

Alpha Five Relational Database

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Manufactured by: *Alpha Software*

Preliminary Notes: *Alpha Five* had been received by Plateau PC Users Group's Product Review Chairperson for Review by a member. My purpose in reviewing this software is to learn about PC database systems and to explore potential uses on my system. A statement on the packaging states that it is for programmers and non-programmers. This presented another challenge in that I am not a PC programmer.

The version of *Alpha Five* that was received for review was version 4.5. I sent an inquiry to Alpha Software asking if version 4.5 would run under Windows XP Home Edition. A very speedy reply from Mr. Richard Rabins, suggested that the latest version, 5.0, be reviewed and he arranged for a download for version 5.0. In addition Mr. Rabins suggested an on-line demonstration of version 5.0. We arranged an agreeable date and Mr. Rabins conducted a very helpful demo.

The price of a *one user, full version Alpha Five Version 5.0 Database system* is listed at \$349.00 on the their web site. I did not find other vendors for *Version 5.0. A home edition* is available from Alpha Five for \$99.00.

System Requirements: Windows 98 or higher (e.g. 98, Me, NT, 2000, XP, or XP Professional), 64 MB Ram (96 MB or higher recommended), 200 MHz processor (300 MHz or higher recommended) and 800 x 600 screen resolution.

Installation: Installing the *Alpha Five version 5.0* programs was a snap with no snafus of any kind.

Documentation: All documentation is downloadable from *Alpha Five's* web site. Documentation is extensive and it includes the following;

- [Getting Started with Alpha Five](#) (book PDF - 04/2003 8MB) or download the [Table of Contents and each chapter individually](#)
- [User Guide](#)
- [Introduction to Action Scripting](#)
- [Learning Xbasic](#)
- [Learning Xdialog](#)
- [Xdialog Reference Help \(.CHM - 7/18/03 - 4.2 MB\)](#)
- [What's New in Version 5](#)
- [What's New in Xbasic](#)
- [Alpha Five Newsletter Archive \(.CHM - 6/25/03 - 3.2 MB\)](#)

Documentation is available on *Alpha Five's* website or printed documentation can be purchased in part or in total thru the same website. A spot review of the documentation revealed very good documentation with the exception of the tutorial as described below.

Tutorial: *Getting Started with Alpha Five* is the tutorial for learning the *Alpha Five* Database program. Although the layout is very good, I kept running into situations where I did not get expected results. This nagged me until I found a situation where there was a mistake in the tutorial itself. From that point on, I usually could find an explanation for most situations where my answers did not match the answers in the tutorial.

The tutorial utilized comprehensive data bases related to businesses for teaching the basics of *Alpha Five* relational data systems. The system is probably used mostly for commercial purposes so the choice to develop the tutorial around business applications is a sound choice by *Alpha Five Software*. As an individual rather than a commercial user, I do see great power in the application and do believe *Alpha Five* can be very useful in system. My first system to develop will probably be building a comprehensive database of my address lists and other “people oriented” files.

Benefits: In short, *Alpha Five* provides timesavings, greater accuracy and space savings. *Alpha Five* attains these benefits by allowing the user to take diverse but related data and pull it all together in a single database. In doing so redundant data in separate files can be eliminated. Since all data is then contained in a single database, one correction can take care of all applications. This will also guard against different applications having data differences in separate application files. Data can be imported from or exported to a number of common applications such as *MS Outlook, MS Excel and others systems*. *Alpha Five* provides the means to construct great input forms with error detection and prevention abilities. It also provides the means to construct pleasing and meaningful reports.

Features: *Alpha Five* provides the means to construct great input forms with error detection and prevention abilities. It also provides the means to construct pleasing and meaningful reports. Search capabilities are outstanding and the browse abilities aid in providing efficiency.

Efficiency is enhanced by the many templates and genies that are included in the package.

More advanced capabilities include their *Xbasic programming language and Action Scripting*. The tutorial introduced me to these subjects and even though I am not a PC programmer, I was able to understand these capabilities. Admittedly, understanding subjects such as these is far different than becoming proficient in their use.

Alpha Five has good Data Processing functions including sorting, data editing, field summarization and deletion of outdated records.

Summary conclusions: In fairness to *Alpha Five Software*, please be advised that I am not a PC programmer and I do not have data base experience. That helps shape this report. With that in mind, I offer the following conclusions.

If you have different files of related data in your system or if you have need for good Information Processing capabilities, *Alpha Five* could be of great benefit to you.

For those who do not have database experience or programming experience, be prepared to spend some time to get familiar with *Alpha Five* or any data base system if you are going to implement a data base application. *Alpha Five* is not an easy solution for the novice looking for a quick answer. It is possible that the *Home Edition* may be easier to digest.

Alpha Five gets my vote of confidence. I see potential benefits for it in some of my applications. It very well may be the solution to some of the quandaries I have had in regards to my applications. Only you can decide if *Alpha Five* may be of value to you. If you think it may be for you, *Alpha Five* does offer a free trial. You can learn more about Alpha Five and/or download the free trial at <http://www.alphasoftware.com/default.asp> .