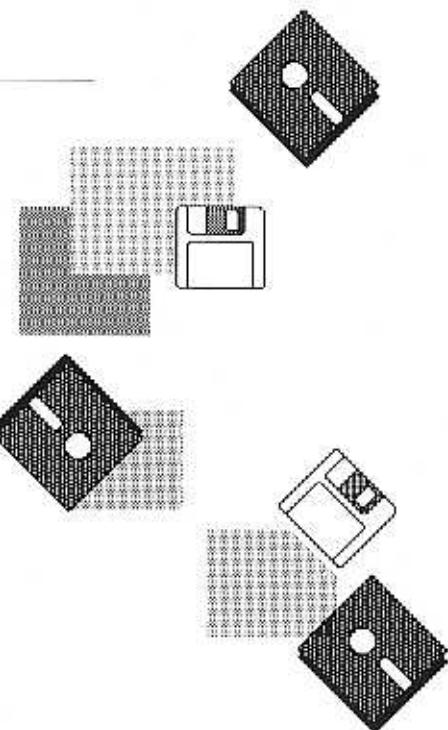


AlphaNETTM

User's Guide



ALPHATM ELECTRONIC DISPLAY PERFECTION

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Form No. 9708-8042-1
Revision Date 11/92



Welcome

Welcome to *AlphaNet*. *AlphaNet*, which works with any Beta-Brite™ or Alpha™ Message Center, allows you to quickly program a message using an IBM compatible personal computer.

AlphaNet™ was designed with user friendly software to ensure quick and easy results. You can customize your message using assorted display modes, text sizes and preprogrammed graphics. Additionally, on some signs, color and line position options are available.

To set up your Beta-Brite™ or Alpha™ Message Center and start using *AlphaNet*, read chapter 1, *AlphaNet* Basics. Then take a few moments to read Chapters 2 and 3 to review *AlphaNet* functions. General information appears in Chapter 4.

If you are not familiar with common IBM personal computer operations, please consult your computer User Guide and DOS manual for assistance.

Remember to fill out and return the registration card found in the disk mailer envelope. This will enable us to notify you about upgrades and product information.

Thank you for purchasing *AlphaNet*!

The Adaptive Micro Systems Staff



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Symbols and Text Formats Used in this Manual

This manual uses the following symbols or text modifications to make it easier for you to follow instructions:

Symbol or Format	Explanation
BOLD	Indicates an option selection, keyboard equivalent or special emphasis.
<i>Italic</i>	Indicates a title or a name.
	Use enter or carriage return.
	Press the left mouse button to activate an option.
	Press the right mouse button to cancel an option. If you need additional information about using the mouse, see your mouse manual.
Keyboard Entry or Screen Messages	How keyboard entries and screen messages appear within the body of the manual. Keyboard entries can be upper or lowercase letters.

NOTE

Throughout this manual, all message centers (Alpha and Beta-Brite) are generally referred to as "Alpha" Message Centers unless the information is specific to one type of sign such as the Beta-Brite.

AlphaNet Basics

Understanding AlphaNet Communications

AlphaNet is a simple one-way communications package that transmits data directly from a PC to a single Beta-Brite™, or single or multiple Alpha™ Message Centers on a network. *AlphaNet* was not designed for modem hookup and does not have individual sign addressing capabilities.

If you need advanced programming capabilities like those mentioned above, please contact your sales representative for information about purchasing *AlphaNet Plus*.

Making Backup Copies of AlphaNet

Before installing *AlphaNet*, please make a backup copy of your disk. Then use the backup disk for the installation instructions that follow.

First make sure that your original disk is write-protected. Then backup the original disks using the DISKCOPY command. (For information about the DISKCOPY command, see your DOS User's Manual.) Label your backup copy and store the original program disk in a safe place.

Software and Hardware Requirements

To use *AlphaNet* you will need the following basic components:

- ♦ The *AlphaNet* software package
- ♦ A personal computer (IBM Compatible)
- ♦ One Beta-Brite™ Message Center, or one/multiple Alpha™ Message Centers
- ♦ Components for desired connection. See pages 2-11 for specific component listings and configuration requirements.

Network Configuration Possibilities

Attention
Beta-Brite™
Users

Pages 2-11 of this chapter include the possible network configurations for all Alpha or Beta-Brite Message Centers operating from *AlphaNet*.

Four configuration sections are included. Select the appropriate group for your situation. After selecting a configuration, remember to read the final two pages of this chapter for installation instructions.

 **NOTE**

See Group 2A (pages 5 and 6) if you are using a Beta-Brite™ Message Center.

 **Group One**

Original Message Center Network
Alpha 210B, 221B, 710, 715, 430A,
440A, 460A, 480A, 221C and 790i
Begins on page 3.

 **Group Two**

New Message Center Network
Beta-Brite, Alpha 215, 215C,
4120C, 4160C, 4200C
Begins on page 5.

 **Group Three**

Mixed Message Center Network
(Original and New Message Centers)
Begins on page 9.

 **Group Four**

Back-to-Back Wiring of Message Centers
(Original and New Message Centers)
Begins on page 11.

If the sign(s) you are using is not listed, or if you have additional networking questions after consulting this chapter, please contact your sales/service representative.

System Requirements

To use *AlphaNet* with your Alpha or Beta-Brite Message Center(s), make sure you have the following system requirements:

- ♦ MS/PC DOS IBM™ or compatible computer
- ♦ DOS version 2.1 and higher
- ♦ Floppy drive (5.25 or 3.5)
- ♦ Hard drive (optional)
- ♦ at least 512K RAM (memory), 640K RAM recommended
- ♦ Monitor (B&W or color)

Connecting Original Single or Multiple Message Centers to a PC

Group 1

Original Message Centers
210B, 221B, 710, 715,
430A, 440A, 460A, 480A,
221C, and 790i

Group 1
Single or Multiple
Message Centers
to a PC
(See page 4)

If you have a sign listed in *Group 1, Original Message Centers* (left sidebar), you will also need the components listed below to complete your sign(s) configuration. If you do not have one of the signs listed, see *Group 2, New Message Centers* on page 5.

- ♦ 1 Converter box
- ♦ 2 T-connectors (attach to sign and converter box)
- ♦ RS485 2-wire shielded cable
- ♦ 1 RS232 Interconnect Cable Type "A"
- ♦ 1 extra T-connector for each additional sign on the network

Connecting Original Single or Multiple Message Centers to a PC

Group 1 Original Message Centers

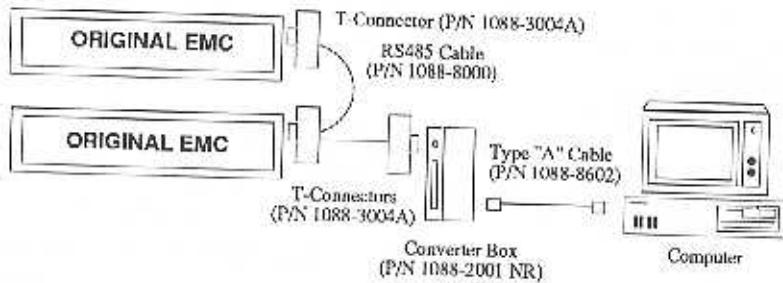
If you have only one communication port on your PC, if applicable, disconnect your mouse and use the port to connect your sign.

If you have more than 32 signs or more than 10,000 feet of cable on your network, you must use a Repeater Box. Contact your sales representative for more information.

Note: Some outdoor Alpha signs do not have a built-in slot for a T-Connector and must be hand wired. See your individual Alpha sign instructions for additional information.

To connect your Alpha Message Center(s) to a PC, follow these instructions and the accompanying illustration. Instructions for preparing T-Connectors are included with the T-Connectors. If needed, see page 3 to review the list of *Original Message Centers*.

- Step 1. Connect the message center T-Connector to a second T-Connector using RS485 cable.
- Step 2. Connect the second T-Connector to the Converter Box.
- Step 3. Using a Type "A" Cable, connect the Converter Box to the serial port on your PC.
- Step 4. For each additional message center on your network, use one T-Connector and connect it to an existing T-Connector using RS485 cable.



Connecting New Single or Multiple Message Centers to a PC

Group 2

New Message Centers
Beta-Brite, 21S, 215C,
4120C, 4160C, 4200C

Group 2A
Single Message Center to a PC
Beta-Brite, 21S, 215C
(See page 6)

Group 2B
Single Message Center to a PC
4120, 4160, 4200
(See page 7)

Group 2C
Single or Multiple Message Centers to a PC
(See page 8)

To network your Alpha or Beta-Brite Message Center(s), make sure you have the common PC system requirements listed on page 3, paragraph 1. Then select the appropriate subgroup of components (listed below) to complete your network configuration. If you do not have one of the signs listed, (left sidebar) see *Group 1, Original Message Centers* on page 3.

- ◆ 1 25 Pos. Sub-D/ to 6 Pos. RJ11 Adapter
- ◆ 1 25 ft. 6-Conductor Data Cable

or

- ◆ 1 RS232 Interconnect Cable Type "A"
- ◆ 1 Converter Box
- ◆ 1 T-Connector (attach to converter box)
- ◆ RS485 Cable as needed for each sign on the network
- ◆ 1 RS485 to 4 pos. RJ11 Modular Network Adapter for each sign on network
- ◆ 1 Eight ft., 4 conductor Data Cable for each sign on network

WARNING!

RJ11 ports on new message centers should not be used for direct phone connections. DO NOT PLUG A MESSAGE CENTER INTO A PHONE ADAPTER. DAMAGE WILL RESULT. The manufacturer warranty will not cover this type of damage.

Also, DO NOT substitute ready made lengths of Telco cable for the 8 ft. 4-Conductor Data Cable (P/N 1088-8624).

Connecting New Single or Multiple Message Centers to a PC

Group 2A

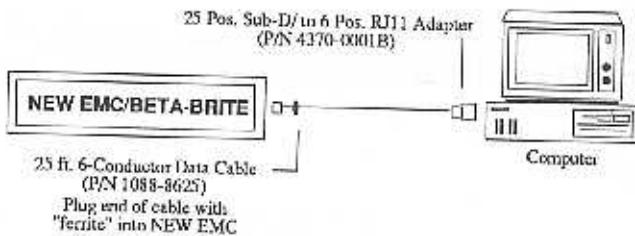
Single Message Center
Beta-Brite, 215, 215C

Note: Some message centers require the use of a "ferrite" (lump) in one or both ends of a cable.

If your message center requires the use of a ferrite, ferrite kits (P/N 1088-9040) or cables with ferrite(s) are available to dealers from the manufacturer. If needed, contact your dealer.

To connect a Beta-Brite or a single Alpha message center (215, 215C) to a PC (simple connection) follow these instructions.

- Step 1. Connect the message center to a 25 ft. 6-Conductor Data Cable. Make sure you plug the end of the cable with the "ferrite" into the message center.
- Step 2. Connect the 25 ft. 6-Conductor Data Cable to a 25 Pos. Sub-D/to 6 Pos. RJ11 Adapter. Then connect the adapter to the serial port on your PC.



Connecting New Single or Multiple Message Centers to a PC

Group 2B

Single Message Center
4120, 4160, 4200

Note: Use caution when moving the "jumper" so as not to drop it inside the message center. If the "jumper" is dropped into the case, the message center will need to be serviced.

Note: Some message centers require the use of a "ferrite" (lump) in one or both ends of a cable.

If your message center requires the use of a ferrite, ferrite kits (P/N 1088-9040) or cables with ferrite(s) are available to dealers from the manufacturer. If needed, contact your dealer.

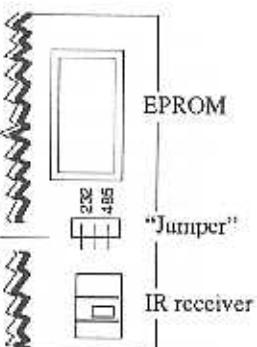
To connect a single message center to a PC (simple connection) follow these instructions. Note: For a simplified connection, an RS232 configuration is necessary on new message centers, 4000 series only. However the message center is preset by the manufacturer for RS485 use. To change the configuration, the "jumper" located inside the message center's right endcap must be adjusted.

Step 1. Disconnect the unit from its power source. Then remove the endcap on the right side of the message center.

Step 2. Find the "Jumper" located below the EPROM and above the IR receiver. See the illustration.

Step 3. Remove the "Jumper" from the two RS485 prongs and place it in the RS232 position.

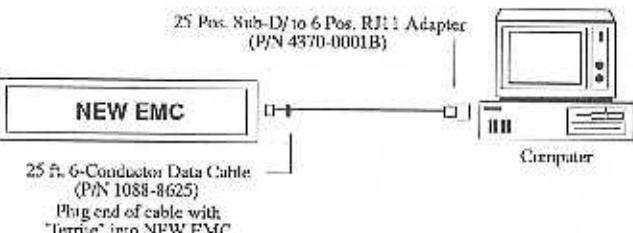
Use first two prongs for RS232 configuration.
Use last two prongs for RS485 configuration.



Step 5. Replace the endcap and restore the power to the unit.

Step 6. Connect the message center to a 25 ft. 6-Conductor Data Cable. Make sure you plug the end of the cable with the "ferrite" into the message center.

Step 7. Connect the 25 ft. 6-Conductor Data Cable to a 25 Pos. Sub-D/to 6 Pos. RJ11 Adapter. Then connect the adapter to the serial port on your PC.



Connecting New Single or Multiple Message Centers to a PC

Group 2C

Multiple Message Centers

Note: Some message centers require the use of a "ferrite" (bump) in one or both ends of a cable.

If your message center requires the use of a ferrite, ferrite kits (P/N 1088-9040) or cables with ferrite(s) are available to dealers from the manufacturer.

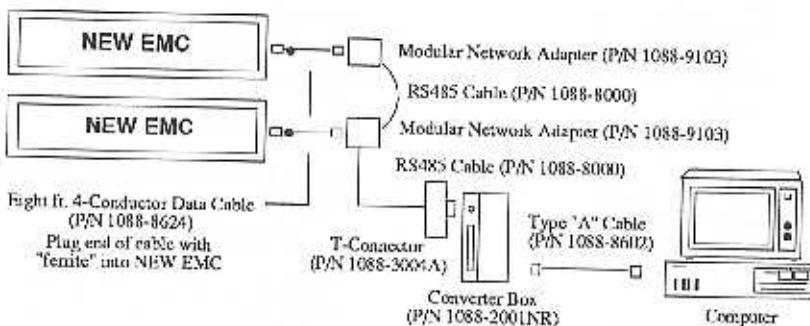
Plug the end of cable with ferrite into the message center.

If you have only one communication port on your PC, if applicable, disconnect your mouse and use the port to connect your sign. Or just disconnect the mouse when you are ready to transmit.

If you have more than 32 signs or more than 10,000 feet of cable on your network, you must use a Repeater Box. Contact your sales representative for more information.

To connect your Alpha Message Center(s) to a PC, follow these instructions and the accompanying illustration. Instructions for preparing T-Connectors and Modular Network Adapters are included with each item. If needed, see page 5 to review the list of *New Message Centers*.

- Step 1. Connect the message center to a Modular Network Adapter using an 8 foot 4-conductor Data Cable.
- Step 2. Connect the Modular Network Adapter to a T-Connector using RS485 cable.
- Step 3. Connect the T-Connector to the Converter Box.
- Step 4. Using a Type "A" Cable, connect the Converter Box to the serial port on your PC.
- Step 5. For each additional message center on your network, use one 8 foot 4-conductor Data Cable, one Modular Network Adapter, and RS485 cable as needed.



WARNING!

RJ11 ports on new message centers should not be used for direct phone connections. DO NOT PLUG A MESSAGE CENTER INTO A PHONE ADAPTER. DAMAGE WILL RESULT. The manufacturer warranty will not cover this type of damage.

Also, DO NOT substitute ready made lengths of Telco cable for the 8 ft. 4-Conductor Data Cable (P/N 1088-8624).

Connecting Mixed Message Centers (original/new) to a PC

Group 3

Mixed (Original and New) Message Centers to a PC

Original Message Centers

210B, 221B, 710,
715, 430A, 440A,
460A, 480A, 221C,
and 790i

New Message Centers

215, 215C,
4120C, 4160C, 4200C

If you have only one communication port on your PC, if applicable, disconnect your mouse and use the port to connect your sign. Or just disconnect the mouse when you are ready to transmit.

If you are mixing signs from groups 1 and 2, review the common PC system requirements on page 3, paragraph 1. Then select the appropriate subgroup of components (listed below) to complete your network configuration.

- ♦ 1 RS232 Interconnect Cable Type "A"
- ♦ 1 Converter Box
- ♦ 1 T-connector (attach to converter box)
- ♦ 1 RS485 to 4 pos. RJ11 Modular Network Adapter for each NEW sign on network
- ♦ 1 Eight ft., 4 conductor Data Cable for each NEW sign on network
- ♦ 1 T-connector for each ORIGINAL sign on network
- ♦ RS485 Cable as needed to complete network. (RS485 cable is needed to connect T-connectors on original signs, to Modular Network Adapters on new signs, and then to the T-connector at Converter Box.)

NOTE: PLEASE REVIEW THE WARNING MESSAGE ON PAGE 8

To connect your mix of original and new Message Centers to a PC, follow these instructions and the accompanying illustration. Instructions for preparing T-Connectors and Modular Network Adapters are included with each item.

- Step 1. Using a Type "A" Cable, connect the Converter Box to the serial port on your PC.
- Step 2. Using RS485 cable, connect a T-connector to the Converter Box. See page 10. (Remember an original or new sign can be nearest the PC.)

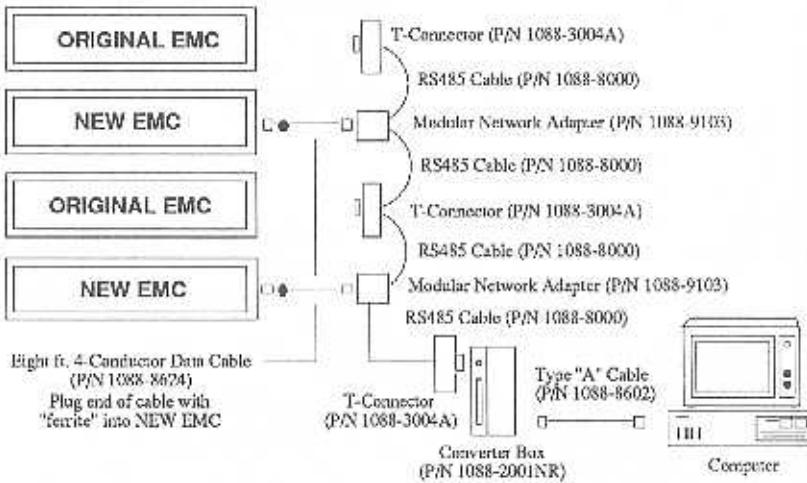
Connecting Mixed Message Centers (original/new) to a PC

Note: Some message centers require the use of a "ferrite" (lump) in one or both ends of a cable.

If your message center requires the use of a ferrite, ferrite kits (P/N 1088-9101) or cables with ferrite(s) are available to dealers from the manufacturer. If needed, contact your dealer.

Plug the end of cable with ferrite into the message center.

- Step 3. Connect the T-connector's RS485 cable to the appropriate connection.
If using a NEW sign: connect RS485 cable to Modular Network Adapter
If using an ORG. sign: connect RS485 cable to T-connector
- Step 4. Connect all ORIGINAL message centers on the network to T-Connectors.
- Step 5. Connect all NEW message centers on the network to Modular Network Adapters using an 8 foot 4-conductor Data cable.
- Step 6. Connect between all Modular Network Adapters and T-connectors using RS485 cable to complete the network.



Back-to-Back Wiring of Message Centers - All Configurations

Note: Some message centers require the use of a "ferrite" (lump) in one or both ends of a cable.

See page 10 (sidebar) for information about ferrite kits and cables with ferrites.

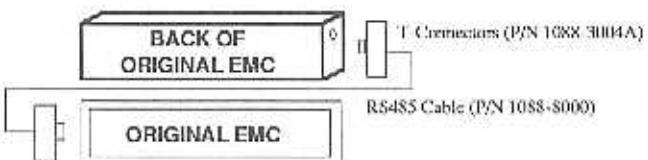
Group 4A
Original Message
Centers wired
Back-to-Back

Alpha Message Centers (original or new) can be wired back-to-back in any of these configurations: original to original, new to new, or original to new. Beta-Brite Message Centers can be wired back-to-back to the following signs: a second Beta-Brite, or Alphas 215, 215C, 4120, 4160C and 4220C. However a specific cable, P/N 1088-8628, is required. Note: If you connect the Beta-Brite to any of the signs in the Alpha 4000 series, use the RS232 port on the Alpha sign and change the "Jumper" to the RS232 configuration. See page 7 for more information about changing the "Jumper".

No step-by-step instructions are listed due to the simplicity of the connections. See the following illustrations. Note: to use a PC or the keyboard with the selected configuration, or to extend the network from the back-to-back configuration, see the appropriate illustrations and parts listings on the preceding pages.

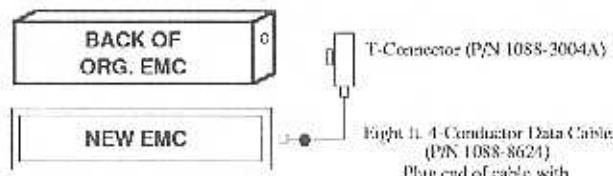
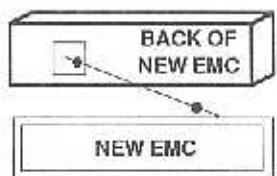
Group 4B
New Message
Centers (including
Beta-Brite), wired
Back-to-Back

Group 4C
Mixed
Message Centers
(original/new)
wired Back-to-Back



Eight ft. 4-Conductor Data
Cables with double ferrite
(ferrite on each end)
(P/N 1088-8626)

Beta-Brite to a second sign
(P/N 1088-8628)



Eight ft. 4-Conductor Data
Cables with double ferrite
(ferrite on each end)
(P/N 1088-8626)

Beta-Brite to a second sign
(P/N 1088-8628)

T-Connector (P/N 1088-3004A)
Eight ft. 4-Conductor Data Cable
(P/N 1088-8624)
Plug end of cable with
"ferrite" into NEW EMC

Installing AlphaNet on a Hard Disk

To install *AlphaNet* on your hard disk, follow these instructions:

- Step 1. Turn on your computer and monitor.
 - Step 2. At the DOS prompt, create a subdirectory for software by typing `MD\Directory Name`.
Directory Name refers to the name you choose to give your directory.
 - Step 3. Change to your new subdirectory by typing
`CD\Directory Name`.
Again, **Directory Name** refers to the name you gave to your directory.
 - Step 4. Insert the *AlphaNet* program diskette into your drive.
Remember, use the backup disks when copying diskettes.
 - Step 5. Copy the *AlphaNet* program from the diskette to your hard drive by typing `Copy Drive Name:*`
Drive Name refers to the letter name of the drive that you inserted the *AlphaNet* program diskette into, for example,
`Copy C:*`
- This completes the hard disk installation. Proceed to *Using AlphaNet from a Hard Disk* on the next page.

Using AlphaNet from a Floppy Disk

Remember, you can type either upper or lower case letters.

If you have only one communication port, COM 1, the default port, is automatically used.

To use *AlphaNet* from a floppy disk, follow these instructions:

Step 1. Turn on your computer and monitor. Make sure you have a bootup disk. Then use the normal bootup procedure for startup.

Step 2. At the DOS prompt, insert the *AlphaNet* software diskette into the desired drive. If necessary, change to a new drive by typing a new drive name, such as B:  Remember, use the backup diskettes when working with *AlphaNet*.

Step 3. At the prompt, type *AlphaNet* and if desired, the commands for the following startup options:

- ♦ Communication ports (For computers with multiple serial ports)
To activate a specific communication port, after *AlphaNet*, type /2  For more information, see page 46.
- ♦ Line positions (Use with two-line signs)
To activate the line positions option, after *AlphaNet*, type /ON  For more information, see page 46-48.
- ♦ Black/White (Improves the clarity of color emulation screens)
To activate the color emulation option, after *AlphaNet*, type /BW  For more information, see page 60.

For example, if you connect a PC to your Alpha Message Center using communication port 2, type *AlphaNet* /2  To use both lines of a two-line sign you would activate the line position option by typing *AlphaNet* /ON  If you are using a color emulation screen, such as a laptop, type *AlphaNet* /BW 

All options must be separated by a space and a slash. However, you can use any of the three options either individually or in groups of any order such as *AlphaNet* /BW /ON /2 .

For more information about each individual option, see pages 46-48 and 60.

Using AlphaNet from a Hard Disk

Remember, you can type either upper or lower case letters.

If you have only one communication port, COM 1, the default port, is automatically used.

To use *AlphaNet* from the hard disk, (after installation) follow these instructions:

Step 1. Turn on your computer and monitor. Wait for the DOS prompt to appear.

Step 2. Change to the directory that contains *AlphaNet* by typing CD\Directory Name.

Remember, Directory Name refers to the name you gave to your directory.

Step 3. At the prompt, type *AlphaNet* and if desired, the commands for the following startup options:

- ♦ Communication ports (For computers with multiple serial ports)
To activate a specific communication port, after *AlphaNet*, type /2 []. For more information, see page 46.
- ♦ Line positions (Use with two-line signs)
To activate the line positions option, after *AlphaNet*, type /ON []. For more information, see page 46-48.
- ♦ Black/White (Improves the clarity of color emulation screens)
To activate the color emulation option, after *AlphaNet*, type /BW []. For more information, see page 60.

For example, if you connect a PC to your Alpha Message Center using communication port 2, type *AlphaNet* /2 []. To use both lines of a two-line sign you would activate the line position option by typing *AlphaNet* /ON []. If you are using a color emulation screen, such as a laptop, type *AlphaNet* /BW [].

All options must be separated by a space and a slash. However, you can use any of the three options either individually or in groups of any order such as *AlphaNet* /BW /ON /2 [].

For more information about each individual option, see pages 46-48 and 60.

AlphaNet Quick Look

Quick Look Introduction

AlphaNet Quick Look lets you explore the menu options and gain a quick understanding of the program. If you do not want to review the screens and menus, you can proceed to *Chapter 3, AlphaNet Message Examples* for information about creating a sample message.

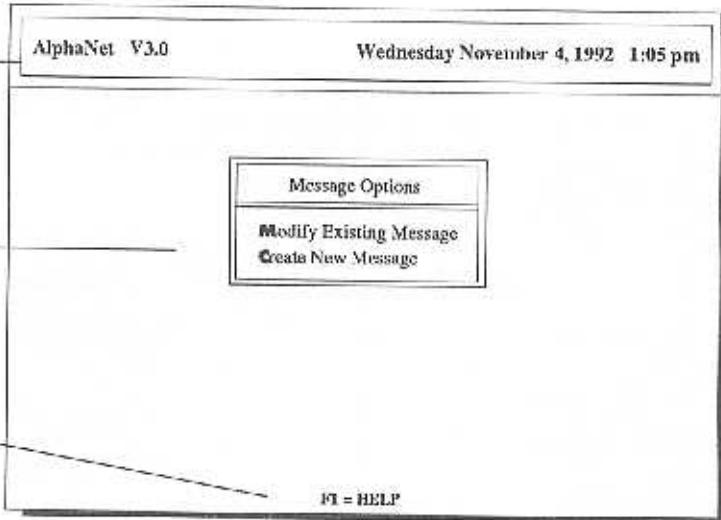
The Main Screen

All options and screens are accessed from the main menu. To select an option you can use the mouse or keyboard equivalents such as the arrow keys \uparrow , \downarrow , \leftarrow , \rightarrow and the enter/carriage return key \rightarrow .

Program name and version number.
Note: The version number will vary due to program updates.

Menu Selections

Display HELP screens



The Help Screens

If you need assistance with *AlphaNet*, the on-line *Help screens* are always available by pressing **F1**. Use **PgUp** and **PgDn** to move between the screens as available. Press **Esc** or use the right mouse button  to cancel a Help screen and return to the previous menu. The main Help screens include:

- ◆ 1 Message Option screen
 - ◆ 2 Function Keys screens
 - ◆ 1 Existing Message screen
 - ◆ 2 Message Editor screens

Additionally, individual Help screens appear for each menu option in the *Create New Message* screen. For example, if you highlight a mode and then press **[F1]** (HELP), a brief description of that mode is displayed.

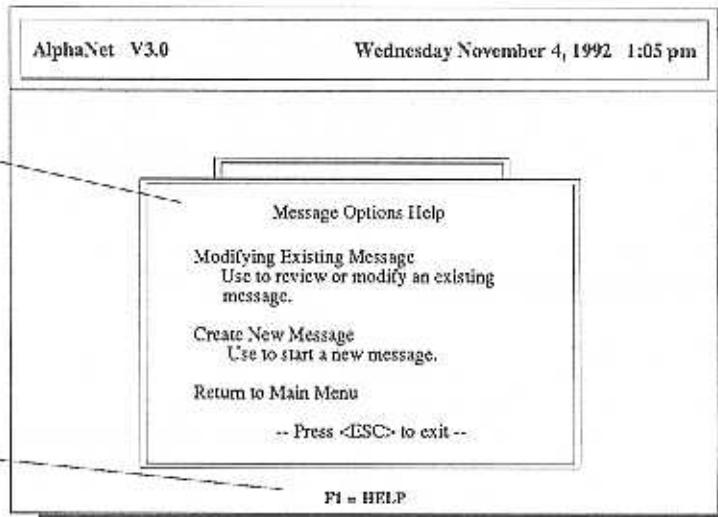
Several Help screens are also available for diagnosing PC to sign transmission problems. See the Transmit menu on page 27 and the Troubleshooting section on page 60 for more information.

Help screen displayed when HELP is selected from the AlphaNet Main menu.

Additional Help screens

If you press **F1** for HELP while the current screen is shown, the function key assignments are displayed.

Press **Esc** or to return to the Main menu.



The Help Screens

continued

Function Keys
Help screen (screen 1)
Press [PgDn] to see page 2.

Screens appear when
[F1] is pressed while
another Help screen is
displayed.

Press [Esc] or [Esc] to
return to the previous
screen.

Function Keys
Help screen (screen 2)
Press [PgUp] to return to
page 1.

AlphaNet V3.0

Wednesday November 4, 1992 1:05 pm

The function keys on your machine are as follows:

ESCAPE	Esc	Exit editor with option to save message.
EXIT	Alt F10	Exit the program.
CANCEL	F7	Cancel all changes.
BACKSPACE	Backspace	Delete the character or command to the left of the cursor.
DELETE	Del	Delete an item.
SELECT	Enter	Accept information entered or select the item.
HELP	F1	Provide on-line help.
UP	Up arrow	Move up one line.
DOWN	Down arrow	Move down one line.
LEFT	Left arrow	Move left one position.
RIGHT	Right arrow	Move right one position.
SPECIAL UP	Ctrl PgUp	Move to the very beginning.
SPECIAL DOWN	Ctrl PgDn	Move to the very end.
SPECIAL LEFT	Home	Move to the left-most position on the line.

-- Press <ESC> to exit -- -- <PgDn> for next page --

Page 1 of 2

AlphaNet V3.0

Wednesday November 4, 1992 1:05 pm

The function keys on your machine are as follows:

SPECIAL RIGHT	End	Move to the right-most position on the line.
PAGE UP	PgUp	Move up one page.
PAGE DOWN	PgDn	Move down one page.
FIELD LEFT	Ctrl Left arrow	Move left one field or one word.
FIELD RIGHT	Ctrl Right arrow	Move right one field or one word.

-- Press <ESC> to exit -- -- <PgUp> for previous page --

Page 2 of 2

The Help Screens

continued

The remaining three HELP Screens appear when HELP is selected while the *Existing Files* menu is displayed, or when you are actually working in the *Message Editor* screen.

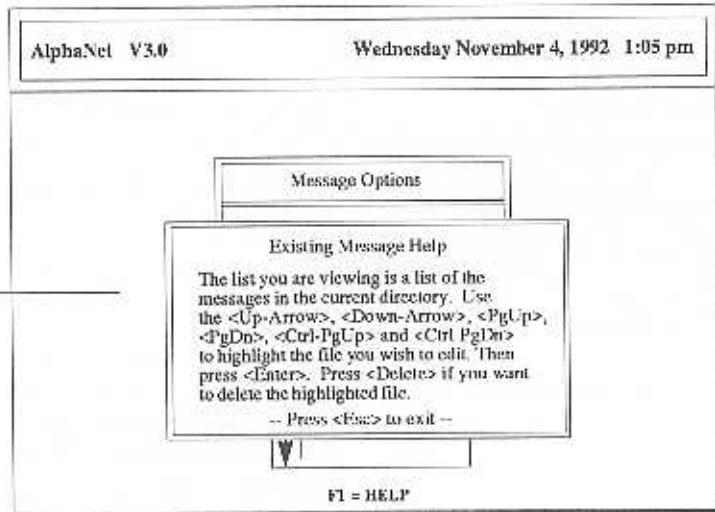
Remember, to cancel a HELP screen, press **Esc** or **□■** until you return to the desired screen or menu.

Existing Files menu
Help screen.

Screen appears when you
press **F1** (HELP) while
the Existing Files menu is
displayed.

Press **F1** to display the
function key assignments.

Press **Esc** or **□■** to
return to the Existing
Files menu.



The Help Screens

continued

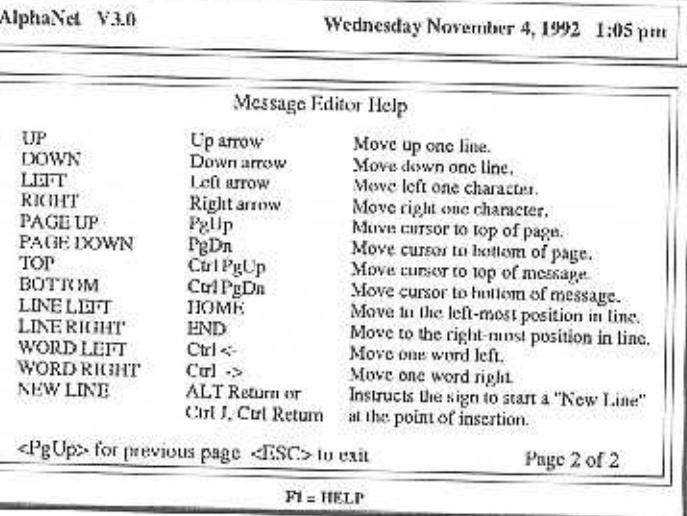
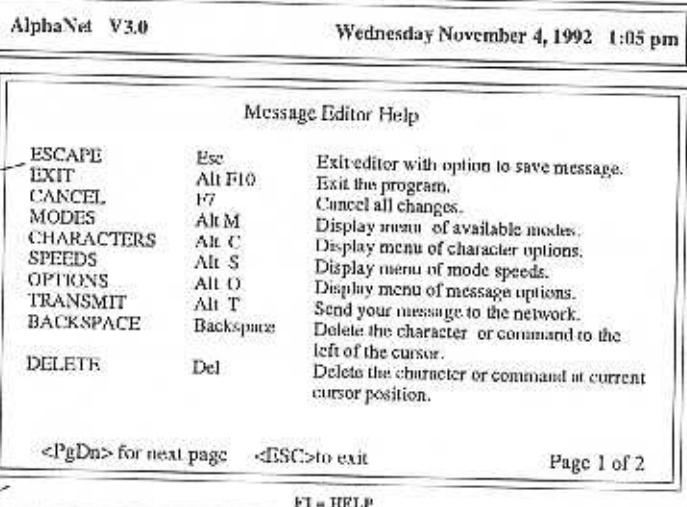
Message Editor
Help screen (screen 1)
Press [PgDn] to see page 2.

Screens appear when
HELP is selected while
creating or editing a
message.

Press [F1] to display the
function keys assignments.

Press [End] or [Home] to
return to the Message
Editor screen.

Message Editor
Help screen (screen 2)
Press [Pg Up] to return to
page 1.



Message Options

Selecting and Modifying Existing Messages

Message Options menu.

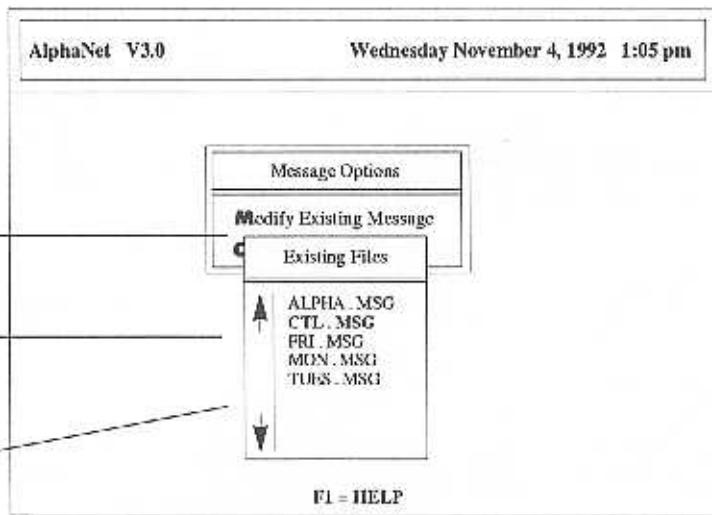
The list of Existing Files appears when you select Modify Existing Message from the Message Options menu.

To select an existing message file, use any of the key or mouse combinations. (Arrows only appear if the number of files in memory exceed the size of the menu area.)

Press **F1** to display the Help screen.

Press **Esc** or **Q** to cancel the Existing Files menu.

To create new or edit existing messages, select the desired option from the *Message Options* menu. If you select *Modify Existing Message*, a submenu of file names appears. Selecting *Create New Message* displays a new screen with additional menus for writing your new message.



- ♦ Use the up/down arrow keys, for example: **↑ ↓**.
- ♦ Use the page up/page down keys, for example: **Pg Up Pg Dn**.
- ♦ Type the first letter of the filename and return/enter. For example, type **C ↵**. Note, a **↵** is not necessary until the exact file you desire is highlighted. Additional letters may be selected to further clarify a filename. For example, to find the file with the name **CTL . MSG**, you would first type **C**, then **T** and then **L** if needed. This will help you search through the files that begin with **C** until you locate the desired file. Then press **↵** to select the file.
- ♦ Using the mouse **□**, click on the menu arrows until you find the desired file, then click **□** again.

Create New Message Screen

The *Create New Message* screen includes the following menus:

- ♦ Modes (Automode, Flash, Hold, etc.)
- ♦ Characters (Five High, Slim, International etc.)
- ♦ Speeds (1, 3, No Hold Time, etc.)
- ♦ Options (Time, Temperature, etc.)
- ♦ Transmit (Sends message to signs)

When selected, each menu displays a list of options. The option you select appears on the message screen. After reviewing the screen menus, see *Chapter 3, AlphaNet Message Examples* to create your own message.

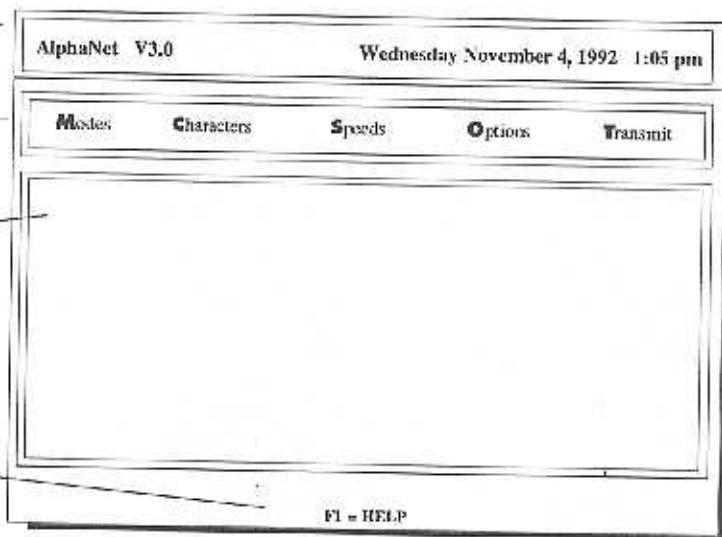
Message Editor screen

To open a menu, type **[Alt]** and the first letter of the menu name, or click **[□]** on the desired menu.

Message Editor screen work area. Your message as programmed, appears here.

Press **[F1]** to display the Message Editor Help screens.

Press **[Esc]** or **[□]** to return to the Main Menu screen.



Mode Menu Options

The *Mode* menu displays a list of 17 available modes. Individual descriptions of each appear in *Chapter 4, AlphaNet Information* or by pressing **F1** (HELP) when a mode is highlighted.

When you select most modes, a submenu may appear. One submenu displays direction selections for the *Wipe* and *Roll* modes. The second submenu displays **line position** selections only if the *line position option* has been activated. For more information about the *line position option*, see *Chapter 4, AlphaNet Information*.

The mode menu keyboard equivalents appear before each mode. Also, the submenu options can be easily selected by typing the first letter of each option. For example, to select the *Up* direction, type **U**. To help you identify the keyboard equivalents, they are highlighted on your screen and appear in **BOLD** in the illustrations.

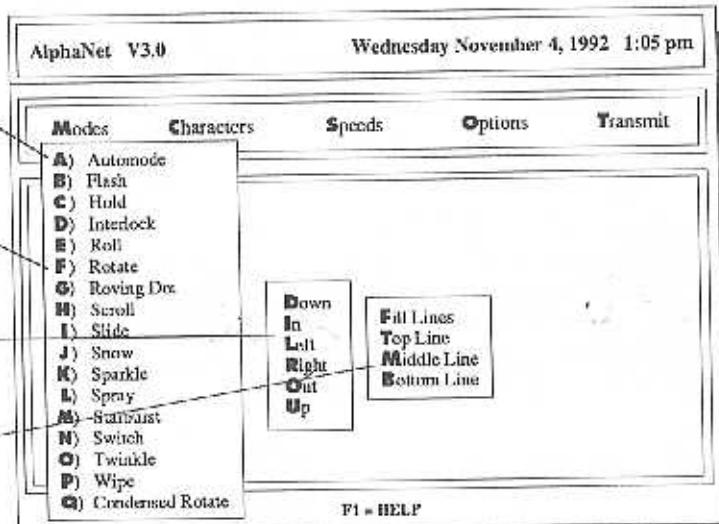
You can also use the **(+)** and **(-)** arrows along with **(←)**, or point to the desired selection and click **(█)**.

The Mode menu displays these available modes.

To select a mode from the keyboard, type the keyboard equivalent, or use **(↑)** and **(↓)**. Then press **(→)**. Or using the mouse, point to the desired mode and click **(█)**.

Press **[Esc]** or **(██)** to close the menu.

Submenus displayed when you select some modes. Press **F1** to display additional HELP screens for each submenu selection. (Second submenu only appears if *Line Position* option has been activated on startup.)



Character Menu Options

The *Character* menu displays a list of available character heights and character options such as *Slim* and *Wide*. Note, not all Character menu selections work on every sign. For individual sign capabilities, see *Chapter 4, AlphaNet Information*.

The character options are selected just like the options in the other menus, either by keyboard equivalents or by using a mouse.

Two submenus appear when *International* is selected. The first submenu requests you to enter the *Base Character* of an international character, such as A. Once the base character is entered, a second submenu appears listing the available *International* characters. For a description of *Character* options and *International* characters, press **F1** (HELP) or see *Chapter 4, AlphaNet Information*.

The Character menu displays these available options.

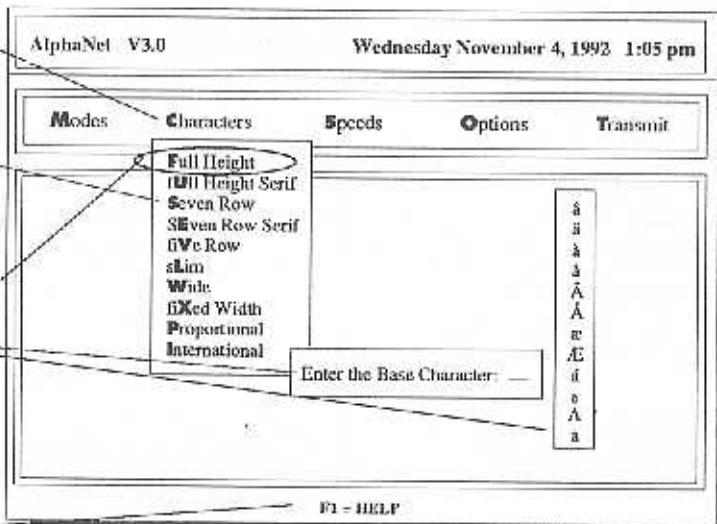
Remember, to select a character option from the keyboard, use the keyboard equivalents (**BOLD**, **Or +** and **+**). Then press **+**. Or using the mouse, point to the desired character and click **█**.

Press **Esc** or **█** to close the menu.

Submenus displayed once you select *International*.

Full Height only works when using the *Middle Position* of the *Line Position* option. See pages 46-48 to review using the *Line Position* option.

Remember, a brief HELP screen is available for each option listed in the menu.



Speed Menu Options

The *Speed* menu displays 5 speeds and a *No Hold Time* selection. Each speed determines how fast the messages are displayed and then replaced on the sign by the next message.

Speed 1 is the slowest speed and *Speed 5* is the fastest. Use *No Hold Time* if you want your messages to display as quickly as each message can be written to the sign. Note, only the *Hold* mode should be used when using *No Hold Time*. If no speed is chosen, the display speed automatically defaults to *Speed 4*.

Note, the keyboard equivalents again are highlighted on your screen and in **BOLD** in the illustration below. Remember, you can also use the **[↑]** and **[↓]** arrows along with **[←]**, or point to the desired selection and click **[█]**.

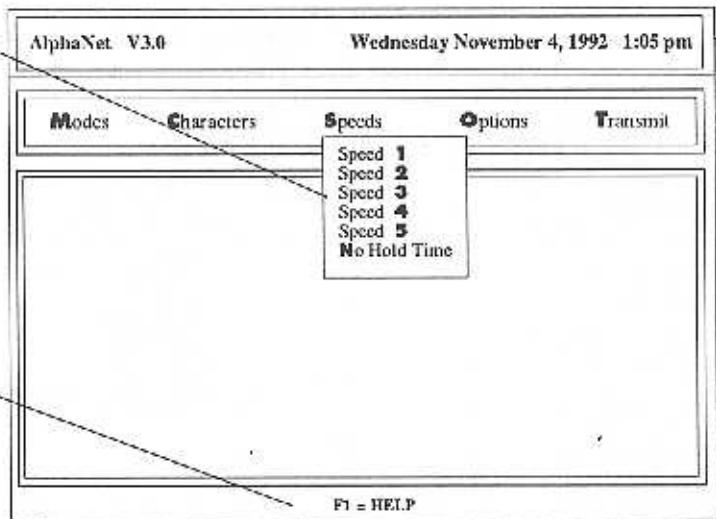
The Speed menu displays these available speeds.

To select a speed from the keyboard, use the keyboard equivalents or use the **[↑]** and **[↓]**. Then press **[█]**. Or using the mouse, point to the desired speed and click **[█]**.

Press **[Esc]** or **[█]** to close the menu.

Remember, a brief HELP screen is available for each option listed in the menu.

Note: The Speed menu does not work with the Condensed Rotate mode. The default speed is used.



Options Menu

The *Options* menu displays four additional message enhancement selections. One of three possible submenus appears when either *Temperature*, *Color*, or *Animation* is selected. Each option is selected like those in the previous menus; by using keyboard equivalents, arrow keys and/or the mouse. Additionally, a description of the options is available in the Help screens (**F1**).

The *Time* option inserts the time directly into your message. The time displayed is based on the time stored in your computer. If your computer system time is incorrect, your Alpha Message Center will reflect the error as well. Note, the Alpha Message Center time is updated each time you transmit a message, even if you do not actually display the time. To change the Alpha Message Center's master time, at the DOS prompt, type **TIME [←]**. The currently programmed time is displayed. Then type the desired time at the prompt and press **[Enter]**. See your DOS Users Manual for additional information.

The *Temperature* option displays a choice of *Fahrenheit* and *Celsius*. However, this option is not available on all signs. For individual sign capabilities, see *Chapter 4, AlphaNet Information*.

The *Color* option allows you to select from multiple colors, if you have a multicolor sign. If you do not select a color, the sign will automatically display *red*, unless the sign supports multiple colors and the message is set in *Automode*. Then the colors are randomly selected and displayed from the available colors.

The *Animation* option offers you nine graphics files that can be inserted anywhere within your messages. If you have a multicolor sign, the colors for the animation options are pre-programmed and cannot be changed. A description of the files appears in *Chapter 4, AlphaNet Information*.

Options Menu

continued

The Options menu displays these selections.

Remember, to select a character option from the keyboard, use the keyboard equivalents (**BOLD**). Or **[F]** and **[+**. Then press **[→]**. Or using the mouse, point to the desired option and click **[]**.

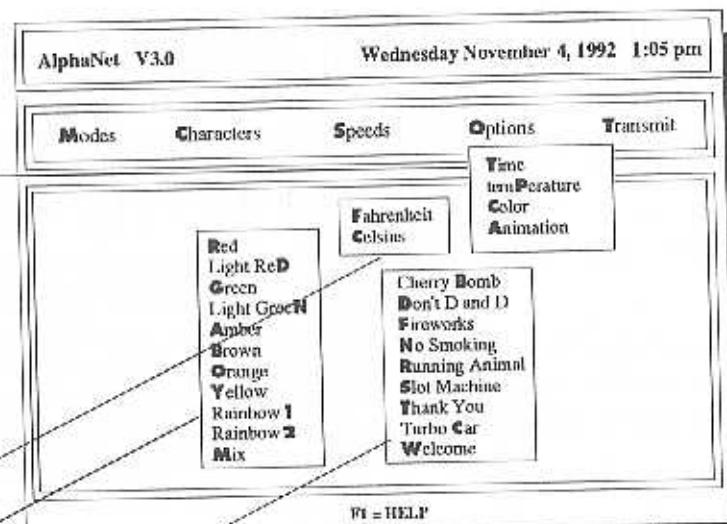
Press **[Esc]** or **[]** to close a menu.

Submenu displayed after selecting *Temperature*.

Submenu displayed after selecting *Color*. Note, not all colors are available on all signs.

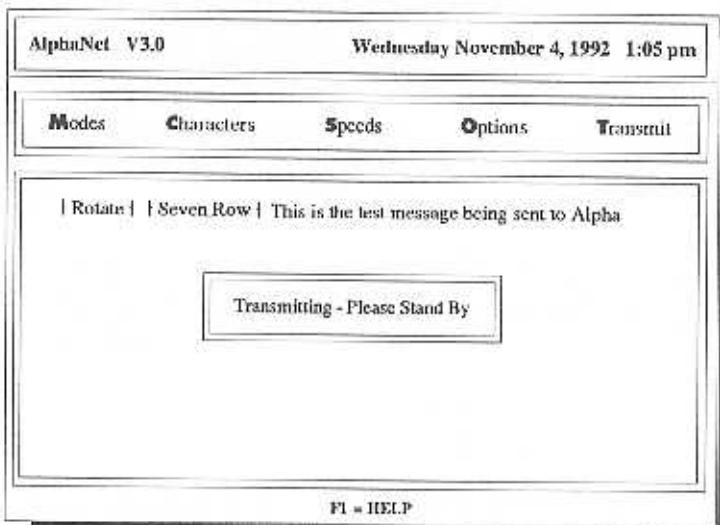
Submenu displayed after selecting *Animation*.

Remember, a brief HELP screen is available for each option listed in the menus.



Transmit Menu

To send your completed message to your Alpha Message Center(s), simply select the *Transmit* menu.



If the connection between your PC and the Alpha Message Center is not working properly, the transmitting message appears for a brief moment.

Transmitting-Please Stand By

Press **[Esc]** or **[Alt D]** to return to the Message Editor screen.

Followed by a second message (may not always appear depending on problem detected).

No cable connection established

Press **[Esc]** (wait momentarily) and then press **[Alt D]** to display a diagnostic message box. Press **[F1]** to display the diagnostic Help screen associated with the message box. Depending on the connection problem, the diagnostic messages and Help screens will vary. Not all connection problems will display message boxes.

Transmit Menu

continued

Press **Esc** or **□** to return to the Message Editor screen.

If your file still does not appear on your Alpha Message Center and no message box appears, press **Alt D** to display a diagnostic message box. Press **F1** to display the diagnostic Help screen associated with the message box.

Again, recheck the appropriate connections as instructed by the diagnostic messages and Help screens. Reselect the Transmit menu.

See the Troubleshooting section in *Chapter 4, AlphaNet Information* for additional information.

AlphaNet Message Examples

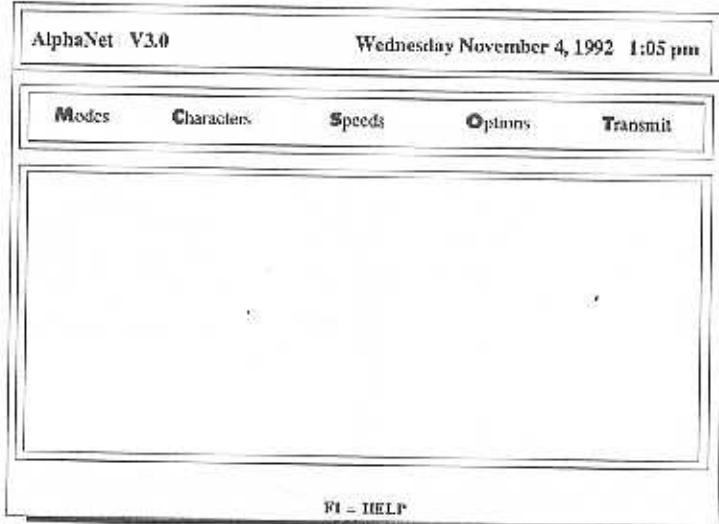
AlphaNet Message Example Introduction

Creating a New Message

This chapter is a guide to creating new and modify existing messages. Additionally you'll learn how to add *AlphaNet's* preprogrammed graphics, save message files, delete your files and exit *AlphaNet*.

To create the *AlphaNet* sample files, follow the examples on the next few pages. Remember, descriptions, shortcuts and configuration information appears in *Chapter 4, AlphaNet Information*.

Step 1. From the *Message Options* menu, select **Create New Message**.
The Message Editor screen appears.



Creating a New Message

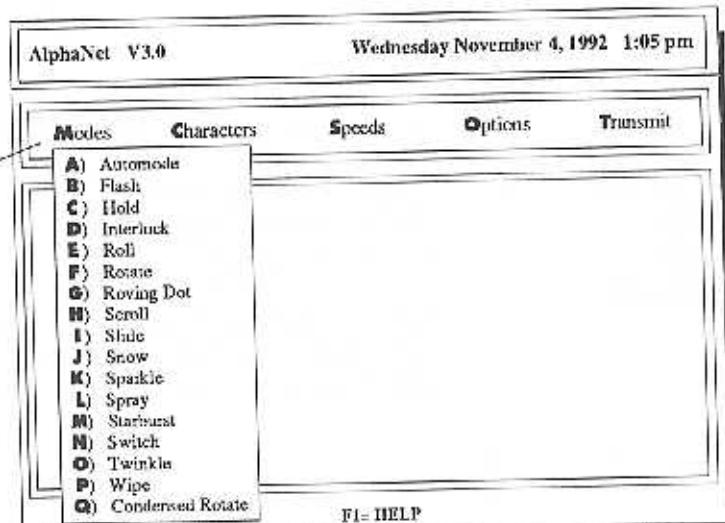
continued

Remember, to open a menu, type [Alt] and the first letter of the menu name or click  on the desired menu.

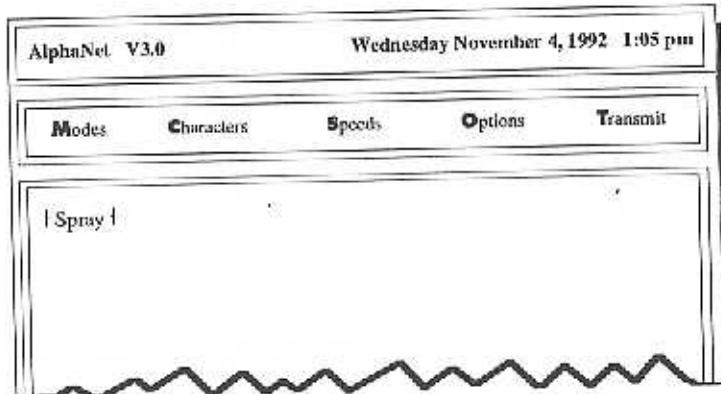
To select a specific mode from the keyboard, type the keyboard equivalent, or use  and . Then press . Or using the mouse, point to the desired mode and click .

Note, the Speed mode has no affect on the Condensed Rotate mode. The default speed is used.

- Step 2. From the *Message Editor* screen, select Modes. The Modes menu appears.



- Step 3. Select the mode Spray. The Mode menu automatically closes and Spray appears in the Message Editor screen.



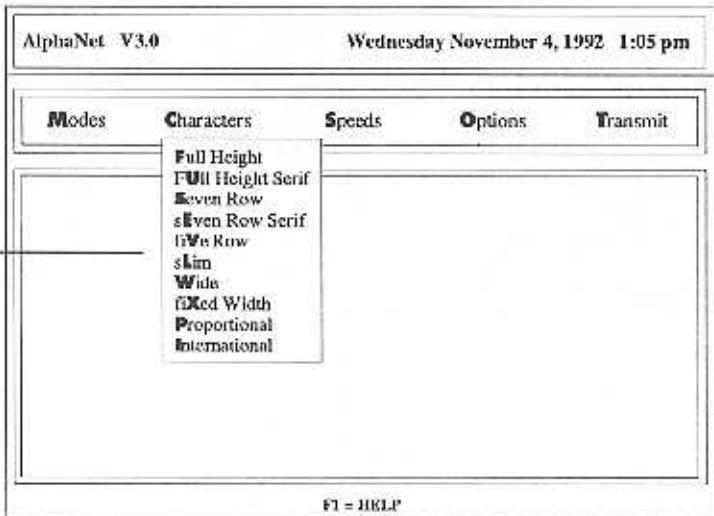
Creating a New Message

continued

Remember, keyboard equivalents appear in **BOLD**.

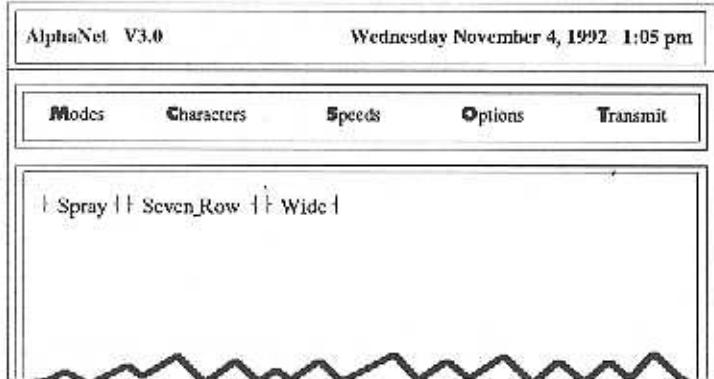
Note, the default height is Seven Row.

- Step 4. From the *Message Editor* screen, select **Characters**. The Characters menu appears.



- Step 5. Select the character **Seven Row** and then select **Wide**. The Character menu automatically closes after each selection. **Seven Row** and **Wide** appear in the Message Editor screen after *Spray*.

Remember, to correct an error during the creation of a message, use the arrow, backspace and delete keys or position your cursor using the mouse.



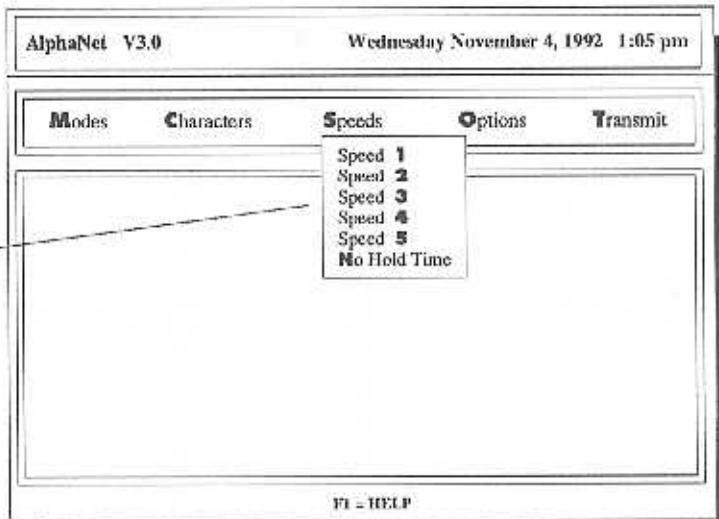
Creating a New Message

continued

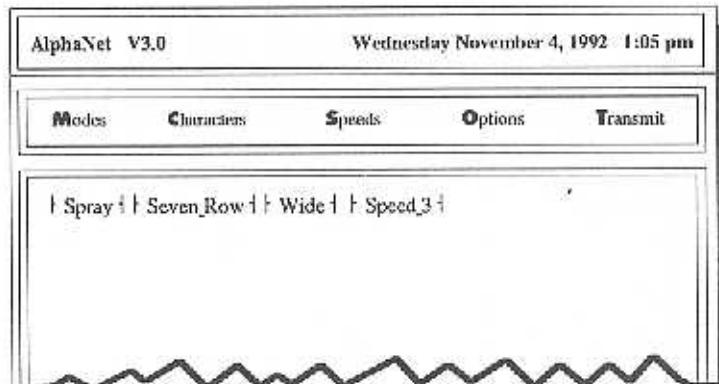
Speed 1 is the slowest display speed and Speed 5 is the fastest.

The default speed is Speed 4.

- Step 6. From the *Message Editor* screen, select **Speeds**. The **Speeds** menu appears.



- Step 7. Select **Speed 3**. *Speed 3* appears in the *Message Editor* screen at the end of the command string, after *Wide*.



Creating a New Message

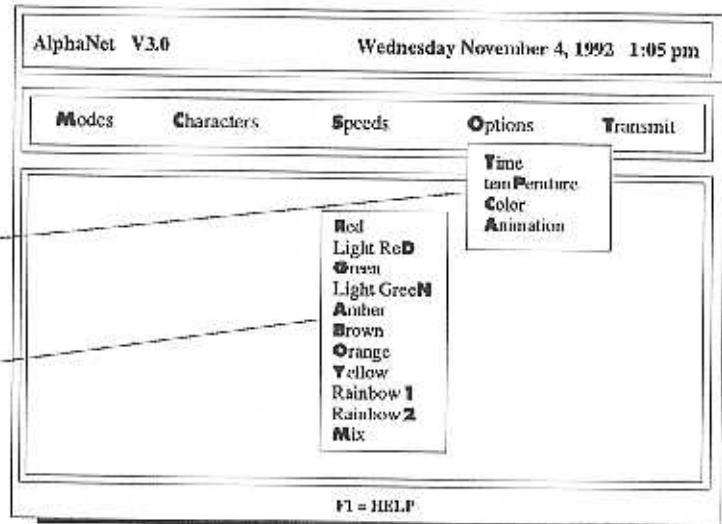
continued

For brief descriptions of the available options, see page 25 or highlight the desired option and press **F1** to display the HELP screens.

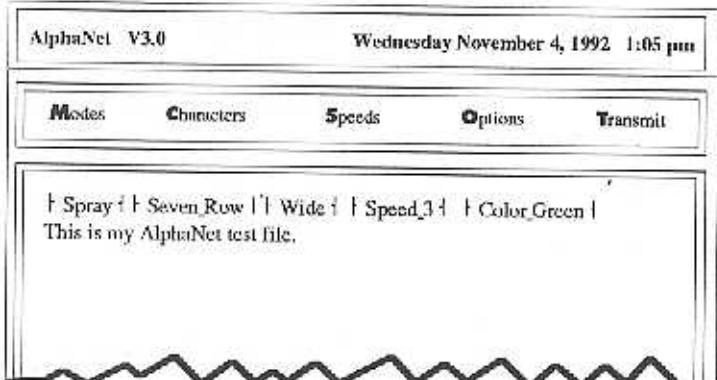
This menu appears if the color option is selected. However, the colors only work with multicolor signs.

To understand the use of carriage returns and their affect on message appearances, see the options on page 49.

- Step 8. From the *Message Editor* screen, select **Options**. The Options menu appears. If you are using a multicolor Alpha Message Center, select the **Color** option, and then choose **Green** from the color selection submenu.



- Step 9. Now, type **This is my AlphaNet test file.** Your screen should look like the following example.

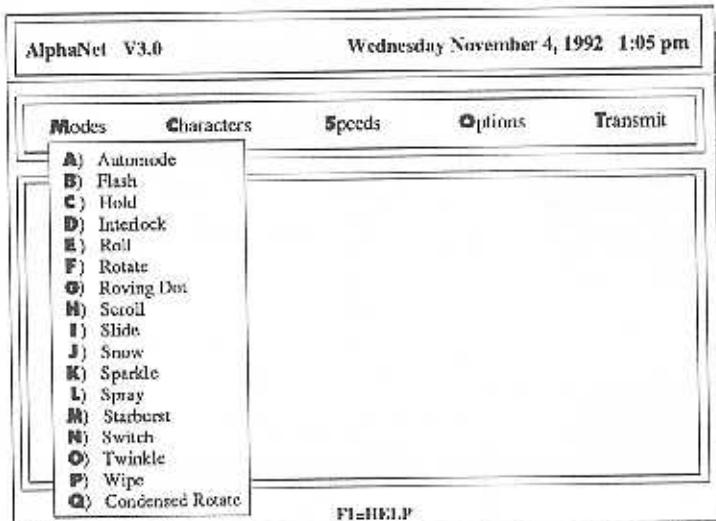


Creating a New Message

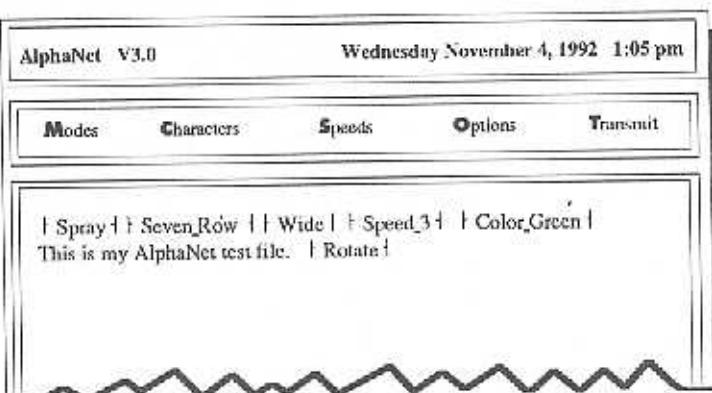
continued

To understand the use of carriage returns and their affect on message appearances, see the options on page 49.

- Step 10. From the *Message Editor* screen, reselect **Modes**. The Modes menu appears. Then select **Rotate** as the trailing mode. The trailing mode tells the message how to exit the display. However, it is not absolutely necessary.



Your screen should look like the following example.



Creating a New Message

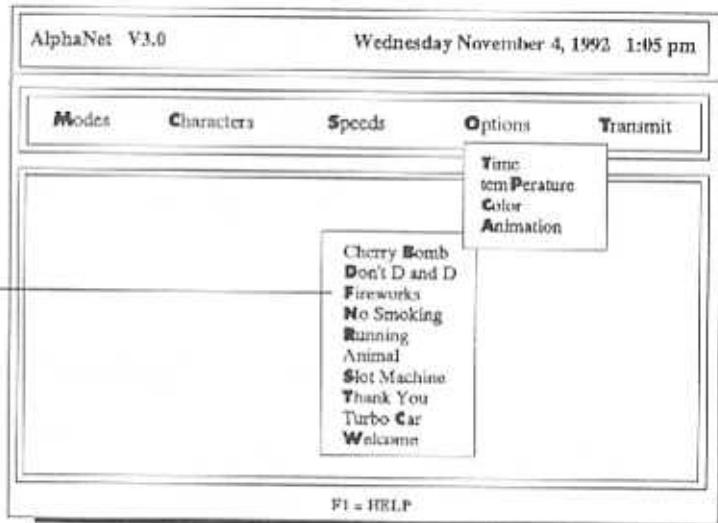
continued

Remember, keyboard equivalents appear in **BOLD**.

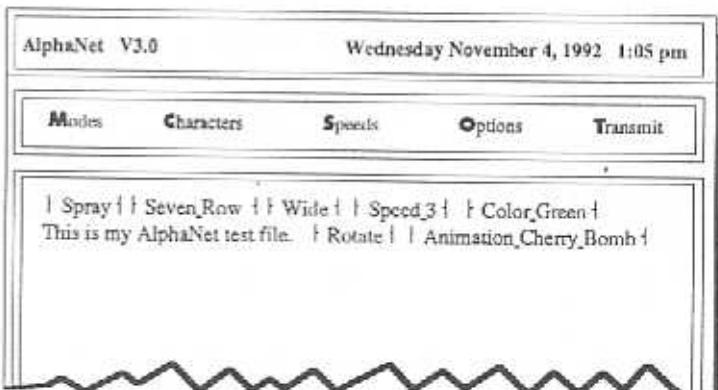
For brief descriptions of each animation, see page 53 or highlight the desired option and press **F1** to display the HELP screens.

Note, to control the height of your animations on a two-line sign, you must activate the *Line Position* option. If you do not select the *Top* or *Bottom* line position, the sign defaults to the *Fill* position. Animations on a one-line sign automatically appear in Seven Row. See pages 46-48 for more information.

- Step 11. Last, again, from the *Message Editor* screen, reselect **Options**. The Options menu appears. Then select **Animation**. A submenu of the Animation options appears. Select **Cherry Bomb** from the submenu.

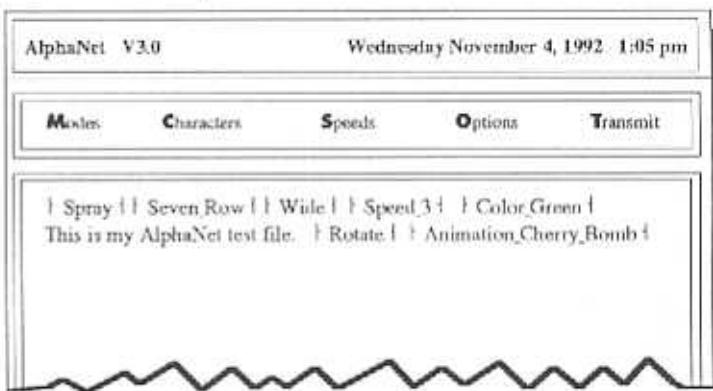


Your completed screen should look like the following example. You are now ready to transmit and save your message.

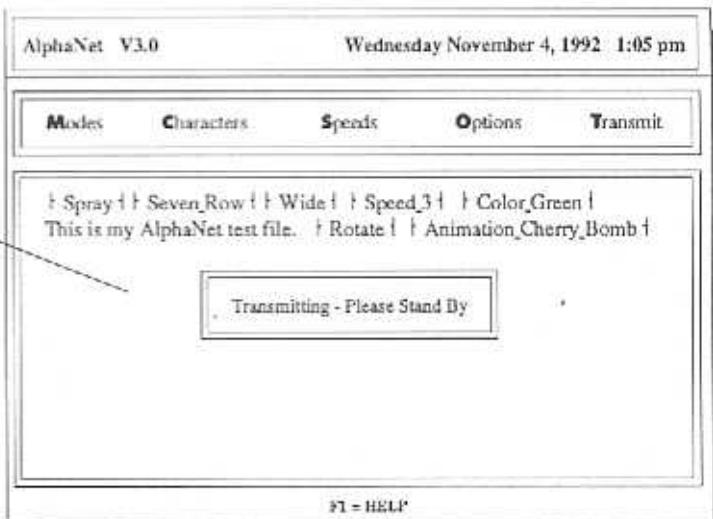


Transmitting Your Message

- Step 1. To send your completed message to your Alpha Message Center, select Transmit from the *Message Editor* screen. Make sure the file you want to send is displayed on your screen when you select Transmit.



Your screen should look like the following example. The message will appear on your Alpha Message Center momentarily.

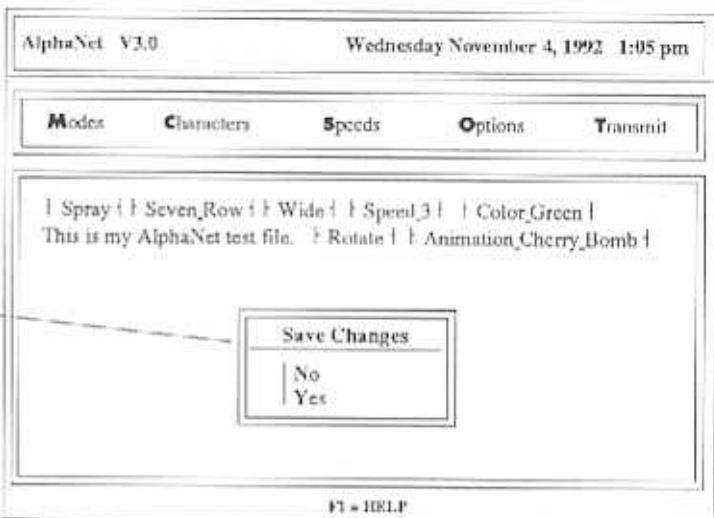


Remember, if you have problems transmitting your message, press **Alt** **F2** to display the diagnostics message boxes. If needed, press **F1** to display the diagnostic Help screens.

Recheck the appropriate connections as instructed by the messages and Help screens.

Saving Your Message

- Step 1. To save your message, press **Esc** or **■**. The save message box appears on your screen. Select Yes to save your file. Select No or press **■** to cancel the save request.



You can select the save options by highlighting and clicking **■** or type N or Y and press **→**. Remember, if you want to cancel the save request, press **Esc** or **■**.

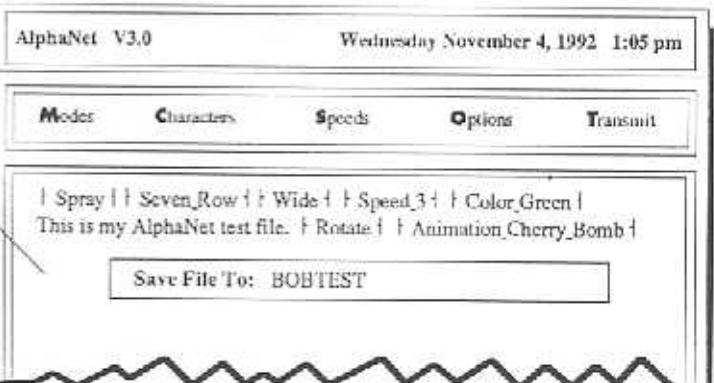
Edit the filename the same way you would edit a file. Use the insert, delete and arrow keys.

In the list of existing files, the name of your file will appear as BOBTEST.MSG. MSG is the file extension.

The maximum number of characters you can enter for a filename is eight. The period and the extension are added automatically and are not included in the final character total.

To save a file to an existing filename (overwrite), see page 41.

- Step 2. Type your name and the word TEST. For example, type BOBTEST and press **→**. The Message Options screen reappears.

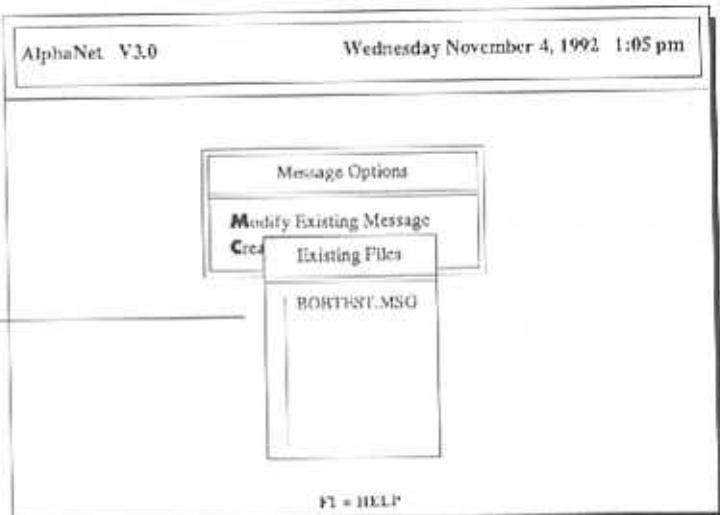


Modifying an Existing Message

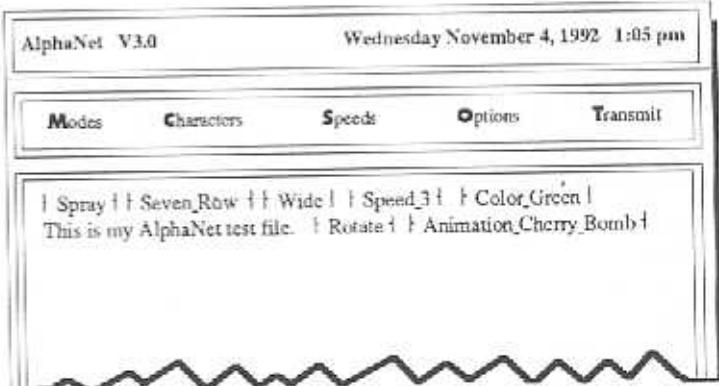
Remember, to select an existing filename using the keyboard, you can type the first letter of the filename and press **←→**. For example, to select BOBTEST, type B **←→**.

Note, a **█** is not necessary until the exact file you desire is highlighted. Additional letters may be selected to further clarify a filename. For example, to find the file with the name CTL.MSG, you would first type C, then T, and then type L, if needed. This will help search through the files that begin with C until you locate the desired file.

- Step 1. From the *Message Options* menu, select **Modify Existing Message**. The Existing Files menu appears and displays all the file(s) previously created.



- Step 2. Select your file. For example, select BOBTEST and press **←→**. The file reappears and can now be modified.

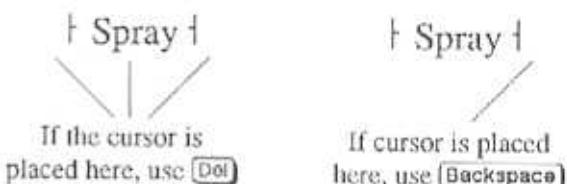


Modifying an Existing Message

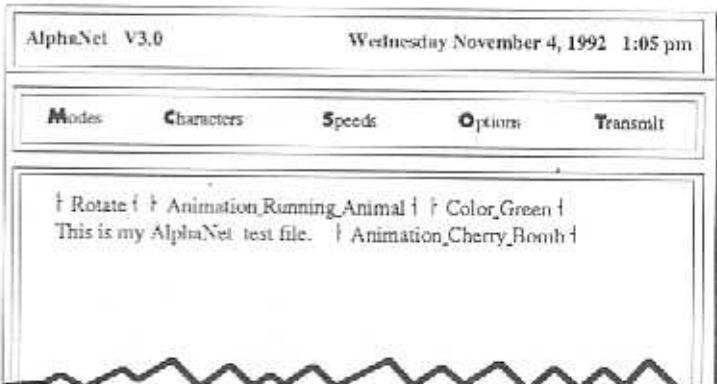
continued

- Step 3. To practice modifying a message, you can use the same message but change some of your options. Begin by deleting the *Spray* mode.

To delete the *Spray* mode and the other options as needed, position your cursor anywhere on the option, or within one character of the left or right brackets of the option and press **Del**. You can also position your cursor one character to the right of the option and press **Backspace**.



- Step 4. After deleting *Spray*, select *Rotate* from the *Mode* menu. Then select *Animations* from the *Options* menu. From the *Animations* menu select *Running Animal*.
- Step 5. Continue by deleting *Seven Row, Wide, Speed 3* and the second *Rotate*. At this point, your screen should look like the following example.



Modifying an Existing Message

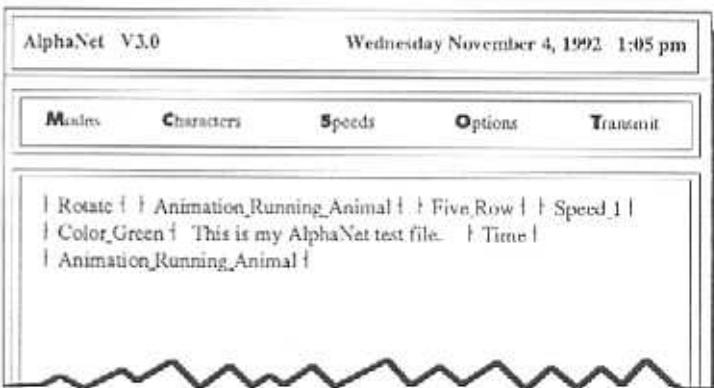
continued

To understand the use of carriage returns and their affect on message appearances, see the options on page 49.

Note, you can transmit at any time during the creation of your message.

Note, files must be displayed to be transmitted.

- Step 6. Position your cursor between *Running Animal* and *Color Green* by using the arrow keys or the mouse. From the *Character* menu, select *Five Row*.
- Step 7. Next, from the *Speed* menu, select *Speed 1*. At this time, if you have a multicolor message center, you can also change your display colors, if desired.
- Step 8. Position your cursor after your message and add five spaces after the word file. Then from the *Options* menu, select *Time*.
- Step 9. Last, position your cursor after *Time* and delete *Cherry Bomb*. Then from the *Options* menu, select *Animations* and then *Running Animal*. This completes the message modifications. Your screen should look like the following example.

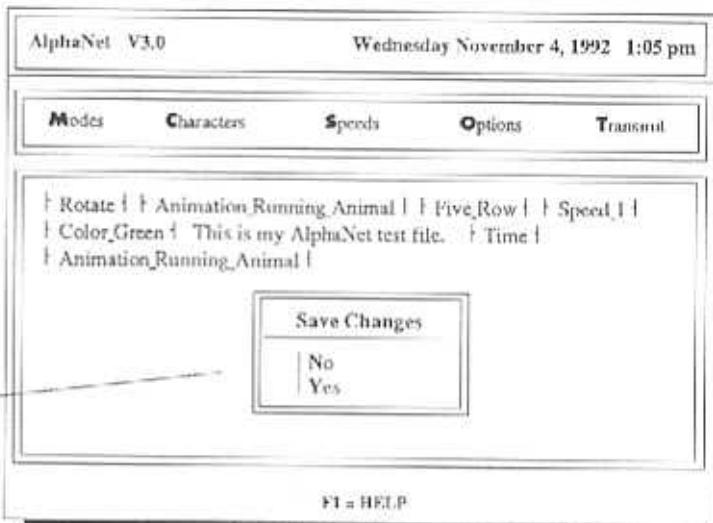


Remember, to send your completed message to your Alpha Message Center, simply select *Transmit* from the *Message Editor* screen.

Saving a modified file differs from saving a new file. See the next section for information about saving your file to an existing filename (overwriting) or to a new name.

Saving to an Existing Filename (overwriting)

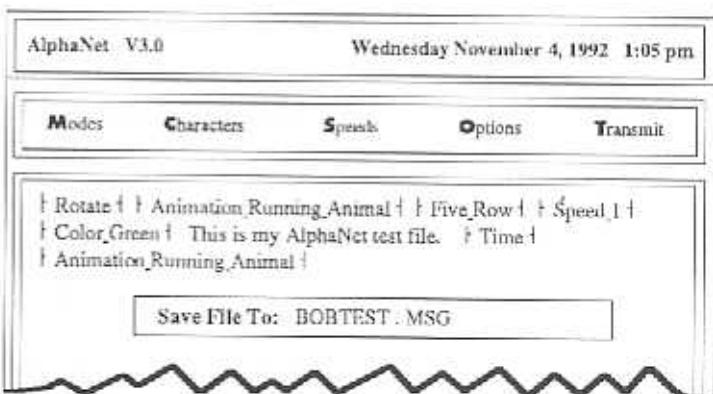
- Step 1. With your modified message still displayed, press [Esc]. The save message box appears on your screen. Select Yes to save your file. Select No or press [Esc] to cancel the save request.



Remember, you can select the save options by highlighting and clicking [Esc] or type N or Y and press [Esc].

Also, if you want to cancel the save request, press [Esc] or [Esc].

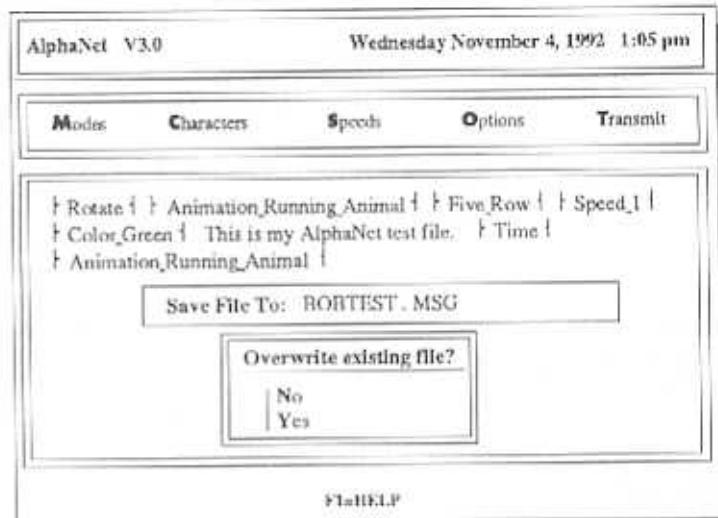
- Step 2. After selecting Yes, the *Save file to* message box appears with the original filename displayed, plus the MSG extension.



Saving to an Existing Filename

continued

- Step 3. With the original filename displayed, if you press **[F10]**, the *Overwrite existing file* message box appears.



If you select Yes, your modified message will be saved to the same filename being displayed. However, this will write over any previous information in that file. The file will then be saved and you will automatically return to the Message Options screen.

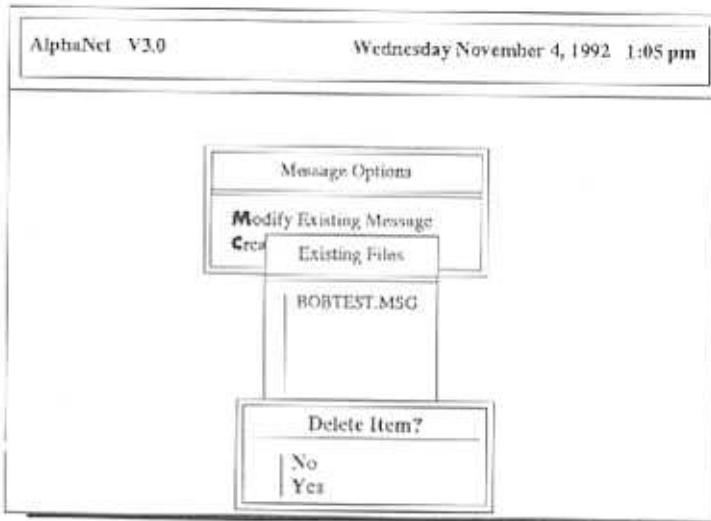
If you would rather save the file to a new filename, cancel the overwrite request, type the new name in the *Save file to* message box and press **[F10]**. You can also press **[Ins]** (insert) to display the *Existing Files* menu, select the desired filename and press **[F10]**. Again, the file will be saved and you will automatically return to the Message Options screen.

Select No or press **[Esc]** to cancel a menu or save request.

This completes the examples. See the following pages for information about deleting files and exiting *AlphaNet*.

Deleting Files

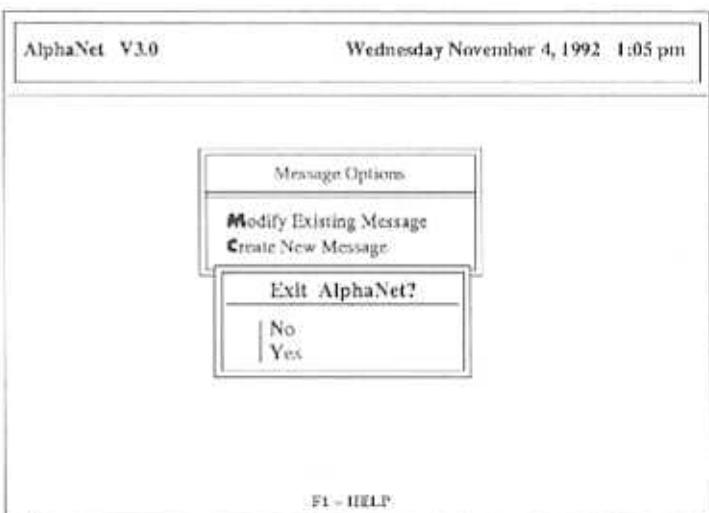
- Step 1. To delete a file, select the desired file from the *Existing Files* menu by using the arrow keys or the mouse. Then press **[Del]**. A message box appears.



- Step 2. If you select Yes to delete the file, the file will be deleted and you'll return to the Existing File menu. Select No or press **[Esc]** to cancel the delete request.

Exiting AlphaNet

- Step 1. To exit *AlphaNet*, press [Esc] at anytime that you'd like to exit the program. If you are in the Message Editor screen, you'll be asked if you want to save the message before the *Exit AlphaNet* message box appears.



- Step 2. Once the *Exit AlphaNet* message box appears, if you select Yes you'll return to the DOS prompt. Select No or press [Esc] to cancel the exit request.

See *Chapter 4, AlphaNet Information* for more *AlphaNet* tips, options and descriptions.

AlphaNet Information

General Information

Each section in this chapter is written to allow easy reference for specific functions. The sections include the following:

- ◆ communications port selection
- ◆ line position installation and usage
- ◆ line breaks and carriage returns
- ◆ AlphaNet and Alpha Message Center programming notes
- ◆ mode descriptions
- ◆ animation descriptions
- ◆ keyboard tips and shortcuts
- ◆ troubleshooting

Technical Support Information

If you need additional information not contained in this manual, please contact your sales representative for assistance.

Communication Port Selection

(For computers with multiple serial ports)

When connecting your Beta-Brite or Alpha Message Center(s) to your PC, you must plug the cable into a communications port and select the same port in *AlphaNet*. After starting *AlphaNet*, by either floppy or hard disk, you'll need to select from either communication ports 1 or 2. (*AlphaNet* supports only ports 1 and 2.)

Note, the default port is COM 1 (port 1). If you are using COM 1 for a printer, modem or mouse, use COM 2. If you do not have multiple serial ports, disconnect all your accessories and connect your sign to COM 1. If you have multiple ports and would like *AlphaNet* to automatically use the default port (COM 1) on each startup, switch your accessories to COM 2. Remember to select the same port on startup that your cable is plugged into. (Not necessary if using default port, COM 1.)

To select and activate a communications port, follow these instructions:

- Step 1. Plug the cable into an open port on your PC.
- Step 2. On startup, after typing *AlphaNet*, type a space, a slash, the communication port number and press . For example: *AlphaNet /2* 

Installing the Line Position Option

Note, all options must be separated by a space and a slash.

Also, you can use any of the three options either individually or in groups of any order.

All two-line Alpha Message Centers allow you to display your message in four different positions. However, the positions are only available if you install the *Line Position* option on startup. See page 47 for an explanation of the available line positions.

To install the option, follow these instructions.

- Step 1. On startup, after typing *AlphaNet*, type space, slash and the communications port number (if not using the default port - COM 1), Then type the word ON and press . For example: *AlphaNet /2 /ON* 

If you do not turn on the *Line Position* option on startup, the program automatically defaults to off.

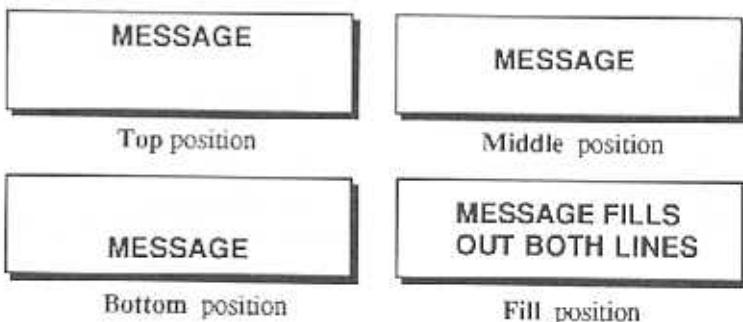
Understanding Line Positions

Note, to control the height of your animations on a two-line sign, you must activate the line position option. If you do not select the *Top* or *Bottom* line position, the sign defaults to the *Fill* position. Animations on a one-line sign automatically appear in Seven Row.

The *Line Position* option lets you display your message in several different areas on all two-line Alpha Message Centers. The positions include: *Top*, *Bottom*, *Middle* and *Fill*. Each position refers to the location of your message when it is displayed on the Alpha Message Center.

For example, if you select the *Top* position, your message will be displayed at the top of the Alpha Message Center. The *Middle* and *Bottom* positions also work exactly as their names imply. However, the *Fill* position displays as much of your message as possible within both lines until you change positions.

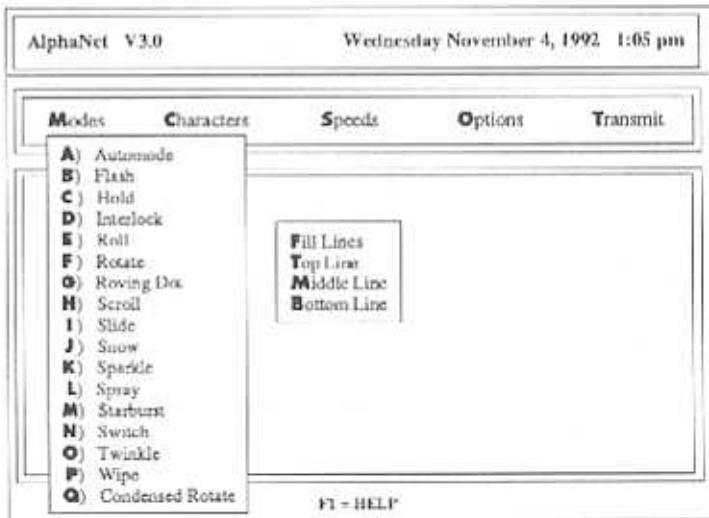
If you do not select a position and you have a two-line sign, your Alpha Message Center will automatically display your message in both lines, the *Fill* position. A one-line sign automatically displays a message in the *Middle* position. See the illustration below for an explanation of all four positions.



Selecting and Using Line Positions

If you decide to activate the *Line Position* option, the *Line Position* submenu will appear when you select most modes. Simply select the desired position from the submenu.

If you do not activate the *Line Position* option on installation, all messages will be displayed in the *Fill* position. Remember, the *Line Position* option is only applicable to two-line signs.

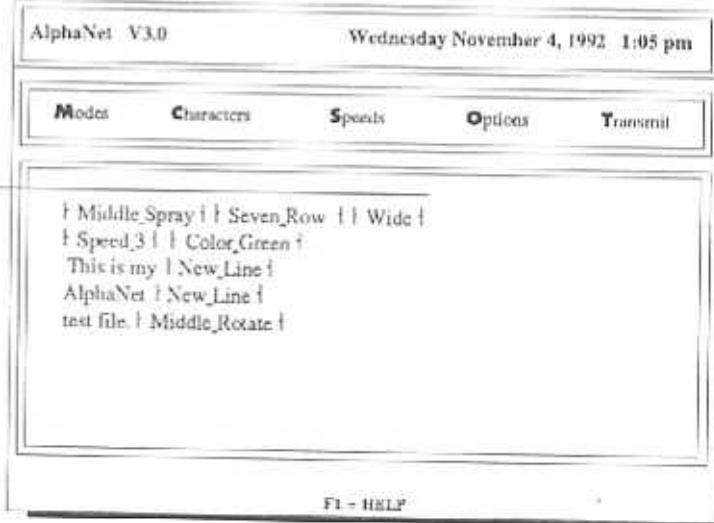


Understanding Carriage Returns and Message Appearance

AlphaNet uses two types of carriage returns, the regular keyboard return and the "New Line" return. The regular keyboard return (→) allows you to format the *Message Editor* screen with line breaks so it can be read easily. However, the sign will not read the regular carriage returns — →.

The second type of carriage return is referred to as "New Line" and appears as ↑ New_Line ↑ in the *Message Editor* screen. The "New Line" carriage return allows you to make line breaks exactly where you want the message to break on the sign. To create ↑ New_Line ↑, use **Alt** ↑, **Ctrl** ↑ or **Ctrl** J. Three choices are offered because of possible conflicts when using Windows™ oriented operating systems.

Regular carriage returns should be used wherever you want to make a break on the screen. However, they do not appear in the *Message Editor* screen and they have no affect on the messages when they appear on the sign.



AlphaNet and Alpha Message Center Programming Notes

This section contains miscellaneous programming notes about how *AlphaNet* works with the various Alpha Message Centers. Additional program exceptions may exist.

Characters and Animations

- *Wide* characters are not available with *Five Row* characters.
- *Full Height* characters (15 or 16 Row) are only available if the *Line Position* option is activated.
- *Five Row* characters appear only in uppercase letters. Lowercase letters are not available.

Line Positions

- The *Middle* position must be selected to use *Full Height* (15 or 16 Row) characters.
- The *Line Position* option must be activated to use the animations in either the *Top* or *Bottom* positions.

Modes

- When using *Rotate*, to completely clear the Alpha Message Center before the next message is displayed, also use *Rotate* as a trailing mode.
- A mode must be selected before a control code (time, temp, speed) can be used.

Alpha Message Centers, miscellaneous

- The multicolor option only works with multicolor signs.
- The temperature option is only available on incandescent signs.
- All animations and text appear in the color *red* unless you are using a multicolor sign.
- Animations on multicolor signs appear in various preprogrammed colors. These colors cannot be changed.

Mode Descriptions

AlphaNet offers you 17 different modes to choose from when creating your message. The modes and the desired colors (multicolor signs only) can be mixed throughout your message. Note, if you do not select a mode, your message will automatically appear in Automode. Additionally, animation files can be added to further enhance your display.

To choose a mode, simply select the desired mode from the Mode menu. The modes and their description are as follows:

Automode	Turns on the Automode function. Your Alpha Message Center automatically selects modes for your messages.
Flash	Your message flashes on the screen.
Hold	Your message holds on the screen for several seconds.
Interlock	Alternating rows of dots interlock your message into the center of the display from each end.
Roll	Rolls your previous message off the display while rolling the new message on. After selecting Roll you must select one of six roll directions (up, down, left, right, in, out).
Rotate	Rotates your message from the right to the left horizontally across the display.
Roving Dot	Writes your new message over the current one with a dot that bounces from side to side and top to bottom.
Scroll	Your message scrolls upward one line at a time, pushing the previous line(s) upward.

Mode Descriptions

continued

Slide	Your message slides onto the display from the right to the left, one character at a time.
Snow	Writes your new message over the current message with a snowing effect from top to bottom.
Sparkle	Your new message sparkles onto the display over the current message.
Spray	Your message sprays onto and across the display from the right to the left, one character at a time.
Starburst	Random starbursts explode your message onto the display.
Switch	Alternating characters of your message slide off the display in different directions (first character slides up, the next down, etc). New characters appear on the display in the same manner.
Twinkle	Your message is displayed in a twinkling effect.
Wipe	Your new message is wiped over the current message. After selecting wipe, you must select one of six directions (up, down, left, right, in, out).
Condensed Rotate	Rotates a condensed version of the message from right to left horizontally across the screen. Note: The Display Speed option does not work with this mode. This is not available on all Alpha Message Centers.
Trailing Mode	A mode placed at the end of a message that tells the message how to exit the display.

Animation Descriptions

AlphaNet includes nine graphic animation files you can use to enhance your messages. Animation files can be placed anywhere within your message. Note, however, that the animation files appear on the display only as pictures and do not function as modes.

To use the animation files, simply select the desired file(s) from the Animation submenu found under the Options menu. If you have a multicolor sign, the Animation colors are preprogrammed and cannot be changed. The files and their description are as follows:

Cherry Bomb	A cherry bomb complete with a fuse is displayed. The fuse burns down to the bomb and the bomb explodes. To have the next word explode out of the bomb, use HOLD as the trailing mode.
Don't Drink and Drive	A car collides with a bubbling cocktail glass and is replaced with the message "Please Don't Drink and Drive."
Fireworks	Exploding fireworks appear randomly in the display.
No Smoking	An image of a cigarette appears, is extinguished and then replaced with the No Smoking symbol.
Running Animal	An animal moves from right to left across the display.
Slot Machine	Slot machines randomly appear across the display.
Thank You	The words "Thank You" are written in script, moving left to right across the display.
Turbo Car	A car appears in the distance and then moves across the display.
Welcome	The word "Welcome" is written in script, moving left to right across the display.

Character Descriptions

Full Height	Text is displayed in full display height.* (Full height varies with the sign size.)
Full Height Serif	Decorative text is displayed in full display height.* (Full height varies with the sign size.)
Seven Row	Text is displayed in seven dot high characters.
Seven Row Serif	Decorative text is displayed in seven dot high characters.
Five Row	Text is displayed in five dot high characters.
Slim	Text is displayed in normal width characters.
Wide	Text is displayed in bold characters.
Fixed Width	Text displayed has a fixed width and spacing.
Proportional	Text is displayed in proportional characters. This is the default setting for all Alpha Message Centers.
International	The columns below display the International character groups. After selecting a basic character, the associated group will be displayed. Select the desired character.

* *Full Height* can only be used on two-line signs with the *Line Position* option activated.

Keyboard Tips and Shortcuts

When programming your Beta-Brite or Alpha Message Center with *AlphaNet*, you can use either the mouse or the keyboard commands. The following pages contain a complete list of keyboard commands. Note, whenever **route** appears, it refers to the order you must access the menus and options to activate the desired command.

Delete a message entry	Delete
Exit menus and/or the Message Editor with an option to save	Esc
Create a line break in the message editor screen	Return
Create a line break on your sign († New_Line †)	All ← , Ctr → or Ctr J
Exit the program	All F10
Cancel all changes	F7
Delete the item to the left of the cursor position	Backspace
Delete the item at the current cursor position	Delete
Accept information entered or select the item	Enter
Help	F1
Move up one line	↑
Move down one line	↓
Move left one position	←
Move right one position	→
Move to the very beginning	Ctrl Pg Up
Move to the very end	Ctrl Pg Dn
Move to the left-most position on the line	Home
Move to the right-most position on the line	End
Move up one page	Pg Up
Move down one page	Pg Dn
Move to the left one word or field	Ctrl ←
Move to the right one word or field	Ctrl →

**Keyboard Tips
and Shortcuts**
continued

Route: *Message Editor* screen,
Menu selections.

Modes	[Alt M]
Characters	[Alt C]
Speeds	[Alt S]
Options	[Alt O]
Transmit	[Alt T]
Diagnostics	[Alt D]

(Not displayed as a menu selection. For transmission problems only.)

Route: Active in the *Message Editor* screen,
Mode selections.

Automode	[A]
Flash	[B]
Hold	[C]
Interlock	[D]
Roll	[E]
Rotate	[F]
Roving Dot	[G]
Scroll	[H]
Slide	[I]
Snow	[J]
Sparkle	[K]
Spray	[L]
Starburst	[M]
Switch	[N]
Twinkle	[O]
Wipe	[P]
Condensed Rotate	[Q]

continued

Keyboard Tips and Shortcuts

continued

Route: Active in the *Message Editor* screen,
Roll and Wipe modes submenu.

Down	D
In	I
Left	L
Right	R
Out	O
Up	U

Route: Active in the *Message Editor* screen,
Most modes (if *Line Position* option is activated).

Fill	F
Top	T
Middle	M
Bottom	B

Route: Active in the *Message Editor* screen,
Character menu.

Full Height	F
Full Height Serif	U
Seven Row	S
Seven Row Serif	E
Five Row	V
Slim	L
Wide	W
Fixed Width	X
Proportional	P
International	I

**Keyboard Tips
and Shortcuts**

continued

Route: Active in the *Message Editor* screen,
Speed menu.

Speed 1	1
Speed 2	2
Speed 3	3
Speed 4	4
Speed 5	5
No Hold Time	N

Route: Active in the *Message Editor* screen,
Options menu.

Time	T
Temperature	P
Color	C
Animation	A

Route: Active in the *Message Editor* screen,
Options menu,
Temperature option.

Fahrenheit	F
Celsius	C

continued

Keyboard Tips and Shortcuts

continued

Route: Active in the *Message Editor* screen,
Options menu,
Color option.

Red	R
Light Red	D
Green	G
Light Green	N
Amber	A
Brown	B
Orange	O
Yellow	Y
Rainbow1	1
Rainbow2	2
Mix	M

Route: Active in the *Message Editor* screen,
Options menu,
Animation option.

Cherry Bomb	B
Don't Drink and Drive	D
Fireworks	F
No Smoking	N
Running Animal	R
Slot Machine	S
Thank You	T
Turbo Car	C
Welcome	W

Route: Active in the *Message Editor* screen,
Options menu (if *Line Position* option is activated),
Animation option.

Fill	F
Top	T
Middle	M
Bottom	B

Troubleshooting

This section contains common problems and possible solutions. If after consulting this list, you are still experiencing difficulties with your Alpha Message Center or *AlphaNet*, please contact your sales representative.

Transmission difficulties:

- Is the Alpha Message Center plugged in?
- Are all the connections installed and secured?
- Is the correct communications port selected?
- Does the port selected match the port the cable is plugged into?
- Press **[Alt][D]** or **[Alt][D]** and then **[F1]** to display additional transmission messages and Help. (Must be in Message Editor Screen.)

AlphaNet or file not found:

- Are you in the correct directory?
- Did you add an extension to the filename when it was first created?
- If applicable, is the proper floppy diskette in place?
- If applicable, is the correct drive specified?

Color Emulation Monitors:

- If using a color emulation monitor, such as a laptop, run the *AlphaNet* option *BW*. The *BW* (Black/White) option gives you a clearer screen image.

To install the *BW* option, follow these instructions:

- Step 1. On startup, after typing *AlphaNet*, type a space, a slash, *BW* and press **[Enter]**. For example, type *AlphaNet /BW* **[Enter]**.

Note, all other options can be used with the *BW* option as long as you use a space and a slash to separate each option.

Characters and animations displayed are not the desired size:

- See page 50 for programming notes.



Troubleshooting

continued

Some of the control codes (color, temp, etc.) do not work with my sign:

- Not all control codes are available on all signs.
See page 50 for programming notes.
- Have you entered a mode before the control code(s) in your message?

The mouse does not work or locks up on the screen:

- Is the mouse driver installed? (Check on startup)
- Is the mouse cable securely installed?
- Is the mouse cable connected to a port different than the assigned port?
- Is the mouse MicroSoft compatible?
- If you have only one communications port, disconnect all accessories, including the mouse and use the port to connect your sign.

AlphaNet does not seem to work as the manual indicates:

- Are you using DOS version 2.1 or higher?
- Do you have enough memory (at least 512K RAM)

The Line Position option does not work:

- Did you activate the *Line Position* option on startup?

The Line Position option has no effect on my sign:

- Is your sign only a one-line sign? The line position option does not work with one-line signs.

Your PC screen has poor quality:

- Try adjusting the contrast and brightness control.
- If you are using a color emulation monitor, run the BW option to clear your screen. See page 60 for more information.

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