

SPHINX / STAR BOOK Best Practices for TheSky6

Version Date: 5/11/2006

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THESE INSTRUCTIONS ASSUME THE READER IS ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH THE VIXEN STAR BOOK CONTROLLER, SOFTWARE BISQUE'S *TheSky6* AND HOW TO NAVIGATE AND DOWNLOAD FILES ON THE INTERNET. THESE INSTRUCTIONS MAY BECOME OUT-OF-DATE AS NEWER SOFTWARE IS RELEASED BY SOFTWARE BISQUE.

Users that require a customizable star chart display and interface can employ such software as *TheSky6* by Software Bisque to control the SPHINX / STAR BOOK. *TheSky6* is available in different versions: a version of *TheSky6* with the Native Telescope Control feature is required to control the SPHINX / STAR BOOK. As of this writing, the *Serious* and *Professional* editions include telescope control.

For best results, follow this step-by-step procedure for establishing a connection between the STAR BOOK and *TheSky6*. In the first two steps, you will make sure that the STAR BOOK and *TheSky6* are updated to the latest versions of their respective firmware and software.

- 1) Update the STAR BOOK with the latest firmware from Vixen Japan. You must update to at least Ver.1.2 Build 28 to take full-advantage of *TheSky6*.
 - Use a web browser to go to <http://www.vixenamerica.com> and click the *Free Autoguider Upgrade from Vixen North America* link to bring you to the "*Sphinx*" *Star Book Controller Upgrades* page. If that link is missing, you can get to the page directly by entering http://www.vixenamerica.com/Technical/TechDoc_StarBookUpdates.asp (note the use of an underbar – not a space – in the URL) into your browser.
 - Select the *How to Upgrade Your Star Book Hand Controller* link at the top of that page and follow the instructions to update your STAR BOOK.
- 2) Update *TheSky6* with the latest Updates and Hot Fixes. You need to be updated to at least Version 6.0.0.50.
 - Establish an Internet connection with the computer running *TheSky6*.
 - Open *TheSky6* and from the *Help* menu select *About TheSky6...* option.
 - Write down your version number from the *Product information* section of the dialog box and press [OK].
 - Back in the *Help* menu, select *Check for Updates* if that option appears, else go to the next section.
 - Press *Check for Updates Now* on the *Check for Updates* dialog box.
 - If updates are available, follow the directions to update *TheSky6*.
 - After updating, restart *TheSky6* and check the version number in the *Help* menu.
 - Skip the next section and follow the instructions for *Hot Fixes* below.
 - If you can not use the *Check for Updates* dialog, shut down *TheSky6* and manually check for updates by entering <http://www.bisque.com> in your Internet browser's URL box.
 - Click *Support Corner* under the *Support* options (on the left column as of this writing).
 - Click *Free Updates* (on the right column as of this writing).
 - Find an update link for *TheSky6* on the updates page. Make sure it is for your version of *TheSky6* or all versions. An associated description indicates the version number of the update. Click the link and follow the instructions to update the software.
 - After the update is installed, if the version number of *TheSky6* on your computer at least 6.0.0.50 this section on loading Hot Fixes is optional.
 - Go back to *Support Corner* under the *Support* options (on the left column as of this writing).
 - Click *Hot Fixes* (on the right column as of this writing).
 - Find an update link for *TheSky6*. Make sure it is for your version of *TheSky6* or all versions. An associated description indicates the version number of the update. Click the link and follow the instructions to update the software.

- 3) At this point, all software and firmware updates have been completed. Follow these instructions to insure the SPHINX / STAR BOOK and TheSky6 are synchronized to the same location and time. Start by powering-up the STAR BOOK and TheSky6.
 - Following the instructions in the SPHINX instruction manual, make sure the local time setting on the STAR BOOK matches the clock on the computer running *TheSky6*. Under *TheSky6 Data* menu, open the *Time* dialog and press the clock icon button to set *TheSky6* to the computer clock. Review the time display on the STAR BOOK and *TheSky6* to make sure they are synchronized to within about 15-seconds. Note that the STAR BOOK clock is 24-hours while *TheSky6* may indicate AM and PM (so 8:15 PM on *TheSky6* is 20:15 on the STAR BOOK).
 - Make sure the latitude / longitude in the STAR BOOK *Locale* dialog matches the latitude / longitude set in the *Location* dialog (under the Data menu) of *TheSky6*. Set the *Hours* offset in the STAR BOOK's *Locale* dialog to your time zone. All zones are negative in the Americas, standard time zones are Atlantic: -4, Eastern: -5, Central: -6, Mountain: -7, Pacific: -8, Alaska: -9 and Hawaii-Aleutian: -10. For daylight savings time, add one hour (Atlantic: -3, Eastern: -4, Central: -5, and etc.).
 - Employ the *Save Setting* option in STAR BOOK's *Configuration* menu to save the above settings.
- 4) Now it's time to setup the SPHINX / STAR BOOK at your observing site and connect it to your computer.
 - Setup the SPHINX / STAR BOOK as described in the user manual and follow the alignment procedure to align the STAR BOOK on at least two stars in the east and two in the west. It is best to use a cross-hair device to precisely center on an alignment star.
 - When complete, make sure no dialog boxes are open on the STAR BOOK screen and the mount is tracking properly.
 - Make the connection between the computer running *TheSky6* and the STAR BOOK using the same crossover cable and network settings as in Step 1 -- when you updated the STAR BOOK with the latest firmware from Vixen Japan.
 - Start *TheSky6* and establish a link to STAR BOOK. You can follow the directions found in *TheSky6* help file: under the *TheSky6 Help* menu select *Contents and Index...*, type *Sphinx* in the Search box, click [List Topics] button and select the *Vixen Sphinx HTTP* topic. For your convenience, the instructions are abbreviated below.
 - Under the *Telescope* menu, select the *Setup* option
 - On the telescope *Name* drop-down select *Vixen Sphinx HTTP*.
 - Check the *Always keep telescope cross hairs on screen* option.
 - Select the [Settings...] button and enter the IP address of the STAR BOOK (usually <http://169.254.1.1> — the correct address can be found in the *About STAR BOOK* option of the *System* or *Configuration* menus). **Even if the address is preloaded in the box, you must always hit the [OK] button to save it.**
 - Now you can select the [Close] button to exit the *Telescope Setup* dialog.
 - Return to the *Telescope Menu* and select the *Link* sub-menu and the *Establish* option. A Crosshair should appear on *TheSky6* screen centered on same target as the STAR BOOK crosshair.
- 5) Help with slewing the SPHINX with *TheSky6* can be found by clicking the [Slewing the Telescope](#) link at the bottom of the *Vixen Sphinx HTTP* topic. Here are some pointers for basic slewing.
 - Right-click on *TheSky6* screen and select *Slew* on the pop-up menu to move the SPHINX to that point.
 - With the *Always keep telescope cross hairs on screen* selection checked in the *Telescope Setup* menu, you can not scroll the cross hair off *TheSky6* (try it, the screen will jump back to the cross hair). If this is a problem, go back to the *Telescope Setup*, uncheck that option and then hit [Close].
 - Left-clicking objects on *TheSky6* screen brings up the *Object Information* menu. You can select a specific object in the vicinity from the *Object* drop-down box at top; then click the telescope icon button at the bottom of the dialog to slew to the object. The [Slew Prior] button makes the SPHINX slew to the previous object. You can use this button to go back and forth between two objects. If the cross hairs on the STAR BOOK and *TheSky6* screen don't center on the same object, center on an alignment star with STAR BOOK's *Object* menu, then use the STAR BOOK controls to center the star in the eyepiece. Select the star in the *TheSky6*'s *Object Information* menu and hit the [Sync] button in the *Telescope* tab. *TheSky6* cross hairs should now center on the same star as the STAR BOOK cross hair.