

How To Get Started Using Microsoft Access Even If You've Never Used It Before

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Thank you for downloading this ebook.

Over the coming weeks I am going to be showing you some cool stuff you can do in MS Access. I will be sending out FREE videos and PDF documents demonstrating a wealth of techniques and information.

Some samples are

- How to create a spell checker in your Access forms
- How to run Word documents from Access
- How to interface with Excel
- Determine if your date falls on a national holiday or a weekend
- How to make your text box change color depending on your data
- Control the number of records that get printed in your report
- How to import worksheets from Excel
- Handling database corruption
- Good form and bad form design
- How to duplicate one form record into another at the touch of a button
- How to email tables, queries etc right within Access

And many many more.....

It does not matter which version of MS Access you are using. You are bound to find something useful in the content you will receive.

For FREE Access ebook and videos click here

<http://access-databases.com/ebook>

Microsoft Access has been part of the Office suite of programs for many years. The Office suite dominates the world of desktop office software. I started using Access from version 2 onwards. My initial thoughts were that it was a wonderful user friendly development tool for beginners and expert users alike. My belief has not changed.

Microsoft over the years have listened to the concerns of users and have taken Access forward with each release. There has been some snobbery in the I.T. world towards Access. This is usually among hardened programmers and developers of large systems. In my opinion they are missing the point. You really would not use a corporate style solution for a simple desktop application for around 10 users.

The advantages as I see it are

- Access contains the best reporting tool of any development package.
- It is wonderful at cleaning up data.
- You can create a quick simple database in minutes.
- You can create more complex systems using the built in programming language
- Access can talk and integrate to other applications in the MS Office suite such as Outlook, Excel and Word.

There have been stability issues over the years due to the more data stored in the system. However, it is at this point that you know you have to upscale to a more robust solution such as Visual Basic and SQL Server. You are not going to create a flight booking system in Access for example. You could, but it would not be practical due to the volume of data you would be storing.

How should you create your Access database system?

Before doing this you really need to know your requirements. What exactly is it you want your system to do? Write down a few ideas and you will find your system will come together on paper. For example for an invoicing system we may outline as follows:

- Record customer information
- Record order information
- Mail or email each customer or supplier
- Create reports on customer information
- Create reports on invoice information
- Add product information into the system
- Record customer payment details

Already you can see a few screen ideas there. For instance we can have a screen for recording customer information. Another for payment information and another for order information.

Do we need the ability to update and delete data?

Will some screens be read only?

Do we need to record the time and date of the order?

Do we need to create a customer mail shot ?
Do we need to create mailing labels?
Can our data be exported into Excel for accounting purposes?

You can also see that we have other components from the Office suite coming into play here. For instance a mail shot? We could mail merge our MS Access data with MS Word to create mail shots. We could do the same with mailing labels. Excel – yes we can export our data very easily into Excel for accounting or even forecasting purposes.

By fleshing out some ideas here we have not only created ideas for screens, but also we have an idea of the data storage backend. Data in Access is stored in what is called tables. In this case we would have a separate table for customers and payments. The screens we create will get it's data from it's related table. For example the customers screen will be using the table called customers to store it's data.

It is a good idea to also sketch out how you want to present the data. Do you want to see a view of how many sales you got in August? Do you want to know the total value of sales or how many overseas customers you have? To view data in this fashion in Access you set up what is known as a query. You can use this query as a basis for a report or even a screen. Queries are very powerful in Access.

There can be a tendency to add too many features into your system. This can make the system bloated and slow. We have all seen examples of this with commercial software we have bought. Try and keep it simple and only stick to what you really need to do your job. Do you really need your database to contain a built in web browser when you just as easily use IE or Firefox?

I will now take you through creating a simple system for recording customer and sales information. Bear in mind this is a general overview outlining certain Access database features. It is possible to expand this to create a full blown system.

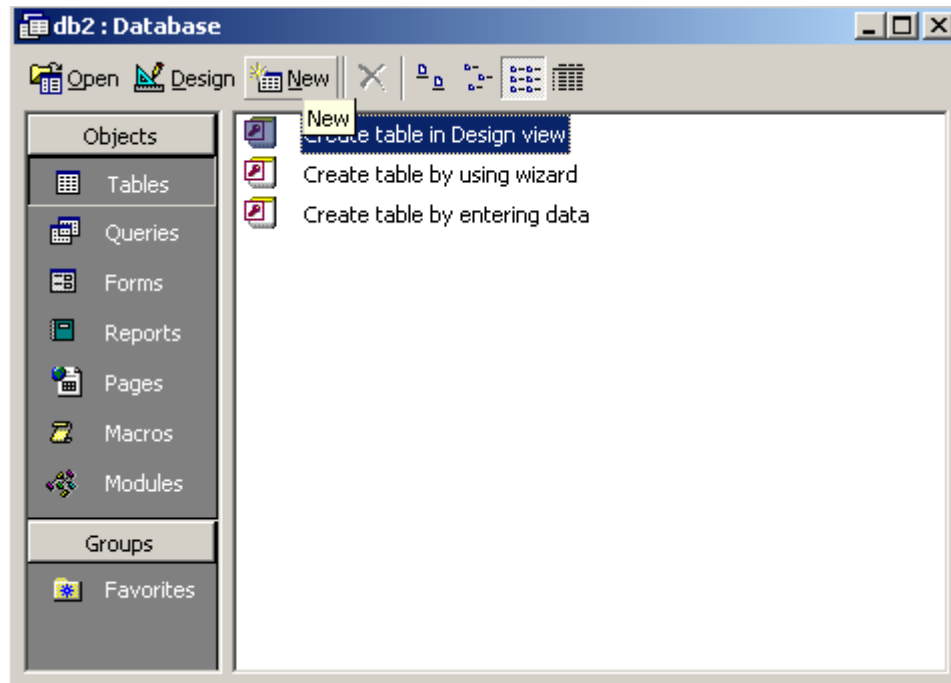
I have used Access 2000 for the examples in this ebook, but they will work just as well for any other version.

GETTING STARTED

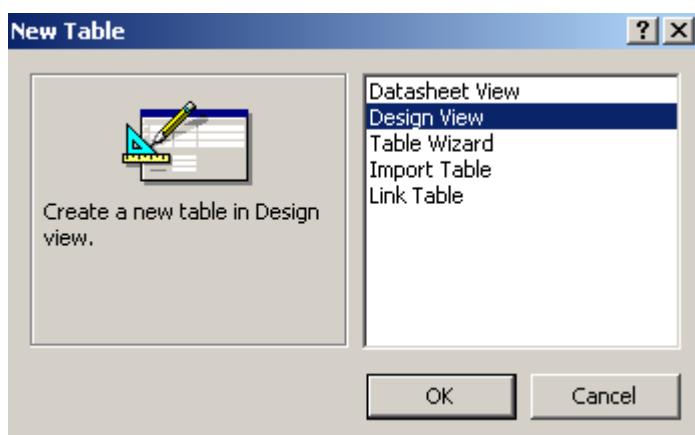
The database window is the hub of Access. It contains all the objects you will create and use in your system. For example tables, forms, queries, macros etc. If you need to create a new form go to the database window, click the forms tab and select new form. To bring the database window back into view at any time press your F11 key.

CREATING A TABLE

At the database window click 'Tables' and then the 'New button'

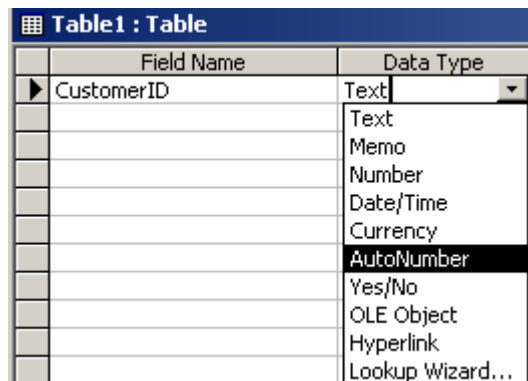


Select the design view option



Add your first field and give it a name. It is advisable to make the first field an ID or identifier field. You will see why later, but essentially it is used to link other tables to this one.

Give the field a name – In this case I have used the name CustomerID. I tend to name my fields using no spaces between the words.



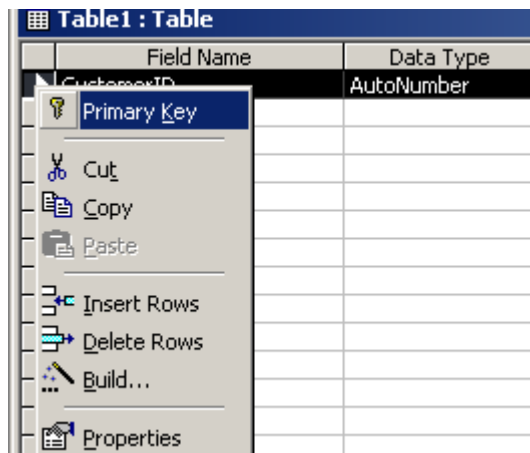
Field Name	Data Type
CustomerID	Text
	Text
	Memo
	Number
	Date/Time
	Currency
	AutoNumber
	Yes/No
	OLE Object
	Hyperlink
	Lookup Wizard...

Select the data type. For ID fields it is recommended to use auto number as the data type. The auto number data type will increment your ID by one each time a record is added and saves you having to do this yourself.

Example



John Smith ID = 1
Kate Wilson ID = 2
Joe Bloggs ID = 3

It is also advisable to make an ID field have a Primary Key. This means that the field is unique and will have a unique ID. To do this right click the field name and select 'Primary Key' from the menu.




Field Name	Data Type
CustomerID	AutoNumber

I will now add in additional fields.

	Field Name	Data Type
	CustomerID	AutoNumber
	FirstName	Text
	LastName	Text
	Address1	Text
	Address2	Text
	Address3	Text
	Tel	Text
	Email	Text
	Web	Hyperlink

I have used text as the data type for some fields and they have a length of 50. You can adjust this if you require by clicking on the field name and looking at the properties that appear. For example:

[illegible]

Now save the table by clicking the save button  on the menu bar.

I am calling it tblCustomer. It is a good idea to prefix tables with the letters 'tbl'. We can do the same with queries and use 'qry' or for forms use 'frm'.



You now have a customers table to store information.

You could open the table and add records in this fashion if you choose.

At the database window right click the table name and select 'Open'



You will then see a table view or what is termed as a datasheet view of your table.

tblCustomer : Table									
CustomerID	FirstName	LastName	Address1	Address2	Address3	Tel	Email	Web	
(AutoNumber)									

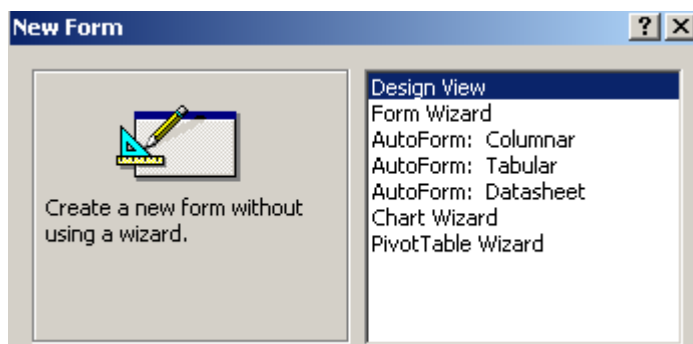
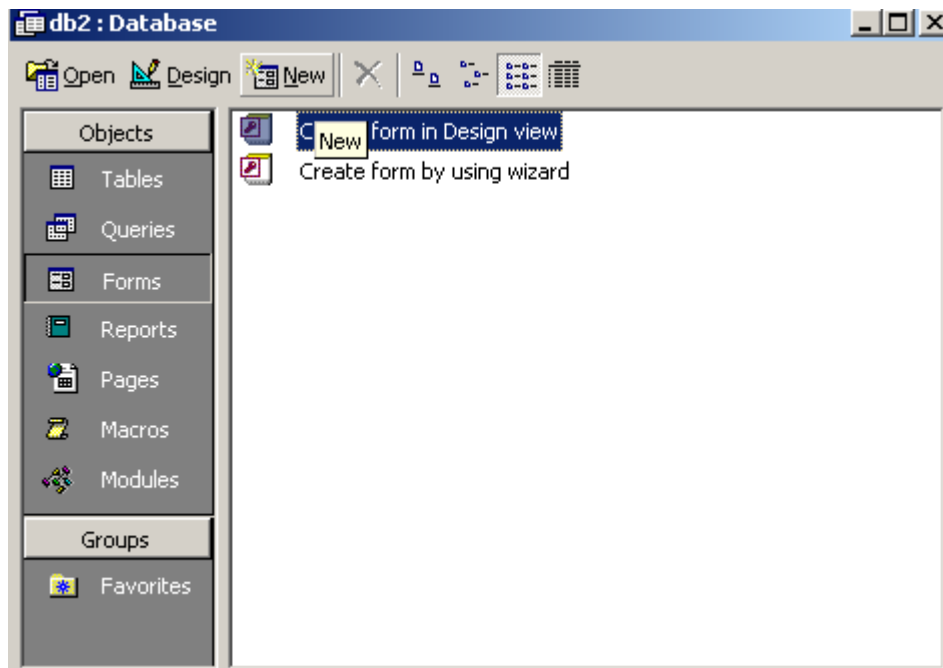
Try typing in the CustomerID field. You will notice that you cannot type in anything there. The reason for this is you set that field to be an Auto number field. It is only MS Access itself that can change values in that field.

Move the cursor along to the other fields and you will find you can type something in.

Adding data in this way is fine, but it is not very user friendly or visual. A better way is to use a form.

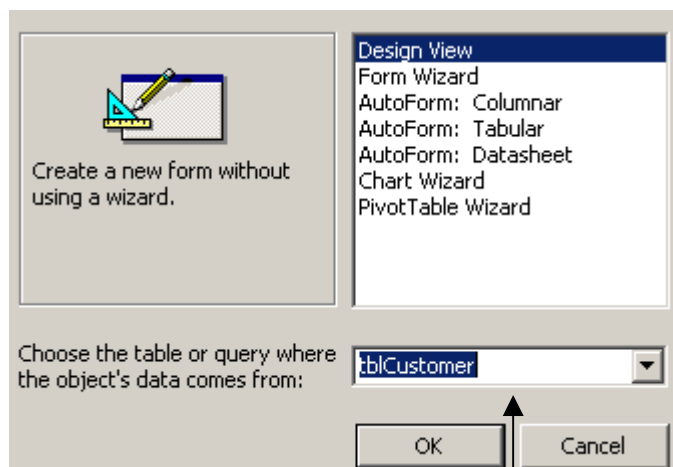
CREATING A FORM

At the main database window click the forms tab and select 'New'



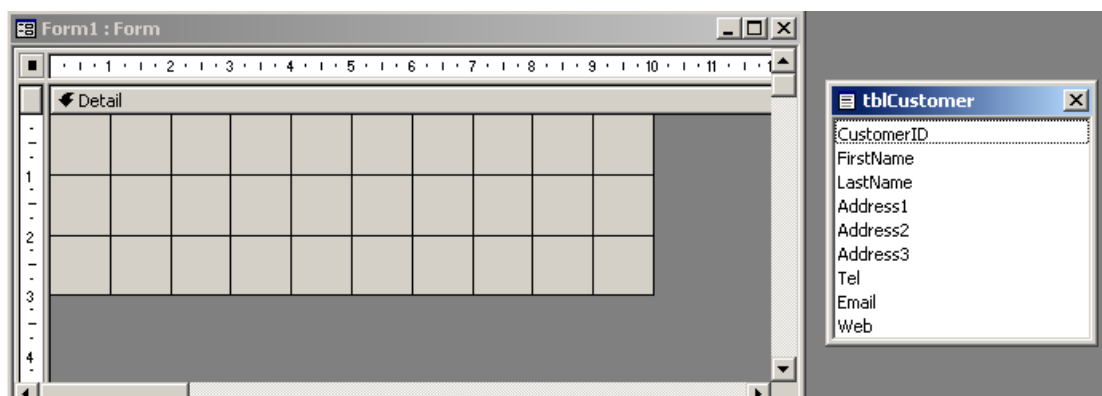
There are various options here. The form wizard option will create a quick, simple looking form. However it is better to become familiar with form design yourself and you will gain a better understanding if you select 'Design View'.

We need to bind the form to a data source. Remember the table we created earlier called 'tblCustomers' – this is what we will use as our data source.

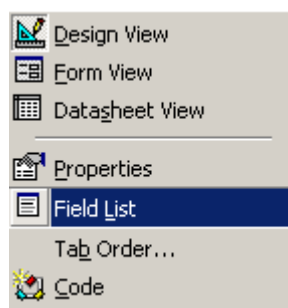


Select the data source from the dropdown box and then click the 'ok' button.

You will see a blank form has been created and also a list of fields from the table 'tblCustomer' is shown.

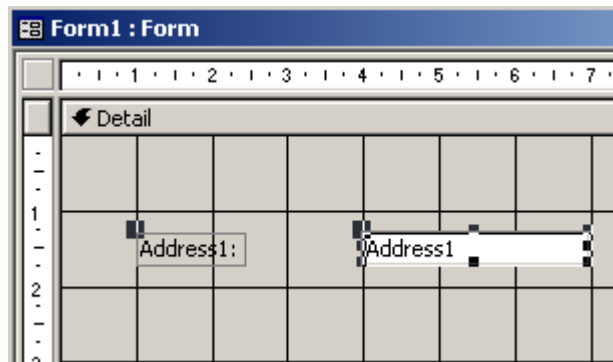


If you don't see the fields you can select them from the menu bar by selecting 'View' and then 'Field List'.

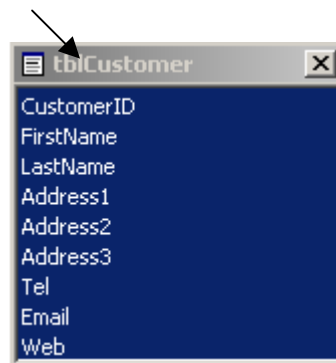


Now we are going to add a field to the form.

To do this click on a field and while holding the mouse down on it, drag it to the form. Release the mouse button and you will see your field on the form.

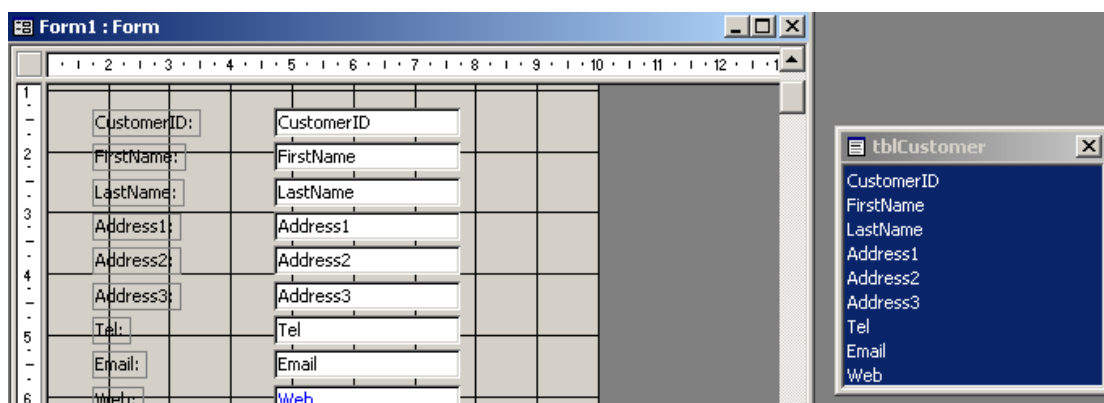


If you want to add all the fields at once to the form simply double click the title at the top of the field list.



The field list will then become highlighted.

While these fields are highlighted hold your mouse down on any field and drag it over to the form. Release the mouse button and you will see all the fields on the form.



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