

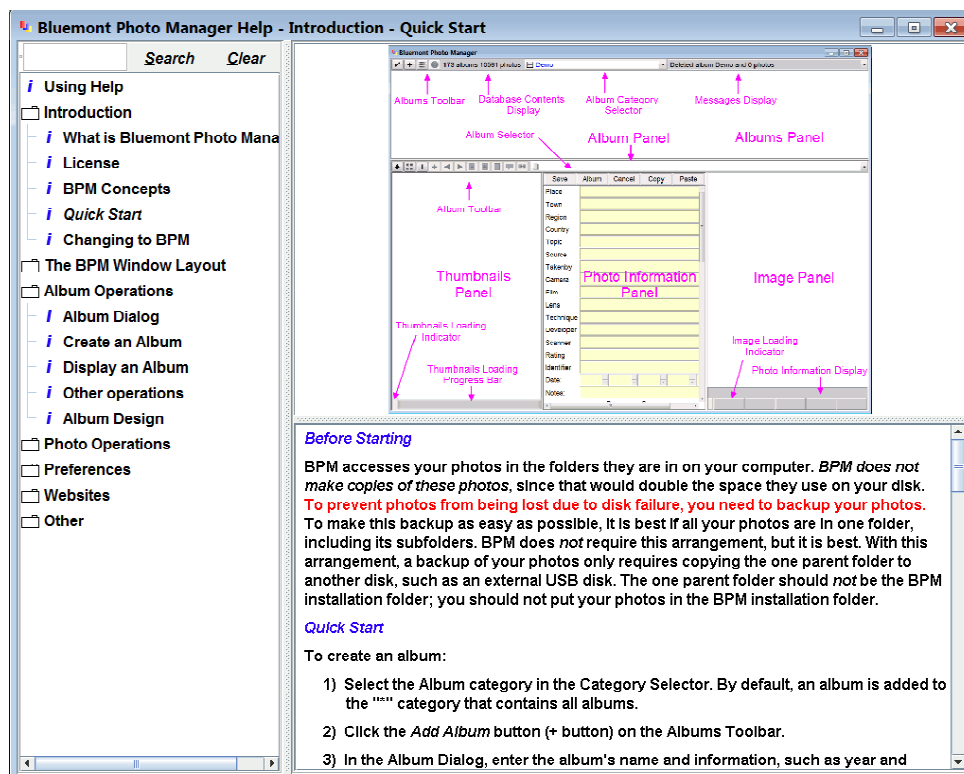
help Reference

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help is a Java package for displaying user help. The figure below is a screen capture of help in the Bluemont Photo Manager program (www.bluemontsw.com/bpm). help's features include:

- "Simple" help involving text from a single help file
- "Tree" help involving any number of help files organized in a tree that can have any arrangement of parent and child nodes. A help tree node can have a title and, optionally, an associated help text file, and, optionally, an associated image file. Optionally, the image file can be zoomed in and out and can be placed above or below the associated text.
- Help text formatting with the following tags: title, header, paragraph, indented paragraph, lettered bullet, numbered bullet, emphasis, and color
- User-resizeable text and image panels
- User single or multi-word search of help text, with found words highlighted in color
- Configurable text fonts, text colors, and tree icons
- Standalone programs to view simple and tree help.



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Distribution

`help` is distributed in Zip file `help-distrib.zip`, which contains the following:

- JAR file `help.jar`, a non-executable JAR containing all `help` class files. `help.jar` must be placed in the Java classpath.
- Class `help.SimpleViewer` for standalone program `simple-viewer.jar` that displays a simple help, and class `help.TreeViewer` for standalone program `tree-viewer.jar` that displays a tree help.
- Package `help.demo`, which contains text and image files for a demonstration help tree, and class `help.demo.HelpTreeBuilder` that builds the tree. The text and image files are only for demonstrating the building of a help tree; the files are not meaningful "help".

Getting Started

To get started with `help`:

- Watch the demonstration video.
- Study this document and the API.
- Study the `help.demo.HelpTreeBuilder` class, run it to build the demonstration help tree, and run program `tree-viewer.jar` to display the help tree.

Class Summary

Table 1 summarizes `help` classes. Class details are given in the API.

Table 1. Classes	
<i>Name</i>	<i>Description</i>
<code>HelpNode</code>	A node of a help tree.
<code>HelpPrefs</code>	Preferences for help fonts and colors.
<code>HelpTree</code>	A help tree with all text and images. A <code>HelpTree</code> file is always named <code>help.dat</code> . See the API.

HelpWindow	A window (JFrame) that displays a simple help or a tree help.
SimpleViewer	Program class that displays simple help in a HelpWindow.
TreeViewer	Program class that displays tree help in a HelpWindow.

Help Text Tags

The tags for formatting help text are defined in interface `TaggedText.View`. See the API. Table 2 describes these tags. A tag is either paired or unpaired. A paired tag is paired with itself to define the start and end of text to which the tag applies. An unpaired tag defines the start of the text to which it applies, and the text end is defined by another unpaired tag or end-of-line. The rules for tags are:

- *A help text must begin with an unpaired tag, and a paired or unpaired tag must have a space or end-of-line before it and after it.*
- *Paired tags can be nested as long as the proper pairing is maintained.*

The `help.demo` package contains help text file `help.txt` that demonstrates tag use.

Table 2. Text Tags		
Tag	Type	Formatting
.b	Unpaired	Starts an indented, unnumbered bullet
.h	Unpaired	Starts a left-aligned header
.i	Unpaired	Starts an indented paragraph
.n	Unpaired	Starts an indented, numbered bullet
.p	Unpaired	Starts a not-indented paragraph
.t	Unpaired	Starts a centered title
.e	Paired	Sets text font to emphasis (see the section below)
.black	Paired	Sets text font color to <code>Color.BLACK</code>
.blue	Paired	Sets text font color to <code>Color.BLUE</code>
.gray	Paired	Sets text font color to <code>Color.GRAY</code>
.red	Paired	Sets text font color to <code>Color.RED</code>
.white	Paired	Sets text font color to <code>Color.WHITE</code>
.rgb	Paired	Sets text font color to the <code>HelpPrefs rgbTagColor</code> . This enables use of a custom color.

Preferences

Class `HelpPrefs` enables setting of help preferences, including fonts, text colors, and emphasis. A `HelpPrefs` is an input to a `HelpWindow` constructor. The `HelpPrefs` class has a main method that writes a serialized `HelpPrefs`. This method can be modified to write a custom `HelpPrefs` that is read and used with a `HelpWindow`. The `SimpleViewer` and `TreeViewer` classes demonstrate use of a serialized `HelpPrefs`.