

# Error opening Help in Windows-based programs: "Feature not included" or "Help not supported"

The Windows Help program is not supported in Windows 10, Windows Server 2012 or later versions of Windows Server. The Windows Help program is available for Windows Vista, 7, 8 and 8.1 only.

Microsoft strongly recommends that software developers discontinue using the Windows Help application. Software developers who ship programs that rely on .hlp files are encouraged to transition their Help experience to an alternative Help file format, such as CHM, HTML, or XML. For more information see the MSDN article [Which Version of Help do I Need?](#) While Microsoft develops future Help technologies, we encourage Help authors to continue using HTML Help 1.4. HTML Help 1.4 is included in Windows versions starting with Windows 7.

## Symptoms

When you try to open Help in Windows-based programs, you receive one of the following error messages.

The Help for this program was created in Windows Help format, which was used in previous versions of Windows and it is not supported in Windows Vista.

The Help for this program was created in Windows Help format, which depends on a feature that isn't included in this version of Windows. However, you can download a program that will allow you to view Help created in the Windows Help format.

The Help for this program was created in Windows Help format, which depends on a feature that isn't included in this version of Windows. For more information, go to the Microsoft Help and Support website.

## Resolution

To view 32-bit Help files with the .hlp file extension in Windows, you will need to download and install WinHlp32.exe from the Microsoft Download Center.

- [4013443 WinHlp32.exe for x86-based versions of Windows 8.1](#)
- [4013443 WinHlp32.exe for x64-based versions of Windows 8.1](#)
- [4013443 WinHlp32.exe for Windows 8](#)

### Important notes for downloading this program

- Open the links by using Internet Explorer.
- If you see a "Validation Required" message when you open the download page, click **Continue**, and then follow the on-screen instructions.
- When you are prompted to download the file, select the file name that contains "x64" for 64-bit versions of Windows or "x86" for 32-bit versions of Windows. Use the following auto-detection

information to make your choice.

- The Windows Help program is not supported in Windows Server 2012 or later versions of Windows Server.

If you encounter problems when you install WinHlp32.exe or use Help, go to the "More information" section.

## More information for advanced users

This problem occurs when Windows Help uses an earlier version of the Windows Help program (WinHlp32.exe) to display content.

### Known issues that may occur when you install WinHlp32.exe

#### Windows Update error 80070422

##### Manually fix this problem

If you receive Windows Update error 80070422 when you download the WinHlp32.exe update, you may have to change the Windows Update service settings, and then restart the service. To do this, follow these steps:

1. Click **Start**, and type Services in the **Start Search** or **Search Programs and files** text box.
2. Double-click **Services** from the Programs list. If you are prompted for an administrator password or for confirmation, type the password, or provide confirmation.
3. Right-click the **Windows Update** service, and then click **Properties**.
4. On the **General** tab, make sure that **Automatic** is selected next to **Startup type**.
5. Next to **Service status**, check whether the service is started. If it is not started, click **Start**. If you are prompted for an administrator password or for confirmation, type the password, or provide confirmation.
6. Click **OK**.

### Known issues that may occur after you install WinHlp32.exe

The following list shows the known functionality regressions from previous releases of WinHlp32.exe. The following known issues apply only to the version of WinHlp32.exe that is discussed in this article.

- **Macros are disabled**

By default, the following macros are disabled in Windows Help:

- ExecFile
- RegisterRoutine

- ShellExecute
- ShortCut
- Generate
- Test
- ExecProgram

However, all other macros in .hlp files will function as they did in past releases. Therefore, if an .hlp file that depends on these macros is opened after you install Windows Help for Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows Server 2008, or Windows Server 2008 R2, some functionality of the file may not work correctly. If this occurs, you may receive the following error message:

There was a problem running the macro. (1037)

If you have to use these macros, you can turn them on by using the Group Policy workaround or the registry workaround that is described in the "Registry entries and group policies for network administrators" section.

- **Cannot access .hlp files that are stored on intranet sites**

By default, you cannot use WinHlp32.exe to access .hlp files that are stored on intranet sites. If you try to open a remote file, you receive the following error message:

Cannot display this help file. Try opening the help file again, and if you still receive this message, copy the help file to a different drive, and try again.

If you have to access .hlp files that are stored on intranet sites, you can unblock them by using the Group Policy workaround or registry workaround that is described in the "Registry entries and group policies for network administrators" section.

- **Noninteractive user access is blocked**

Access has been blocked to .hlp files by noninteractive users, such as system processes. The user does not receive an error message when this error occurs.

- **Drag-and-drop functionality is disabled**

Support for drag-and-drop functionality in the application has been disabled. The user does not receive an error message when this error occurs.

- **Dependencies on "How to Use Help" files**

The Help files that are titled "How to Use Help" were removed from Windows Vista and Windows Server 2008. The following files were removed:

- Windows.hlp
- Winhlp32.hlp
- Winhlp32.cnt

- Winhelp.cnt
- Nocntnt.cnt

## Notes

- These files are not included in Windows 7 or in Windows Server 2008 R2.
- The .hlp files that depend on these files may return an error when you try to open them.

## How to address compatibility issues that are related to WinHlp32.exe

You can use the WinHlp32.exe to view 32-bit Help files. This release provides Group Policy settings and registry subkeys that you can use to work around application-compatibility issues. For example, the Group Policy settings and registry subkeys can be used to resolve issues that are related to macros in .hlp files and to access .hlp files that are stored on intranet sites. However, if users view Help files from an unknown source, the computer will be put at more risk if they enable these policies or these settings. Therefore, you should use caution when you decide whether to implement the application-compatibility workarounds that are described in this section.

Use the following questions to determine whether to install WinHlp32.exe, and which policy changes and registry changes to make.

- **Do you have to have the applications and the functionality that are affected by the removal of WinHlp32.ex?**
  - How many applications require WinHlp32.exe? How many applications are affected by the functionality changes? How important are these applications?
  - How severe is the malfunction that's caused by the changes?
- **What are your security requirements and security capabilities?**
  - Which is more important: That you can use the WinHlp32.exe functionality or that you make sure that your security is as strong as possible?
  - Do external security measures, such as a local or a corporate firewall, give you sufficient confidence that you can install WinHlp32.exe and make the policy changes or the registry changes that are described in this article?
- **If you are in an organization, does your organization deliver content in the .hlp format?**
  - Can you modify the program or the contents so that they do not have to use WinHlp32.exe functionality? For example, can you convert the help content that is currently in the .hlp format to an alternative file format such as .chm, .html, or .xml?
  - Does your organization store .hlp files on an intranet site? Can you install these files locally instead?

## How to enable macros on a single computer after you install WinHlp32.exe

After you install the WinHelp32.exe program that is discussed in this article, certain macros are disabled. For more information about this issue, see the "[Known issues](#)" section.

This section contains steps to re-enable these macros by modifying a registry key. If your computer is in a managed environment, do not follow these steps without first consulting with your IT department. IT departments may decide not to re-enable macros or they may decide to re-enable them by using group policies. IT departments should read this article in its entirety before you continue.

**Warning** This article offers information about how to work around issues that are caused by changes in this release of Windows Help. However, Microsoft makes no specific recommendations about which registry keys and which values are right for your unique environment. If you are in a managed environment, your IT department is the best judge of how to weigh the advantages of these workarounds against the risks of using them. The safer course is to use no registry workarounds at all.


**Note** To perform the steps in this task, you must be logged on to the computer by using an administrator account. By using an administrator account, you can make changes to your computer that you cannot make with any other account, such as a standard account.

To log on by using an administrator account, you must know the password for an administrator account on your computer. If you are performing these steps on your personal computer, you are likely already logged on by using an administrator account. If you are performing these steps on a computer at work, you might have to ask the system administrator for help.

### Manually enable macros on a single computer

**Important** Follow the steps in this section carefully. Serious problems might occur if you modify the registry incorrectly. Before you modify it, [back up the registry for restoration](#) in case problems occur.

To enable macros on a single computer after you install WinHelp32.exe, follow these steps:

1. Log on by using an administrator account.
2. Press the Windows logo key + R, type regedit, and then click **OK**.  If you are prompted for an administrator password or for confirmation, type the password, or click **Continue**.
3. On 32-bit editions of Windows, locate and then select the following registry subkey:

**HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft** On 64-bit editions of Windows, locate and then select the following registry subkey:

**HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Wow6432Node\Microsoft**

4. On the **Edit** menu, point to **New**, and then click **Key**.
5. Type WinHelp, and then press Enter.
6. Click the **WinHelp** key.
7. On the **Edit** menu, point to **New**, and then click **DWORD (32-bit) Value**.
8. Type AllowProgrammaticMacros, and then press Enter.

9. On the **Edit** menu, click **Modify**.
10. In the **Value data** box, type 1, click **Hexadecimal** in the **Base** area, and then click **OK**.
11. Exit Registry Editor.

## How to unblock .hlp files that are stored on an intranet on a single computer after you install WinHlp32.exe

After you install the WinHelp32.exe file that is discussed in this article, .hlp files that are stored on intranet sites are blocked. For more information about this issue, see the "[Known issues](#)" section.

This article contains steps to unblock these .hlp files by modifying a registry key. If your computer is in a managed environment, do not follow these steps without first consulting with your IT department. IT departments may decide not to re-enable macros or they may decide to re-enable them by using group policies.

**Important** This article contains information that shows you how to help lower security settings or how to turn off security features on a computer. You can make these changes to work around a specific problem. Before you make these changes, we recommend that you evaluate the risks that are associated with implementing this workaround in your particular environment. If you implement this workaround, take any appropriate additional steps to help protect the computer.

**Warning** This article offers information about how to work around issues that are caused by changes in this release of Windows Help. However, Microsoft makes no specific recommendations about which registry keys and which values are right for your unique environment. If you are in a managed environment, your IT department is the best judge of how to weigh the advantages of these workarounds against the risks of using them. The safer course is to use no registry workarounds at all.


**Note** To perform the steps in this task, you must be logged on to the computer by using an administrator account. By using an administrator account, you can make changes to your computer that you cannot make with any other account, such as a standard account.

To log on by using with an administrator account, you must know the password for an administrator account on your computer. If you are performing these steps on your personal computer, you are likely already logged on with an administrator account. If you are performing these steps on a computer at work, you might have to ask the system administrator for help.

### Manually unblock .hlp files that are stored on an intranet on a single computer

**Important** Follow the steps in this section carefully. Serious problems might occur if you modify the registry incorrectly. Before you modify it, [back up the registry for restoration](#) in case problems occur.

To unblock .hlp files after you install WinHelp32.exe, follow these steps:

1. Log on by using an administrator account.
2. Press the Windows logo key + R, type regedit, and then click **OK**.  If you are prompted for an administrator password or for confirmation, type the password, or click **Continue**.

3. On 32-bit editions of Windows, locate and then select the following registry subkey:

**HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft** On 64-bit editions of Windows, locate and then select the following registry subkey:

**HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Wow6432Node\Microsoft**

4. On the **Edit** menu, point to **New**, and then click **Key**.

5. Type WinHelp, and then press Enter.

6. Click the **WinHelp** key.

7. On the **Edit** menu, point to **New**, and then click **DWORD (32-bit) Value**.

8. Type AllowIntranetAccess, and then press Enter.

9. On the **Edit** menu, click **Modify**.

10. In the **Value data** box, type 1, click **Hexadecimal** in the **Base** area, and then click **OK**.

11. Exit Registry Editor.

## Registry entries and group policies for network administrators

**Warning** This workaround may make a computer or a network more vulnerable to attack by malicious users or by malicious software such as viruses. We do not recommend this workaround but are providing this information so that you can implement this workaround at your own discretion. Use this workaround at your own risk.

**Warning** This article offers information about how to work around issues that are caused by changes in this release of Windows Help. However, Microsoft makes no specific recommendations about which registry keys and which values are right for your organization. Your IT department is the best judge of how to weigh the advantages of these workarounds against the risks of using them. The safer course is to use no registry workarounds at all.

The WinHlp32.exe download provides Group Policy settings and registry entries to work around two known issues in this release of Windows Help. By using the following Group Policy settings or registry entries, network administrators and individual users can re-enable macros and unblock .hlp files that are stored on intranet sites. A local computer Group Policy setting and a current user Group Policy setting are provided as a workaround for each feature. You can also use a user registry setting to manage each feature.

For each feature, precedence is given in the following order:

- Local computer Group Policy
- Current user Group Policy
- User registry setting

If a policy has not been set for a feature, and the user registry setting for the feature has not been set, the features will behave as described in the "[Known issues](#)" section.

**Important** This section, method, or task contains steps that tell you how to modify the registry. However, serious problems might occur if you modify the registry incorrectly. Therefore, make sure that you follow these steps carefully. For added protection, back up the registry before you modify it. Then, you can restore the registry if a problem occurs. For more information about how to back up and restore the registry, click the following article number to view the article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

[322756](#) How to back up and restore the registry in Windows

- **How to enable macros**

Network administrators can use the **Allow programmatic macros in WinHlp32.exe** Group Policy setting to turn on or to turn off macros in .hlp files. Administrators can use the Group Policy Management Console (GPMC) to manage this Group Policy setting. For more information about Group Policy, see the "References" section.

If neither the local computer Group Policy nor the current user Group Policy for this feature has been set, users can modify the user registry setting for this feature to turn on or to turn off macros in .hlp files. To change this setting, users must first add the following new subkey to the registry:

**HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\WinHelp** Then, users must add a DWORD value that is named AllowProgrammaticMacros to this subkey. If the value for AllowProgrammaticMacros is set to **1**, the macros will be turned on. If the value is set to **0**, the macros will be turned off. If this registry value does not exist, the macros will be turned off.

- **How to unblock .hlp files that are stored on an intranet**

Network administrators can use the **Allow WinHlp32.exe to access .hlp files stored on intranet sites** Group Policy setting to unblock .hlp files that are stored on the intranet. Administrators can use the GPMC to manage this Group Policy setting. For more information about Group Policy, see the "References" section.

If neither Group Policy setting for this feature has been set, users can modify the user registry setting for this feature to block or to unblock .hlp files that are stored on intranet sites. To change this setting, users must first add the following new subkey to the registry:

**HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\WinHelp** Then, users must add a DWORD value that is named AllowIntranetAccess to this subkey. If the value for **AllowIntranetAccess** is set to **1**, the .hlp files that are stored on intranet sites will be available. If the value is set to **0**, the .hlp files that are stored on intranet sites will be blocked. If this registry value does not exist, the .hlp files that are stored on intranet sites will be blocked.

## **Help content providers who release .hlp files**

Starting with Windows Vista, the older Help component (WinHlp32.exe) is replaced by a new Help component that adds more functionality for newer versions of Windows.

The WinHlp32.exe technology will not be supported in its current form in future Windows releases. Therefore, we strongly recommend that software developers no longer use this Windows Help program. Software developers who release programs that rely on .hlp files are encouraged to transition their Help systems to an alternative Help file format, such as .chm, .html, or .xml. They will also have to change their calls from the WinHelp API to the new content source. Several third-party tools are available to help software



developers convert Help content from one format to another format.

Note Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows Server 2008, and Windows Server 2008 R2 still includes WinHelp.exe for 16-bit .hlp files. The WinHelp.exe program is a version of Windows Help for 16-bit .hlp files.

## References