is still locked.

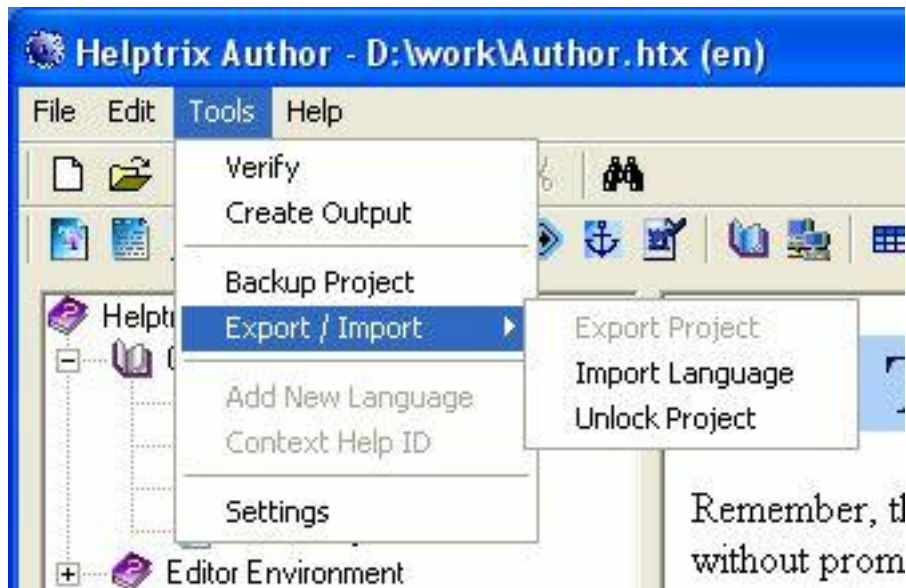


Figure 3.4. Export / Import submenu

Open dialog for opening project to import from is displayed.

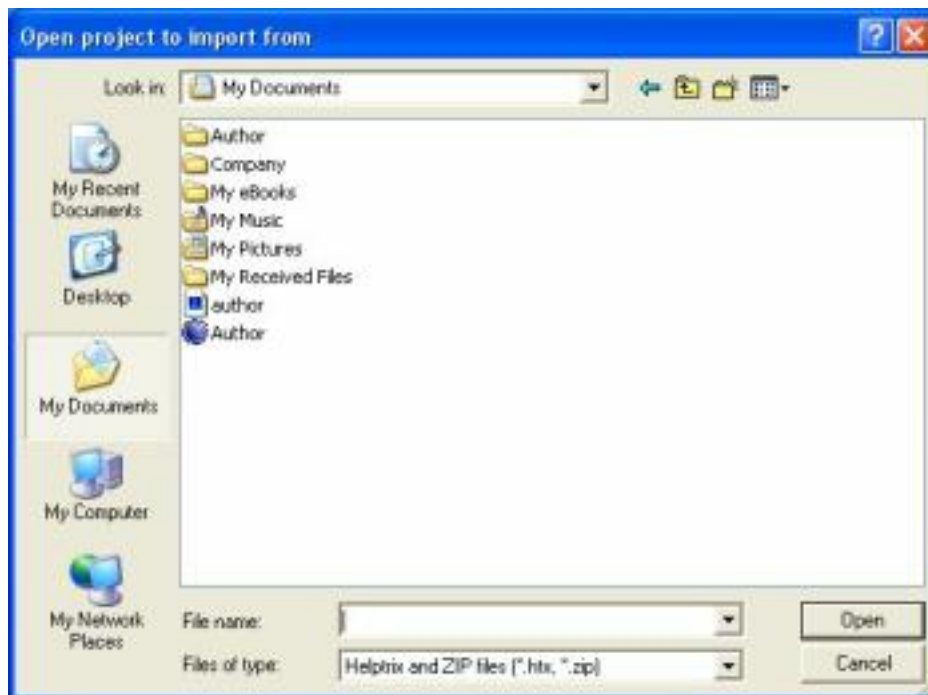


Figure 3.5. Open dialog

You can select and open directly Helptrix project file (".htx") or you can select ZIP archive (".zip") with project. In second case you will be asked to select folder for extracted project from ZIP archive.



Figure 3.6. Browse for folder

Project will be extracted from the ZIP archive to selected folder. Then, once again Open project dialog will be displayed in folder with extracted project - select project file and click **Open**.

Note

Only project that was export from current project can be selected (unique keys have to match)!

If everything is alright, **Import Language** window is displayed.

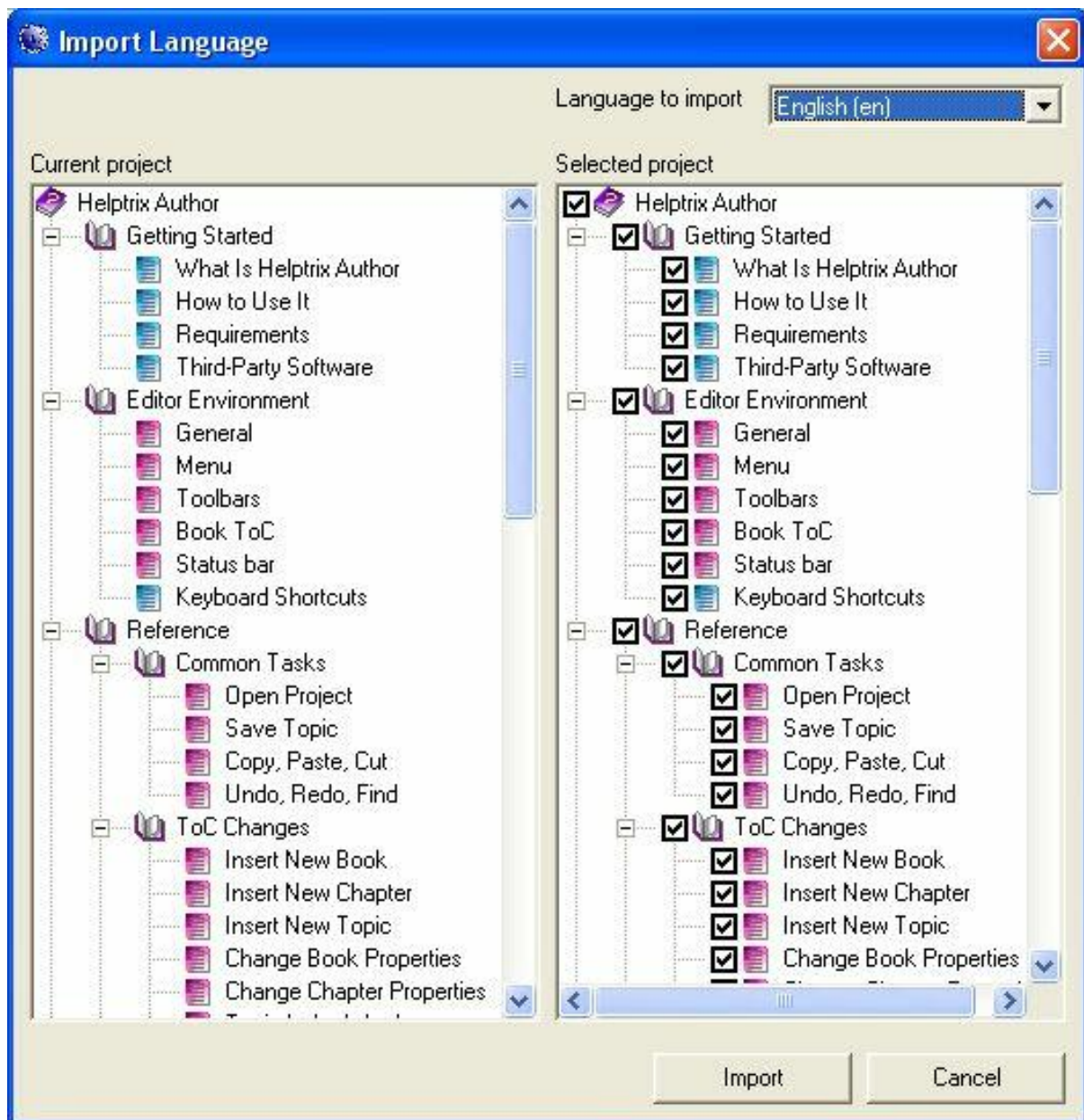


Figure 3.7. Import language window

In this window you have to select from **Language to import** combo box language to import. In **Selected project** project pane you can specify by checking / unchecking items, which chapter and topics should be imported. If book or chapter is checked, its current title in selected language will be replaced during import with new one. If topic is checked, its current title and content in selected language will be replaced during import with new ones.

Click **Import** button to start importing language content from the selected project to the current project. You will be informed about operation progress by Import window.

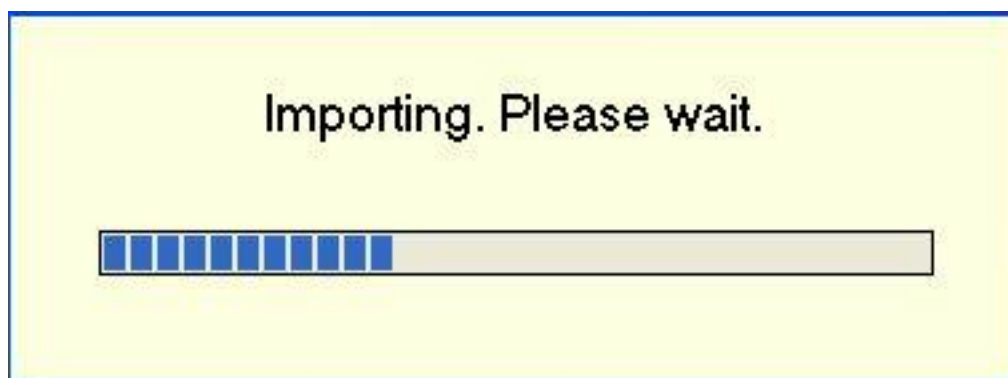


Figure 3.8. Import window

Now, translated language has been imported successfully to your project.

3.1.3. Context Help IDs

Windows HTML Help offers users system, which makes possible to display certain topic exactly concerned about part of application that was user using when he asked for help. For example, if user needs help on "Image properties dialog", and this dialog is displayed as user presses F1 for help, topic referring exactly about "Image properties dialog" is showed. This system is called **context sensitive help**.

How it works:

1. In your application you must assign unique number (ID) to every component (usually form), that should provide context sensitive help. Usually development environment for programming language you are using provides some way how to do this.
2. In your HTML Help you have to assign these unique numbers (IDs) to topics.

In Helptrix Author is the second step provided by **Context Help ID** tool. This tool is designed for assigning context sensitive help IDs from application to topics in book.

HTML with frames

If you want to use context sensitive help in the HTML output with the frames, use Context Help ID tool as described bellow. When output is created, you can invoke specific topic by calling "index.html" file with question mark followed by some id (number). For example, type into your browser "http://www.mycompany.com/myproduct/manual/index.html?25", assuming that path is specified correctly and some topic was assigned form with context help id 25.

To use Context Help ID tool select item **Context Help ID** from menu the **Tools**.



Figure 3.9. Tools menu

The tool window is displayed.

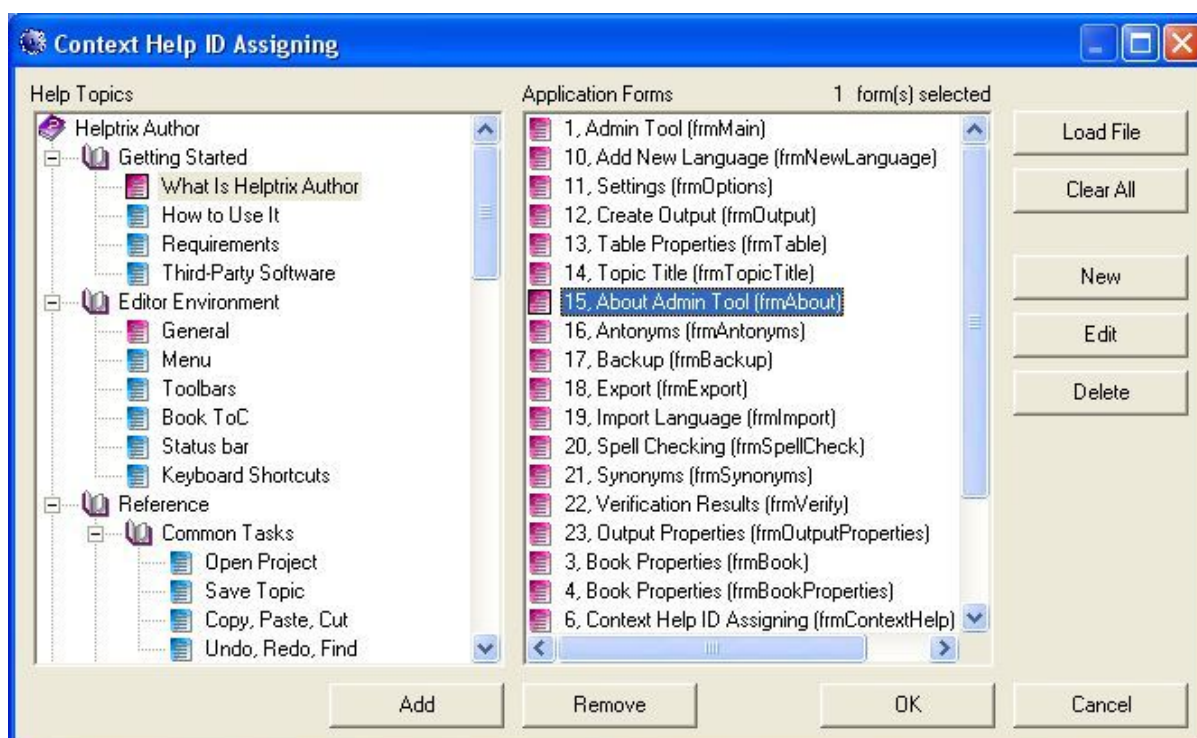


Figure 3.10. Context Help ID window

Window is divided to the two sections. **Help Topic** pane on the left is table of content of your book. Topics, which have already assigned some application form are shown with red icon, unassigned topics with blue. **Application Forms** pane on the right shows all application forms with their number IDs. Already assigned forms are shown with red icon, unassigned with blue. To find out current assignments click on already assigned topic on the left or already assigned form on the right and its matching pair is selected automatically in the opposite pane (see figure above). Your goal is to have all applications forms assigned to some topics, because each form must have matching pair. At the other hand, not every topic must be (and most likely would be not) assigned to some application form.

Note

More application forms may have the same ID number. In this case they are always treated together automatically.

To assign form's IDs to topics, follow these steps:

1. Create list of application forms which IDs you want to assign to some topic in your book. **a)** You have your form records stored in the XML file. In this case, click **Load File** button. The Open file dialog is shown. Locate XML file you have created and click Open button. Tool will make local copy of specified file and this local copy will be then used each time you run Context Help ID tool until you load new XML file. **b)** Create forms records manually Click on **New** button to add the new form record (see figure bellow). Click on **Edit** button to change properties already existing form record or click **Delete** button to remove it. Click on **Clear All** button to remove all existing form records.
2. To create new assignment select one unassigned help topic on left side and one unassigned application form on right side. Click **Add** button.
3. To cancel existing assignment select assigned help topic on left side, or assigned application form on right side. Click **Remove** button.
4. If you have finished assigning, click **OK** button. Changes will be saved to book immediately.



Figure 3.11. Form record

This window is used to add new or edit old form records. **Form name** is unique form identifier, usually form name in IDE of your programming language. **Form caption** is usually form title bar. **Context Help ID** is number that you have assigned to form in your programming language IDE. Click **OK** to add new form record or change properties of old one.