**User Help files**

It isn’t possible to display much text on the WP 34S screen, and typing on the DM42 keyboard isn’t straightforward either. The WP 34S allows the creation of substantial programs that may require documentation, especially if they aren’t regularly used.

The new command αHELP (found in the P.FCN catalogue) allows a program to open a user-provided help file in the DM42 html browser.

Operation is straightforward.

* First, prepare your help file. Use a text editor so that there aren’t any hidden control characters behind the scenes. The minimum HTML that seems to be needed is <body> ...</body> tags, and <br> to start a new line. The DM42 browser only understands basic HTML.
* For example:

<body>

This is a very short help file.

<br>

To use my program, put x and y in the x and y registers, and run the program.

<br>

The answer is returned in units of furlongs per lunar month.

</body>

* Break up text with <br> – I don’t know what the limit is, but the browser seems to choke on more than a few hundred characters with no break.
* The name of your file can be anything you like. It is easiest to use a three-character name and “.html” as the file name extension: the three-character name fits in a single alpha instruction, and “.html” is added automatically if not other extension is present.
* File names do not seem to be case-sensitive.
* Put a **copy** of your file in the HELP/ folder on the DM42. Keep the original safe! See below.
* When you want to open your file, put its name in the alpha register and use the αHELP command. The help file should open; you can browse and exit it in the usual way.

**The problem…**

So far as I can see, the DMCP command that opens help files – run\_help\_file(char\* fname) – has a problem. Having opened a help file with it, subsequent calls always return to the same file, even if fname changes.

To work around this, before opening a helpfile it is first renamed (to xxxHELP.html) and then this file is opened. On exit, it is renamed to its original name. (In case you are wondering, there is no file “copy” command in DMCP.) This seems to work perfectly, but it isn’t hard to imagine that if it didn’t, a help file could be lost.

So: keep your originals safe! Of course, this applies to any files you have on the DM42, but there is an extra risk with help files. This caution applies to the main help file wp34s\_help.html as well.