

ACCESS Software Shortcuts & Tips

January 2009 Newsletter:

Knowing the relationships between tables within your database is critical to quick, efficient management of data and creation of forms, queries and reports. With your relationships window displayed, click on the File option and choose Print from the menu. Access will create a report (you can even save it) and allow you to print – probably on multiple pages – your relationship diagram.

Internet Extra:

Much like Excel, Access is full of functions for mathematical equations as well as others to just help you along. This function may quickly become my favorite in Access: NZ.

The NZ function helps to sort two columns in a query, especially when the value for a record in one column is blank.

My contacts database contains names and addresses. However, while every contact should have a first and last name, not every contact will have a company name. If I want a list of customers, I can sort by last name or company name. NZ basically, lets me sort by one, substituting the other when the first one is blank.

In the field cell of a query, I enter `NZ([CompanyName],[LastName])` and select Ascending for the sort of this field.

If the company name is blank (null), the function uses the value in Lastname for the sort. Of course, both fields must also be present in your query's source data and you'll only see the results if they are in your query output.

If you're using VBA code in your database and need to quickly jump from where the code is called to where the code is stored, point to the reference of the code and press Shift+F2

September 2007 Newsletter:

Office Links allows you to export data from Access into Excel—simply choose Tools | Office Links | Analyze it With Excel. Exporting from a datasheet your gridline and font attributes are carried over to Excel; from a form, text box shading and font properties are applied.

May 2006 Newsletter:

If you create text boxes but rarely use the accompanying label component, you might want to know that you can eliminate creation of the label portion before you add the text box. Click the Textbox control on the Toolbox, then click the Properties button and locate the Auto Label property and change the setting to No. Now click inside your form to position your text box, with no label component.

February 2006 Newsletter:

Need to show the record number on a form without the standard record navigation buttons? Add an unbound text box (preferably in the form footer) and set the ControlSource property to “=[CurrentRecord]” (no quotes). Label the box accordingly for your application.

Internet Extras:

Close your active windows from the keyboard with the key combination CTRL+F4.

To create a primary key made up of multiple fields, while in table Design View, hold down the CTRL key and click each field that you want to use in the primary key, then choose Edit/Primary Key or click the key button on the toolbar

October 2005 Newsletter:

When you rearrange columns in Datasheet view, whether you save it or not, the order of the fields in Design view does not change. To move columns in Datasheet view, select the column by clicking its heading then click the heading again and drag the column to your preferred location and release the mouse button.

Sept 2004 Newsletter:

If you are about to run an action query, think about making a back up copy of the affected table. Remember, you can't undo an action query without writing a new query. To copy a table, select it in the database window, choose Edit/Copy then select Edit/Paste and provide a new name.

April 2004 Newsletter:

Use the right wildcard character. Most of us are used to using the asterisk (*) as a wildcard, but there are others available within Office. In several applications, Access being the most needing of this feature, the question mark (?) also serves as a wildcard. The difference being that the asterisk stands for several characters while each question mark stands for one single character.

Controlling the size of objects in Access is extremely important. When possible, be sure to take advantage of the Size to Fit option. This will save you time as it automatically sizes the frame to fit the selected font. You can also use this for an entire form by choosing Window / Size to Fit from the menu bar. Once Access has sized the form, saving it will have access remembering to use the same size next time

Internet Extras:

To change a number to a text string with leading zeros, try this function:

Right ([original_number] + 10000000; 7)

The one is followed by the number of characters needed and the last number is the number of characters needed from the right of the result. So the above formula will create a 7-character text string.

Documenting a database can be an astronomical task. If you need to document the objects within your database, check to see if the Documenter tool is loaded as part of your Access software. (If it's not, you'll need to find the CD to add it.) Documenter is available from Tools / Analyze / Documenter. Within the documenter dialog box, you can choose which objects to document – everything from a simple list of the fields within a table to the code that accompanies your database. I use this as a research tool because the output can be sent to Word where I can use the find tool to locate recurring instances of code or a specific field name.

Need to show the record number on a form without the standard record navigation buttons? Add an unbound text box (preferably in the form footer) and set the ControlSource property to “=[CurrentRecord]” (no quotes). Label the box accordingly for your application.

January 2004 Newsletter:

Pop-up tips are great for displaying field information and reducing form clutter. This property is found on the ‘other’ tab in the property box for each control

September 2003 Newsletter:

For version XP, but may work in older versions as well:

If you want to see the records impacted by an action query before running it, use the Datasheet view.

If you're editing a record and want the default value to be entered, press Ctrl-Alt-spacebar.

Internet Extra:

If you need to store e-mail addresses within your Access database and want to be able to click on the address and have a new message created by the system, you need to properly format the e-mail address. To do this, be sure to preface the actual e-mail address with MAILTO: (the colon is important as the separator).

If you have a parameter query that is the basis for a report, you might want to print the parameter as part of the actual report. (I tried this one with mixed results.) Try adding a label box to the heading of your report and setting the Data Source property as follows:

=Reports![reportname]![parametername]

To view how a report will look without running the underlying query, choose VIEW | Layout Preview from the menu bar rather than switching to Print preview.

May 2002 Newsletter:

If you frequently work with a particular Access object, you can create a shortcut to it on your desktop. Right-click on the object in the Database window and choose Create Shortcut. By default, Access creates the shortcut on your desktop, but you can specify a different folder in the Location text box.

Internet Extra:

When you rearrange columns in Datasheet view, whether you save it or not, the order of the fields in Design view does not change. To move columns in Datasheet view, select the column by clicking its heading then click the heading again and drag the column to your preferred location and release the mouse button.

February 2002 Newsletter:

Shift+Enter will save a record without moving off of it.

Use LIKE to find a series of entries within a query, such as those starting with A,B, and C. Set your criteria to say LIKE "[A-C]*" or for more flexibility, select several letters by using LIKE "[A-C,E,J]*". Just separate the first and last items in a series with a hyphen and separate groups with a comma.

Internet Extras:

To copy a value from the cell above in datasheet view, use the key combination ALT+' (single quotation mark)

To freeze columns in datasheet view, click on the field's name and then choose Format / Freeze Columns