



# **Case Study:** Database-resident User Assistance

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# Overview

- How to link user assistance topics to application pages
- How to store page- and field-level user assistance in a database
- How to format the delivered content
- How to allow users to customize the user assistance

## sample\_login.htm

Login as "user" or "admin." The password is not really used.

Name:

Password:

**Note:** This application only supports IE 4+  
with JavaScript and cookies enabled.

# Sample App

[Home](#)

[Tutorial](#)

[Help](#)

01/06/2002

You are logged in as: sss

[Create project](#)

## Create Project

[View projects](#)

[View schedule](#)

[Search](#)

Project Number:



Page-level UA

Description:

Field-level UA

Start Date:

Completion Date:

Requestor:

Priority:

Tasks:



# Storing UA information in a database

FieldID	FieldLabel	HlpText	HlpTextCustom
ProjectNumber	Project Number	The number ....	<b>Note:</b> This number is automatically generated.
Description	Description	A brief ....	
StartDate	Start Date	When the project needs to begin.	
CompletionDate	Completion Date	When the project should end.	
Requestor	Requestor	The person ....	Requestors must be managers.
Priority	Priority	The importance ....	
Tasks	Tasks	What should ....	

- "HlpText" is used to store defaults.
- "HlpTextCustom" is used to store modified UA topics.



# Linking application pages to UA topics

Create Project

Project Number:  

```
<a href="#" onClick="openFieldHelp('ProjectNumber')">  
</a>
```

```
<script>  
function openFieldHelp(topic) {  
window.open('fieldhelp.asp?' + topic,'helpwin','toolbar=0, ↵  
location=0,directories=0,status=0,menubar=0,scrollbars=1, ↵  
resizable=0,width=600,height=400');  
}  
</script>
```



# Opening the database

## **VBScript Code to Open the Database**

```
Dim objConn
Set objConn =
Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Connection")
objConn.Open "DRIVER={Microsoft Access Driver
(*.mdb)};
DBQ=" & Server.MapPath("\db\fieldhelp.mdb")
```

```
Dim objRS
Set objRS = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Recordset")
objRS.Open "Tutorial", objConn, , , adCmdTable
```



# Pulling content from the database

```
Do While Not objRS.EOF
```

```
If Request.QueryString = objRS("FieldID") Then
```

```
If objRS("HlpTextCustom") <> "" Then
```

```
    Response.Write "<b>" & objRS("FieldLabel") &  
    "</b><br> " & objRS("HlpTextCustom")
```

```
Else
```

```
    Response.Write "<b>" & objRS("FieldLabel") &  
    "</b><br> " & objRS("HlpText")
```

```
End If
```

```
End If
```

```
objRS.MoveNext
```

```
Loop
```





# Formatting the UA

```
Do While Not objRS.EOF
```

```
If Request.QueryString = objRS("FieldID") Then
```

```
If objRS("HlpTextCustom") <> "" Then
```

```
    Response.Write "<b>" & objRS("FieldLabel") &  
    "</b><br> " & objRS("HlpTextCustom")
```

```
Else
```

```
    Response.Write "<b>" & objRS("FieldLabel") &  
    "</b><br> " & objRS("HlpText")
```

```
End If
```

```
End If
```

```
objRS.MoveNext
```

```
Loop
```



# Testing

- Set up two UA columns in the database: default and custom.
- Make sure that each cell contains some information, even "Help is not available for this field."



# How to customize your UA

- Remembering user settings
- Hiding topics based on the user's login
- Modifying topics dynamically



# Remembering user settings

sample\_tutorial.asp

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window with the title bar 'Sample Tutorial - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by EarthLink Inc.'. The main content area displays the following text:

**Sample Tutorial**

[big normal](#)

Remember and use selected size

**User tutorials**

- ✓ [How to log-in](#)
- How to create a project
- How to view projects
- How to search

**Admin tutorials**

- How to customize the application

The status bar at the bottom shows 'Done' and 'Internet'.



# Remembering user settings

## **Code to set the window size**

(in sample\_tutorial.asp)

```
<a href="sample_tutorial.asp?big">big</a>
```

...

```
If Request.QueryString = "big" Then
```

```
    Do While Not objRS.EOF
```

```
        If objRS("ID") = Session("security") Then objRS("size") = "big"
```

```
        Response.Write "<script language=vbscript>Call window.resizeTo(800,  
600)</script>"
```

```
        objRS.MoveNext
```

```
    Loop
```

```
End If
```



# Remembering user settings

## **Code to change the window size** (in sample\_tutorial.asp)

```
If Request.QueryString = "" Then
  Do While Not objRS.EOF
    If objRS("ID") = Session("security") Then
      If objRS("size") = "big" Then Response.Write "<script
language=vbscript>Call window.resizeTo(800, 600)</script>"
      If objRS("size") = "normal" Then Response.Write "<script
language=vbscript>Call window.resizeTo(600, 400)</script>"
    End If
    objRS.MoveNext
  Loop
End If
```



# Hiding topics based on the user's login

Sample Help - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by EarthLink Inc.

[TOC](#) [Index](#) [Search](#)

## Sample Help

The Create Project page can be used to ....

**Project Number**  
The project number ....

**Description**  
The description ....

...

**Related Topics**  
Viewing projects  
Viewing schedules  
Searching  
[Customizing the application](#)

Hide this link if the user is not logged in as "admin"

Done Internet

sample\_help.htm



# Hiding topics based on the user's login

## **Code to hide links**

(in sample\_help.asp)

```
<%  
If Session("security") = "admin" Then  
Response.Write "<a href= 'link.htm'>Customizing the  
application</a><br>"  
End If  
%>
```





# Modifying topics dynamically

sample\_home.asp

**Sample App**  
01/06/2002 You are logged in as: sss

[Create project](#) **Create Project**

[View projects](#)

[View schedule](#)

[Search](#)

Project Number:

Description:

Start Date:

Completion Date:

Requestor:

Priority:

Tasks:

Sample Help - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by EarthLink Inc.

[TOC](#) [Index](#) [Search](#)

## Sample Help

The Create Project page can be used to ....

**Project Number**  
The project number ...

**Description**  
The description ....

...

**Related Topics**  
Viewing projects  
Viewing schedules  
Searching  
[Customizing the application](#)

Done Internet

Field names need to match between application and UA

sample\_help.asp



# Modifying topics dynamically

(in sample\_help.htm)

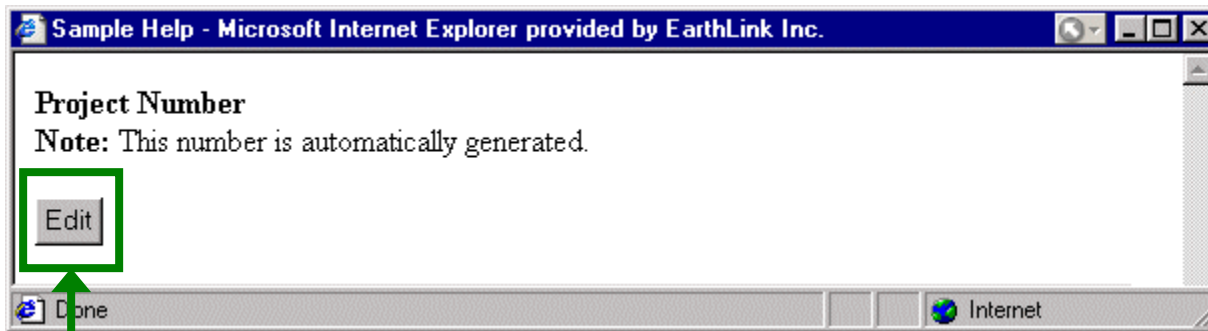
```
Do While Not objRS.EOF
Response.Write "<font face='Arial'><b>" & objRS("FieldLabel") &
"</b><br>"
If objRS("HlpTextCustom") <> "" Then
    Response.Write objRS("HlpTextCustom") & "</font></p>"
Else
    If objRS("HlpText") <> "" Then
        Response.Write objRS("HlpText") & "</font></p>"
    Else
        Response.Write "No Help has been written for this
        field.</font></p>"
    End If
End If
objRS.MoveNext
Loop
```



# Annotated UA

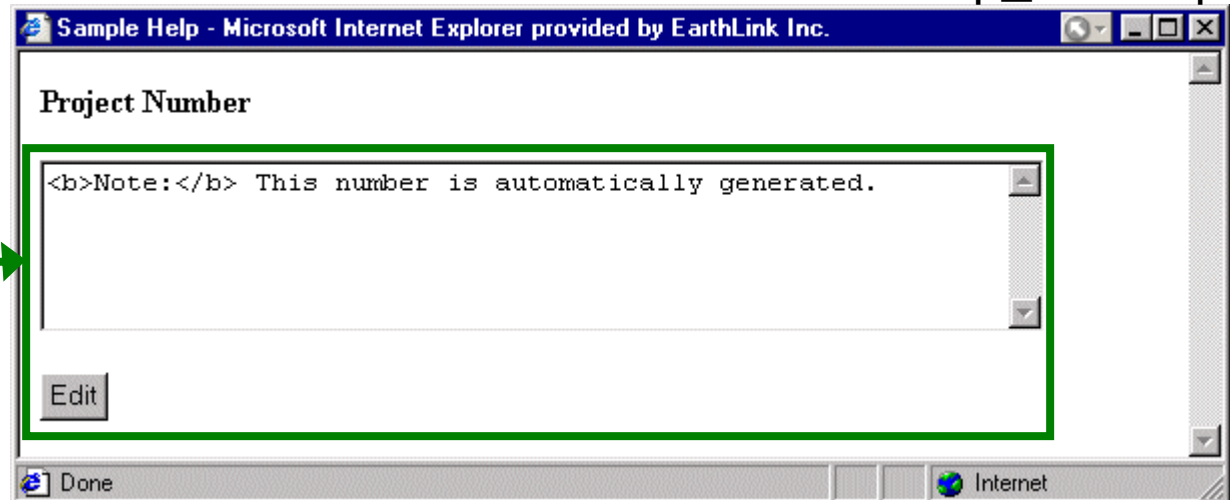
## Allowing users to modify/add topics

fieldhelp.asp



Administrators see the "edit" button, which they can use to add or change the field UA topics.

fieldhelp\_edit.asp





# Modifying/Adding topics

## **Code to show field UA** (in fieldhelp.asp)

```
Do While Not objRS.EOF
```

```
  If Request.QueryString = objRS("FieldID") Then
```

```
    If objRS("HlpTextCustom") <> "" Then
```

```
      Response.Write "<b>" & objRS("FieldLabel") & "</b><br> " &  
      objRS("HlpTextCustom")
```

```
    Else
```

```
      Response.Write "<b>" & objRS("FieldLabel") & "</b><br> " &  
      objRS("HlpText")
```

```
    End If
```

```
  End If
```

```
  objRS.MoveNext
```

```
Loop
```



# Modifying/Adding topics

## **Code to show Edit button**

(in fieldhelp.asp)

```
If Session("security") = "admin" Then _  
Response.Write "<form name='form' method='post'  
action='fieldhelpedit.asp?' & Request.QueryString &  
''><input type='submit' name='submit'  
value='Edit'></form>"
```



# Modifying/Adding topics

## **Code to display the "Edit" form (1 of 2)** (in fieldhelpedit.asp)

```
Do While Not objRS.EOF
```

```
If Request.QueryString = objRS("FieldID") Then
```

```
Response.Write "<b>" & objRS("FieldLabel") & "</b><br>"
```

```
Response.Write "<form method='post' action='fieldhelpupdate.asp?' &  
Request.QueryString & "">"
```

```
If objRS("HlpTextCustom") <> "" Then
```

```
Response.Write "<textarea name='helptext' cols='60' rows='5'>" &  
objRS("HlpTextCustom") & "</textarea>"
```

```
Else
```

```
Response.Write "<textarea name='helptext' cols='60' rows='5'>" &  
objRS("HlpText") & "</textarea>"
```

```
End If
```



# Modifying/Adding topics

## **Code to display the "Edit" form (2 of 2)** (in fieldhelpedit.asp)

...

```
Response.Write "<p><input type='submit' name='submit' value='Edit'>  
</form>"
```

```
End If
```

```
objRS.MoveNext
```

```
Loop
```



# Modifying/Adding topics

## **Code to update the UA**

(in fieldhelpupdate.asp)

```
Do While Not objRS.EOF
```

```
  If Request.QueryString = objRS("FieldID") Then
```

```
    If Request.Form("helptext") <> "" Then
```

```
      objRS("HlpTextCustom") = Request.Form("helptext")
```

```
      objRS.Update
```

```
    End If
```

```
  End If
```

```
  objRS.MoveNext
```

```
Loop
```





# Viewing and downloading the sample files

**ASP sample files** (zipped and live)

<http://www3.brinkster.com/userfirst/index.html>

(Brinkster is a free ASP hosting site, so it goes down from time to time.)

**This presentation and notes**

[www.userfirst.net/demos/index.html](http://www.userfirst.net/demos/index.html)



# Recommended JavaScript books

## **“JavaScript Visual Quickstart Guide”**

Tom Negrino and Dori Smith

## **“Designing with JavaScript”**

Nick Heinle and Bill Peña

## **“JavaScript Bible” & “JavaScript Examples”**

Danny Goodman



# Recommended VBScript and ASP books

## **“Teach Yourself Active Server Pages in 21 Days”**

Scott Mitchell and James Atkinson

## **“VBScript in a Nutshell”**

Matt Childs, Paul Lomax, & Ron Petrusha



Questions?