



# Alpha Anywhere

Enhance Your **Desktop** App!

More Desktop Features Made Easy

Also suitable for Alpha Five V11

Susan Hussey Bush





# Alpha Anywhere

## Enhance Your **Desktop** App!

More Desktop Features Made Easy

Suitable for Alpha Anywhere and Alpha Five V11

How to . . .

- **Make your application amazing!**
- **Add images, data controls, filters, charts, and lots more!**
- **Use the same forms on both desktop and web!**

What's inside . . .

- ♦ **Web Wonders Dazzle Desktop!** — Learn to create your first grid component and use it on the desktop. Great way to sample the web side of the software.
- ♦ **Picture Perfect!** — Your database will stand out when you add images, charts and even Google Maps!
- ♦ **Data Entry Made Easy!** — Learn about data controls and which to use when for easier and more accurate data entry. Zoom, zoom from an embedded browse to an entry form.
- ♦ **Radical Reports!** — Add charts, bookmarks, table of contents, index and color to make your reports real crowd pleasers.
- ♦ **Find It! Sort It! Filter It!** — Work your way through the many find, sort and filter features. It's all about making it easy for the end user.
- ♦ **Experiment with Xbasic and Xdialog!** — Even a non-programmer will be impressed with these mind broadening exercises.
- ♦ **Customize Your App!** — Design your own menus and toolbars and show the progress of a long script. See some neat new ways to use Bubble Help.
- ♦ **Hot Color and Cool Style!** — Consistent design is easy when you know how to use color and style.
- ♦ **Exciting Email and Efficient Faxes!** — Learn how to make an email confirmation that you can send with a click.. Need to fax a report? Do it from within the program. Alpha Mailer uses your tables to send mass emails.

### The equipment you will need to have to use this book:

- You will need to have the Alpha Anywhere or Alpha Five software program installed on your computer. Information on purchasing the program may be found at [www.alphasoftware.com](http://www.alphasoftware.com).±
- A companion CD containing the working databases for the book is included with this manual.

BOOKSHELF CATEGORY:

ALPHA FIVE/ALPHA ANYWHERE/DATABASE/SOFTWARE

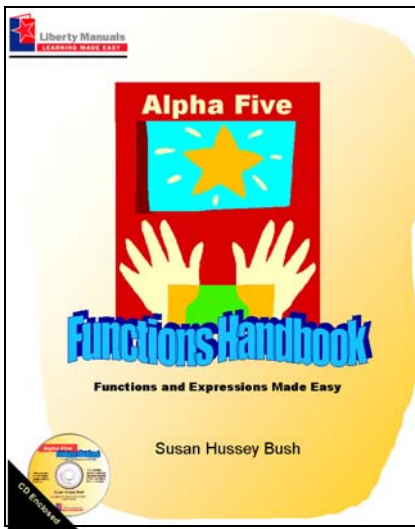
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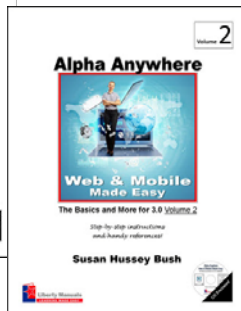
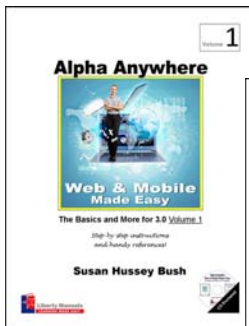
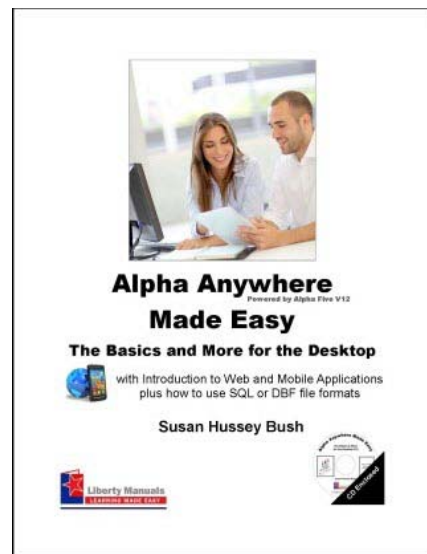
Alpha Five Functions Handbook,  
Functions and Expressions Made Easy  
by Susan Hussey Bush

Alpha Five's Functions allow the development of database applications with and without programming. In this handbook, they are explained simply, in layman's terms. This manual was born of the author's many years of frustration while searching for the right function for the job. Character, date, numeric, summary or filter—you'll find and use them easily in this logically designed manual.

- Also suitable for Alpha Anywhere.

Alpha Anywhere  
Made Easy  
by Susan Hussey Bush

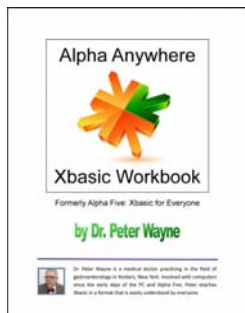
The perfect book for learning how to use Alpha Anywhere for the desktop. Learn to create your own application and will be ready to add the features you learn here. A must have for all Alpha Anywhere desktop devotees.



Alpha Five Web & Mobile Made Easy  
by Susan Hussey Bush

Make the most of your software — your copy of comes with the ability to design Web & Mobile applications. The way of today - don't miss out!

- Two volumes.



Alpha Five: Xbasic for Everyone  
by Dr. Peter Wayne

Learn Xbasic, Alpha Anywhere's programming language. Hard copies and downloads available at [www.LibertyManuals.com](http://www.LibertyManuals.com).

More books at [www.LibertyManuals.com](http://www.LibertyManuals.com) or call 1-732-842-3000

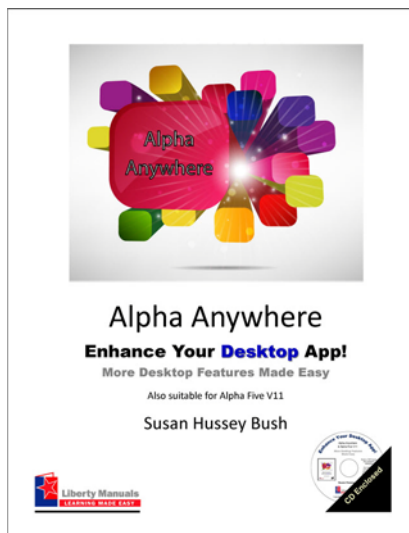
# Alpha Anywhere

ENHANCE YOUR DESKTOP APP!

## More Desktop Features Made Easy

Also suitable for Alpha Five V11

by Susan Hussey Bush



Liberty Manuals Company  
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## **Alpha Anywhere Enhance Your Desktop App! More Desktop Features Made Easy**

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For information on purchasing the books in the Alpha Anywhere and Alpha Five series, contact:

Liberty Manuals Company, 1806 Route 35, Suite 104, Oakhurst, NJ 07755, USA.

Tel: (732) 842-3000. Fax: (732) 741-5820.

Email and Website: [info@LibertyManuals.com](mailto:info@LibertyManuals.com); [www.LibertyManuals.com](http://www.LibertyManuals.com).

## Frances M. Peake, professional database developer, has this to say about *Alpha Anywhere Made Easy*...

Susan Bush and I met at the Alpha Five\* Developer's Conference in December of 2000. I was the professional developer. Susan used Alpha Five in her business. After a short conversation with Susan, I realized that she was much more than an end-user. She has made a study of Alpha Five over the years, pushing the product to its limits to serve her business needs.

Shortly after the conference, Susan came to our South Florida Database User Group meeting. She offered to give a presentation on a multi-step import procedure she had devised in Alpha Five. She impressed the group with detailed handouts and screen shots. Then she hosted the next few meetings while I was out of town.

When I returned to the User Group meetings, Susan pitched the idea of doing a seminar to help Alpha Four† users make the transition to Alpha Five thus our joint ventures, "Get Outta DOS" and then "Get into Alpha Five!" seminars were born. We agreed that, with all the preparation it would require, the seminars would not be big money makers. So I asked, "What would you want to get out of it?" She stated very emphatically, "I want to do an Alpha Five book." I can't remember whether I said this out loud, but my first thought was "Are you out of your mind?" But I knew it was true, Susan was going to write her Alpha Five book.

The book that you hold in your hands is not simply the product of Susan's experience as an advanced-level Alpha Five user. It is a product of her vision and seemingly boundless energy and enthusiasm. It is also a product of many, many hours of

research, writing, editing and above all, attention to detail.

Like so many of us in the Alpha Five community, Susan saw a need for additional training and support materials for Alpha Five. Any of us who have ever contemplated actually writing such a book and imagined ourselves as the author of, "Step 1. Right-click the mouse...Step 2. Choose Properties..." can only begin to appreciate what Susan has accomplished here.

This book can be used as both a tutorial and reference manual. Susan has achieved a healthy and practical balance between tutorial and reference by offering short, compartmentalized exercises. The book and disk that accompanies it are designed so that you can start at any chapter. For example, if you want to jump right into designing forms, you will not be lost if you have not followed the lessons from Chapter 1. You will find that every chapter is chock-full of valuable information for Alpha Five users of all levels.

The value of Susan's experience using Alpha Five in a real-world business environment cannot be overstated. It is evident throughout the book in the plain-English explanations of each Alpha Five feature and in the examples she uses. You will appreciate the generous use of screen shots to guide you through the exercises. Best of all are the tips and hints she provides to help shorten the learning curve so that you can get the most out of Alpha Five.

On behalf of Alpha Five users and enthusiasts everywhere, **thank you** Susan, for writing this book!

— Frances M. Peake,‡ Co-owner, Proctor & Peake, Inc.  
[www.proctorandpeake.com](http://www.proctorandpeake.com)

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\*. Alpha Anywhere is powered by Alpha Five V12, so references are suitable to both products.

†. Alpha Four is a relational database program developed by Alpha Software, Inc. It uses the MS DOS platform.

‡. Frances Peake is the author of *Alpha Four to Alpha Five, The Transition*, soon to be available at [www.proctorandpeake.com](http://www.proctorandpeake.com) and [www.libertymanuals.com](http://www.libertymanuals.com)

## About the author



From her first computer experience in 1984 – a used Apple I presented by her father after he upgraded to an Apple II – Susan Hussey Bush has been hooked on this amazing (and sometimes frustrating) tool of the modern world. The 1985 purchase of the state of the art IBM XT with an astounding 10 mg hard drive opened the door to database development. That first flat database, *Nutshell*, showed her that one did not have to be a programmer to develop applications.

Later, she began the search for a relational database that did not require programming skills. *Alpha Four*, a DOS product, met those requirements. When *Alpha Five* was released, she

moved to the Windows version and developed a database for her business, Liberty Food Marketers Co. She has since sold the business to her son, who continues to use the database to stay current with the demands of government bidding and to offer customers outstanding service.

Susan's first Alpha book was for *Alpha Five v4.5*. She has written updates for every version since. She always welcomes new features and looks forward to working out ways to explain them in her unique step-by-step exercises.

She feels the name change from *Alpha Five* to *Alpha Anywhere* was a natural because it describes the range of desktop, web and mobile applications that are essential to today's markets.

Susan has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Architectural Design. She brings that training to her application designs and to her books

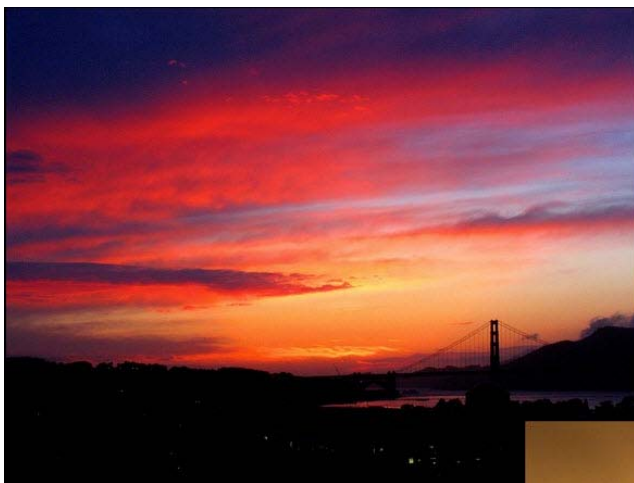
She lives with her husband, Richard, in Flat Rock, North Carolina. They take great pleasure in their blended family of seven children and eight grandchildren, spread across the country. Mike, Liz and Walter Hussey live in the Florida Keys. JR Hussey and his wife, Carin Young, live in Mill Valley, CA. In Oakhurst, New Jersey, Dave Hussey keeps busy with Liberty Food Marketers Co. and acts as fulfillment manager for Liberty Manuals Co. Rick Bush lives in Missouri. His eldest daughter, Hailey, is in Joplin, Missouri and younger daughters, Jordan and Lindsey, are in Pea Ridge, Arkansas. Jordan recently added baby Beckett to the clan. Ross Bush and daughter, Clara, live in Vichy, Missouri. Residing in Fort Smith, Arkansas are Missy, her husband, Jeff Brown and son Jake. Kathleen and Sands Orris and their sons, William and Foster make their home in Cumming, Georgia.

*This book is dedicated to my husband, Richard Bush,  
my son, J. R. Hussey and his wife, Carin Young*

JR's love is surfing and photography. I am particularly fond of his San Francisco photos ([jrhussey.com](http://jrhussey.com)).

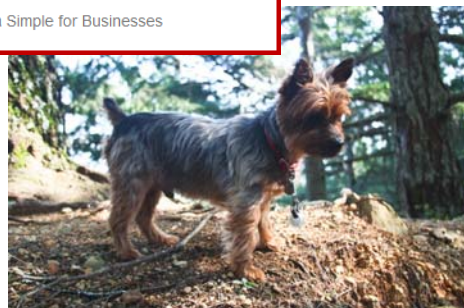
Carin's hobbies are horses and photography. She is also excited about her company, Matterhorn Social Media ([www.matterhorn-company.com](http://www.matterhorn-company.com)).

They both enjoy skiing and, of course, their Yorkie, Henry.



**Matterhorn Social Media**

Making Social Media Simple for Businesses



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Notes:

## Introduction

### *Alpha Anywhere & Alpha Five*

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This manual is for those who have experience with Alpha Anywhere or Alpha Five, so we know you are already a fan of this remarkable software. As each new feature is added, we become more and more impressed at what can be done with such facility.

And, regardless of the degree of sophistication that the program itself may achieve, it continues to appeal to programmer and non-programmer alike. And that's a big deal in our book.\*

### **A message to the small business community**

The database is a wonderful tool, yet, unfortunately, many small business owners believe they must know how to write code in order to create database applications.

*Alpha Anywhere / Alpha Five* has been our solution for many years.

I am a business owner, not a programmer, yet I designed the databases which have been the foundation of my companies for many years. You've heard it said repeatedly, "If I can do it, you can do it."

And it is true. I did. You can. Good Luck—and have fun!

—Susan H. Bush

President, Liberty Manuals Company

### *Books for desktop design*

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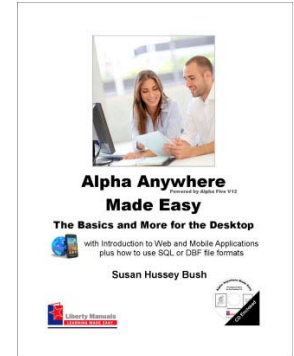
Liberty Manuals has four books that are essential to learning to design desktop applications.

Here's what you'll find in them:

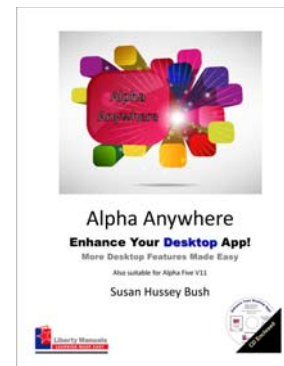
### **Alpha Anywhere Made Easy!**

This is the place to begin. In just a short time, you will have a basic understanding of the program and will soon be developing your own custom application.

- Chapter 1: Planning Ahead
- Chapter 2: Workspaces and Tables
- Chapter 3: Alpha Anywhere with SQL
- Chapter 4: The Alpha Help System
- Chapter 5: Field Rules and Data Entry
- Chapter 6: Sets and Mapped Tables
- Chapter 7: Forms and Browsers
- Chapter 8: Introduction to the Web
- Chapter 9: Introduction to Mobile
- Chapter 10: Operations
- Chapter 11: Buttons, Hyperlinks & Bubble Help
- Chapter 12: Inserting Images
- Chapter 13: Handy Things to Know



### **Enhance Your Desktop App!**



This is the book that belongs at your side while you are developing your own application. It contains methods you might not have previously considered and will expand your working knowledge of others.

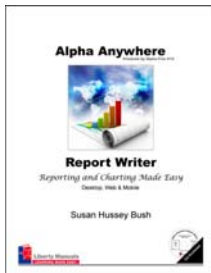
- Chapter 1: Beyond the Basics!
- Chapter 2: Web Wonders Dazzle Desktop!
- Chapter 3: Picture Perfect!
- Chapter 4: Data Entry Made Easy!
- Chapter 5: Radical Reports!
- Chapter 6: Find it! Sort it! Filter it!
- Chapter 7: Experiment with Xbasic & Xdialog!

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\*. No pun intended!

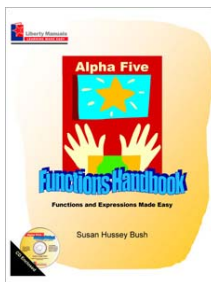
- Chapter 8: Customize Your App!
- Chapter 9: Hot Colors and Cool Styles!
- Chapter 10: Exciting E-mail and Efficient Faxes!
- Chapter 11: Heavenly Help Plus

## Alpha Anywhere Report Writer!



Reporting and charting are definitely made easy with this book. This book is the third in the desktop series. It is also applicable to web and mobile apps.\*

## Alpha Five Functions Handbook!



The *Alpha Five Functions Handbook* details more than two hundred commonly used functions and explains how they are used in expressions.

- Also suitable for Alpha Anywhere.

In addition to the above “must haves,” there are some more books that will aid in your study. All are

available at [www.libertymanuals.com](http://www.libertymanuals.com).

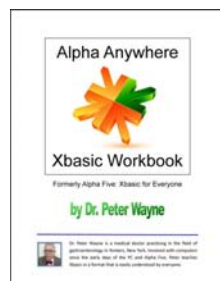
### Learning Xbasic

Alpha Anywhere and Alpha Five contain the tools that allow you to design databases with or without using code. For those interested in learning Xbasic, a good starting point is Dr. Peter Wayne's book, *Alpha Anywhere Xbasic Workbook*.

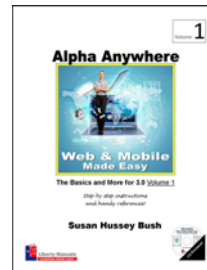
- Also suitable for A5 V11.

### Alpha Four to Alpha Five: The Transition

If you still are still running an Alpha Four database, this guide will make the transition to Alpha Anywhere / Alpha Five go more smoothly. It is written by Frances Peake, professional Alpha Five & Alpha Anywhere developer. Go to [www.libertymanuals.com](http://www.libertymanuals.com) and click Contact Us to request a free copy.



## Integrating Desktop with Web/Mobile



Your copy of Alpha Five comes complete with the ability to develop web and mobile applications. As you will learn in Chapter 2, web forms can also be used on the desktop. To learn more about creating web components, be sure to get *Alpha Anywhere Web & Mobile Made Easy*, Volumes 1 and 2.

- A5V11 users get *Alpha Five Web Applications Made Easy*, *The Basics and More for V11*.

### Hard copies and downloads

We carry both electronic download editions and hard copies of all our books. The hard copy editions are produced in full color with a durable spiral binding for convenience in learning and future reference. If you have purchased this book as a download and now want the hard copy, go to [www.libertymanuals.com](http://www.libertymanuals.com) and click Contact Us to discuss an appropriate credit.

### More Learning Tools

Liberty Manuals is constantly adding to its library, so be sure to check out all the books at [www.libertymanuals.com](http://www.libertymanuals.com).

## Acknowledgments

The assistance of my son and fulfillment manager, David Hussey continues to be invaluable. Dave handles the printing, assembly and shipping of our books.

## Getting Started

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### About Enhance Your Desktop App!

*Enhance Your Desktop App!* was developed to aid intermediate users in developing their Alpha Anywhere and Alpha Five applications. While targeted at the average user, experienced developers have told us our books have gotten them up to speed more quickly than if they had ventured out on their own.

The lessons are designed with step-by-step instructions. While each section may be used independently, some of the terminology builds sequentially from chapter to chapter.

The programs have even more features than we can cover in our manuals. We invite the user to explore the program by using the genies and the help file. The beauty

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\*. Alpha Five V11 users will find reports covered in *Alpha Five Made Easy*, *The Basics and More for Version 11*.

of the software is that it is so user friendly. Once you get started, you will be amazed at the level of sophistication you can achieve.

### Naming convention for lesson files

The included Alpha Anywhere / Alpha Five databases contain sample and working tables, reports, etc. When the exercise calls for you to create or open a file there is usually a corresponding completed example.

- The exercises may call for you to *create* a file beginning with “My,” such as **MyColorForm**.
- The exercises may call for you to *open an existing* a file ending with “Practice,” such as **Color-Form\_Practice**.
- The *completed examples* do not have the “My” prefix nor end in “Practice,” such as **ColorForm**.

*Troubleshooting tip:* If you are having difficulty with an exercise, compare your work with the completed one.

### To quote or not to quote

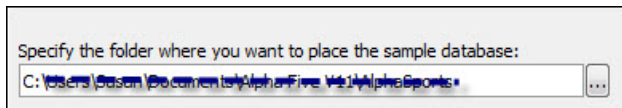
Within Alpha Anywhere / Alpha Five, quotes have a very specific use. To avoid confusion in the instructions, we have not used quotes around text to be entered, but have bolded the font instead. For example: Type **My name is Susan**.

### Footnotes

In some instances, the footnote for a given page will appear at the bottom of the following page. Location of footnotes is set by our book writing software program (*Adobe Framemaker*) and we have no control over where it puts them!

### Screen shots

For various reasons, the paths given in the screen shots are sometimes different than the ones to which we refer in the text. To avoid confusion, we have stricken out the screen shot paths. Just follow the text for the proper path.



### Checkboxes, OK and Dialogs

There are many instances where checkboxes will need entries. Rather than saying, check the check box, we will just say Yes or No. For example:

- Display ‘Print/Preview’ at runtime? Yes.

As you can well imagine, we say “Click OK” a gazillion times. In order to save a few trees, we will attach it to the previous step as in:

- 5. Type in the file name: **Clients**. (Click OK)

*Dialogs:* We will indicate the changes that need to be made in dialogs. Often there will be other options that are not mentioned. In those cases, accept the defaults.

### Using remote databases

One of the very impressive things about Alpha Anywhere / Alpha Five is that it allows users of SQL\* and other database file types to connect to their data. The data remains in its original format, but now the software’s legendary easy-to-use design features are available for everyone. This book describes briefly how to use SQL with grid components. For more information, see *Alpha Anywhere or Alpha Five Made Easy*.

### What you need to know

You will need a working knowledge of Alpha Anywhere or Alpha Five on the desktop. This book expects you to already know how about tables and sets, fields and field rules. You should know how to design desktop forms and reports and create buttons. You should know how to use the Expression Builder and how Functions are used (we don’t expect you to be an expert in this area, but you do need to have a basic understanding). You should know how to use Action Scripting and have a sense of how Operations work. You should know how to use the Properties Pane and Object Properties dialog, as well as the Toolbox and DragDrop List. In short, you need to know the topics covered in *Alpha Anywhere Made Easy* and the *Report Writer* or *Alpha Five Made Easy*.

### The equipment you will need to have

You will need to have *Alpha Anywhere* or *Alpha Five Version 11* installed on your computer. Information on purchasing the program can be found at [www.alphasoftware.com](http://www.alphasoftware.com). You may also contact Alpha Software, Inc. by E-mail at ([custserv@alphasoftware.com](mailto:custserv@alphasoftware.com)) or by phone at 781-229-4500 during regular business hours, Eastern Time.

### Alpha & Windows compatibility

At this writing, Alpha Anywhere and Alpha Five V11 are both compatible with *Windows XP – Service Pack 3* (SP3 includes .NET v4, a V11 requirement), *Vista*, *Windows7* and *Windows Server 2003*. Alpha Anywhere is also

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\*. SQL = Structured Query Language. This is the format used by Microsoft Access and some other databases, as opposed to the DBF file format used by Alpha Five.

## INTRODUCTION

### Installing the Lesson Files

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compatible with *Windows8*. For complete and up-to-date information, see [www.alphasoftware.com](http://www.alphasoftware.com).

#### Documentation



There is extensive documentation for the desktop side of Alpha Anywhere / Alpha Five. Details on using the help system can be found in Chapter 11 on page 311. Individual references are found at the end of relevant exercises.

#### Videos



We have also included references to videos at the end of the exercise. Look for the camera icon.

- Readers have asked that we also alert them in advance so they might watch the video and then do the exercise. In most cases, **Video!** will appear at the beginning of the exercise with the page number where you will find the camera icon that gives the location of the video.

### Installing the Lesson Files

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Note: The *Alpha Five* program is necessary to open the lesson files.

- A. To install the lesson files from the CD:
  - a. Insert the *Enhance Your Desktop App!* companion CD-ROM in your CD drive.
  - b. Open Windows Explorer and navigate to the drive with the CD.
  - c. Proceed as follows for the download edition.
- B. To install lesson files for the Download Edition:
  - a. Double click on the zip file and/or the .exe file to begin installation.
    - Message reads: This will install the *Enhance Your Desktop App!* files to your hard drive.
  - b. Click OK.
  - c. *Unzip to folder:* **c:\Alpha\_EnhanceDesktopBook.**

- This is the default folder. It may be changed, but please note that links in some of the completed examples may need to be reset.

d. Click Unzip.

- Message reads: Files unzipped successfully.

e. Click OK.

- The Readme file opens.

f. After reading the *Readme*, close it.

g. Open the database as indicated below.

### What files are included?

There is one database included with this book.

- **ABC\_EnhanceDesktop** is the foundation for most of the exercises.
- Copies of the Alpha Anywhere / Alpha Five databases, **Northwind** and **AlphaSports** are for remote database users. They are referenced in “Connecting your SQL data” on page 46.
- **The PDF version of the book** will be installed at `c:\Alpha_EnhanceDesktopBook > Elec Edition`.

### Opening the database for the lessons

- To open the databases included with this book, open Alpha Anywhere / Five and navigate to the following file:

• `c:\Alpha_EnhanceDesktopBook \ ABC_EnhanceDesktop \ ABC Seminars.adb.`

- The .adb extension may or may not appear. Look for the file name with the tiny Alpha logo next to it.

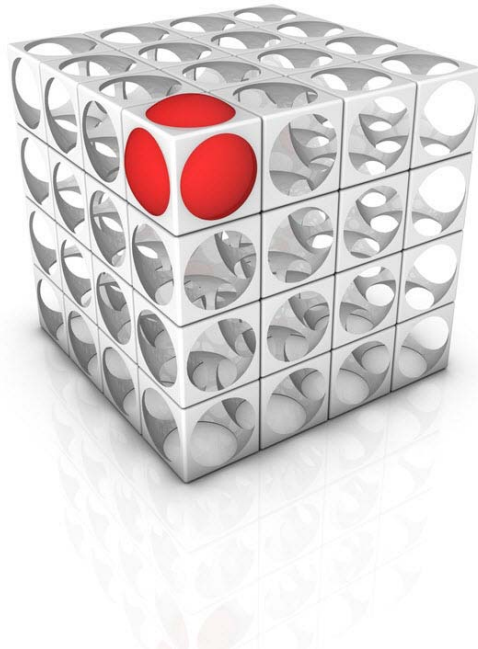
- File type = alpha5 Document.



- Click on the Control Panel tab in the status bar at the bottom of the screen to bring the Control Panel to the front.

## Chapter 1.

# *Beyond the Basics!*



***Time to make the box even better...***

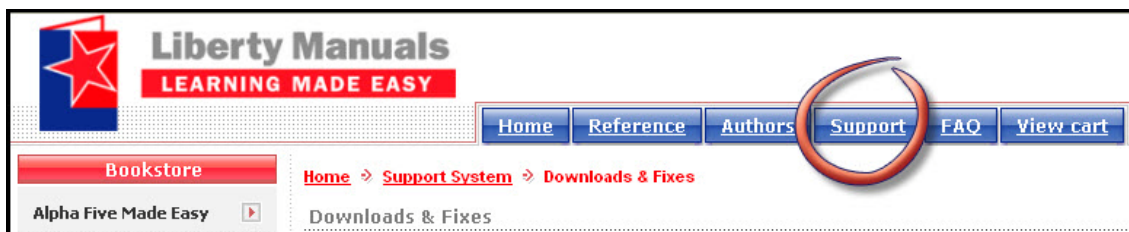
*No plain, boring database for you. This book will show you how to add just the right elements for an amazing application. Enhance your forms and reports with images, charts, color and style. Make data entry effortless and customize to your client's content. And that is just a small sample of what you'll find around here. Enjoy!*

Notes:



Important!

To open the databases included with this book, see “Preparation for the Lessons” on page 6.



## Support

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While every effort has been made to provide readers with a trouble free and accurate learning experience, some errors are bound to occur.

The support section of our website will publish corrections as they are discovered. We suggest you visit it periodically to see if there are modifications for this book.

And please let us know if you find some-

## Welcome!

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Welcome to *Alpha Anywhere Enhance Your Desktop App!* The subjects you will find here will help you develop professional and sophisticated applications. This book should be at your side while you are developing your own application because the software has so many valuable features that it is hard to absorb them all at once. This book will show you methods that you many not previously have considered and will dig into details about others.

## What's in a name?

If you have been a long-time member of the Alpha family, you are likely to be familiar with the name progression from *Alpha Four* to *Alpha Five* to *Alpha Anywhere*. However, if you are a new user, it may be a bit confusing. I liken it to my blended family. Those in the know can figure out the relationships – others need a two page diagram. Here's an Alpha Software history lesson.

ALPHA FOUR      Alpha Software began back in the DOS days with its initial database product called *Alpha Four*.

ALPHA FIVE      The change from DOS to Windows required an entirely new way to develop databases, hence the name change to *Alpha Five*.

- Alpha Five Versions 1 - 11 were sold as independent entities.

ALPHA ANYWHERE      In time web design was added to Alpha Five's capabilities. Then along came smart phones and tablets, creating the mobile era. Alpha Software immediately jumped on board. In 2013, the name was changed to *Alpha Anywhere* to more fully describe the versatility of the product.

- Alpha Anywhere is sold by subscription.

All of that seems fairly straight forward, except that *Alpha Five V12* remains the engine for *Alpha Anywhere*. That is why you will find the program files for *Alpha Anywhere* in the c:\ Program Files (x86) > A5V12 \ directory.

It also explains why *Alpha Anywhere* is not version specific. In other words, even though the most recent release is promoted as **Alpha Anywhere 3.0**, it is still powered by *Alpha Five V12*. And, because it is sold by subscription, the versions just meld one into the other.

## REFERENCES

The above is important to know because it means that what works in Alpha Five also works in Alpha Anywhere.

- Certain file names still begin with A5 and certain dialogs still say Alpha Five, even when you are working inside Alpha Anywhere. And many documentation pages and videos also refer to Alpha Five.

We will use the reference in existence at the time of the writing of the book. It may be changed by the time you see it. Just remember that Alpha Five and Alpha Anywhere are the same entity. Only the names differ.

Since this book is compatible with both *Alpha Anywhere* and *Alpha Five VII*, we will refer to the software as **AA/A5** or **Alpha**.



## IMPORTANT NOTE

## Companion book

*Enhance Your Desktop App!* is the second book in our series of using AA/A5 on the desktop. The title of the first will depend on the software version you are using.\*

- AA: *Alpha Anywhere Made Easy, The Basics and More.*
- A5: *Alpha Five Made Easy, The Basics and More for V11.*

For simplicity's sake, we may refer to the above books as:

- Alpha Anywhere / Alpha Five Made Easy* or
- Alpha Anywhere* and/or *Alpha Five Made Easy*.

## What you need to know

While this book is independent of the above publications, it does presume that you know how to use the software. You should already know about databases, tables, field rules, sets, forms, embedded and stand-alone browses, reports, operations, how to create buttons and use Action Scripting. If you need more information on these topics, we suggest you become familiar with the material in the above books before you embark on the exercises in this one.†

## What's in this book...

AA/A5 has two types of forms, standard desktop forms and web forms. Because it will be new to many of you, we will first show how to create a web form that can be used on the desktop. We will then move on to ways to enhance the standard forms with Action Scripting, charts, conditional color, Stylesheets and many more marvelous methods.

Finding and filtering records is discussed in detail, as are data controls. Images are a large part of our world today and we will show how they can be used effectively. Custom menus, toolbars and bubble help will make your application even more useful and unique.

And let's not forget reports, another mainstay. We will show how to enhance them with charts and conditional color and even put one on a form.‡ We'll wrap up with the built-in e-mail system.

All these extras will give your application the functionality and fine appearance that it deserves. And we will do it all without a line of code – well almost. In the one small instance where Xbasic is required, we even supply it for you. Here's a chapter by chapter breakdown.

## WEB WONDERS DAZZLE DESKTOP!

In the web/mobile world, Alpha is revolutionary. It is far more than a database software program, it is a development environment that can be used by novice and expert alike. One of its signature pieces is the “Grid” component that

\*. Both books are by Susan Hussey Bush and are available at [www.libertymanuals.com](http://www.libertymanuals.com)

†. If you are using AA/A5 with SQL, we will show you how to connect to your data, but the full benefits of using them together on the desktop are described in *Alpha Anywhere* and *Alpha Five Made Easy*.

‡. This is included for A5V11 users because it is not covered in *Alpha Five Made Easy*. Alpha Anywhere user will also find more information on this topic in the *Alpha Anywhere Report Writer*.

provides a point and click way to design forms that can be viewed on the Internet. Another type is called the “UX” (User Experience) Component.” While we do not cover the UX specifically here, it can be used on the desktop in the same manner as the Grid component.

Standard desktop style forms cannot be used on the web because everything must pass through a browser – Internet Explorer, Firefox, etc. Regardless of the database program that creates them, these forms cannot meet the browser requirements. Since the desktop form cannot go to the web, the folks at Alpha Software brought their web forms to the desktop.

So you can see how great grid components are on the desktop, we start right out with a quick demo – after which, we expect you will be champing at the bit and wondering how to create one of these marvels and add it to *your* desktop app!

- Then it’s back to the desktop side.

#### **PICTURE PERFECT!**

How many times have you heard it said that a picture is worth a thousand words? Your users will be impressed with images and go gaga when you add Google! And let’s not forget about charts. Another winner, for sure!

#### **DATA ENTRY MADE EASY!**

Forms are all about data entry, so it’s important to know which tool suits the job – do you need a drop down lists or radio buttons or a spin control? Learn which to use when. Then its time for a fun exercise that shows how to jump from the data in an embedded browse to a form with some fascinating features!

#### **RADICAL REPORTS!**

Reports can have personality, too. Since printing to PDF is almost as important as printing to a printer, color has become a consideration and so have book-marks. Headers and footers are not old hat when you know how to use them. And there’s more to munch on!

#### **FIND IT! SORT IT! FILTER IT!**

Finding and filtering data is one of the primary needs in a database and AA/A5 is loaded with tools that get the job done. This chapter will help you sort them out and choose the most apt for your application!

#### **EXPERIMENT WITH XBASIC AND XDIALOG!**

Learn how Variables and Xdialog can take your application to new highs. Don’t be scared – we make them child’s play!

#### **CUSTOMIZE YOUR APP!**

Tweak your application with custom menus and toolbars, add a dialog that shows the progress of a long script and toss in some really special bubble help. Be sure to take this car for a drive!

#### **HOT COLOR AND COOL STYLE!**

Up! Up! Up! Take your desktop forms to the sky with the right color scheme – and keep it consistent with sophisticated Stylesheets.

#### **EXCITING E-MAIL AND EFFICIENT FAXES!**

How did we live without e-mail? Click a button to send a confirmation in seconds. Fax a report from your computer. Make mass mailings a part of your marketing methods!

#### **HEAVENLY HELP PLUS**

We put this chapter in every book because it is so important. If you have yet to use the Documentation and Video buttons that can be seen when the Control

Panel is displayed, be sure to go to page 311, even before you begin the exercises.

And, even if you have used it before, be sure you are familiar with the updated Video Finder that is described on page 324.

- Ready to dig in? Begin with these basics!

## Preparation for the Lessons

Chapter 2 uses the “web side” of AA/A5. the others use the “desktop side.”

### Opening the database for the exercises

The exercises in the following chapters are based on a database included with this book.

- Open AA/A5 and navigate to the following file:
  - c:\Alpha\_EnhanceDesktopBook\ABC\_EnhanceDesktop\ABC Seminars.adb



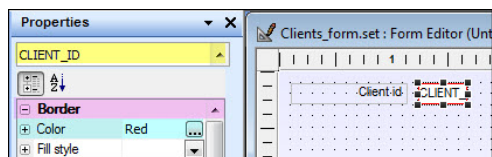
- Click on the Control Panel tab in the status bar at the bottom of the screen to bring the Control Panel to the front.

### Object Properties Instructions

Alpha has two places at design mode for setting the properties of objects (fields, labels, etc.) on a layout (form, report, etc.), the Properties Pane and the Object Properties dialog. We will use one or the other, depending on the situation. Our instructions will use the following format to identify the settings and where they are located.

- If the Properties Pane is not visible at Design mode, go to Top Menu > Task List > Properties.

#### PROPERTIES PANE



The Properties Pane consists of the following attributes:

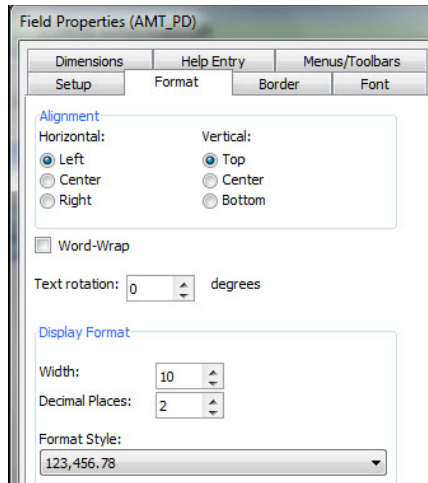
- Name of object: CLIENT\_ID (yellow).
- Various Categories, such as Border (pink).
- Formatting and definition options, such as Color (aqua).

Here's how the instruction will read:

**PROPERTIES PANE: CLIENT\_ID**

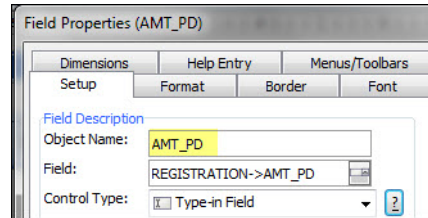
**BORDER**      *Color: Red*

## OBJECT PROPERTIES



The Object Properties dialog contains the same definitions as the Properties Pane, with the exception of Dynamic properties. It also has unique definitions and sometimes its graphic interface makes it easier to spot what you're looking for and/or visualize the results.

**Object name:** Note that the object name is reported at the top of the dialog and at the Setup tab. It can be changed here as well as in the Properties Pane.



- In this case, the name of the tab will appear at the left instead of the category.

F12 is the Hot Key that opens the dialog.

### OBJECT PROPERTIES (F12): : AMT\_DUE

#### FORMAT

- *Display Format:* **Width 17; Decimal places 2.**
- *Format Style:* **123,456.78.**

## Don't miss out!

In case you're the type that skips the Introduction, be sure you review:

- "Getting Started" on page x.

And by all means check out:

- "Heavenly Help Plus!" on page 311.

At the end of most chapters, you will find references to our other books so you can be sure not to miss even a minute morsel of our compelling content!

Notes:

## Chapter 11.

# *Heavenly Help Plus!*



### *Ordinary help is old school ...*

AA/A5 help is one of the best we've seen. It puts the extraordinary number of help topics and videos at your fingertips.

The newly revised Video Library makes it super easy to find just what you're looking for. Definitely a plus!

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*What you'll find here...*

Topic	Page
<b>"How the Chapter is Organized"</b>	313
<b>"Understanding the Documentation Viewer (DV)"</b>	314
"Getting off to a strong start"	314
"Display and navigation"	314
"Searching for topic pages"	316
"Saving page references"	319
"Taking notes"	320
"Printing topics"	322
"Updating the documentation"	322
"Window style"	323
"Restoring open pages"	323
"Sending feedback"	323
<b>"Using the Video Finder"</b>	324
"Filtering"	324
"Refreshing"	325
"Preferences"	325

You may have seen this chapter before because we add it to almost all our books – it's that important!

**But.** Don't run off. There's new information on using the Video Library, so be sure to look it over (page 324).

## How the Chapter is Organized

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Being able to get assistance as you work is essential to using any feature laden program like AA/A5. The good news is that there is so much documentation. The bad news is that there is so much documentation because the sheer volume can be overwhelming.

Fortunately, the *Documentation Viewer* (DV) and *Video Finder* (VF) will get you where you want to be. These are both opened within AA/A5.

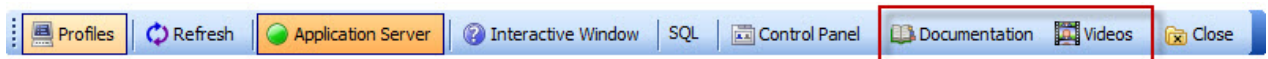
You can:

- Add notes to any topic.
- Print a single page or multiple pages to a PDF document.
- Save to lists.
- Search for topics by keyword, full text and multiple criteria.
- Update topic pages with the click of a button.

**And.** Much of the help system can be used *without an Internet connection*. That means you can keep working on an airplane or other non-Internet location. There are two exceptions, however:

- DV: Images do require an Internet connection at first, but are cached locally once a topic has been viewed.<sup>1</sup>
- VF: You will need an Internet connection to view the videos.

The *Documentation Viewer* and *Video Finder* will find all the references seamlessly – and you won't even have to leave the AA/A5 environment. The **Documentation** and **Videos** buttons are on the main toolbar and are available at either the *Web Projects Control Panel* or the *Control Panel*.<sup>2</sup>



WHERE DO I LOOK?

The Video Finder is the first place to look for web and mobile coverage. The Documentation Viewer also contains many useful pages, so be sure to go there for additional information.

**Why Plus?** You may be wondering why we entitled this chapter *Heavenly Help Plus*. The answer is that there's been an improvement to the Video Finder that you will really appreciate. Finding videos is easier than ever, now.

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1. See "Image display" on page 314.

2. As we go to press, the **Videos** button is not in the latest software update, so you may not be able to see it. If that is the case, go to Top Menu > Help > Video Finder. We have been advised that the button will appear in the next release. SHB 10.5.2012

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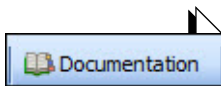
## *Understanding the Documentation Viewer (DV)*

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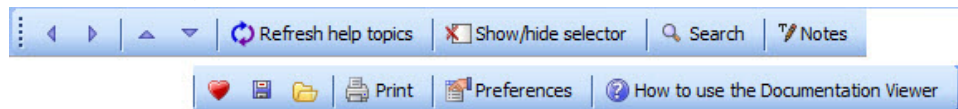
The Documentation Viewer and Video Finder are separate systems. Since there are so many documents on so many topics, it has a more complex structure.

### Getting off to a strong start

We recommend you watch the following videos to learn how to use the Documentation Viewer. Our notes will be available for a quick refresher, but **they depend on your having watched the videos**. It will be 20 minutes well spent – promise!<sup>1</sup>



1. Open AA/A5.
2. Click the **Documentation** button on the main toolbar.
  - Once it opens, the DV has its own toolbar (shown below in two sections).



3. Click **How to use the Documentation Viewer** (far right).
  - The Documentation Viewer page opens. It gives a list of the features and has 4 videos. You may need to scroll down to find them.
    - [Video Part 1](#): Overview, Navigating, Filtering.
    - [Video Part 2](#): Filtering (cont), Saving Lists, MDI & Modeless views, Properties.
    - [Video Part 3](#): Synchronize with 2 monitors, Browser-like experience, Links to Wiki, Printing to PDF.
    - [Video Part 4](#): Favorites, Annotating help documents (Notes).
  - Now that you have watched the videos, you know how the system works so please read over the rest of this chapter. You can come back here for the settings as you need them.

**And.** We have included additional information that you will find valuable.

### Display and navigation

#### IMAGE DISPLAY

We mentioned earlier that the DV can be used without an Internet connection. This is true for the most part. One exception is that, the first time a page is displayed, an Internet connection is required in order to see the images.

- Once the page has been displayed with an Internet connection, the images are downloaded from the server and cached locally. Therefore, the next time

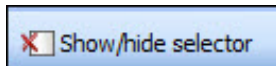
---

1. Sorry if I sound like your mother here - but, you gotta to do your homework - now! SHB

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that particular page is opened, the images will be displayed even when you are not on-line.

## ENLARGING THE VIEWING AREA



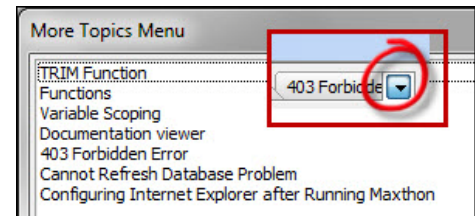
There are two ways to give more room on the screen.

- **Width:** Do this give more width to the topic pages:
  - Click the **Show/hide Selector** button on the toolbar to close the left panel.
- **Height:** If you have a document or list that is very long, it can sometimes be difficult to see the bottom of the scroll bar. Solution: Close the tabs at the bottom of the window.
  - *Top Menu > View:* Turn off **Window Bar**.

## OPENING PAGES

Topic pages are opened by selecting an item from the left pane.

- **One click open:** Each time you select a topic in the list, its page is opened in the right pane.
- **Viewing open pages:** When you have a lot of pages open, do the following:
  - a. Click the **arrow** at the right side of the tabs for a list (red circle).
  - b. Select the page.
  - c. Click OK.
- **One page is always open.** The system requires that at least one page be open at all times. To close unwanted pages, see “Closing pages” below.



## NAVIGATING

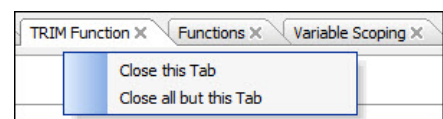
As you saw in the video, it is easy to get around using the back, next, up and down arrows.

- **Back and next arrows:** Moves back and forth between pages.
- **Up and down arrows:** Moves up and down on the list.
  - When you use these to move to a new topic in the list, the page is also opened. Handy for opening a group of pages that are listed sequentially.

## CLOSING PAGES

You can close an individual topic page or several at a time.

- **Closing selected pages:** When you have a lot of pages open, do the following:
  - a. Click the **arrow** at the right side of the tabs for a list (red circle above).
  - b. Select the pages you would like to close.
  - c. Click [Close selected topics](#).
- **Closing a single page.**
  - a. Right click on the tab and choose **Close this Tab**.



- **Closing all except current page:**

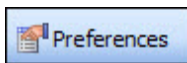
- b. Select the page you want to keep open.
  - c. Right click on the tab and choose **Close all but this tab**.

## BREADCRUMBS

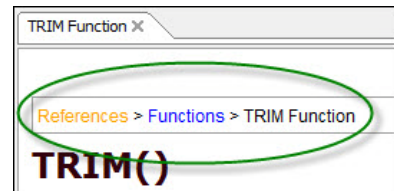
Breadcrumbs show where the page is located within the AA/A5 Wiki structure. By default, you will find them at the top of the topic page as below. You may turn them off or have them appear elsewhere, if you like.

We recommend you keep them on, at least in the beginning, because they can be handy for navigating upwards in the structure. In the example below, you could click on *References* or *Functions* for additional references.

We suggest you experiment. Sometimes the links are useful, other times not.



- a. Preferences > Show topic path: Yes or No.
  - b. Preferences > Topic path position: Choose: Above, Below or Above and Below.



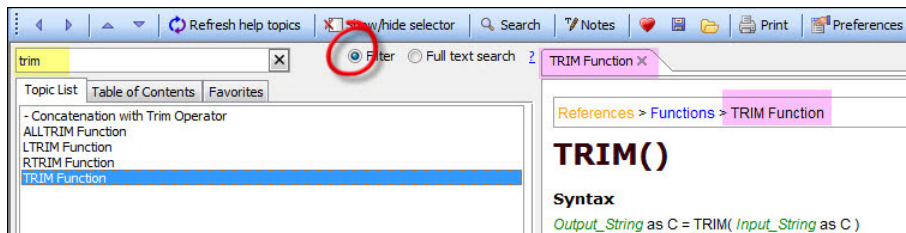
## Searching for topic pages

There are several ways to find documents. You can search by page title, by text in the topic, or use multiple criteria. Other aids include the Table of Contents and Search Results tabs. If you have a second monitor, you will be interested in synchronized searching. We have also included notes on using help inside the Expression Builder.

## FILTER BY TITLE

Finds all occurrences in the document title.

- a. Type: Choose **Filter** (red circle below).



- b. Enter **trim** in the filter box.

- c. Select **TRIM Function**.

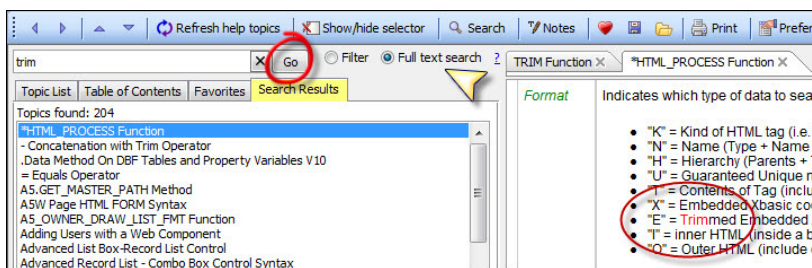
- Trim() will not return any results because the title of the page is *TRIM Function* (pink), not TRIM() as you might think.

- Now, let's see what happens when we change to full text search.

## FULL TEXT SEARCH

Finds every occurrence of the entry – full or partial word, highlighted in red.

- When you select *Full text search*, a *Go* button appears.



- a. Type: Click **Full text search** (gold arrow).

- b. Click **Go** (red circle).

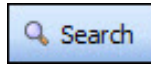
- Alpha automatically opens the *Search Results* tab.

- Returns 204 pages.

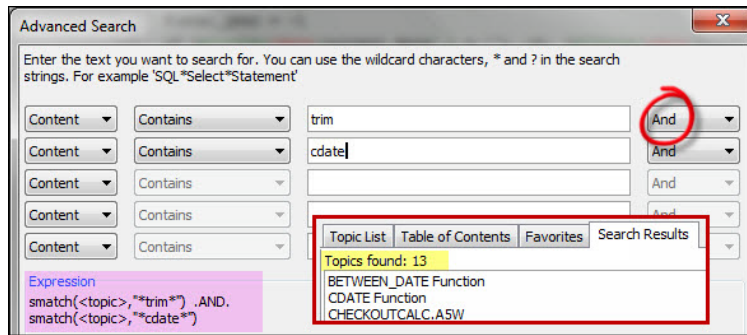
- c. Select a document and scroll to see the highlighted text.

## MULTIPLE SEARCH CRITERIA

Finds instances of up to five designations. Results are shown in the *Search Results* tab as above.



- Wildcards \* and ? are permitted, such as *SQL\*Select\*Statement* (finds only records with all entries).
- Found text is highlighted in red as above.



- Click the **Search** button on the toolbar.
- Enter **trim and cdate** in the first two boxes.
  - The expression is returned at the bottom of the window (pink).
  - Finds documents that contain *both* criteria.
- Click OK.
  - The search begins immediately.
  - 13 documents are returned at the *Search Results* tab (inset).

d. Click **Search** again.

e. Enter **trim or cdate**. (Click OK)

- Click *And* and change to *Or*.
- Finds documents that have *either* trim or cdate.
- This time 213 documents are returned.

f. Inspect a few to see how selections were made.

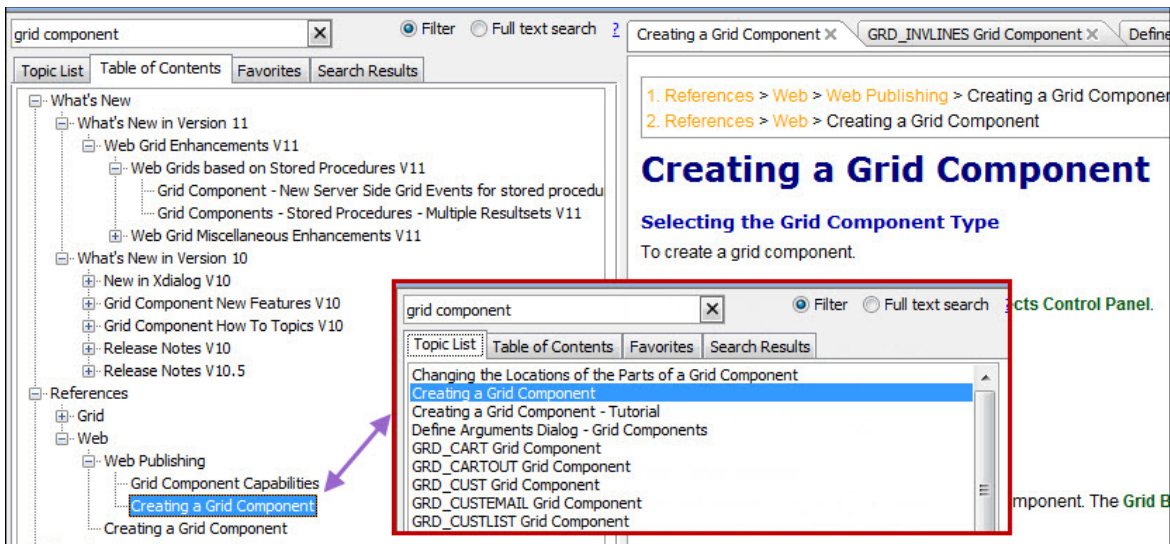
Now would be a good time to experiment with some more searches so you get a good sense of how everything works. Will save you time down the road.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS TAB

The *Table of Contents* tab shows the search criteria in a tree format. We entered **grid component** in the Filter to get the result below.

- Drilling down the various sections, opens the page references.
- The TOC can be useful for finding topics in a very long list.

- When a topic is selected in the TOC, the selection is reflected in the Topic List (inset) and vice versa.



### SEARCH RESULTS TAB

Each time you do a *Full text* or *Multiple criteria search*, the results are displayed in the *Search Results* tab.

- When you first open the DV, there is no Search tab.
- When you do a *Full text search* or use the *Search* button for multiple criteria, the tab is automatically opened and the results displayed.
- Each new search replaces the previous one.
- When you close the DV, the search contents are cleared.

### SYNCHRONIZED SEARCH

Video #3 explains *Synchronized Searches* very well so we'll save a few trees and skip it here except to note that, if you are in the process of learning Xbasic and/or are serious about writing code and don't yet have a second monitor, this just might be the time to get one.

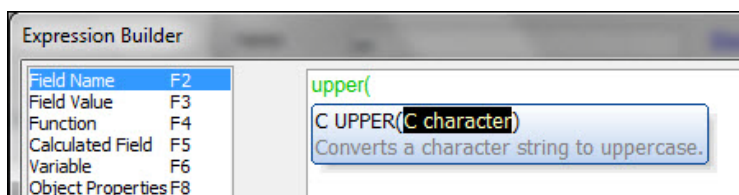


- To turn it on, click **Preferences** on the toolbar.
- Synchronize help on current function:* **Yes**.
  - Default = No.

### FUNCTION HELP IN THE EXPRESSION BUILDER

When writing expressions in the builder, you can get function help by pressing **F1** or clicking **Help on Current Function**. This will bring up the *Documentation Viewer* page. If you only have one monitor, you will need to close the page before continuing with the expression.

Here's a work around for keeping the page open.



- At the *Expression Builder*, place the cursor in the middle of the Function (**upper**).

- The full function, complete with the opening parenthesis, needs to be entered in order for this to work. Just begin typing and pick it from the suggestions.

**UPPER Function**

**Description**  
UPPER() converts all the text in a *Input\_String* to uppercase.

**Supported By**  
Alpha Five Version 5 and Above

**Examples**

```
upper("ibm") -> "IBM"
upper(FIRSTNAME) -> "BEVERLY", if FIRSTNAME contains "Beverly"
```

To locate records in a table, you may often need to create search criteria that is not case matching records, regardless of the case in which the data was entered:

```
upper(COMPANY) = "FRANKLIN'S TOWER BAKERY"
```

**See Also**  
[Character Case Functions](#)

The original document is available at <http://wiki.alphasoftware.com/UPPER+Function>

b. Click the **Help on Current Function** button or press **F1**.

### HOW EB HELP WORKS

The *Expression Builder* is opened in a “modal” window. That means you can’t move to another window when it is open. When you go to help from within the EB, the *Documentation Viewer* opens in yet another modal window that must be closed in order to continue.

### KEEPING FUNCTION HELP OPEN

If you would like to keep Function Help open while you continue to work in the Expression Builder:

c. Click the link at the bottom of the DV page (yellow) to open the document in the *Wiki*.

- You can then work back and forth between AA/A5 and the page in the Wiki.

## Saving page references

You can save page references so you can return to them quickly. There are two ways, *Favorites* and *Lists*. The first is a simple listing of pages, the latter groups multiple pages.

### FAVORITES

It’s quick and easy to save your frequently used topics in *Favorites*. At this writing, topics are added in the order saved – most recent at the bottom – and there is no way to group or alphabetize them, so a long list could become unwieldy. Keep *Favorites* short and use *Lists* (below) for more lengthy topics.

a. *Filter*: Enter **trim**.

- 5 topics are returned.

b. Select a topic in the list: **Right click > Add to Favorites**.

c. Go to the **Favorites** tab to see the entry (green).

### LISTS

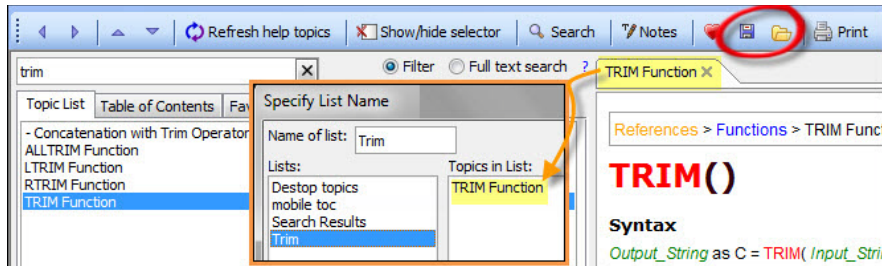
Lists are great for saving groups of pages. The important thing to remember is that they save the open *pages* – not items in the *Topic List* (see screen shot below).

a. *Filter*: Enter **trim**.

• 5 topics are returned.

b. Click the last topic in the list.

c. Right click on the Trim page and select **Close all but this tab**.



SAVING

a. Click **Save the current list of open topics ...** on the toolbar (red circle).

b. *Name of list:* **Trim**.

c. Click OK.

RETRIEVING

a. Click **Open a previously saved list of topics** (red circle).

b. Select **Trim**.

• Note that *Topics in List* contains only the open page (inset above).

ADDING PAGES

Pages can be added to a list. This operation **overwrites** the existing list. In order to add pages, you need to *open the original list first*.

a. Click **Open a previously saved list of topics**.

b. *Name of list:* Choose the List. (Click OK)

• The original pages in the list are now open in the right pane.

c. Open the new pages you want to add.

d. Click **Open a previously saved list of topics** again.

e. *Name of list:* Choose the List.

f. Click OK.

• Alpha recognizes that you have changed the list and asks if you want to overwrite.

g. *Overwrite existing list?* Click OK.

DELETING PAGES

Pages can be deleted in the following manner.

a. Click **Open a previously saved list of topics**.

b. *Name of list:* Choose the List.

c. Click [Edit List](#) at bottom of dialog.

d. Delete the pages you want to remove.

e. Click OK twice.

## Taking notes

Notes are well described in Video #4. Here are the settings and some additional thoughts.

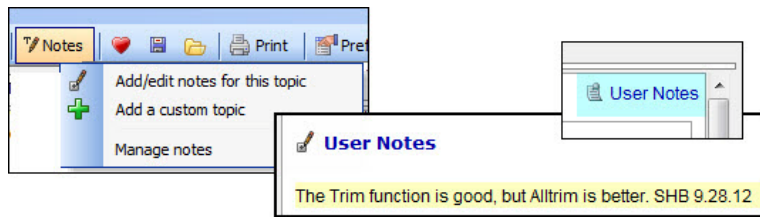
ADD NOTE TO EXISTING PAGE

You can annotate any page. Depending on where you have located the notes, these may or may not be shared with a work group (see “Notes directory” on page 321).

a. Enter **trim** in the Filter box.

b. Select **TRIM Function**.

c. Click **Notes** on the toolbar.



d. Choose **Add / Edit notes for this topic**.

e. Enter: **The Trim function is good, but Alltrim is better**. Add your initials and the date.

f. Click **OK**.

• A *User Notes* link is added to the top right of the page (aqua).

g. Click **User Notes**.

• Jumps to the notes at the bottom of the page (yellow above).

## CUSTOM TOPICS

You can create your own topic pages. They can be found as any other **AFTER** you close and reopen the Documentation Viewer.

a. Click **Notes** on the toolbar (screen shot above).

b. Choose **Add a custom topic**.

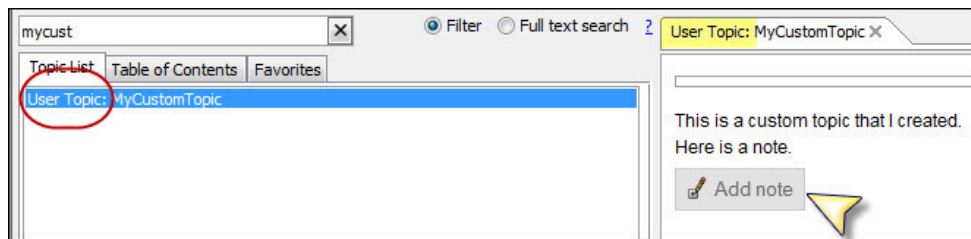
c. Specify the name of the topic: **MyCustomTopic**.

Choose a naming convention for these pages in advance. For example, start them all with “My.” It will help you locate them later. You could also add them to the *Favorites* tab or create a *List* for them.

d. **Enter** your information in text or HTML format. (Click OK)

## RETRIEVE

Do the following to retrieve the page:



a. **Close the Documentation Viewer and reopen.**

b. **Filter:** Enter the topic name: **MyCustomTopic**.

• The page is found and identified as a *User Topic* (red circle and yellow highlight).

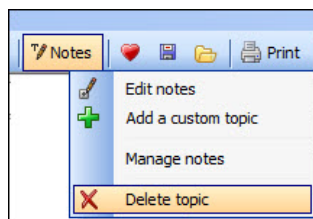
## EDIT

There are two ways to edit custom topics.

• **Topic page:** Click *Add note* (gold arrow above).

• **Toolbar:** Click *Notes > Manage Notes > Edit Note* (screen shot below).

## DELETE

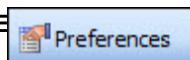


After you create the custom topic, a new item is added to the *Notes* menu.

a. Click **Notes > Delete topic**.

b. Confirm deletion.

## NOTES DIRECTORY



To identify and/or change the directory where the Notes are stored, go to:

a. *Preferences > Table for user notes*: **Click to Define**.

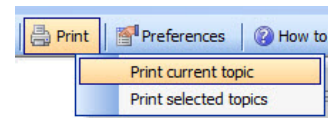
- b. Choose SQL or DBF.
- c. Complete dialog as indicated.
  - Be sure to read notes about sharing across the workspace and/or creating tables.

## Printing topics

Printing is done to a PDF file which you can then print out if you like. You can print a single page or combine multiple pages into a “book.”

### SINGLE PAGE

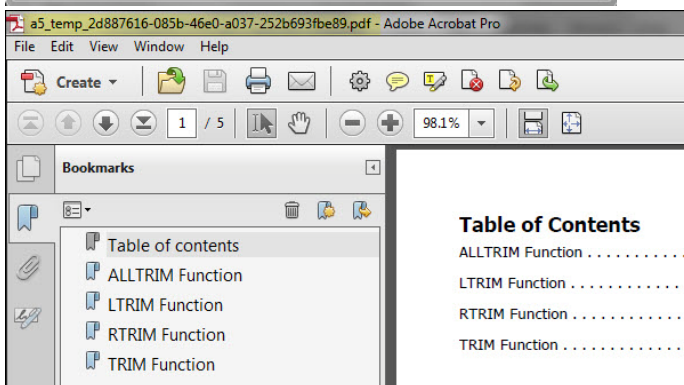
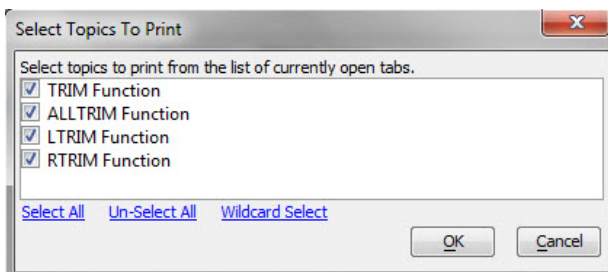
- a. Select the page you want to print from the right pane.
- b. Click **Print** on the toolbar.
  - If only one page is open, printing will begin immediately.
- If more than one page is open:
  - c. Click **Print > Print current topic**.
- PDF document will be opened in Adobe Acrobat.



### MULTIPLE PAGES

Printing multiple pages will result in a PDF document with a *Table of Contents* and *Bookmarks*.

- a. Open the pages you want to print.
- b. Click **Print > Print selected topics** (screen shot above).
- c. Choose the topics individually or use the hyperlinks at the bottom of the dialog to do one of the following:
  - [Select All](#), [Un-select All](#), [Wildcard Select](#).
- d. Click [Wildcard Select](#) to see how it works.
- e. Click [Select All](#). (Click OK)
- f. Click OK.
  - Documents are printed in alphabetical order.

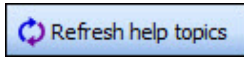


- The PDF document is opened.
- Note it has been saved as an *a5\_temp* file (top of window).
- g. **File > Save As: Rename and save in desired location.**

## Updating the documentation

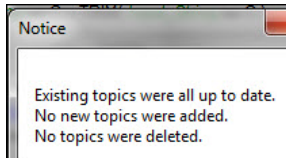
From time to time, the folks at Alpha update or add pages and remove outdated material, so you should refresh your local content periodically. There’s a reminder for that.

## REFRESH ALL TOPICS



Refreshing all the topics takes only a few moments.

- a. Click **Refresh help topics** on the toolbar.



- Alpha checks the server for revisions and returns a notice of the action taken. In this case, our topics were all up to date.

- b. Click OK.

- You are then notified that the DV will be closed and reopened.

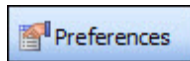
- c. Click OK.

## REFRESH A SINGLE TOPIC

You can refresh a single page, if you like.

- a. *Topic List*: Select the page.
- b. Right click > **Refresh topic from server**.

## SETTING A REMINDER



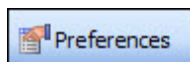
You can have Alpha remind you to refresh topics when you open the DV.

- a. Preferences > Display reminder to refresh documentation every:  
Enter number of days.
  - Default - 14 days.

## Window style

You can have the window appear as *MDI* or *Modeless*. This is well illustrated in Video #3.

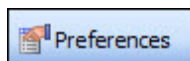
- *MDI* allows you to move from window to window. Recommended for use with single monitor. Default.
- *Modeless* means that you are “locked” in the window until it is dismissed. Good for users with dual monitors.
- The setting is located at:
  - a. Preferences > Window style.



## Restoring open pages

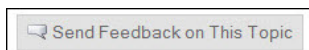
You can specify whether or not you want Alpha to restore the most recently used tabs upon opening the DV. You can also set the maximum number of tabs to restore.

- The setting is located at:
  - a. Preferences > Restore tabs on startup: Choose Yes or No.
  - b. Preferences > Maximum number of tabs to store: Enter number.
    - Default = 20.



## Sending feedback

There is a button at the bottom of each document that will open a window where you can submit comments on the topic directly to Alpha Software.



- a. Select the document, scroll to the bottom and click **Send Feedback**.
- b. Enter notes, your email, etc.



NOTE

c. Click **Send Feedback**.

- A Notice is returned with an ID number.

d. Make note of the ID number for future reference. (Click OK)

This feature is not available if you add notes (page 320) to the topic page.

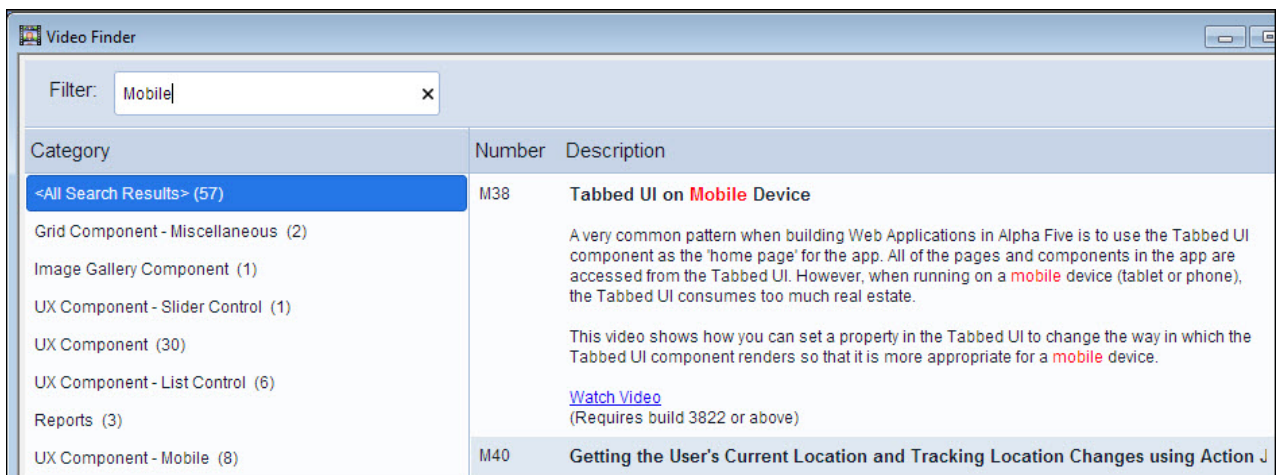
## Using the Video Finder

After all that work on the Documentation Viewer, this section is going to be a piece of cake!

AA/A5 has a wealth of videos, most of which are for web/mobile. They are easy to follow and you will find them extremely helpful. Each is identified by Number, Category and Description. Some of the numbers have prefixes, as M38 below. Others do not. Even though many created for earlier versions, they are still applicable.



1. Open AA/A5 and click **Videos** on the main toolbar.<sup>1</sup>
  - Available at Web Projects Control Panel and Control Panel.



2. Enter a **Filter**.

- The Category list comes up, with the number for each listed at the left (in parenthesis).

## Filtering

At this writing, only simple searches are available. There is no provision for “and,” “or,” etc. That is on the Alpha “to do” list, however, so keep an eye out for a [Search Syntax](#) hyperlink next to the filter box.

1. If you don't see the Videos button, go to Help > Video Finder. The button is coming soon – promise!

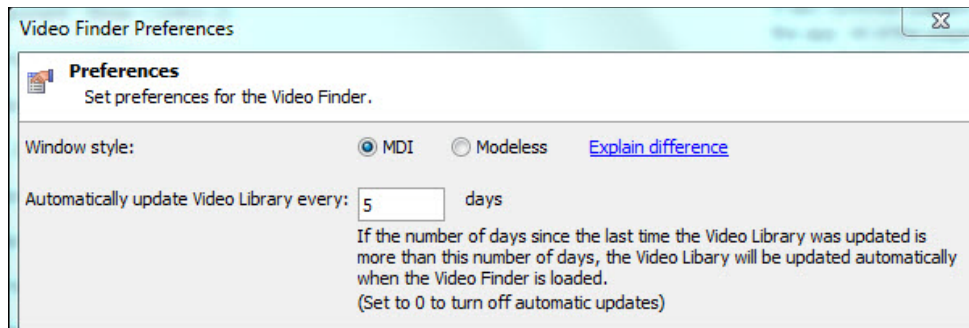


## Refreshing

Just as with the DV, you will need to refresh the video content from time to time. You can do it manually or add it to your preferences (see below).

## Preferences

You can define the Window style and set an automatic update.



3. Click **Preferences** on the toolbar.

### WINDOW STYLE

There are two window style options, MDI and Modeless.

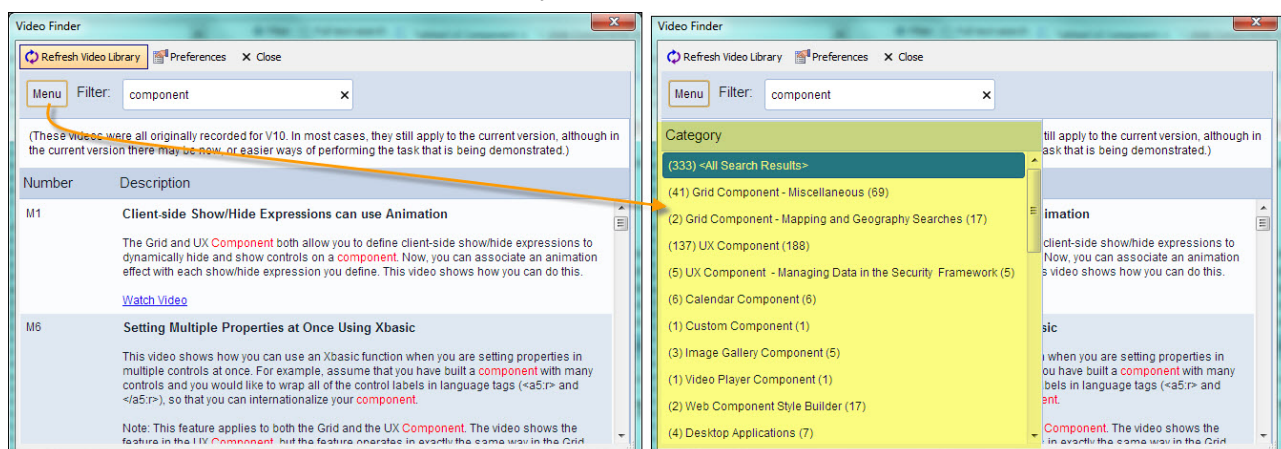
a. Choose **MDI** (default) or **Modeless**.

- **MDI:** This is the standard view (default). Recommended if you are using a single monitor. (See below for wide screen monitors.)
- **Modeless:** If you are using two or more monitors, you can drag the VF window to one of them and keep it open while you are working. This also works if you have a wide screen monitor and want to place the AA/A5 workspace on one side and the Video Library on the other.

### MODELESS WINDOW STYLE

If you choose the Modeless style, a Menu button will automatically be added when the screen is too narrow to display both the categories and the video list.

- When the Menu button is clicked, the category list slides out on top of the video list (yellow below).



Do you recognize the *Docked Panel*? Of course you do. We learned all about them at “Building a Menu with Docked Panels” on page 275. That leads us to one of the more interesting aspects of the new Video Library – it was built using the List Control! Watch the video below to learn all about it.

**AUTOMATIC UPDATE**

If the number of days since the last time the Video Library was updated is more than this number of days, the Video Library will be updated automatically when the Video Finder is loaded.

b. *Automatically update Video Library every 5 days.* (Default)

- Set to 0 to turn off automatic updates.

4. Click OK or Cancel to close the Preferences dialog.

- If you make a change and click OK, the Video Finder will be closed and reopened to make the change.

Can you believe that’s all there is to *Video Finder*? We’re done!

See how the Video Finder was developed with the List Control.

- Videos > Filter: Enter **Video Finder**. Choose:
  - VF\_V12-1. Finding Videos in the Video Library.



GO TO ALPHA VIDEO