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Starlink Project
Starlink User Note 38.8

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DOCFIND — Starlink document index searching

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Users' Manual

Abstract

This document explains how to search the Starlink documentation using the `docfind` command.

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1 Introduction

One of the recurrent problems with Starlink is that as the volume of software grows, so does the number of documents describing it. These include project wide documents and documents which are local to other sites. It is often extremely difficult to find out which document should be consulted about a particular topic.

Starlink maintains a list of currently valid project wide documents called 'STARLINK DOCUMENTATION' in the file `/star/docs/docs_lis`. This may be printed if required. It is maintained at RAL by the Starlink Software Librarian and updated at other sites by the Starlink software update process. The current date is stated at the beginning of the file so you can see if your site is up to date by comparing your site's file with the RAL file available via the WWW.

An alternative approach is to consult file `/star/docs/subject_lis`. This is a Key-Word index to Starlink documentation which does not rely only on document titles. Once again, it is maintained up to date at RAL but other sites may lag behind. The specified current date will tell all. `/star/docs/analysis_lis` is also centrally maintained. This is a list of the Starlink documents listed by which Software item is the main subject of each document.

The `docfind` program has been developed to help users search this mass of information.

2 Use

The `docfind` procedure searches the file `/star/docs/subject_lis` for a given key word and then searches the file `/star/docs/docs_lis` for the same key word in the titles of the Starlink documents. This technique is used since not all key words will appear in the titles of the documents.

To invoke `docfind` simply type:

```
% docfind word
```

A search is executed for occurrences of `word` in the files, and the results of the search stored in a temporary file. This is then displayed using the Unix `more` command. The temporary file is deleted one the `more` output is finished.

3 Alternative searching utilities

The `docfind` command is rather limited in what it can search, particularly with the advent of hypertext versions of documentation and the use of the WWW and WWW browsers to provide cross-referenced information about software.

The Starlink hypertext utilities package HTX has two powerful search and display 'engines' to make searching for and displaying information easier. Both use hypertext browsers for display.

The first tool is the `findme` command, which may be used to search for information within documents.

The second is the `showme` command, which may be used to display a specific document.

Full details of the HTX utilities can be found in SUN/188.