

Alpha Five Syntax Files for Use with UltraEdit and UltraStudio

Introduction

Included with this distribution are the following two files that provide syntax highlighting features for the Alpha Five (A5) Xbasic programming language when used with UltraEdit:

- TAGLIST.UET
- WORDFILE.EUW

These files were developed for use with UltraEdit from version 14 and UltraStudio 6.5 but should work with any version of UltraEdit or UltraStudio released in at least the last five years or so.

If you are using a version of UltraEdit prior to 14.0 or UltraStudio prior to 6.5 then you must change the file extensions for both files to .TXT before using them.

Installation

These two files must be copied to the correct UltraEdit folder as indicated by the settings contained in the Advanced menu/ Configuration/ Editor Display/ Syntax Highlighting:

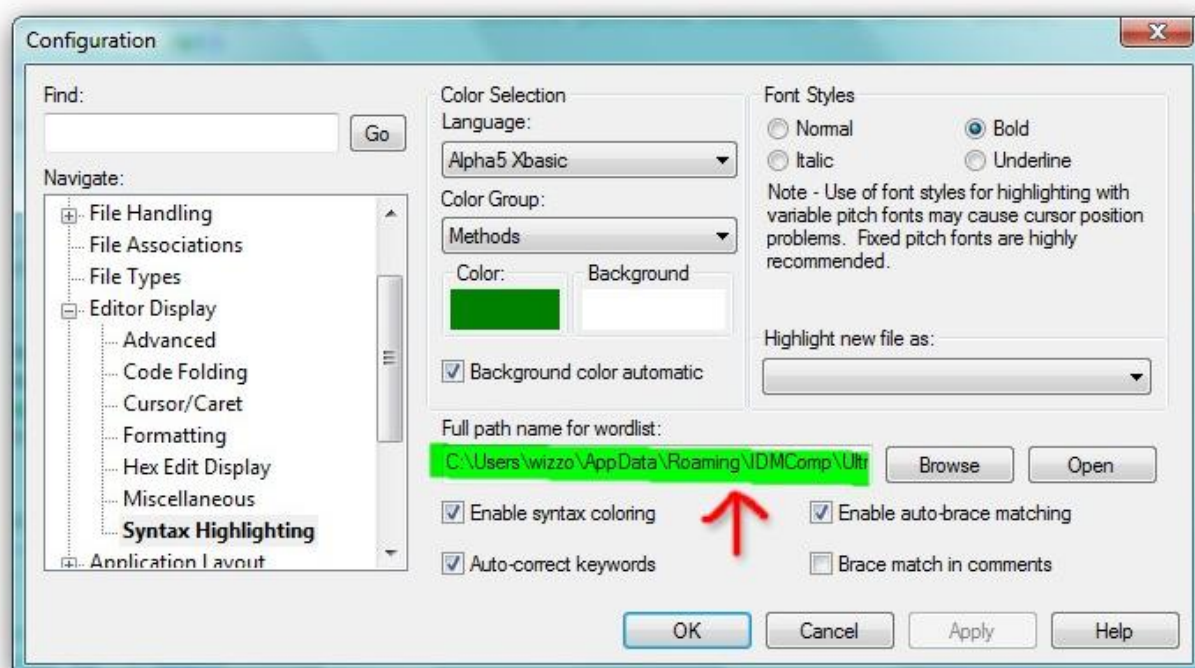


Figure 1: UltraEdit Folder location for the TAGLIST and WORDFILE files

Early versions of UltraEdit located these files in the same folder as the UltraEdit executable, e.g. C:\Program files\IDM Computer Solutions\UltraEdit-32. So if your version of UltraEdit does not contain this Syntax Highlighting screen equivalent, locate and use the UltraEdit-32 program folder.

After copying the supplied two files to this folder, UltraEdit should be closed and restarted.

The following options should be enabled (as illustrated in Figure 1) to enjoy all the features provided here:

- Enable syntax coloring
- Auto-correct keywords
- Enable auto-brace matching

NOTE: The two supplied files TAGLIST and WORDLIST replace pre-existing files of the same name. If you have made any of your own changes to these files previously, you should reapply these same changes to the two files provided here.

Detection of Alpha Five Xbasic

To allow UltraEdit to automatically identify text files as Alpha5 Xbasic code, two things need to be done:

- From the UltraEdit Advanced menu/ Configuration/ File Types option, tell UltraEdit to associate files having an **.AXB** extension with Alpha Five (you need do this only once). See figure 2.
- Save your Xbasic code files with an **.AXB** extension

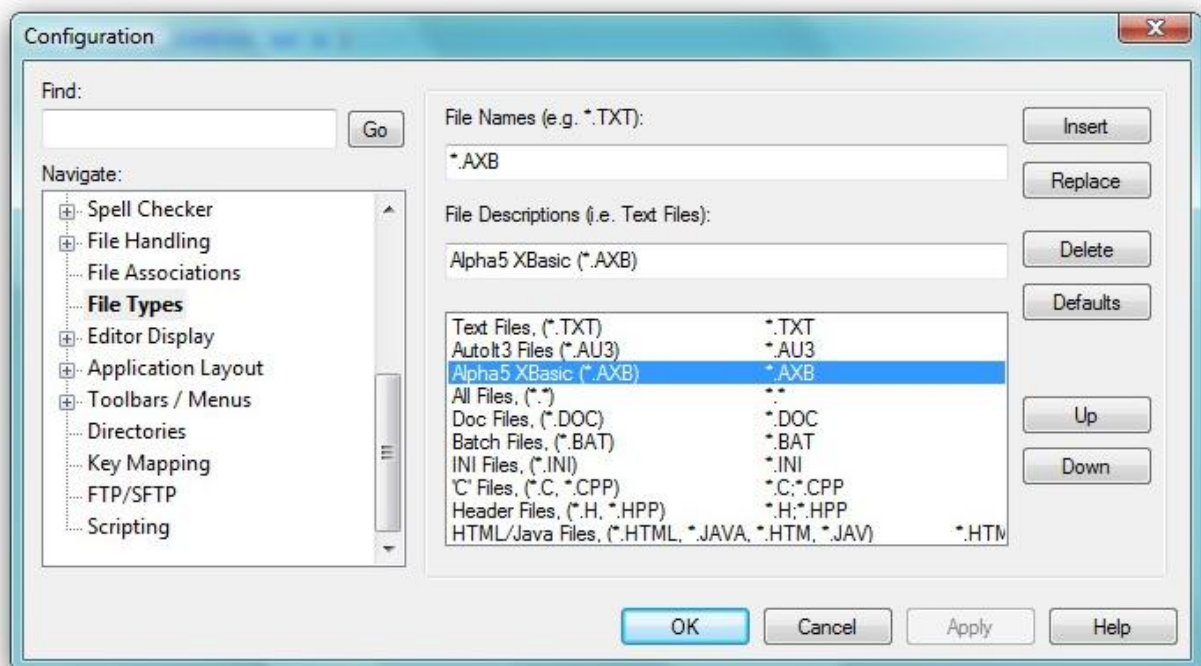


Figure 2: How to set up the Menu Advanced/ Configuration/ File Types for .AXB file types

In lieu of 'b.' above you may also identify a file of Xbasic code to UltraEdit by selecting the View menu option "View as (Highlighting File Type)" and selecting the "Alpha5 Xbasic" option.

This selection is permanent once the file has been saved with an .AXB extension.

Features Provided by Syntax Highlighting

Here is an example of some of the features provided:

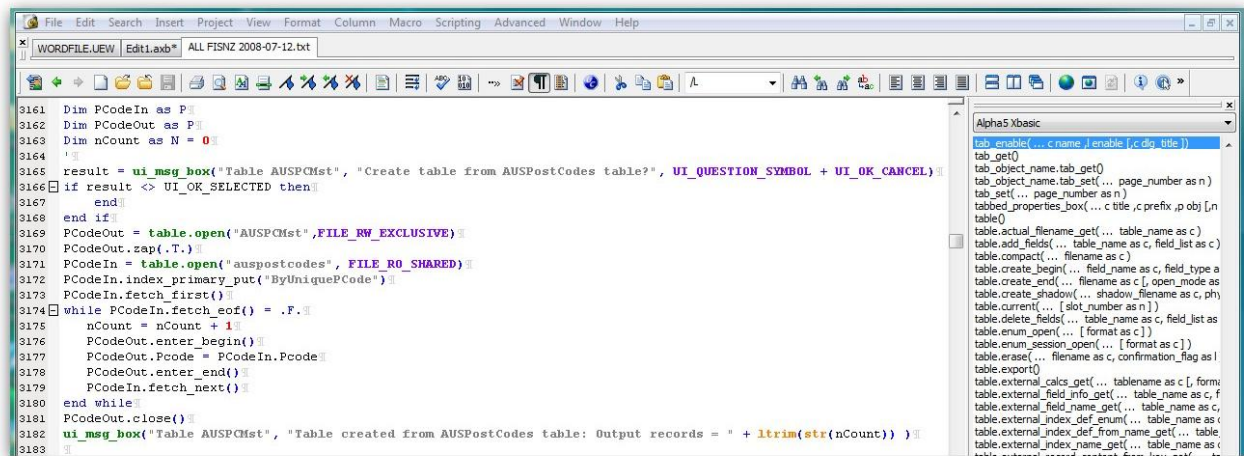


Figure 3: Example of some of the Syntax Highlighting features provided

The features provided here include:

- Syntax highlighting of reserved words, functions, methods etc. using configurable colors.
- Code folding – expansion and contraction of code blocks – if, else, end if; while, end while; function, end function; etc. Just click on the “+” or “-” signs on the left side of the code that appears after the line number (if you have enabled the View/ Display line numbers option).
- Auto completion - Automatic selection of Alpha5 syntax from pop-up auto-completion lists.
- Screen splitting so you can work on separate parts of the same code file without the need to scroll through your code backwards and forwards repeatedly.
- Dockable tags list – for an example see the right hand side of the display in figure 3. Double click on the tag and the syntax will be copied into your code at the cursor’s current location.
- All the advanced features provided by UltraEdit for editing and handling your Alpha5 Xbasic code.

How to Change the Syntax Highlighting Colors

UltraEdit assigns default colors to each category, or color group, using defaults that can be changed. The defaults can be used or alternates specified via the Color Group settings – see figure 4. These settings can be accessed and changed from the UltraEdit Advanced/ Configuration menu item.

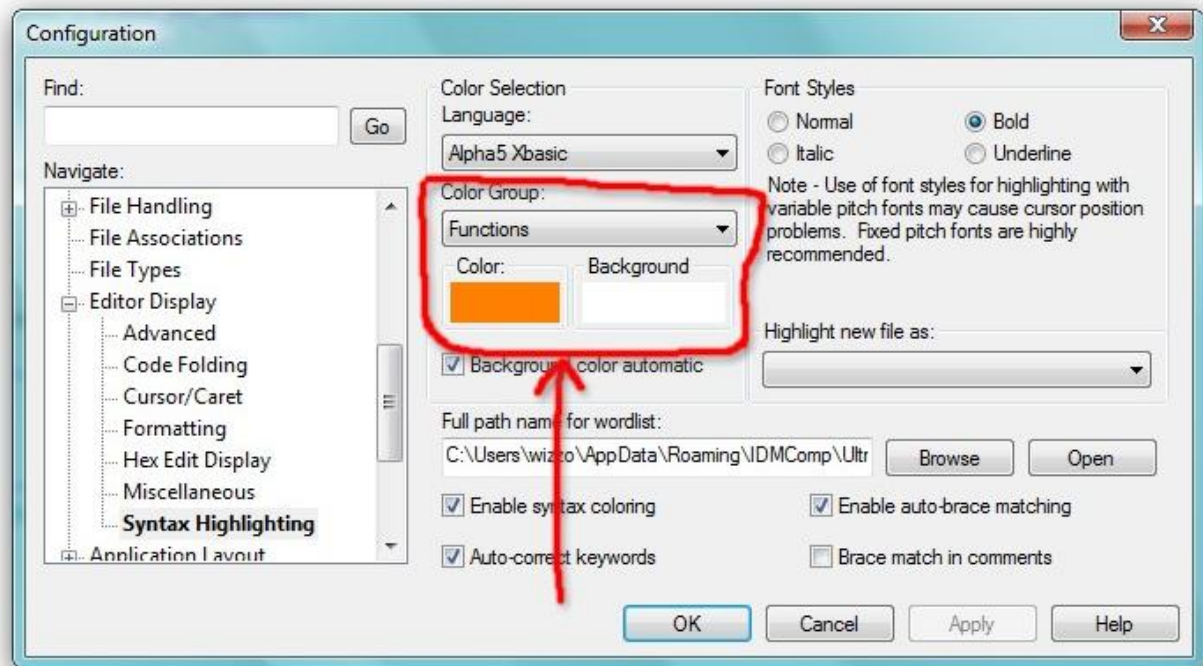


Figure 4: How to change the default Color Group settings

The Alpha5 Xbasic color groups provided here are as follows:

- Normal text
- Comments
- Strings
- Numbers
- Key words
- Commands
- Functions
- Methods
- Variables
- Data types
- Operators
- Separators

Setting the color for the Variables color group will currently have no effect because there is presently no way for UltraEdit to identify user defined variables in the Alpha5 Xbasic language.

How to Display the Tags List

The UltraEdit Tags List for Alpha5 (see figure 3 – right hand side) is a dockable list that can be displayed by selecting from the UltraEdit View menu the View/Lists option followed by Tag List option. This toggles the list display on/off. Ctrl-F8 is the keyboard shortcut sequence that does the same thing.

Use the drop-down list at the top of the Tag List to select Alpha5 Xbasic.

Limitations

Despite best efforts I cannot yet find get around the following limitations:

- Auto complete will not automatically insert the braces following a function or method name. For example typing the first two characters of the method name “refresh()” will automatically allow you to select the full name but the inserted text will not include the braces.
- For methods that are preceded by an object name (as type P), the method name will not highlight. For example “pTbl.close()” does not highlight.

There is a workaround available for the first problem. Just double click on the function or method name from the Tags List and the full name and braces will be inserted into your Xbasic script at the current cursor location.

If anyone finds more enduring solutions to these two problems, please let me know.

Changes in Version 2

Changes and improvements added to version 2 of the templates are as follows:

- “Exit While” syntax now works correctly (code folding and indentation)
- more function and method names added to the A5 tags
- several miscellaneous tweaks and improvements
- interface with **PGPre** pre-compiler (separately available on the [Alpha5 Code Archive Forum](#), coming soon) to allow UltraEdit/ UltraStudio to compile and run Alpha5 Xbasic code.

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