DotTalk++ Alpha v3 Release Notes

Tag: alpha.3  
Date: August 19, 2025  
  
This release marks the third alpha milestone of the DotTalk++ project. It stabilizes APPEND behavior, indexing, external shell hook, and directory listing, with clean source bundling.

# Summary of Changes

- Clean manifest-based ZIP bundle (sources only, no build artifacts)  
- APPEND and APPEND BLANK functional (with some interactive quirks)  
- DIR command implemented and tested (formats DBFs and files)  
- External shell command (!) integrated successfully  
- Indexing commands (INDEX, SET INDEX TO, SEEK) wired into CLI  
- Registry cleanup, avoiding most duplicates  
- Test DBFs bundled for regression testing  
- `bundle\_code.ps1` script included

# Known Issues

- APPEND BLANK <n> still only appends 1 record (loop logic missing)  
- APPEND (no args) does not yet enter full interactive field-prompt mode  
- RECNO appears registered twice in shell.cpp  
- External shell (!) does not accept trailing comments  
- Some commands (e.g., LOCATE, ZAP, BROWSE, SKIP) remain stubs  
- Display alignment needs verification under LIST/DISPLAY

# Regression Checklist

To confirm alpha.3 readiness, run these tests on a sample DBF (teachers.dbf):  
  
1. USE teachers → verify open count.  
2. COUNT → matches DBF record count.  
3. APPEND <n> → silently add n records.  
4. APPEND BLANK <n> → currently adds 1 (expected: n).  
5. DISPLAY / FIELDS / RECNO → show metadata & current record.  
6. DELETE, RECALL, PACK → verify record lifecycle.  
7. INDEX ON <field> TAG <t>, SET INDEX TO <t>, SEEK <key> → confirm sorting/search.  
8. LIST, TOP, BOTTOM → show correct ordering, alignment.  
9. DIR → show DBFs/files in current directory.  
10. ! → drop into external shell and return cleanly.

# Next Steps

- Fix APPEND BLANK <n> to append n records.  
- Implement interactive APPEND field-by-field prompts.  
- Remove duplicate RECNO registration.  
- Expand LOCATE, ZAP, BROWSE, SKIP implementations.  
- Improve LIST/DISPLAY column alignment.  
- Add more regression test DBFs and fixtures.