

Table of Contents

Introduction

Alpha Anywhere	vii
Alpha Anywhere Made Easy	vii
A message to the small business community ix	
Acknowledgments ix	
Getting Started	ix
Installing the Alpha Anywhere Made Easy lesson files	xi
What files are included? xi	
Support	xii

1 Planning Ahead

What is in your future?	3
Option 1: Single office 3	
Options 2 & 3: Office, Internet and/or Mobile 3	
Let this book show the way 4	
Active- and Passive-Link Tables 4	
The decision can wait for now ... 4	
What is best? SQL or DBF???	5
Understanding the Client / Server model	7

2 Workspaces and Tables

Creating a New Workspace	11
Understanding Tables and Fields	12
Creating a new table. 15	
Closing the workspace 18	
Opening multiple workspaces 18	
Understanding the Alpha Anywhere Control Panel	18
Taking a tour 19	
Changing the Table Structure	20
Planning table design 21	
Naming your Workspace and its Objects	21
Using a naming convention 22	
Opening an Existing Workspace	23

3 Alpha Anywhere with SQL

What is SQL?	27
Using SQL Databases with Alpha Anywhere	27

- Understanding Active- and Passive-Link Tables 27
 - Using the built-in drivers 28
 - Using the dialogs 28
- Creating a New Workspace.....29**
- Adding an Active-Link Table to the Workspace.....29**
 - Understanding the Connection String 29
 - Creating a new Named Connection String 30
 - Adding a single Active-Link table 32
 - Changing field definitions 33
 - Adding multiple tables 35
 - Editing table definitions 36
 - Making View tables updateable 36
 - Editing Field Rules 37
 - Refreshing the table structure 37
 - Converting connection strings 37
- Using Active-Link Tables38**
 - Understanding Queries 38
 - Creating a Browse 39
 - Defining where the Query is run 40
- Using the Client-side Query Genie40**
- Using the Server-side Query Genie41**
 - Using the Query Builder 41
 - Understanding the Query Genie Toolbar 42
 - Previewing the filter 43
 - Ordering the records 44
 - Previewing the records 45
 - Running the Query 45
 - Creating reports 45
- More Query Options46**
 - Writing the Query yourself 46
 - Using the Value/Expression builder 46
 - Writing a SQL Select Statement 47
 - Running and modifying a saved Query 47
 - Setting Query preferences when adding/editing table 47
- Using Passive-Link Tables.....48**
 - Creating a named DataSource 48
 - Linking the named DataSource to the table 49
 - Naming and viewing the table 50
 - Refreshing the data 50
 - Reviewing & editing the DataSource definition 51
 - Editing Field Rules 51
- Understanding Record Locking52**
 - Refreshing the view of the record updates 53
- Moving from SQL to DBF54**

Connecting the SQL data to Alpha Anywhere	55
Moving from DBF to SQL	55
More Help References	55

4 The Alpha Help System

A small detour	59
How the material is organized	59
Understanding the Documentation Viewer (DV)	60
Getting off to a strong start	60
Display and navigation	61
Searching for topic pages	62
Saving page references	65
Taking Notes	66
Printing topics	68
Updating the documentation	69
Window style	69
Restoring open pages	69
Sending feedback	70
Using the Video Finder	70
Filtering	70

5 Field Rules and Data Entry

Understanding Field Rules	75
Creating Table Level Field Rules	76
Understanding the menus	76
Defining Field Rules	78
Understanding Field Rules settings	78
Understanding the Field Types tab	78
Defining Auto Increment fields	80
Changing the case of fields	81
Understanding Masks	82
Defining a default value	84
Creating a calculation	85
Understanding Functions and Expressions	85
Defining Memo, Time, Image & File Reference fields	86
Saving and closing Field Rules	86
Understanding error messages	86
Testing with the default browse	87
Moving between Restructure Table and Field Rules	88
Defining a Lookup Table	89
Understanding Source and Fill	90
Choosing the type of lookup box	91
Creating a separate window lookup	92
Adding and editing records on the fly	92

- Choosing the lookup form or browse 92
- Defining the pop-up behavior 92
- Creating a drop down list box lookup 93
- Entering, Changing and Deleting Data94**
 - Opening the default browse 94
 - Using the separate window lookup 95
 - Entering dates 95
 - Entering numbers 96
 - Entering character fields 96
 - Entering a date for the current year 96
 - Using the drop down list box lookup 97
 - Using spell check 97
 - Making data entry faster with the Speed Glossary 99
 - Canceling an entry 100
 - Deleting records 100
 - Saving records in a workspace 100
 - Changing data in a record 100
 - Applying new Field Rules to existing records 101
 - Restoring prior Field Rules 101

6 Sets and Mapped Tables

- Understanding Sets105**
 - Connecting the tables 106
- Creating a Set107**
 - Understanding links 107
 - Creating a One-to-One Link 108
 - Understanding Referential Integrity 111
 - Creating a One-to-Many Link 112
 - Completing the Set 113
 - Editing Sets 114
 - Creating Calculated Fields at the Set level 114
 - Creating Variables at the set level 115
 - Linking on multiple fields 115
 - Using the same table more than once in a set 116
 - Seeing Referential Integrity in action 117
 - Using Field Rules with sets 118
- Understanding Mapped Tables 119**
 - Creating a Mapped Table 119
 - Understanding field properties 121
 - Making fields updateable 122
 - Viewing the mapped table 123
 - Changing the display 124
 - Viewing the Xbasic 125
 - Editing an existing Mapped Table 126
 - Adding a computed column 126

Exporting to Excel 127

7 Forms and Browsers

Overview	130
Don't miss out!	130
Understanding Form Design	131
Choosing the right style	131
Creating a Default Form	133
Creating a Custom Form	135
Understanding the Top Menu	136
Understanding the Forms Toolbar	141
Working with the Floating Toolbars	143
Docking and undocking the Floating Toolbars	147
Using Dynamic Guidelines	148
Using the Right Click Menu	148
Using the Rulers Menu	150
Restoring to a prior version of the design	152
Understanding the Task Panes	152
Using the Task Panes	153
Using the Toolbox	155
Using the DragDrop List	161
Using Browse Controls	164
Using the Interactive Window	164
Testing Form design	165
Understanding the Properties Pane & Object Properties Dialog	166
Using the Properties Pane	166
Using the Object Properties dialog	169
Setting the properties of objects	169
Creating a Form with Tabs	171
Adding color to the background of the Form	171
Setting the properties of the Grid	172
Sizing the Form	173
Placing a title	173
Sizing the title	174
Renaming an object	174
Formatting the Text object	175
Creating a Tabbed Interface	176
Changing page names and colors	176
Understanding Browsers	178
Creating an Embedded Browse	179
Understanding Embedded Browse properties	181
Changing the Sort Order for the Properties Pane	181
Sizing the Browse	182
Adjusting the columns	183

- Ordering the Form's records 185
- Making a Browse read-only 186
- Changing colors 186
- Sorting by column title 187
- Testing the changes 187
- Using the Undo and Redo commands 188
- Placing One-to-One fields189**
 - Moving objects 190
 - Placing fields and their titles 191
 - Aligning objects 191
 - Equalizing vertical spacing 192
 - Adjusting field sizes 192
 - Moving objects in small increments 193
 - Equalizing horizontal spacing 193
 - Adding more fields with titles 193
 - Modifying an object without ungrouping 193
 - Ungrouping objects 194
 - Copying attributes 194
 - Viewing the form edits 196
- Adding a Record Navigator197**
 - Editing the navigator control 199
- Placing One-to-Many fields199**
- Adding Dynamic References201**
 - Creating a dynamic header 201
 - Using fields as dynamic references 203
 - Making the fields read only 203
 - Tweaking the layout 204
 - How everything works so far 204
 - Entering data into the browse 204
 - Viewing more reference objects 205
- Creating Form Level Field Rules.....205**
 - Understanding the difference between rules and properties 206
 - Choosing the right option 206
 - Locating the rules and properties options 207
 - Creating form level rules 209
 - Understanding the form rules editor 209
 - Creating a form level lookup 210
 - Formatting examples 211
- Understanding the Expression Builder212**
 - Taking a tour 213
 - Finding the right function 215
 - Using the library 217
 - Using the EB keyboard 219
 - Using the toolbar 221
 - Entering expressions 221

Creating Calculated Fields.....	222
Creating a character expression 223	
Using the ALLTRIM function 223	
Saving the expression 224	
Using a calculated field 225	
Modifying calculated field objects 225	
Creating a simple mathematical calculation 226	
Combining field types in an expression 227	
Editing calculated fields 228	
Refining the Tabbed Form	229
Creating a Rich Text object 230	
Copying and pasting objects from another form 232	
Changing the tab order 233	
Naming the form 234	
More Tips and Tricks for Forms	235
Finding records with Find by Form 235	
Filtering records with Quick Filter 236	
Creating Smart Fields 236	
Locking the titles on long or wide forms 238	
Understanding Stand-Alone Browsers	240
Opening the Alpha Sports workspace 240	
Copying a browse 241	
Modifying the appearance of a browse 241	
Modifying the appearance of a column 242	
Creating conditional color 243	
Finding records with Find by Key 244	
Ordering records 247	
Reviewing browse properties 248	
Putting a Button, a Smart Field and an Ellipsis in a Browse.....	249
Putting a button into a browse cell 250	
Adding a smart field to your browse 252	
Showing longer field contents 252	
Using the Ad Hoc browse	253

8 Introduction to the Web

Understanding Web Components (aka web forms).....	259
Why can't I use my desktop forms on the web? 259	
How the material is organized	260
Preparation for the lessons	261
Understanding the Web Projects Control Panel	261
Connecting to a SQL database 263	
Starting the Application Server 265	
Creating a new Web Project 265	
Creating a Grid Component.....	266

- Defining the Component Type 267
- Defining the Data Source 268
- Defining the Query 269
- Selecting Fields for the Grid 271
- Setting the Field Properties 271
- Defining the Grid Properties 273
- Setting up the Search part elements 274
- Setting up the Detail View elements 275
- Saving the component 278
- Previewing Web Components279**
 - Viewing at the Preview tab 279
 - Viewing in Live Preview 280
 - Viewing in Working Preview 281
 - Viewing in the Browser 281
- Testing Component design.....282**
 - Using the Detail View 284
 - Looking at the Grid settings 285
 - Using the Search Part Query Syntax 286
 - Clearing Search part values 286
 - Understanding Modeless and Modal windows 287
- Revising an existing component288**
 - Centering column contents 289
 - Copying properties to one or more fields 289
 - Preventing data entry 290
- Using Web Components on the Desktop291**
- Embedding a grid on a desktop form292**
 - Using the Grid Component 294
 - Placing the Grid Component on the form 295
 - Linking to Fields on the Form 296
- A few more notes.....296**
 - About the In-line Style Editor 296
 - About searching and finding properties 297
 - About annotating the
grid component 297
 - About getting off to a flying start 297
- More component styles297**
- Connecting to an Alpha Anywhere DBF workspace298**
- Converting from DBF to SQL299**
 - Converting an existing web project to SQL 299

9 Introduction to Mobile

- Mobile device simulator302**
 - iPhone 302
 - iPad 302

Understanding the UX Component	303
What is a dialog? 304	
What's the difference? 304	
Previewing UX Components 304	
Preparation for the lesson	305
Creating a UX Component	305
Overview of the UX Builder 305	
Understanding the Menus 305	
Understanding UX Component design 307	
Adding a single control 308	
Adding multiple controls at the same time 308	
Adding controls from a table 311	
Understanding Breaks 313	
Removing Breaks 313	
Adjusting control width 314	
Binding the UX fields to an existing table	314
Mapping the fields 315	
Adding a field and binding it in the UX builder 317	
Defining the Server-side code 318	
Adding submit and reset buttons 320	
Submitting the data to the table 320	
Editing the data 321	
Understanding auto-increment controls 321	
Hiding a control 321	
Using Wysiwyg View 322	
Previewing Mobile	323
Setting the device simulator 323	
Understanding Panel Cards 323	
Adding a Panel Header & Footer 324	
Using Mobile Components on the Desktop	326
Removing Panel Cards 326	
Adding a frame 327	

10 Operations

Preparation for the Lesson	331
Understanding Operations	331
Examining the types of Operations 332	
Using the genies 333	
Understanding the Operations Toolbar 334	
Understanding the Top Menu 334	
Running a saved operation 335	
Importing Overview	335
Importing Excel files with AlphaDAO.	336
Understanding the AlphaDAO Import Genie 336	

- Viewing the Excel file. 338
- Establishing the connection 338
- Defining the selected object properties 339
- Choosing the columns to import 340
- Running the import 340
- Viewing the table 340
- Importing to a new table 341
- Choosing the Import Type 341
- Understanding table overwrite 341
- Evaluating the import table 342
- Marking Records342**
 - Using the CONTAINS function 343
 - Marking and unmarking records manually 344
- Creating a Search and Replace (Update) Operation344**
 - Filtering the Operation 345
 - Using the STRITRAN function 345
 - Viewing the filter 346
 - Removing the filter in the browse 347
- Adding Records to a Table.347**
 - Understanding Master and Transaction tables 347
 - Moving a field 349
 - Adding an expression 349
 - Matching options 349
 - Viewing the records 350
 - Deleting records at the browse 350
 - Expanding the filter for the Append 351
- Marking Duplicate Records352**
 - Activating an Operation from the Control Panel 353
 - Using Quick Sort 354
 - Marking & deleting duplicate records at the table 355
- Copying an Operation355**
- Deleting Duplicate Records356**
- Putting the Operations on a Button356**
- Importing an ASCII Text File357**

11 Buttons, Hyperlinks & Bubble Help

- Overview.....364**
- Don't miss out!364**
- What's ahead in this chapter365**
- Creating a Button that Prints a Report365**
 - Using Action Scripting 366
 - Using the Script Editor 367
 - Enhancing the appearance of a button 368
 - Adjusting button placement on the form 369

Customizing a fly-over effect	370
Understanding button events	370
Setting Multiple Actions for a Button	372
Editing the script	375
Completing the operations	375
Commenting.....	376
Temporarily stopping an action	376
Understanding Selection Criteria for Buttons	377
Defining the selection criteria	379
Adding Custom Graphics for your Buttons	380
Putting the graphic on a button	381
Password Protecting a Button	382
Creating A-Z Buttons for a Directory	383
Understanding the dialog	384
Defining a horizontal button bar with all letters	386
Creating a vertical bar that uses a range	386
Using a Button to Open a Web Component	387
Viewing more components on the desktop	390
Creating a Hyperlink on a Form	391
Using the button genie to get hyperlink code	391
Converting Action Script code to Xbasic	392
Creating a Hyperlink on a Report that opens a Form.....	393
Setting up the links	393
Making the field look like a hyperlink	394
Choosing the linking layout	394
Using the hyperlink	395
Viewing your changes in the report	395
Creating User Instructions with Bubble Help	396
Understanding Variables.....	397

12 Inserting Images

Don't miss out!.....	402
It's all about Graphics	403
Understanding the terms	403
Understanding field and file types	404
Understanding the graphic design features	404
Static and dynamic control types	406
Understanding the HTML Editor	406
Using Image Fields in Forms and Browsers	407
Sizing the file: JPG, BMP, etc.	407
Viewing the image on the form	408
Adding an image field to a form	408
Enter or change a photo	408

Enlarging a photograph 409
Using an HTML Memo field in a browse 409
Opening a file or web page 410

13 Handy Things to Know

Overview	414
Don't miss out	414
Wrapping it up	415
Workspace Maintenance	415
Updating Indexes	415
Getting rid of the \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$	416
Compacting the workspace	417
Packing tables	418
Update, Back up, Restore and Email the Workspace	418
Alpha Anywhere software updates	418
Backing up the workspace	419
Restoring the workspace	421
E-mailing a workspace	421
Workspace Settings	421
Data entry mode	421
Naming conventions	422
ODBC connection	422
Opening Alpha Anywhere	423
Setting up security	424
Understanding Aliases	424
Alpha Anywhere File Types	425
Customize the Alpha Anywhere Startup	426
Creating a desktop shortcut	426
Naming the Title and Start bars	426
Adding a custom Icon	427
Creating a startup form	428
Hiding the Control Panel	429
Tables	430
Adding a table	430
Sharing tables	430
Deleting a table	431
Dropping a table	432
Duplicating a table	432
Emptying the table	433
Reusing a favorite table structure	433
Records	433
Deleting and undeleting records from a table	433
Deleting duplicate records	434
Copying records from one table to another	434

Removing certain records from a table 435	
Fields	435
Field widths on layouts 435	
Field widths at Table Structure. 436	
Date settings 436	
Logical fields 437	
Unbound fields 437	
Field Rules.....	437
Apply new rules 437	
Restore prior rules 437	
Auto Increment value reset 437	
Layouts — Browsers, Forms, Reports, Letters, Labels.....	438
Layout and field rules backups 438	
Sending and receiving layouts 439	
Print and/or send records with current layout 439	
Printing a report for the current record 440	
Viewing structure information 440	
Ungrouping the DragDrop list 441	
Copying a layout 441	
Using the Control Library to copy and paste objects 442	
Deleting a layout 444	
Customizing the form title bar 444	
Setting up application menus 445	
Finding the source of the layout 445	
Understanding the Trace Window 446	
Report Security 447	
Functions and Expressions.....	447
Help with Functions 447	
Color coding 447	
Entering text in expressions 448	
Error messages 448	
IF statements 448	
ISBLANK, ISNOTBLANK and PREVIOUS 449	
Importing and Exporting.....	450
Transfer data to Excel or Word 450	
Xbasic Terminology.....	451
Assuring successful script writing 452	
Reference Library	453
Learning about Reports 453	
Learning Functions and Expressions 453	
Learning Xbasic 454	
Learning Action Scripting 454	
Learning Xdialog 455	
Learning to write Web and Mobile applications 455	
Help!.....	455

Alpha Software Website 456
Alpha Software, Inc. 457
Tips and Tricks 458

Index 461