

General Tips and Tricks for the beginning developer

Brief description of object types

Explanation of the different types of objects

Tables – all data is stored here

Queries – pull from multiple tables, sort, add criteria

Forms – user interface to add, update, and delete info from table or query

Report – format data for display, group and sort multiple levels



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Table Design

NAMES

When thinking of a good name for tables and fields, keep in mind that names are for developers and don't need to be understood by users. Captions, Descriptions, and associated controls are to give information to the user.

In your naming convention, whatever makes sense for you, for the name itself:

make it concise yet descriptive.

avoid spaces and special characters (underscore _ is a good separator and gives illusion of space)

start with a letter A-Z or a-z

FIELDS

When designing fields, pick a good name and give thought to the type of data it should contain. If the data type is numeric, delete the automatic Default Value that Access may provide (this is especially important if field is a foreign key). The field description is for developer information, and will also be echoed to the StatusBarText when controls are created. If data type is text, think about how long you want text to be and set the Size property in the lower pane. If the general data type is numeric, set the type of number



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Table Design

Create default

Paste As Fields to Import both data and structure

Primary Key - must have one if you want to have as part of a query that is updateable

Indexes

Lookups

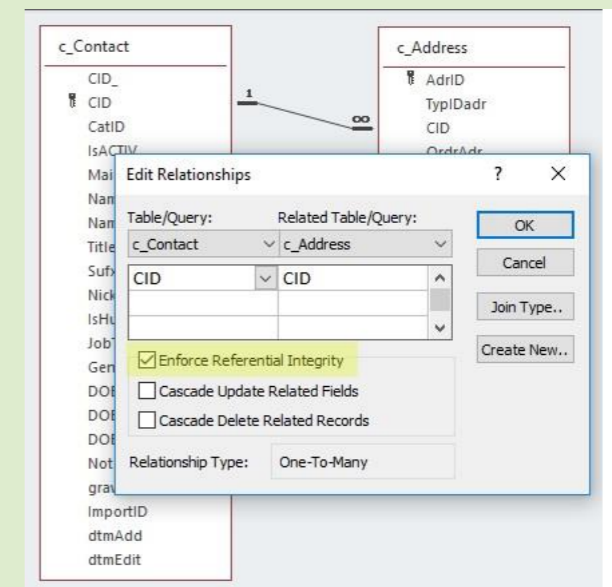
Properties - filter, order, linking



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Relationships

It's a good idea to build relationships as you're designing tables. Drag from the primary key in one table to the foreign key in a related table. Check the box to Enforce Referential Integrity.



Size field lists to show all records. Position tables such that “1” is on the left and “7” is on the right so that data flows from left to right as it needs to be created.



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Datasheet

NAVIGATION

in the lower left corner, there are navigation buttons to move to the First, Previous, Next, Last, and New record.



If you type a number in the Record Number box and press , you will go to that record (depends on sort order).



New Records from Clipboard

To create new records from the Windows Clipboard, put columns in the data sheet in order of the data that is to be pasted. Click the New Record selector in the last row and paste -- Ctrl-V or right-click selector and choose Paste from the shortcut menu.



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Query - Design

Add - Tables, Links, Queries, All - Resize

Field names with spaces

Criteria, be careful when using or, using SQL view to clarify.

Renaming fields



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Forms

Select table or Query – Create Form (Single)

Create Form Wizard

Create More Forms

- Multiple Items (Continuous)

- Datasheet (Datasheet)

- Split Form

- Modal Dialog (Single with Popup, stays on top
and Modal, keeps focus set to Y on Other)

Design tab – Add Existing Fields, Property Sheet, Tab Order



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Reports

Add from Table or Query similar to Forms
Header & Footer, Report, Page, Group
Group, Sort, and Total
Page Setup
Warning bar
Default view – Report or Print Preview



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Form/Report Design – what applies to both

For a command button, on the Other tab of the property sheet, set the Default property to Yes to make that command button activate when Enter is pressed, or the Cancel property to Yes to make that button activate when Escape is pressed.

And shortcut keys



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Macro

Macros are an easy way to get into automating Microsoft Access. With the exception of the AutoKeys macro, anything that can be done in a macro and more, can be done with VBA.

AutoExec

To make a macro automatically execute when a database is opened, name it “AutoExec”. Capitalization doesn’t matter. This name came from the DOS days for a batch file that would automatically execute when the computer was booted.

AutoKeys

If a macro is named AutoKeys (capitalization doesn’t matter), keyboard shortcuts can be defined.



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Module

Shortcut keys



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Overall

Navigation Pane

Expand/Collapse Navigation Pane

click >> to expand the Navigation Pane so you can see it
When the Navigation Pane is showing, click << to collapse it

Display by Object Type

To see objects in the Navigation Pane as they're organized by Table, Query, Form, Report, Macro, and Module choose **Object Type** for the Category.

Navigation Pane Options

Click on the down-arrow at the end of the Navigation Pane Titlebar to show options. Choose Object Type for the Category. Optionally, you may wish to show "All Access Objects" and use the Search Bar (/Find) to filter by name.

Ribbon



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Overall - Options

Current Database

Display Form – if you want to set a startup form

Display Status Bar – Yes

Document Window Options – Overlapping Windows

Use Access Special Keys – Yes

Compact on Close – No. Only compact after you backup the database

Track name AutoCorrect info – No

Perform name AutoCorrect– No

Object Designers

Default text field size: 50

AutoIndex on Import/Create: delete whatever is there

Show Property Update Options buttons – I like to turn this off.

Client Settings

Enter Key Behavior

*It's convenient to set the ENTER key behavior to move to the next record, or row, as it is in Excel. Under Client Settings in Access Options, choose "Next record" for "Move after enter" in the Editing section.



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Overall – Trust Center

Click the Trust Center Settings button. Set Trusted Locations to places where Access databases might be stored. When you add new locations, also check the box to trust subfolders.

Microsoft Office Trusted Location

Warning: This location will be treated as a trusted source for opening files. If you change or add a location, make sure that the new location is secure.

Path:

C:\

Browse...

Subfolders of this location are also trusted

Description:

Date and Time Created: 12/23/2020 1:57 PM

OK Cancel



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Templates

Open Access next to Blank database, More templates
Search to narrow down
Featured Access Templates

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/featured-access-templates-e14f25e4-78b6-41de-8278-1afcf91a9cb>



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Follow up

We will likely have a follow up deeper dive session on this topic this spring.

What else would you like to hear more about?

What other items need to be covered?

Ideas?

Suggestions?



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RESOURCES

Access Shortcut Keys

<http://msaccessgurus.com/tool/ShortcutKeys.htm>

Join our Access Lunchtime User Group

<https://accessusergroups.org/lunch/>

<https://accessusergroups.org/beginners/>

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