

A Book Proposal for

**Developing Online Documentation
for OS/2**

SAMPLE

Steven Radecki
XXX Shadow Dance Drive
San Jose, California 95110
(408) 123-4567

SAMPLE

The contents of this proposal are copyright © 1994 by Steven Radecki.
All rights reserved.

IBM, Operating System/2, and OS/2 is registered trademarks of
International Business Machines, Inc.
All product names mentioned in this proposal are the property of their respective copyright and
trademark owners.

Table of Contents

About This Proposal.....	1
About This Book.....	2
About the Author	5
Chapter Outline.....	7
Introduction.....	7
Chapter 1: Introducing OS/2 Online Documentation	7
Chapter 2: Creating OS/2 Online Documentation	8
Chapter 3: Generating OS/2 Online Documents.....	12
Chapter 4: Customizing Your Topics	13
Chapter 5: Customizing the Help Window	14
Chapter 6: Working with Multiple Windows	15
Appendix A: Information Presentation Facility Language Reference.....	16
Appendix B: Programming for Online Help.....	17
Appendix C: Online Documentation Development Tools.....	18
Bibliography.....	18
Index.....	18
Writing Samples	19
“Developing Online Help for OS/2 Applications”	
“OS/2 2.0: How Does It Compare to the Macintosh OS?”	

SAMPLE

About This Proposal

The purpose of this proposal is to present the background and concepts *Developing Online Documentation for OS/2*. It establishes the author's credentials for writing this book, and provides samples from the book itself. The proposal contains the following sections:

About This Book

This section presents a brief overview of the book and the reasons for writing it. It describes the need in the marketplace for a book like *Developing Online Documentation for OS/2* and how this book fulfills those needs.

About the Author

This section gives a brief biography of the author. It describes his professional experience in the field of technical communication and online documentation, especially where related to OS/2.

Chapter Outline

This section provides a brief synopsis of each of the chapters that comprise *Developing Online Documentation for OS/2*. It presents the main ideas for each chapter and section.

Writing Samples

This section includes two short, published works by the author on the subject of OS/2 and developing online help systems for that environment.

SAMPLE

About This Book

This section of the proposal provides a brief summary of the book, describes the need for this book, tells why *Developing Online Documentation for OS/2* is different from other books on OS/2 that are currently on the market, and presents some of the publishing details for this book.

Summary

Developing Online Documentation for OS/2 is designed to assist newcomers to online documentation and also to assist developers accustomed to other environments in understanding how the OS/2 online tools work. It also presents some techniques for taking advantage of the added flexibility that OS/2 provides that is not generally available on other platforms.

The majority of the book describes how to use the Information Presentation Facility markup language to create source files that can be compiled into online documentation files. Readers are shown examples of the different types of document structures and layout that can be created, then sample code is provided and explained to show them how to do it themselves. There is also a brief discussion on how to use the OS/2 help compiler to produce online documents and online help files. Each section contains an example of the finished structure (such as a list or table), then describes how to create it using the markup language.

The book ends with three appendixes:

- The first appendix contains a reference for all of the tags in the markup language.
- The second appendix contains programming information that online developers might need to know in order to better understand how online help is integrated into OS/2 applications.
- The third appendix summarizes some of the tools available to online developers for creating OS/2 online documentation.

Why This Book is Needed

According to IBM, over 2 million copies of OS/2 2.0 were shipped. The next release, 2.1, shipped near the end of 1993 and continues to sell well. OS/2 is rapidly becoming a popular development and server platform. Its multi-tasking capabilities and crash protection far exceed those available in *Windows*. The same is true of its capacity for handling online documentation. OS/2 provides a set of document-building tools that

allow online information developers to create online documentation systems that contain far more functionality and usability than their *Windows* counterparts who use WinHelp.

Creating online documentation with OS/2-based tools for OS/2 applications can be a drastically different experience for online information developers, especially those who are accustomed to other environments. An online information developer who has previously developed online documentation for the *Windows* environment might find the tools more limiting, but might also be overwhelmed by the level of additional customization that OS/2 tools provide.

There are many books available on the subject of programming and developing applications for OS/2. None of these that are generally available discuss the development of online documentation (documents or help systems) as a part of the development process. Many of these books do not even discuss how to integrate online help into an application. This situation is not entirely surprising, as these books are written for programmers, not technical writers and online information developers.

What Makes This Book Different

The only book available that is strictly devoted to online documentation for OS/2 is IBM's own *Information Presentation Facility Guide and Reference*. This book, part of their OS/2 Technical Library, is not available in bookstores, but must be ordered from IBM directly. Published by IBM, the information it provides is biased toward creating online documentation that follows IBM style guidelines. As such, it does not provide clear information on types of customization that online information developers might want to perform for their own applications.

The approach of the *Information Presentation Facility Guide and Reference* is to provide a code example, then explain what it does and how it appears on the screen. For this reason, readers usually must go the end of section to see if the code represents what they are trying to accomplish themselves. In addition, this book does not fully explore the reasons why online information developers might want to use some of tag attributes. It also does not cover some of the conditions of which developers need to be aware when using some of the formatting tags, such as those involving colors and fonts.

The *Information Presentation Facility Guide and Reference*, while it presents more advanced design features such as multiple viewports, it does not fully address the problems associated with these design decisions. It provides few guidelines for either using or managing these design elements. The details of implementing these features are primarily left to the reader.

Developing Online Documentation for OS/2 takes the reverse (and more useful) approach. It shows readers what they can accomplish by using the code presented in a section, then describes how to perform the task. For example, readers are shown a finished topic that uses split windows, then the following section describes how to create split windows.

Publishing Details

Developing Online Documentation for OS/2 can be completed in approximately three to four months. It will contain between 200 and 250 pages. Black-and-white diagrams, charts, and screen shots comprise the artwork in this book. There are currently no plans to include photographs. All of the example code provided with the book will be originally produced for this book and will not have to be licensed from another source. A diskette that contains these examples could be packaged with the book.

SAMPLE

About the Author

The author of this book possesses a varied scope of experience in technical communications in general, and developing online documentation systems, specifically.

Steven Radecki

Developing Online Documentation for OS/2 is Steven's second book. His first book, *Multimedia with QuickTime*, was published in October 1993 by Academic Press Professional (a division of Harcourt Brace & Co.).

Steven Radecki currently works as a Senior Technical Writer developing online help for Borland International in Scotts Valley, California. He developed two of the online help systems that shipped with *Borland C++ for OS/2*. He has been in the technical communications field for more than five years. During that time he has also worked for PDR Information Services in Santa Clara, California, and for Kirk Paper Corporation in Los Angeles, California.

Steven, along with colleagues, has presented several talks on hypertext and hypermedia at colleges, universities, corporations, user groups, and professional associations. His most recent publications include:

- "Developing Hypertext Documentation: One Writer's Experience" (*Proceedings*, 38th International Technical Communication Conference, 1991)
- "Practical Hypermedia: Using Hypertext and Multimedia in the Real World" (*Proceedings*, 40th Society for Technical Communication Conference, 1993)
- "Developing Online Help for OS/2 Applications" (*Proceedings*, 40th Society for Technical Communication Conference, 1993)

While at PDR Information Services, Steven contributed to their report, *No Hype, Just Media: An Independent Evaluation of PC Hypermedia Software*. He also served as an assistant instructor at the 1990 International Technical Communications Conference post-conference session, "Making the Hypertext Decision." At the 1991 International Technical Communications Conference, he served on the panel, "The Twists and Turns of the Hypertext Learning Curve."

Steven has a Bachelor of Science in Information and Computer Science from the University of California at Irvine, and an Associate in Science degree in Data Processing from Mount San Antonio College. His background also includes film, creative writing, and speech communications.

SAMPLE

Chapter Outline

This part of the proposal presents a chapter-by-chapter outline of *Developing Online Documentation for OS/2*.

Introduction

The introduction provides some summary information about OS/2 and the challenges of developing online documentation for that platform, especially for readers used to creating online documentation in such environments as *Windows*.

Chapter 1: Introducing OS/2 Online Documentation

This chapter introduces readers to the different types of online documentation they can create for OS/2.

Developing Online Documents

This section provides a general discussion of how readers might create and use standalone online documents under OS/2. Online documents provide the opportunity for developers to place a great deal of information that would normally be printed online, thereby decreasing the amount of printed documentation that needs to be shipped with a product. This decreases the shipping cost of the product, and can provide faster and easier access to information for users.

Using the VIEW Program

To read online documents, users must use the OS/2 VIEW command to see the document. As a result, online documents must be created in a slightly different manner than online help files. They also behave differently on the screen.

Developing Online User Guides

The structure of an online document is highly related to its usefulness and effectiveness. An online user guide should be organized by task, so that readers can easily discern from the Contents the sub-tasks and steps required to complete any task. Online user guides can also function as tutorials for a product.

Developing Online Reference Guides

One of the advantages of online documents is that it can provide information at users' fingertips. One of the most common uses of online documents is to locate reference information for an application. Such information as keyboard shortcuts, commands, functions, and macros

can be made available in the form of an online reference guide. These online documents should be organized in such a manner that users can easily locate the information which they need.

Developing Online Help

This section provides a general discussion of how readers might create and use online help systems under OS/2. Although online documents can often be created directly from the text of printed documentation, online help has its own set of advantages and limitations.

Writing for Online Help

The mode of writing for online help is often very different from the forms typically used for printed documentation. Users want fast and ready information, so the writing style needs to be terse and informative. Developers cannot assume that readers have seen previous sections of the document, so there is a greater need to create links between topics.

Interacting with the Application

Online help is designed to interact directly with the application it supports. It is, in every respect, an integral piece of the product. Users might be able to access online help with a variety of methods: from a menu option, the keyboard, or a mouse button. Online help topics can be made available for elements of the user interface or commands entered in an edit window. Because online help is so tightly integrated with the application, there needs to be solid communication between the software developer and the online help developer.

Differences Between Online Documents and Online Help Files

There are some functional and technical differences between online documents and online help. This section summarizes those differences so readers can determine which type of online documentation will suit their needs the best.

Chapter 2: Creating OS/2 Online Documentation

This chapter discusses the basics of creating OS/2 online documentation using the Information Presentation Facility markup language.

Using the Information Presentation Facility Markup Language

This section presents an overview of the Information Presentation Facility markup language—what it is and how to use it.

Advantages

The Information Presentation Facility markup language has several advantages over development tools used to create online documentation for other environments. In many ways, it is more powerful and flexible than the *Windows* help tools.

Disadvantages

None of the tools provided by IBM for creating online documentation using the Information Presentation Facility markup language are as WYSIWYG as tools provided with *Windows* and other environments. Using a tagging language can be a new and uncomfortable experience for online documentation developers.

Creating Documents

This section describes how to create the basis for online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the appropriate tags and their attributes. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:userdoc`, `:title`, and `:docprof` tags.

Creating Headings

This section describes how to create topic headings for topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:h1` through `:h9` tags.

Creating Paragraphs

This section describes how to create paragraphs in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:p` tag.

Creating Notes and Notices

This section describes how to create special types of paragraph that contain notes and special messages. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:note`, `:nt`, `:caution`, and `:warning` tags.

Creating Plain Lines and Examples

This section describes how to create paragraphs that require special line breaks or contain code examples. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:lines` and `:xmp` tags.

Creating Lists

This section describes how to create different types of lists in topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags.

Creating List Items

This section describes how to create items in lists in topics in online documents and online help files. The syntax is the same for list items in simple, bulleted, and numbered lists. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:li` tag.

Creating Simple Lists

This section describes how to create simple lists in topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:sl` tag.

Creating Unordered (Bulleted) Lists

This section describes how to create bulleted lists in topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:ul` tag.

Creating Ordered (Numbered) Lists

This section describes how to create numbered lists in topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:ol` tags.

Creating Definition Lists

This section describes how to create definition lists in topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:dl`, `:dt`, and `:dd` tags.

Creating Parameter Lists

This section describes how to create parameter lists in topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:parml`, `:pt`, and `:pd` tags.

Creating List Paragraphs

This section describes how to create paragraphs within lists in topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:lp` tag.

Creating Compact Lists

This section describes how to create compact versions of lists in topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `compact` attribute, and discusses the design issues regarding when to use compact lists.

Creating Tables

This section describes how to create tables in topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:table`, `:row`, and `:c` tags.

Using Artwork and Figures

This section describes how to include bitmapped images in topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:artwork`, `:cgraphic`, and `:fig` tags.

Formatting Topics

This section describes how to format character styles, use color, and how to change fonts and margins within a topic.

Highlighting Words and Phrases

This section describes how to highlight text in topics in online documents and online help files. This includes such character formatting as boldface, italics, and underlining. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:hp1` tags.

Using Color

This section describes how to use color in topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:color` tag.

Changing Fonts

This section describes how to change fonts in topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:font` tag.

Setting and Changing Margins

This section describes how to change the margins in topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of

these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:lm` and `:rm` tags.

Linking Topics

This section describes the different ways readers can link topics together, as well as access other online documents, online help files, and run applications from the online documentation. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:link` and `:artlink` tags.

Adding Footnotes

This section describes how to add footnotes to online documents and online help files. It describes two different methods for implementing footnotes. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:fn` tag.

Creating an Index

This section describes how to index topics in online documents and online help files. It discusses how to use the attributes of these tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:i1` and `:i2` tags.

Using Symbols

This section describes how to use symbols in topics in online documents and online help files. Symbols are characters that might not be available from the keyboard or dependent on the code page or display drivers installed on the OS/2 system.

Chapter 3: Generating OS/2 Online Documents

This chapter discusses how to use the Information Presentation Facility Compiler (IPFC) to generate online documents and online help files. It also describes how to customize the compilation process for specific international languages.

Using the OS/2 Help Compiler (IPFC)

This section discusses how to use IPFC to compile IPF-tagged files. It describes how to use IPFC from the OS/2 command line and presents its general syntax.

Creating Online Documents

This section discusses how to use IPFC to generate online documents (.INF files).

Creating Online Help Files

This section discusses how to use IPFC to generate online help (.HLP) files.

Handling Errors and Warnings

This section discusses some of the common error and warning messages and how to correct them. It also describes how to suppress the generation of certain types of warning messages.

Using Code Pages

Code pages are the mechanism by which OS/2 supports international languages and alternate extended ASCII character sets. This section describes how to generate online documents and online help files that use a specific OS/2 code page.

Using National Language Support

This section describes how to generate online documents and online help files for specific international languages. This section also previews how to use the national language support (NLS) files to customize the appearance of an online document.

Chapter 4: Customizing Your Topics

Although readers can use the Information Presentation Facility defaults to produce effective online documents and online help files, there are several way in which they can customize the topics in these files.

Customizing Colors

By default, OS/2 online documentation topics are displayed with dark blue text on a white background (assuming that users are using the OS/2 default color settings.) This section explores different method they can use to accomplish this.

Customizing Tables and Character Graphics

By default, table and character graphics are displayed in dark blue, using the monospaced Courier font. This section describes how to change these defaults to use different colors and fonts.

Customizing Margins

The default margin for online documentation topics is 0. However, there are times when online documentation developers might want to indent

paragraphs and other items, then restore the margins to their default settings.

Customizing Symbols

IPF supports dozens of symbols, but online developers might discover that there are symbols or characters that they use frequently that are part of the IPF default symbol set. This section describes how to add custom symbols to the set.

Chapter 5: Customizing the Help Window

The Help window contains menus and buttons that can be customized for specific users and applications. This chapter discusses the ways that online documentation developers can modify these elements.

Customizing Buttons

The Help window contains several navigation buttons that takes users forward or backward in a document, and also provides them with immediate access to the Contents and Index. This section describes how to customize those buttons. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `:ctrl` and `:ctrldef` tags.

Customizing Buttons on the Coveragepage

The navigation buttons are, by default, located on the Help window coveragepage. This section describes how to customize those buttons.

Customizing Buttons in the Topic Window

Navigation buttons can exist on the coveragepage or in the topic window. This section describes how to locate the navigation buttons in the topic window and how to customize them.

Customizing Menus

The Help window comes with a set of default menus. Online documentation developers can modify the resources of that window, thereby changing the menu choices that are available of their users.

Modifying the Help Manager Resource File

This section describes how to modify the HMTAILOR.RC file in order to modify and create menu choices in the Help window.

Using a Customized Help Manager Resource File In an Application

This section describes how to use customized HMTAILOR.RC files to customize the Help window.

Resizing the Help Window

When displaying online help files, the default size of the Help window is 35% of the screen space. By using the HM_SETCOVERPAGESIZE message, an application can specify other sizes for the Help window.

Chapter 6: Working with Multiple Windows

One of the most powerful features of OS/2 online documentation is its ability to display multiple topic windows at the same time. This chapter discusses two methods for taking advantage of this feature and how to implement them.

Displaying Multiple Windows

This section discusses the concept of using multiple topic windows in online documentation. It describes how to implement them using heading tags, link tags, or through a combination of both.

Using the Heading Tags to Size Windows

This section describes how to implement multiple topic windows using heading tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `width`, `height`, `x`, and `y` attributes.

Using the Link Tags to Size Windows

This section describes how to implement multiple topic windows using link tags. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `vpx`, `vpy`, `vpcx`, and `vpcy` attributes.

Working With Groups

This section discusses how to maintain better control over multiple topic windows by using groups in both headings and links. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `group` and `viewport` attributes.

Using Split Windows

Split windows are an alternative method of implementing multiple topic windows in online documents and online help files. It is more difficult to implement and maintain than the first method, but has some advantages over the other method.

Why Use Split Windows?

This section discusses the differences between the multiple windows described in the previous section and split windows, and presents reasons why online documentation developers might want to use split windows instead.

Implementing Split Windows

This section describes how to implement multiple topic windows using the split windows technique. This discussion covers the syntax and usage of the `split` attribute.

Appendix A: Information Presentation Facility Language Reference

This appendix contains a reference to all of the tags, control words, and symbols that are contained in the Information Presentation Facility markup language.

Tags

This section contains a reference listing of all of the tags supported by the Information Presentation Facility markup language. It presents their syntax and example usage.

Control Words

This section contains a reference listing of all of the control words (directives) supported by the Information Presentation Facility markup language. It presents their syntax and example usage.

Symbols

This section contains a reference listing of all of the symbols supported by the Information Presentation Facility markup language.

Appendix B: Programming for Online Help

This appendix covers some of the programming issues related to online help files that online documentation developers might want to know in order to more effectively understand and communicate with software developers.

OS/2 Presentation Manager Messages

This sections outlines the OS/2 messages that can be used to implement online help in an OS/2 Presentation Manager application.

Application Programming Interface

This section outlines the function calls that can be used to initialize and access online help systems in an OS/2 application. It also covers how to manage more than one online help system from one application.

Data Structures

This section outlines the global data structures that can be used to pass information between an OS/2 application and its online help system.

Appendix C: OS/2 Online Documentation Development Tools

This appendix briefly describes some of the tools available to assist online developers when they create online documentation for OS/2. Products described in this section include *Universal Help* and *Xantippe*.

Bibliography

Developing Online Documentation for OS/2 will contain a bibliography that lists all of the works referenced in the book.

Index

Developing Online Documentation for OS/2 will contain a comprehensive index.

SAMPLE

Writing Samples

This section includes two short, published works by the author on the subject of OS/2 and developing online help systems for that environment:

- “Developing Online Help for OS/2 Applications” (*Proceedings*, 40th Society for Technical Communication Conference, 1993)
- “OS/2 2.0: How Does It Stack Up Against the Macintosh OS?” (*BMUG Newsletter*, Fall 1992)

SAMPLE