

# Table of Contents

## Introduction

Alpha Five .....	ix
Alpha Five Made Easy .....	ix
A message to the small business community	x
Acknowledgments	xi
Getting Started.....	xi
Tips on searching the Help files .....	xii
Installing the Alpha Five Made Easy lesson files .....	xiii
What files are included?	xiii
Support .....	xiv

## 1 Databases and Tables

Alpha Five Today .....	3
Creating a New Database .....	3
Understanding Tables and Fields .....	5
Creating a new table.	7
Closing the database	9
Opening multiple databases	10
Understanding the Alpha Five Control Panel.....	10
Taking a tour	10
Changing the Table Structure.....	12
Planning table design	13
Naming your Database and its Objects .....	13
Using a naming convention	14
Opening an Existing Database .....	14

## 2 Field Rules and Data Entry

Understanding Field Rules .....	19
Creating Table Level Field Rules.....	19
Understanding the menus	20
Defining Field Rules .....	21
Understanding Field Rules settings	21
Understanding the Field Types tab	22
Defining Auto Increment fields	23
Changing the case of fields	24
Understanding Masks	25
Defining a default value	27
Creating a calculation	28
Understanding Functions and Expressions	29
Defining Memo, Time, Image & File Reference fields	29
Saving and closing Field Rules	29
Understanding error messages	29
Testing with the default browse	30
Moving between Restructure Table and Field Rules	31
Defining a Lookup Table .....	32
Understanding Source and Fill	33
Choosing the type of lookup box	34
Creating a separate window lookup	35

- Adding and editing records on the fly 35
- Choosing the lookup form or browse 35
- Defining the pop-up behavior 35
- Creating a drop down list box lookup 36
- Entering, Changing and Deleting Data.....37
  - Opening the default browse 37
  - Using the separate window lookup 37
  - Entering dates 38
  - Entering numbers 38
  - Entering character fields 39
  - Entering a date for the current year 39
  - Using the drop down list box lookup 39
  - Using spell check 40
  - Making data entry faster with the Speed Glossary 41
  - Canceling an entry 42
  - Deleting records 42
  - Saving records in a database 42
  - Changing data in a record 43
  - Applying new Field Rules to existing records 43
  - Restoring prior Field Rules 43

**3 Sets and Mapped Tables**

- Understanding Sets.....47
  - Connecting the tables 47
- Creating a Set .....48
  - Understanding links 49
  - Creating a One-to-One Link 49
  - Understanding Referential Integrity 52
  - Creating a One-to-Many Link 53
  - Completing the Set 54
  - Editing Sets 55
  - Creating Calculated Fields at the Set level 55
  - Creating Variables at the set level 56
  - Linking on multiple fields 56
  - Using the same table more than once in a set 57
  - Seeing Referential Integrity in action 58
  - Using Field Rules with sets 59
- Understanding Mapped Tables.....59
  - Creating a Mapped Table 60
  - Understanding field properties 62
  - Making fields updateable 63
  - Viewing the mapped table 64
  - Changing the display 64
  - Viewing the Xbasic 66
  - Editing an existing Mapped Table 66
  - Adding a computed column 67
  - Exporting to Excel 67

**4 Forms and Browsers**

- Overview .....70
- Don't miss out! .....70
- Understanding Form Design .....71
  - Choosing the right style 71
  - Creating a Default Form 72
  - Creating a Custom Form 74

Understanding the Top Menu	76
Understanding the Forms Toolbar	80
Working with the Floating Toolbars	82
Docking and undocking the Floating Toolbars	86
Using Dynamic Guidelines	86
Using the Right Click Menu	87
Using the Rulers Menu	88
Restoring to a prior version of the design	90
Understanding the Task Panes .....	90
Using the Task Panes	91
Using the Toolbox	93
Using the DragDrop List	98
Using Browse Controls	101
Using the Interactive Window	102
Testing Form design	102
Understanding the Properties Pane & Object Properties Dialog.....	103
Using the Properties Pane	104
Using the Object Properties dialog	106
Setting the properties of objects	106
Creating a Form with Tabs .....	108
Adding color to the background of the Form	108
Setting the properties of the Grid	109
Sizing the Form	109
Placing a title	110
Sizing the title	111
Renaming an object	111
Formatting the Text object	111
Creating a Tabbed Interface	113
Changing page names and colors	113
Understanding Browsers.....	115
Creating an Embedded Browse .....	116
Understanding Embedded Browse properties	117
Changing the Sort Order for the Properties Pane	118
Sizing the Browse	119
Adjusting the columns	119
Ordering the Form's records	121
Making a Browse read-only	122
Changing colors	122
Sorting by column title	123
Testing the changes	123
Using the Undo and Redo commands	124
Placing One-to-One fields.....	125
Moving objects	125
Placing fields and their titles	126
Aligning objects	126
Equalizing vertical spacing	127
Adjusting field sizes	127
Moving objects in small increments	128
Equalizing horizontal spacing	128
Adding more fields with titles	128
Modifying an object without ungrouping	128
Ungrouping objects	129
Copying attributes	129
Viewing the form edits	131

Adding a Record Navigator.....	132
Editing the navigator control	134
Placing One-to-Many fields .....	134
Adding Dynamic References.....	136
Creating a dynamic header	136
Using fields as dynamic references	137
Making the fields read only	138
Tweaking the layout	138
How everything works so far	138
Entering data into the browse	139
Viewing more reference objects	139
Creating Form Level Field Rules .....	139
Understanding the difference between rules and properties	140
Choosing the right option	140
Locating the rules and properties options	141
Creating form level rules	143
Understanding the form rules editor	143
Creating a form level lookup	143
Formatting examples	144
Understanding the Expression Builder.....	145
Taking a tour	146
Finding the right function	148
Using the library	150
Using the EB keyboard	152
Using the toolbar	154
Entering expressions	154
Creating Calculated Fields .....	155
Creating a character expression	155
Using the ALLTRIM function	155
Saving the expression	157
Using a calculated field	157
Modifying calculated field objects	157
Creating a simple mathematical calculation	158
Combining field types in an expression	159
Editing calculated fields	160
Refining the Tabbed Form .....	162
Creating a Rich Text object	162
Copying and pasting objects from another form	164
Changing the tab order	165
Naming the form	166
More Tips and Tricks for Forms .....	167
Finding records with Find by Form	167
Filtering records with Quick Filter	167
Creating Smart Fields	168
Locking the titles on long or wide forms	170
Getting Ready for the Web.....	171
Why can't I use my desktop forms on the web?	172
Using the Grid Component	174
Placing a Grid Component on a Form	175
Linking to Fields on the Form	176
Understanding Stand-Alone Browsers .....	176
Opening the Alpha Sports database	177
Copying a browse	178
Modifying the appearance of a browse	178

---

## 5 Reports, Letters and Labels

Modifying the appearance of a column	179
Creating conditional color	179
Finding records with Find by Key	181
Ordering records	183
Reviewing browse properties	184
Putting a Button, a Smart Field and an Ellipsis in a Browse.....	185
Putting a button into a browse cell	185
Adding a smart field to your browse	187
Showing longer field contents	187
Using the Ad Hoc browse .....	188
Overview .....	194
Learning Report Basics .....	195
Comparing the report styles	196
Understanding the Quick Report Genie .....	197
Saving the Quick Report settings	200
Using the Quick Report Genie to create a Free Form report.....	200
Creating a group	201
Ordering the report	202
Defining the appearance	202
Previewing the report	203
Switching to the Free Form Report Editor	203
Understanding the Report Editor.....	203
Testing the design of the report	204
Understanding the preview tabs	204
Understanding the preview toolbar	204
Saving reports as PDF, HTML, Rich & Plain Text and Excel files	205
Using the Task Panes	208
Understanding the Top Menu	208
Examining the Report Editor Sections .....	209
Understanding the Report section	209
Understanding Group section(s)	210
Understanding the Detail section	211
Hiding and showing sections	211
Adding and removing sections	212
Aligning and Moving Objects in Free Form reports .....	213
Using Dynamic Guidelines	213
Using the Rulers Menu to align and move objects	214
Closing up the space	215
Customizing Free Form Reports .....	216
Modifying the Report Header in a Free Form report .....	217
Combining text and date fields	217
Modifying the Group Header in a Free Form report .....	218
Formatting multiple objects	219
Modifying the Detail Section in a Free Form report .....	220
Creating simple numeric calculations	220
Using a calculated field in an expression	221
Refining height and position of objects	221
Modifying the Group and Report Footers in Free Form reports .....	222
Creating a Group summary	222
Creating a Report summary	223
Creating a Group summary label	224
Writing summary expressions	224
Modifying Quick Report Genie summaries	226

TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

- Modifying the Page Footer in Free Form reports .....226
  - Copying objects from one report to another 227
- Viewing and Changing Calculated Fields .....228
  - Understanding the Calculated Values dialog 228
- Filtering and Ordering Reports.....229
  - Adding a Filter 230
  - Ordering records 232
  - Asking the user for input 232
  - More filtering options 233
- Creating a Sub-Report .....234
- Creating a Layout Table Report .....236
  - Transferring data to Excel 237
  - Using the Quick Report Genie 238
  - Switching to the Layout Table Report Editor 239
  - Understanding the Layout Table Report Editor 239
  - Understanding the Cell Contents Dialog 242
  - Changing cell contents 243
  - Adding a field column 244
  - Formatting with the Text Toolbar 244
  - Merging cells 245
  - Creating an Excel file 246
  - Setting up the report for printing 246
- Understanding Linked Reports.....247
  - Creating a “parent” report 248
  - Creating a “child” report 248
  - Adding a Linked Report to a Layout Table report 249
  - Transferring to Excel 250
  - Modifying the reports for printing 250
  - Refreshing a Linked Report 251
  - Adding a Linked Report to a Free Form report 251
  - More Linked Report features 252
- Important Things to know about Reports .....252
  - Creating a Blank Report 252
  - Understanding Report Properties 253
  - Displaying the data on the page 253
  - Adding or removing the detail section 254
  - Adding headers & footers 255
  - Adding and ordering groups 255
  - Adding charts 256
  - Printing records 256
  - Formatting objects 257
  - Importing a layout 258
  - Restoring to a prior version 258
- Creating Letters .....259
  - Reviewing properties for letters 262
- Creating Labels and Envelopes .....262
- Don’t miss out! .....264
  
- 6 Operations .....267
  - Understanding Operations .....267
    - Examining the types of Operations 268
    - Using the genies 268
    - Understanding the Operations Toolbar 269
    - Understanding the Top Menu 270
    - Running a saved operation 270

Importing Overview .....	271
Importing Excel files with AlphaDAO. ....	271
Understanding the AlphaDAO Import Genie	272
Viewing the Excel file.	273
Establishing the connection	273
Defining the selected object properties	274
Choosing the columns to import	275
Running the import	275
Viewing the table	275
Importing to a new table	276
Choosing the Import Type	276
Understanding table overwrite	276
Evaluating the import table	276
Marking Records .....	277
Using the CONTAINS function	277
Marking and unmarking records manually	278
Creating a Search and Replace (Update) Operation.....	279
Filtering the Operation	279
Using the STRITRAN function	280
Viewing the filter	280
Removing the filter in the browse	281
Adding Records to a Table.....	281
Understanding Master and Transaction tables	282
Moving a field	283
Adding an expression	283
Matching options	283
Viewing the records	284
Deleting records at the browse	284
Expanding the filter for the Append	285
Marking Duplicate Records.....	286
Activating an Operation from the Control Panel	287
Using Quick Sort	288
Marking & deleting duplicate records at the table	288
Copying an Operation .....	289
Deleting Duplicate Records.....	289
Putting the Operations on a Button .....	290
Importing an ASCII Text File .....	290
<b>7 Buttons, Hyperlinks &amp; Bubble Help</b>	
Overview .....	296
Don't miss out! .....	296
What's ahead in this chapter .....	297
Creating a Button that Prints a Report.....	297
Using Action Scripting	298
Using the Script Editor	299
Enhancing the appearance of a button	300
Adjusting button placement on the form	301
Customizing a fly-over effect	302
Understanding button events	302
Setting Multiple Actions for a Button .....	303
Editing the script	307
Completing the operations	307
Commenting .....	308
Temporarily stopping an action	308
Understanding Selection Criteria for Buttons .....	308

- Defining the selection criteria 310
- Adding Custom Graphics for your Buttons.....311
  - Putting the graphic on a button 312
- Password Protecting a Button.....313
- Creating A-Z Buttons for a Directory .....314
  - Understanding the dialog 315
  - Defining a horizontal button bar with all letters 316
  - Creating a vertical bar that uses a range 317
- Using a Button to Open a Web Component .....317
- Creating a Hyperlink on a Form.....320
  - Using the button genie to get hyperlink code 320
  - Converting Action Script code to Xbasic 321
- Creating a Hyperlink on a Report that opens a Form.....322
  - Setting up the links 322
  - Making the field look like a hyperlink 323
  - Choosing the linking layout 323
  - Using the hyperlink 324
  - Viewing your changes in the report 324
- Creating User Instructions with Bubble Help .....325
- Understanding Variables .....326

## 8 Inserting Images

- Don't miss out!.....330
- It's all about Graphics .....331
  - Understanding the terms 331
  - Understanding field and file types 331
  - Understanding the graphic design features 332
  - Static and dynamic control types 333
  - Understanding the HTML Editor 333
- Using Image Fields in Forms and Browsers.....334
  - Sizing the file: JPG, BMP, etc. 334
  - Viewing the image on the form 335
  - Adding an image field to a form 335
  - Enter or change a photo 335
  - Enlarging a photograph 336
  - Using an HTML Memo field in a browse 336
  - Opening a file or web page 337

## 9 Alpha Five with SQL

- What is SQL? .....341
- Using SQL Databases with Alpha Five.....341
  - Understanding Active- and Passive-Link Tables 341
  - Using the built-in drivers 342
  - Using the dialogs 342
  - Continuing the lessons 342
- Creating a New Database .....342
- Adding an Active-Link Table to the Database .....343
  - Understanding the Connection String 343
  - Creating a new Named Connection String 343
  - Adding a single Active-Link table 345
  - Changing field definitions 346
  - Adding multiple tables 348
  - Editing table definitions 348
  - Editing Field Rules 349
  - Refreshing the table structure 350



**10 Handy Things  
to Know**

Converting connection strings 350	
Using Active-Link Tables .....	351
Understanding Queries 351	
Using the Client-side Query Genie 352	
Using the Server-side Query Genie 353	
Understanding the Query Genie Toolbar 353	
Using the Query Builder 354	
Ordering the records 355	
Previewing the records 355	
Running the Query 356	
Creating reports 356	
More Query Options.....	356
Writing the Query yourself 356	
Writing a SQL Select Statement 357	
Running and modifying a saved Query 357	
Setting Query preferences when adding/editing table 358	
Using Passive-Link Tables.....	358
Creating a named DataSource 359	
Linking the named DataSource to the table 359	
Naming and viewing the table 360	
Refreshing the data 360	
Reviewing & editing the DataSource definition 361	
Editing Field Rules 362	
Understanding Record Locking.....	362
Refreshing the view of the record updates 364	
Moving from SQL to DBF .....	364
Connecting the SQL data to Alpha Five 365	
More Help References.....	365
Overview .....	368
Don't miss out .....	368
Wrapping it up.....	369
Database Maintenance.....	369
Updating Indexes 369	
Getting rid of the \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ 370	
Compacting the database 371	
Packing tables 371	
Update, Back up, Restore and Email the Database .....	372
Alpha Five software updates 372	
Backing up the database 372	
Restoring the database 374	
E-mailing a database 374	
Database Settings .....	374
Data entry mode 374	
Naming conventions 375	
ODBC connection 375	
Opening Alpha Five 376	
Setting up security 376	
Understanding Aliases 377	
Alpha Five File Types .....	377
Customize the Alpha Five Startup.....	378
Creating a desktop shortcut 378	
Naming the Title and Start bars 379	
Adding a custom Icon 379	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

- Creating a startup form 380
- Hiding the Control Panel 381
- Tables .....382
  - Adding a table 382
  - Sharing tables 382
  - Deleting a table 383
  - Dropping a table 383
  - Duplicating a table 383
  - Emptying the table 384
  - Reusing a favorite table structure 384
- Records .....385
  - Deleting and undeleting records from a table 385
  - Deleting duplicate records 385
  - Copying records from one table to another 386
  - Removing certain records from a table 386
- Fields .....386
  - Field widths on layouts 386
  - Field widths at Table Structure. 387
  - Date settings 387
  - Logical fields 388
  - Unbound fields 388
- Field Rules .....388
  - Apply new rules 388
  - Restore prior rules 388
  - Auto Increment value reset 389
- Layouts — Browsers, Forms, Reports, Letters, Labels .....389
  - Layout and field rules backups 389
  - Sending and receiving layouts 390
  - Print and/or send records with current layout 390
  - Printing a report for the current record 391
  - Viewing structure information 391
  - Ungrouping the DragDrop list 392
  - Copying a layout 392
  - Using the Control Library to copy and paste objects 393
  - Deleting a layout 395
  - Customizing the form title bar 395
  - Setting up application menus 396
  - Finding the source of the layout 396
  - Understanding the Trace Window 396
  - Report Security 397
- Functions and Expressions .....397
  - Help with Functions 397
  - Color coding 398
  - Entering text in expressions 398
  - Error messages 398
  - IF statements 399
  - ISBLANK, ISNOTBLANK and PREVIOUS 400
- Importing and Exporting .....400
  - Transfer data to Excel or Word 400
- Xbasic Terminology .....401
  - Assuring successful script writing 402
- Reference Library .....403
  - Learning Functions and Expressions 403
  - Learning Xbasic 403

---

Learning Action Scripting 403  
Learning Xdialog 404  
Learning to Write Web Applications 404  
Help!.....404  
Alpha Software Website 404  
Alpha Software, Inc. 406  
Tips and Tricks 406

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

---

Notes: