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Subject: Help text task\_id

Posted by [gpatti](#) on Mon, 15 Sep 2008 12:58:57 GMT

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I'm trying my hand at building some help screens and I've noticed that the help screens display a default text of "Help text for <task\_id>" at the top of the main body.

I have used the language facilities to display proper task descriptions on the screens, but can't figure out how I would change the default behaviour at the top of the help screens to show the task description rather than the task\_id.

Is this possible?

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Subject: Re: Help text task\_id

Posted by [AJM](#) on Mon, 15 Sep 2008 15:22:48 GMT

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It is possible, but I don't do it. I deliberately use the task\_id as this uniquely identifies the task in question. Task descriptions may not be all that unique and could therefore be confusing.

If you want to use descriptions you could try adding the following line in the help.php script:

```
$help_id = getLanguageText($help_id);
```

This would translate the task\_id into the relevant description.

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Subject: Re: Help text task\_id

Posted by [gpatti](#) on Mon, 15 Sep 2008 15:34:48 GMT

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Did you mean in the std.help.inc rather than in help.php?

This works, although it would then look for a text name using the description rather than the task\_id - and I agree with you that this would then be very confusing for the person maintaining the system.

I chose to modify the std.help.inc with two lines:

```
$help_desc = getLanguageText($help_id);  
$title = getLanguageText('sys0099', $help_desc); // "Help text for '$help_desc'"
```

This way the translation only appears on the text on the screen rather than the help text file itself. I like this approach because then the help screen uses the language translations in exactly the same way as all your other translations.

I'm not comfortable that I've modified std.help.inc though as this change will presumably get overwritten if/when I upgrade?

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Subject: Re: Help text task\_id  
Posted by [AJM](#) on Mon, 15 Sep 2008 17:13:38 GMT  
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Sorry, I did mean std.help.inc and not help.php

If you change your copy of std.help.inc then it will be overwritten when you upgrade. Perhaps it would be better if I changed it to include both the id and description in the heading, in which case that would cover all the options.

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Subject: Re: Help text task\_id  
Posted by [gpatti](#) on Tue, 16 Sep 2008 08:38:04 GMT  
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Tony, I thought my solution covered both options anyway...  
If a translation is provided in language\_text.php then it is used - and what is displayed to the end user is consistent across everything they see. If no translation is provided, then the task\_id is used. From a developer's perspective the actual help file is still named using the task\_id - so is easy to identify for maintenance.

I prefer not to display anything to the end user that is not 'plain English' so would prefer a solution that allows this.

Graham

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Subject: Re: Help text task\_id  
Posted by [AJM](#) on Tue, 16 Sep 2008 08:54:44 GMT  
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You also have to remember that it is possible for several tasks to have the same or similar descriptions, so when reporting problems it is vitally important to easily distinguish EXACTLY which task they are talking about.

Besides, if the heading on the help page contains both the task\_id and the description would that cause a problem? Would it cause any confusion?

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Subject: Re: Help text task\_id  
Posted by [gpatti](#) on Tue, 16 Sep 2008 09:01:20 GMT

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Yes I agree that it is necessary to be able to identify pages easily.

From a personal preference I would like to do something like put the task\_id in a footer, out of the way, or something.

I suppose ultimately it would be nice to have some more flexibility with the layout, as you have with the other areas of the framework. That might be something for the future perhaps.

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Subject: Re: Help text task\_id  
Posted by [AJM](#) on Tue, 16 Sep 2008 09:14:48 GMT  
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I think that there is enough flexibility already. Only the heading has a fixed format - the rest of the page is totally customisable.

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Subject: Re: Help text task\_id  
Posted by [gpatti](#) on Tue, 16 Sep 2008 09:17:24 GMT  
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Yes I'm sorry - I was being too general. My comments should have just referred to the header.

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