



How To

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Displaying Instructional “Helper Pages” in Framesets - Applet Runtime

A system demonstrating this “How To” can be run from the “Displaying Instructional ‘Helper Pages’ in Framesets – Applet Runtime” section of:

<http://www.exsys.com/support/howto>

The code for the sample system can be downloaded from the same page.



Ideally, when a system asks the end user a question, they should be able to easily answer them. However, in many cases the user may not understand the question or it may be desirable to provide a more detailed explanation of what is being asked. Some systems provide detailed “instructional” text with each question to educate the user. Some systems even have questions that may require the user to do research on other web pages to be able to provide an answer.

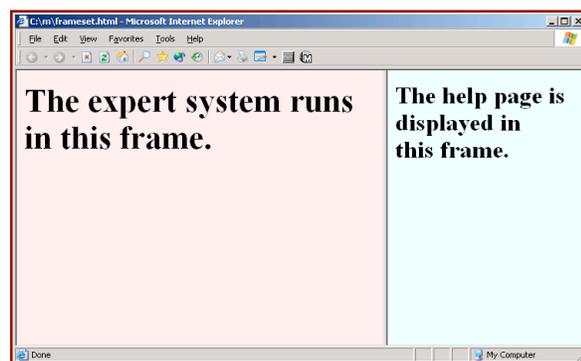
There are various ways of dealing with these issues. The simplest is to have URL links in the text of the question that can be clicked on to open other browser pages with the needed content. This is done by simply embedding the HTML code:

```
<a href="..."> text </a>
```

in the prompt of the question or in other text displayed with the question. Clicking on the link will open the new page. This approach works for either the Applet or Servlet Runtime programs. However, it requires that the user take an action to click on the link. In some cases, the “Helper Page” will always be needed and should always be displayed with the question. In these cases frames are the answer.

A frameset is a good way to have this extra information displayed when a question is being asked. The extra information can be anything that the browser can display. This includes web pages, images, videos, flash animation, or audio recordings. To display videos, audio, and other multimedia in the side frames, put them into a web page and display the web page.

A “frameset” is a browser window that is really two windows tiled together sharing an edge. Each window is called a “frame”. An expert system can run in one frame and cause other pages, images, sounds, or videos to appear in the other frame. The KB can display these helper web pages in the other frame whenever it asks a



question, shows the Results or Title, or at any time in a Command Block by using a DISPLAY_HTML command.

This “How To” covers using frames to present helper pages when using the Corvid Applet Runtime. A separate “How To” covers how to display helper pages when using the Corvid Servlet Runtime.

Demo System

The demo system asks some questions with the helper page displayed in the frame to the right. Run the demo, read the messages, and pay attention to how the helper pages are displayed in the frame to the right.

The frame on the right shows the initial page. That page is replaced when the first question is asked. If you click on a hypertext link, the right frame will contain the page from the link. After you answer the questions you will see the Results screen (in the left frame), and the right frame will have extra information to help you make sense of the results.

How it Works

Load and run the demo system from the Corvid editor. You will see the split screen, which is the frameset. Switch back to the Corvid editor (by clicking on its button in the task bar at the bottom of your monitor or by holding down the Alt key and pressing Tab).

Click on the 'Properties' button and under the 'Test Run' tab, notice the 'Specific URL' is 'frameset.html'. This is a simple frameset that is used to run the system.

Using Notepad or a similar editor, open the file “frameset.html” (It is in the same folder as the other demo files). It is a very simple HTML page with a <FRAMESET> tag with two <FRAME> tags inside it, like this:

```
<html>
<frameset cols="80%,20%">
    <frame src="frameset_example.html" name="leftside">
    <frame src="starthelp.html" name="rightside">
</frameset>
</html>
```

This causes the web browser window to be split into two frames that are tiled together.

The frame named 'leftside' is used to run the Corvid system, ask questions, present results, etc. The content for that frame is the HTML page “frameset_example.html”. This is a typical Corvid HTML page used to run a system. It contains the call to the Corvid Runtime Applet and knowledge base files. When Corvid builds the runtime files, it will automatically rebuild “frameset_example.html” – even though the page specified to run is “frameset.html”.

The frame named 'rightside' is used for the helper pages that provide details and information the user may need to answer the questions, etc. The initial content for that frame is the HTML page “starthelp.html”.

The frame names can be anything, but must be used consistently in the system.

Switch back to the browser showing the frameset. The key to having the 2 frames work together is the DISPLAY_HTML command. The TITLE screen commands do not contain a DISPLAY_HTML command so the initial content, 'starthelp.html', remains visible while the Title screen is displayed.

Note: the TITLE screen could force different content into the “rightside” frame by adding a DISPLAY_HTML command in the custom screen commands for the TITLE. This would specify the file to be displayed and use "rightside" for the 'Frame'.

Click on the OK button on the Title screen and it asks the first question. Notice the helper screen in the right frame changed. This was done with a DISPLAY_HTML command associated with the first question.

In the Corvid editor, open the “Variables” window and click on the variable “Color” to select it. Look at the 'Ask With' tab.

In the “Other Graphics” group, click on the “Before” radio button to select it. Notice that the commands include:

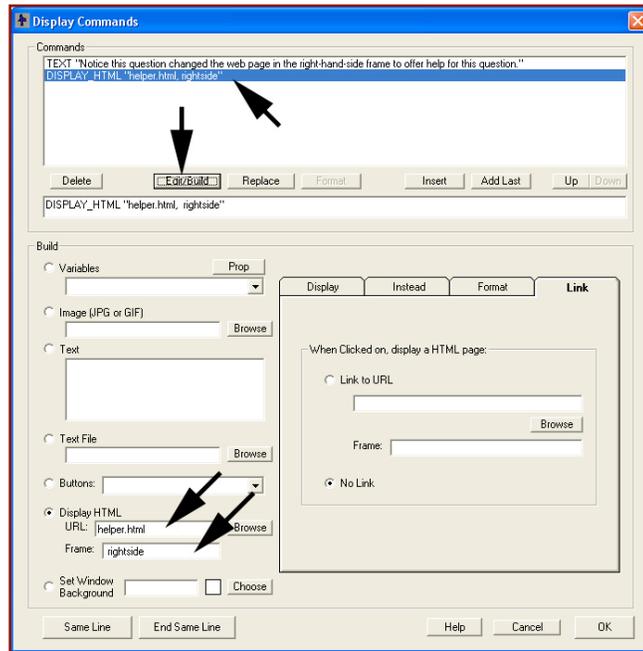
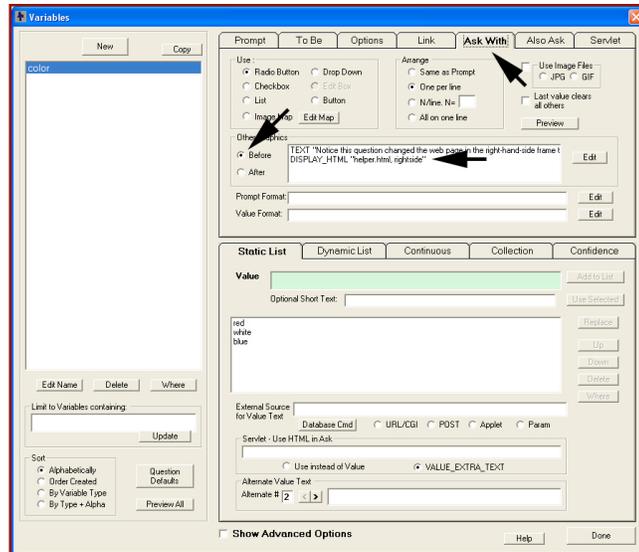
DISPLAY_HTML "helper.html, rightside"

This command causes the Corvid runtime to display the HTML page “helper.html”. The “rightside” parameter causes the page to be displayed in the frame named “rightside”. If the “rightside” parameter was not there, the page would be displayed in a new browser window.

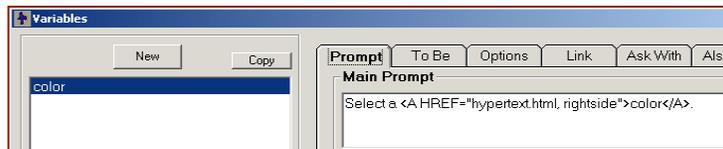
With the “Before” radio button selected, click the “Edit” button to edit the commands. In the editing window, click the “DISPLAY_HTML” command and click the “Edit/Build” button.

Look near the bottom of the window. Notice the 'Display HTML' radio button is selected, the 'URL' contains the name of the web page and 'Frame' has the frame name. When the question is asked, Corvid will display the 'helper.html' in the right frame.

DISPLAY_HTML commands can be added at any place screen commands are allowed. To force content into the helper page, just specify the page to use and the name of the frame.



In the demo, clicking on the hypertext link in the Corvid system changes the content displayed in the right frame. This is done by using a normal link, but specifying the target as the frame.



In the Corvid editor open the 'Variables' window and select [color].

The 'Prompt' tab, shows an HTML link:

` color `

By putting <A> tags around the word "color", it is marked as a hypertext link (This will be displayed in blue text with extra spaces around it).

The link is to the “hypertext.html” file, and the optional name parameter causes the page to be displayed in that frame. (If there were no frame parameter, the page would be displayed in a new browser window.)

Using the frame name this way in an anchor tag is NOT standard HTML, but it is supported in Corvid. If this system were moved to the Corvid Servlet Runtime, the link would not work correctly since it is not correct HTML.

If you are running with the Corvid Servlet Runtime, you must use standard HTML:

Select a `color`.

Note: In Corvid v4, the more standard "TARGET=" syntax can be used with the Applet Runtime, though it is not the syntax automatically built by the command builder. If a system is to be run using frame with both the Applet and Servlet Runtimes, the "TARGET=" syntax should be used.

If a KB asks multiple questions, each question can display its own helper page in the right frame by adding the appropriate DISPLAY_HTML command to the question.

The RESULTS screen also displays a helper page in the right frame. Look at the RESULTS commands and notice the DISPLAY_HTML command is done the same way as when asking questions.

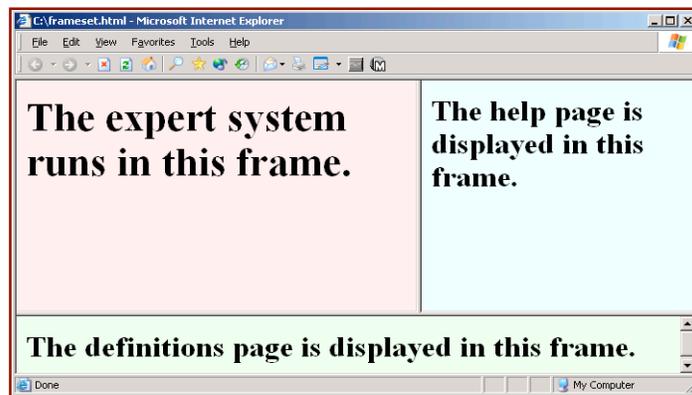
Designs with More Than 2 Frames

A main page can also contain more than 2 named frames, and DISPLAY_HTML commands can be used to force content into any of them. The content will be forced into the frames based on when the main system runs the custom screen commands. The Corvid system can only run in one frame with the others used for helper pages. You could even have a second Corvid system running in another frame.

For example, this design has 3 frames and displays 2 helper pages in the 2 extra frames:

The frameset is actually designed as a frameset inside a frameset, like this:

While you can specify how much space each frame occupies in the total window, browsers allow the user to change it by grabbing the frame edge between the frames and dragging it. Frame designs need to consider that the user may change the size of the layout.



The code for the frameset is:

```
<html>
  <frameset rows="80%,20%">
    <frameset cols="80%,20%">
      <frame src="kb.html" name="leftside">
      <frame src="helper.html" name="rightside">
    </frameset>
    <frame src="defs.html" name="bottomside">
  </frameset>
</html>
```