



Marketing Bulletin

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AlphaODBC™ 1.4 Released

Faster, Easier to Customize, Supports Uploads from Excel®

Dear Alpha Micro Dealer:

Have you been intrigued by ODBC, but concerned about the complexity of configuring it? We are pleased to announce the release of an updated version of AlphaODBC, with the primary objective of making ODBC easier for developers to integrate into any kind of AMOS® environment.

Improved Speed

The model driver programs for AlphaODBC have been upgraded to improve performance.

Write a Database Driver In Less Time

The structure of the driver programs has been modified to facilitate custom code. It is now much easier to interface AlphaODBC to ANY AMOS database. To access a database, AlphaODBC now just needs some small sections of BASIC code.

“Quick” Mode Option

"Quick" mode is where the AMOS computer works on the SELECT request while waiting for the PC to actually request more data.

In earlier versions of AlphaODBC, the "Quick" mode was handcrafted. In 1.4, it uses the new, more standardized driver routines. Now all that is required is setting the Quick flag in the "database processor".

Simplified Index Access

Previously, index access also had to be hand crafted. The newly simplified customization routines automatically provide the “key” information for simple queries and form a foundation for supporting more complex queries. Currently more complex queries scan the whole database (sequential mode).

“Old” ISAM Model Driver Program Now Included

Would you like to use ODBC in conjunction with Old ISAM files? We can save you some time: In addition to our original ISAM example, we are adding a simple Old ISAM example with the new, simplified drivers.

More Examples To Get You Started

In addition to the example of old ISAM, we have added two more customized read-only examples. In both of these examples, there is an index to a second index file that then indexes the actual data. This may sound complex, but is actually surprisingly easy with the new driver design.

Easier Utilization of Special Keys

To help improve performance, AlphaODBC 1.4 offers improved support of secondary and special keys. As you may know, the ODBC specification is neutral to the use of keys. It is up to you to decide how best to access your data, via the driver programs. Now, AlphaODBC 1.4 offers you simpler ways to provide improved speed for special purposes by utilizing any key you wish.

New Developer's Manual

None of this will help you if you don't know how to use it. A new AlphaODBC Developer's Guide covers both defining AMOS databases for existing AlphaODBC database types (like ISAM Plus), and creating custom database types (usually a hundred or so lines of BASIC code). You no longer have to search through the AlphaODBC source code to learn the appropriate programming techniques. See DSM-00225-20, the AlphaODBC Developer's Guide, located in the documentation section of our web site at www.alphamicro.com/amphtm/docs.htm.

Upload Data from Excel to AMOS

Microsoft Excel has always integrated well with AlphaODBC for download operations. Excel's integrated Microsoft Query™ provides a convenient means for users to extract data from their AMOS files directly into Excel, once you have initially created appropriate AlphaODBC driver programs. However, Excel does not include a built-in upload function.

The next update to AlphaODBC 1.4 (1.4A) will include, as ODBCe:PrtOd.zip, a sample Excel spreadsheet containing a Visual Basic for Applications® program that provides upload functionality. Information regarding this Excel spreadsheet is included in the AlphaODBC Developer's Guide, mentioned above.

Upload functionality lets Excel serve as a source for updating your AMOS database. For instance, you could allow department heads to download budget figures from General Ledger into Excel. They could pass the updated budget spreadsheets back to a manager for review. Upon approval, the manager could click a button in the spreadsheet, and AlphaODBC would update the original AMOS data files with the newly edited budget numbers.

You can download the sample Excel spreadsheet (which includes the VBA program) from: www.AlphaMicro.com/ODBCe/PrtOd.zip. Later an ISAM Plus example will be added.

Availability: Now. Price: Free to Existing Users

AlphaODBC 1.4 is available immediately on the January, 2006 AlphaCD. The 1.4A update to that release will be available by March 15, 2006, as www.AlphaMicro.com/ODBCs/ODB14a.lit. Existing AlphaODBC licensees may update to the new version at no charge; your existing PIC Code will work. The price for new AlphaODBC licenses remains unchanged.