Qt Assistant and the Qt Reference Documentation

Qt 3.0

The definitive Qt documentation is provided in HTML format supplied with Qt, and available online at http://doc.trolltech.com. This PDF file was generated automatically from the HTML source as a convenience to users, although PDF is not an official Qt documentation format.

Contents

Introduction

This document introduces *Qt Assistant*, a tool for presenting on-line documentation. It also introduces the Qt Reference Documentation which is accessible using *Qt Assistant*, or with a web browser. The document is divided into the following sections:

- Introduction to the Qt Reference Documentation
- The 1 Minute Guide to using Qt Assistant
- Qt Assistant in More Detail

Introduction to the Qt Reference Documentation

The documentation for the Qt library is written in-line in the `.cpp` files by the developers themselves. The documentation team revises the documentation to ensure that it is accurate and usable, and to provide quality control. The documentation team also writes the larger texts, such as the class descriptions that introduce a class along with the concepts the class uses as well as introducing the functions and properties that the class provides.

The documentation focuses on the API rather than the internals, since we make great efforts to keep our API consistent and compatible with each new version, but may change the internals considerably to improve performance and enhance functionality.

The Qt Reference Documentation consists of almost 1,500 HTML pages (over 2,500 US letter-sized pages). The overwhelming majority of pages document Qt classes. Since developers differ in the way they think and work we provide a variety of approaches to navigating the documentation set:

- The All Classes page lists every class in Qt's public API, and consists of several hundred classes.
- The Main Classes page lists the classes you're most likely to use most often, and provides a much shorter and more managable list than the All Classes list.
- The Grouped Classes page presents a list of groups, each of which leads to a list of related classes, for example, the Advanced Widgets list.
- The Inheritance Hierarchy page presents a list of classes in terms of the hierarchy of Qt classes.
- The All Functions page lists all the functions provided by Qt classes, each one with links to the class(es) in which it appears.

No matter where you find yourself in the Qt documentation, you will find extensive cross-referencing. Even snippets of example code contain clickable links, so that for example, if you come across a class declaration in a code example, the class name will be a clickable link to the class's documentation.

In addition to the class documentation some of Qt's modules have extensive descriptions, and there are several overview documents which describe various aspects of the Qt library; all these are linked from the reference documentation home page. There are also numerous example programs in $QTDIR/examples.

The 1 Minute Guide to using Qt Assistant

Under Windows *Qt Assistant* is available as a menu option on the Qt menu. On Unix run `$QTDIR/bin/assistant` from an xterm.

When you start up *Qt Assistant* you will be presented with a standard main-window style application, with a menu bar and toolbar. Below these, on the left hand side is a navigation window called the *Sidebar*, and on the right, taking up most of the space, is the documentation window. By default the Qt Reference Documentation's home page is shown in the documentation window.

Qt Assistant works in a similar way to a web browser. If you click underlined text (which signifies a cross-reference) the documentation window will present the relevant page. You can bookmark pages of particular interest and you can click the **Previous** and **Next** toolbar buttons to navigate within the pages you've visited.

Although *Qt Assistant* can used just like a web browser to navigate through the Qt documentation set, *Qt Assistant* offers a powerful means of navigation that web browsers don't provide. *Qt Assistant* uses an intelligent algorithm to index all the pages in the documentation sets that it presents so that you can search for particular words and phrases.

To perform a search, click the **Index** tab on the Sidebar (or click **Ctrl+I**). In the 'Look For' line edit enter a word, e.g. 'homedirpath'. As you type, words are found and highlighted in a list beneath the line edit. If the highlighted text matches what you're looking for, double click it, (or press **Enter**) and the documentation window will display the relevant page. You rarely have to type in the whole word before *Qt Assistant* finds a match.

For some words there may be more than one possible page that is relevant. For example, enter 'setenabled' in the 'Look For' line edit. As you type, words are found and highlighted in the list beneath the line edit, as before. Once the highlighted text matches what you're looking for, double click it, (or press **Enter**). In the case of setEnabled, it is a function name which occurs in several classes, so a dialog pops up listing the possible choices. Click the choice you're interested in (or move to it using the **Up** and **Down** arrow keys and press **Enter**). The relevant page will display in the documentation window.

Qt Assistant in More Detail

The Sidebar

The sidebar provides three ways of navigating documentation:

1. The **Contents** tab presents a tree view of the documentation sets that are available. If you click an item its documentation will appear in the documentation window. If you double click an item or click a '+' sign to the left of an item, the item's sub-items will appear. Click a sub-item to make its page appear in the documentation window. Click a '-' sign to the left of an item to hide its sub-items.
2. The **Index** tab is used to look up key words or phrases. See The 1 Minute Guide to using Qt Assistant for how to use this tab.
3. The **Bookmarks** tab lists any bookmarks you've made. Double click a bookmark to make its page appear in the documentation window. The **Bookmarks** tab has a **New Bookmark** button a and **Delete Bookmark** button at the bottom. Click **New Bookmark** to bookmark the page that is showing in the documentation window. Click a bookmark in the list, then click **Delete Bookmark** to delete the highlighted bookmark.

If you want the documentation window to use as much space as possible, you can easily hide and show the Sidebar. If the Sidebar is showing, press **Ctrl+T**, **Ctrl+I** or **Ctrl+B** to hide it. If the Sidebar is hidden, press **Ctrl+T** to show it on the Contents tab, or press **Ctrl+I** to show it on the Index tab (with the focus in the 'Look For' line edit box), or press **Ctrl+B** to show it on the Bookmarks tab.

The Sidebar is a dock window, so you can drag it to the top, left, right or bottom of *Qt Assistant*'s window, or you can drag it outside *Qt Assistant* to float it.

The Toolbar

The toolbar provides fast access to the most common actions.

- **Previous** takes you to the previous page. The menu option is **Go|Previous** and the keyboard shortcut is **Alt+Left Arrow**.
- **Next** takes you to the next page. The menu option is **Go|Next** and the keyboard shortcut is **Alt+Right Arrow**.
- **Home** takes you to the home page (normally the home page of the Qt Reference Documentation). The menu option is **Go|Home** and the keyboard shortcut is **Ctrl+Home**.
- **Copy** copies any selected text to the clipboard. The menu option is **Edit|Copy** and the keyboard shortcut is **Ctrl+C**.
- **Find in Text** invokes the *Find Text* dialog. The menu option is **Edit|Find in Text** and the keyboard shortcut is **Ctrl+F**.
- **Print** invokes the *Print* dialog. The menu option is **File|Print** and the keyboard shortcut is **Ctrl+P**.
- **Zoom in** increases the font size. The menu option is **View|Zoom in** and the keyboard shortcut is **Ctrl++**.
- **Zoom out** decreases the font size. The menu option is **View|Zoom out** and the keyboard shortcut is **Ctrl+-**.

The remaining toolbar buttons are bookmarks and will vary depending on your configuration.

The Menus

The File Menu

- **File|Print** invokes the *Print* dialog.
- **File|Exit** terminates *Qt Assistant*.

The Edit Menu

- **Edit|Copy** copies any selected text to the clipboard.
- **Edit|Find in Text** invokes the *Find Text* dialog.
- **Edit|Settings** invokes the *Settings* dialog.

The View Menu

- **View|Zoom in** increases the font size.
- **View|Zoom out** decreases the font size.
- **View|Views|Sidebar** toggles the display of the Sidebar.
- **View|Views|Toolbar** toggles the display of the Toolbar.
- **View|Views|Line up** lines up the toolbar buttons in the Toolbar.

The Go Menu

- **Go|Previous** display the previous page.
- **Go|Next** display the next page.
- **Go|home** go to the home page.

This menu also has additional items; these are pre-defined bookmarks that vary depending on your configuration.

The Bookmarks Menu

- **Bookmarks|Add** add the current page to the list of bookmarks.

This menu may have additional items, i.e. any bookmarks that you have already made. If you want to delete a bookmark go to the Bookmarks tab on the Sidebar.

The Dialogs

The Print Dialog

This dialog is platform-specific. It gives access to various printer options and can be used to print the current page.

The Find Text Dialog

This dialog is used to find text in the current page. Enter the text you want to find in the Find line edit. If you check the 'Whole words only' checkbox, the search will only consider whole words, i.e. if you search for 'spin' with this checkbox checked it will not match 'spinbox', but will match 'spin'. If you check the 'Case sensitive' check box then, for example, 'spin' will match 'spin' but not 'Spin'. You can search Forward or Backward from your current position in the page by clicking one of the Direction radio buttons. Click the **Find** button to search (or search again), and click the **Close** button to finish.

The Settings Dialog

This dialog is used to set your preferences for *Qt Assistant*. You can change the base font used throughout by choosing a new font from the Font combobox. You can choose a new fixed-width font, e.g. used to show code snippets, by choosing a new font from the 'Fixed font' combobox. You can change the colour of hypertext links by clicking the 'Link color' color button. Uncheck the 'Underline links' checkbox if you don't want underlined links. Click **OK** to confirm your changes or click **Cancel** to keep the previous settings.

Qt Assistant will remember your settings between sessions, including window sizes and positions, and which page(s) you have open.