

Altair Accounting Software Notes

Booting/Startup

The accounting disks are Altair Disk BASIC floppies, so follow the same procedure used for booting disk BASIC. At the "Memory Size?" prompt, enter 59000 (see explanation under "Printer Type" below). Enter "5" for both the "Files" and "Random Files" prompts. Start the accounting module by loading and running the "xx MENU" program where xx is the module type (e.g., GL, AP, AR). The password is the module initials plus "TEST": APTEST, ARTEST, GLTEST, PRTEST, and INTEST

Printer Type

Accounting does not use the printer specified during the BASIC startup dialog. Instead, it uses the printer type specified in the "#xxxSYS" file, where xxx depends on the accounting module (GL, AR, AP, etc.). Valid printer types are "C"entronics, "Q"ume, or "S"erial. The serial printer type uses the 2nd port on an 88-2SIO board. The accounting software provides its own driver for these printer types and uses interrupts without the 88-VI/RTC board (i.e., RST 7 vectoring to 38h is expected).

When loading BASIC and prompted for "Memory Size?" enter 59000 because the printer driver base address (BASE%) is E678h (59000). This is where the printer driver is placed. This address is present in the same parameter file as the printer type (see the "Parameter File" section below).

The accounting software allows the operator to choose between the screen or the printer when generating reports. The accounting software uses only the PRINT command (not PRINT and LPRINT), so this feature is implemented by hi-jacking the PRINT command in BASIC itself. The address of the PRINT routine in BASIC is specified in the parameter file (PBASE%). Since the location of the PRINT routine in BASIC may change based on the version of BASIC, a particular parameter file is effectively locked-in to a particular version of BASIC.

The parameter file is written as part of the SYSGEN procedure. The program "SETPRINT" allows you to change just the printer type in the parameter file. This program changes the printer type in all parameter files it finds on the specified drive (e.g., GL and AR and AP, etc.). A floppy system has just one module type on the disk, the hard disk system will typically have all accounting modules on the disk. Note: The SETPRINT program is not a part of the original accounting system.

Blocked Ctrl-C

The BASIC image on the accounting disks is patched to prevent the operator from using CTRL-C. This is done by changing a "CPI 03" instruction at 505Eh in the BASIC memory image to "CPI 0FFh" (i.e., location 505Fh changed from 03 to 0FFh). This can also be done/undone by patching the disk image file in a hex editor. The byte to change from 03 to 0FFh (or vice-versa) is at offset 5A4Ah in the disk image file.

Console I/O

The accounting software does its own console I/O for user input, bypassing BASIC's standard INPUT routines. Because I/O is done by code in a BASIC program, it's not hard to type faster than the program can input the data. Get used to typing slow. For some reason, the accounting system returned to using the DEL character for backspace instead of ASCII backspace. BASIC itself uses the backspace character.

System Parameter File

Following is the system parameter file for the General Ledger accounting module. The total number of parameters, and the parameters from index 25 and up, vary based on the module (e.g., GL, AP, AR, etc.)

Index	Description	Sample Content
0	Number of entries	30
1	Module Description	GENERAL LEDGER
2	Password	GLTEST
3	Compatible BASIC version	300-5-C/VER2 REVC
4	Creation Date?	4/1/79
5	Date	4/1/79
6	Console status port	16
7	Mask for console data present	1
8	Clear screen sequence	~
9	Printer width	80
10		0
11	Printer Type (C, Q, or S)	S
12		18
13		1
14		0
15		80
16		0
17		2
18	Main drive number	0
19	Address of printer driver and PRINT command in BASIC	&HE678: &H5169
20		APR
21	Hard or Floppy Disk	F
22	Company Name	SOFTWARE SUPPLY CO.
23	Company Address	20630 NORDHOFF ST.
24	Company City, State, Zip	CHATSWORTH, CA. 91311
25		
26		2
27		#A.GLMST
28		0
29		#A.GLJEF
30		0