

# The Animation Editor

## Introductory note

Just to be on the safe side, if you plan to use the Animation Editor, make sure you have a safe backup of Easy Writer. You should have one anyway, but we just need to emphasize it here, since from this panel you can, theoretically, wipe out all the animation data. If you do any extensive alphabet creation, you should back up your custom copy of Easy Writer too.

## How animations work

Animations are nothing but a list of Cartesian coordinates. The draw routine simply connects line segments from one point to the next one. If it encounters an empty pair of coordinates, it “lifts the pen” before setting it down at the next pair of coordinates. Your job in creating an animation is to tell the program where the points are. The program makes the letters in different places by adding the x and y coordinate of the current position to the data that it gets out of the chain. That is why you trace your animations in the upper left (the “0,0” position).

The alphabet editor panel looks similar to the illustration below.

## How to Edit Animations

To create a new animation or replace an existing one:

0. Select a letter from the Choose Letter popup. This will also clean the “blackboard.” (If you do not want to “clean the blackboard”, hold down Command while choosing a letter. )

1. Select White ink from the patterns palette, if it is not already.

2. Select the Brush tool from the tools palette. Select a brush by double clicking the brush tool. The brush that Easy Writer uses is the 3rd to the smallest circular brush. We strongly suggest using that one to draw your model.

3. Carefully draw your letter on the small blackboard, taking care to seat it on the baseline and proportion it correctly. Use the eraser tool to fix boo-boos, and be sure your letter looks like you want it to before proceeding.

4. When done, select the pointing finger tool from the tools palette.

5. Click the Trace Letter button. The button will highlight, and the cursor will change to a crosshair.

6. Starting at the beginning, click on the points that you want to connect. The more points you click, the slower it will draw. Curves need more points than straight lines to draw smoothly. Beginners often make the mistake of trying to **drag** the crosshair over the outline. This is WRONG! What you need to be doing is telling it discrete POINTS (clicks) that you want to connect.

7. If you want a discontinuity (i.e. to lift the pen during drawing), click the Discontinuity button at the appropriate time during tracing.

8. When finished, click the Done Tracing button. The Trace Letter

button will unhighlight, and the cursor will change back to normal.

9. Click the Test button to see how your letter looks. If you do not like it, repeat steps 5-8 until you are satisfied.

10. Making sure the letter and the alphabet are correct, click the

Save Animation button. This operation will be confirmed, since you can not undo it.

11. The alphabet will be set to whatever alphabet you came from. If you want a different alphabet, use the Choose Alphabet popup, and you will be able to select from any currently available alphabet.

### Creation and Deletion of Alphabets

(currently not available)

To create an entirely new alphabet, click New Alphabet. You will be prompted for the name of the new alphabet. The new alphabet will have no letters.

To delete an ENTIRE ALPHABET, choose the Delete Alphabet button. For your own protection, you are not allowed to delete the Manuscript and Cursive alphabets.

### Copying Letters from one Alphabet to another

Choose the alphabet that you want to get the letter from, and the letter. Click the Get Animation button. The letter will draw on the blackboard, and its animation data will be in Easy Writer's "clipboard." Now choose the alphabet that you want to copy the letter to, and click Save Animation. This is particularly useful for copying the digits, since they normally do not change.