



P.O. Box 22219, Lincoln, NE 68542-2219
Phone: (402) 423-4782, Fax: (402) 423-5154
<http://www.braille2000.com>

Braille2000 Help Library

Embossing without Braille2000

This topic contains information you may want to print and send to a person or agency that has received an ABT-type of file for embossing but who lacks the Braille2000 software. By following the instructions given here, perfect braille can be embossed without using Braille2000.

Note: these instructions assume that the file to be embossed was created by Braille2000. If the file was created instead by ED-IT PC, see Situation 3 below.

Situation 1: The recipient of the Braille2000 ABT file has a PC-type computer with an embosser but has neither Braille2000 nor ED-IT PC.

The procedure to emboss goes like this:

1. Determine the computer port to which the embosser attaches. It might be LPT1: which is the standard parallel port, or it might be COM2: which is one of the serial ports. Note that the name of a port includes an ending colon.
2. If the ABT file to be embossed is on a diskette, insert the diskette into drive A.
3. Open the "MS-DOS Prompt" window (for Windows 95/98/ME) or the "Command Prompt" window (for Windows 2000/XP). There is an entry for this in the Programs menu reached from the Start button.

4. At the prompt symbol, type in the following command:

COPY /A A:\filename.ABT portname

where "filename.ABT" is the actual name of the file to be embossed, and where "portname" is the correct name of the port to which the embosser is connected. Press the Enter key to cause the command line to be performed. The embosser should immediately start producing braille.

If the port is a serial port (e.g., COMn: type), you may need to configure the serial data parameters to match those of your embosser before the data can flow properly. Serial port configuration is covered in the Windows user's guide.

Why it works

The ABT kind of file produced by Braille2000 contains two data sections. The first section is embosser-ready braille, similar to a BRF file. The second section is XML

control information that should not be embossed. The boundary between the two sections is indicated by a Control-z code. The DOS "copy" command, with the argument /A copies text from the input file to the output file (which is a port), stopping at the Control-z. In this way, "copy" delivers only the embossable portion of the ABT file to the port, and from there the data goes to the embosser and comes out as embossed braille.

Situation 2: The recipient of the Braille2000 ABT file has ED-IT PC software, but can't open the file.

The ABT files produced by Braille2000 are of a new type and cannot be edited by ED-IT PC. By following the instructions below, you can emboss such a file. You will need ED-IT PC Version 3.40, which is available from the Internet at <http://www.c-a-s.com/editpc/editpc6.htm> (free to licensed ED-IT PC users).

1. If the file is on a diskette, insert the diskette into drive A.
2. Run ED-IT PC and click Open in the File menu. In the "Get a braille file" window, put a checkmark in the box for "For embossing only".
3. Proceed to locate and select the ABT file to be opened. This will include adjusting the Drive setting and the Directory setting. When you have opened the file, there will be no yellow text and each line will show a red triangle. Do not edit this file, just emboss it.

Situation 3: The file was created by ED-IT PC and the recipient of the ABT file has neither ED-IT PC nor Braille2000 software.

ABT files prepared by ED-IT PC do not contain Form Feed codes between braille pages (ABT files created by Braille2000 do). The braille portion of this kind of ABT file is like files produced by the Pokadot program. Unless the embosser is properly configured, the braille will creep up or down the page, and the pagination will be wrong.

Most embossers are set up by lying about the number of lines of braille per page to be embossed, setting the embosser for 26 or 27 lines when in fact the pages have no more than 25 lines. (Setting the embosser to a higher-than-actual value prevents the embosser's own page advance from operating; the software usually tells the embosser to advance to a new page via Form Feed.)

When no special software is used, (as in this solution) the embosser's idea about braille page size must be correct. So if you need to emboss an ABT file created by ED-IT PC, use the technique for embossing a Braille2000 file (Situation 1 above), but first change the embosser's setting for the number of braille lines per page to the correct value, e.g., to 25. After the ABT file has been embossed, you will need to change this setting back, to handle work done through your regular software tools.