

Unit 23 Creating Conditional Content

Unit Overview

In this unit, you will learn how to:

- Create conditional build tags in the Project Manager
- Apply conditional build tags to text and graphics in a topic
- Apply conditional build tags at the topic level
- Use conditional build tag expressions to include and exclude content from the output you generate

What Is Conditional Content?

Conditional content is content that is specific to a particular output format, audience, product version, or deliverable.

For example, if you need to produce two versions of your online Help system—one for a “Lite” version of your application and the other for a “Pro” version—you can flag topics, text, and images that are specific to one or the other version. Then, you can generate both versions of your Help system from the same Help project files.

Similarly, if you plan to produce both online Help and printed documents from your RoboHelp project, you can flag the elements that are specific to one output format or the other.

Note *The RoboHelp online Help system refers to conditional content as “conditional text.” This terminology, while commonly used in the industry, is not truly accurate. In addition to text, you can also flag images, tables, and other elements as conditional.*

What Are Conditional Build Tags?

To create conditional content in RoboHelp, you use conditional build tags and conditional build tag expressions. **Conditional build tags** are the names you assign to the various conditions you need to manage. When you create a conditional build tag, you assign it a name and a color.

For example, you might create two conditional build tags: Help (blue) and Print (red). Then, you can apply the Help conditional build tag to the content you only want to include in your Help system and apply the Print conditional build tag to the content you only want to include in printed output. While you’re working in RoboHelp, content tagged Help is displayed with a blue background pattern, and content tagged Print is displayed with a red background.

Each new RoboHelp project has two pre-defined conditional build tags: Online and Print. RoboHelp lists all the conditional build tags you define in a project in the Conditional Build Tags folder in the Project Manager.



What Are Conditional Build Tag Expressions?

You can apply conditional build tags to entire topics or to text and other elements within topics. After applying conditional build tags in a project, you use **conditional build tag expressions** to determine what RoboHelp includes and excludes from any particular build of your Help system. You can define basic or advanced conditional build tag expressions.

Basic conditional build tag expressions let you exclude conditions from your output. For example, if you are using Print and Help conditional build tags, you can use a basic conditional build tag expression to omit the Print condition from your HTML Help system.

In RoboHelp, conditional build tags are additive. This means that you can apply multiple conditional build tags to the same content, and then use Boolean operators when you construct conditional build tag expressions.

Advanced conditional build tag expressions let you use Boolean operators—AND, OR, and NOT—to handle more complex situations. For example, if you are creating online Help and printed documentation for both “Lite” and “Pro” versions of a product, you might use four conditional build tags:

- Print
- Help
- Lite
- Pro

To create the online Help for the Lite version of the product, you would use the following advanced conditional build tag expression:

NOT Print AND NOT Pro

To create a review copy containing all content for both online Help and print for the Pro version of the product, you would use the following advanced conditional build tag expression:

NOT Lite

RoboHelp provides a dialog box you can use to construct advanced conditional build tag expressions. You do not need to type the syntax directly.

RoboHelp Components in this Unit

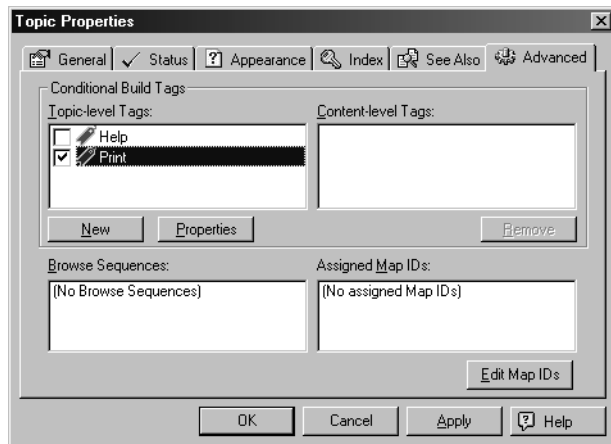
This unit introduces the following RoboHelp components:

- Topic Properties Dialog Box, Advanced Tab
- Define Conditional Build Tag Expression Dialog Box

Topic Properties Dialog Box, Advanced Tab

You use the Advanced Tab in the Topic Properties dialog box to apply a conditional build tag to an entire topic. By applying a conditional build tag to a topic, you ensure that the topic is excluded from your TOC, browse sequences, index, and full-text search results.

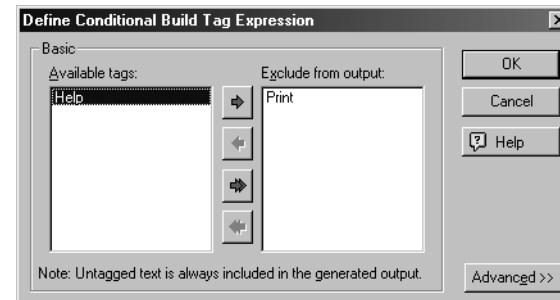
Figure 23.1 Topic Properties Dialog Box, Advanced Tab



Define Conditional Build Tag Expression Dialog Box

You use this dialog box to construct conditional build tags that control which content is included and excluded from the output you generate.

Figure 23.2 Define Conditional Build Tag Expression Dialog Box

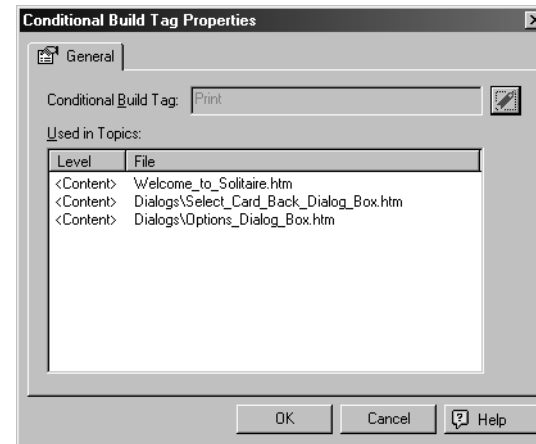


Lab 23.1 Use Conditional Build Tags within a Topic

1. In RoboHelp, open your Solitaire Help project.
2. In the Project Manager, expand the Conditional Build Tags folder.
RoboHelp lists the two pre-defined conditional build tags: Online and Print.
3. Open the “Welcome to Solitaire” topic in the WYSIWYG Editor.
4. In the second paragraph, select `Help file`.
5. Right-click the selected text, and then choose **Apply Conditional Build Tag**→**Online** from the right-click menu.
The text now appears with a colored background pattern.
6. Click just after the letter `s` in the word `This`.
7. Press the space bar, and then type **User Guide**.
8. Select `User Guide`, and then apply the Print conditional build tag to the selected text.
The text appears with a colored background pattern.
9. Open the “Options Dialog Box” topic.
10. Right-click the graphic, and then choose **Apply Conditional Build Tag**→**Print** from the right-click menu.
11. Repeat Step 10 to apply the Print conditional build tag to the graphic in the “Select Card Back Dialog Box” topic.

12. In the Project Manager, right-click the Print conditional build tag, and then choose Properties from the right-click menu.

RoboHelp displays the Conditional Build Tag Properties dialog box:

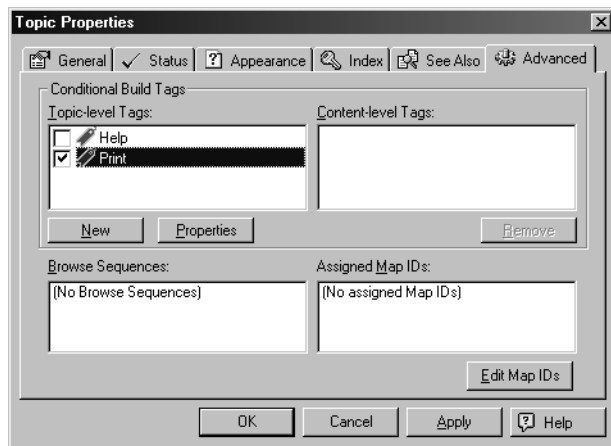


This dialog box lists the topics in which the Print conditional build tag has been applied. In the **Level** column, **<Content>** means that Print has been applied to content within the list topics.

13. Click **OK** or **Cancel** to dismiss the dialog box.

Lab 23.2 Apply Conditional Build Tags at the Topic Level

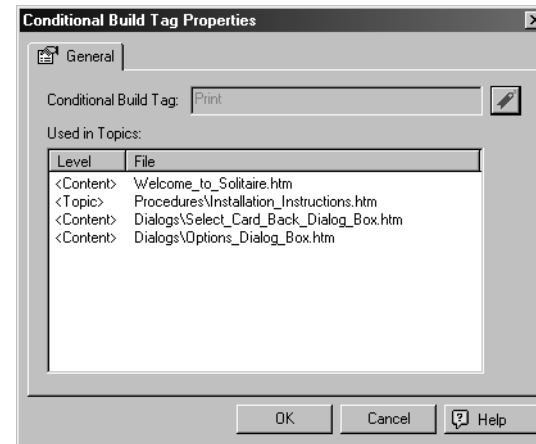
1. Create a new topic in the Procedures folder and name it **Installation Instructions**.
2. In the “Installation Instructions” topic, type the following topic text:
To install Solitaire, insert the CD and follow the instructions that appear on the screen.
3. Add the “Installation Instructions” topic to the TOC right after the “Welcome to Solitaire” topic.
4. In the Project Manager or the Topics List, right-click the “Installation Instructions” topic, and then choose Properties from the right-click menu.
5. In the Topic Properties, dialog box, click the Advanced tab.
6. Under Topic-level Tags, select **Print**, as shown in the following illustration:



7. Click **OK**.

8. In the Project Manager, right-click the Print build tag, and then choose Properties from the right-click menu.


RoboHelp displays the Conditional Build Tag Properties dialog box:



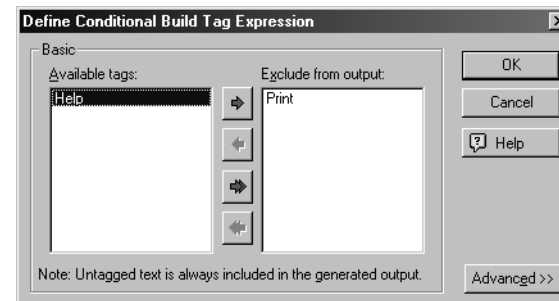
In the **Level** column, **<Topic>** means that Print has been applied to the entire topic.

9. Click **OK** or **Cancel** to dismiss the dialog box.

Lab 23.3 Generate Using a Conditional Build Tag Expression

1. Click **View Primary Layout**  to generate and view your Help system.
2. Inspect the “Welcome to Solitaire” topic.
Both “User Guide” and “Help File” appear in the topic text.
3. Inspect the “Options Dialog Box” and “Select Card Back Dialog Box” topics.
Both graphics are displayed.
4. Inspect the TOC.
The “Installation Instructions” page is included in the TOC.
5. Close the Help system.
6. In the Project Manager, expand the Single Source Layouts folder.
7. Right-click the Microsoft HTML Help layout, and then choose **Properties** from the right-click menu.
8. In the HTML Help Options dialog box, click the **Define** button under **Conditional Build Tag Expressions**.
RoboHelp displays the Define Conditional Build Tag Expression dialog box.

9. In the **Available tags** list, double-click **Print** to move it to the **Exclude from output** list.



10. Click **OK**, and then click **Save**.
11. Generate your Help system, and inspect the TOC, and the “Welcome to Solitaire,” “Options Dialog Box,” and “Select Card Back Dialog Box” topics.
The “Installation Instructions” topic does not appear in the TOC, and “User Guide” does not appear in the “Welcome to Solitaire” topic. The graphics do not appear in the “Options Dialog Box” and “Select Card Back Dialog Box” topics.

Unit Summary

- **Conditional content** is content that is specific to a particular output format, audience, product, or deliverable.
- **Conditional build tags** are the names you assign to the various conditions you need to manage.
- After creating conditional build tags, you can apply them to entire topics or to text and other elements within topics.
- After applying conditional build tags, you use **conditional build tag expressions** to determine what RoboHelp includes and excludes from any particular build of your Help system.
- You create conditional build tags in the Project Manager. RoboHelp lists the conditional build tags you have created in the Conditional Build Tags folder.
- To apply conditional build tags to text or other content, select the content in the WYSIWYG Editor, right-click the selected content, and choose a build tag from the **Apply Conditional Build Tag** submenu.
- To apply a conditional build tag to an entire topic, use the Advanced tab in the Topic Properties dialog box.
- To generate a conditional build of your Help system, right-click the layout in the Single Source Layouts folder, and then choose Properties from the right-click menu. Define a conditional build tag expression in the Options dialog box that appears.