

Microsoft Access – Frequently Asked Questions

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Converting from Access 2.0

How do I convert Microsoft Access from version 2.0 to 97?

Before converting from **Access 2.0** to **97**, make sure all users of the database are going to convert to **Access 97**. If not, do not convert the database, at this time. Once the conversion takes place, **Access 2.0** users will be unable to use the database.

1. Make a **backup copy** of the original **Access 2.0** database. Keep this copy of the **Access 2.0** database until you are comfortable using **Access 97**.
2. Close the database. Make sure that all users close the database.
3. Open **Access 97**.
4. From the menu bar, select **Tools...Database Utilities...Convert Database**.
5. In the **Database To Convert From** dialog box, select the database to convert.
6. Click the **Convert** button.
7. In the **Convert Database Into** dialog box,
 - Type a new name for the database, and/or
 - Select a different location for the database.

Note: You cannot convert an Access database into a file with the same name and location as the original database.

8. Click the **Save** button. The process is complete and the **Access 97** database should function in the same manner as in **Access 2.0**.

Note: If other users of the database try to use the database in **Access 2.0**, the following error message will appear:

Cannot open database d:\\$data\database\Name of database'. It may not be a Microsoft Access database or the file may be corrupt.

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Converting from Access 97

How do I convert an Access 97 Database to Access XP (Access 2002)?

Before converting from **Access 97** to **Access XP**, make sure all users of the database are going to convert to **Access XP**. If not, do not convert the database, at this time. Once the conversion takes place, you can't open it in the previous version of Access; however, you can convert the database back to the previous version.

1. Make a **backup copy** of the original **Access 97** database. Keep this copy of the database until you are comfortable using **Access XP**.
2. Close the **database**. Make sure that all users close the database.
3. Open **Access XP**.
4. From the menu bar, select **Tools...Database Utilities...Convert Database...To Access 2002 File Format**.

Note: If the **Convert/Open** dialog box appears, select **Convert Database** and click the **OK** button.

5. In the **Convert Database Into** dialog box,
 - Type a new name for the database, and/or
 - Select a different location for the database.

Note: You cannot convert an Access database into a file with the same name and location as the original database.

6. Click the **Save** button. The process is complete and the **Access XP** database should function in the same manner as in **Access 97**.

Note: Once the database has been converted, the new database cannot be shared with **Access 97** users, however, the database can be converted back to **Access 97**.

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Using Data Types

Text	(Default) Text or text and number combinations, as well as numbers that do not require calculations, such as zip codes (up to 255 characters).
Memo	Text or text and number combinations that is lengthy (up to 65,535 characters).
Number	Numeric data that can be used in mathematical calculations.
Date/Time	Date and time values.
Currency	Numeric data used in mathematical calculations shown as dollars.
AutoNumber	A unique sequential number (incremented by 1) or random number that is assigned by Microsoft Access when a new record is added to a table.
Yes/No	A field containing one of two values (Yes/No, True/False, On/Off).
OLE Object	An object (such as a graphic, or a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet) that is linked to or embedded in a Microsoft Access table.
Hyperlink	Text or text and number combinations stored and used as a hyperlink address. A hyperlink can have up to four parts: text to display – the text that appears in a field or control. address – the path to a file (UNC path) or page (URL) subaddress – a location within the file or page screentip – the text displayed as a tool tip. Note: Select Insert...Hyperlink to insert a hyperlink address in a field or control.
Lookup Wizard	Creates a field that allows you to choose a value from a list or another table by using a list box or a combo box.

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How do I display the text Yes or No instead of check boxes?

By default, Access will display check boxes for fields with a **yes/no** data type (a check meaning **yes** and an empty box meaning **no**). After converting an **Access 2.0** database to **Access 97**, **yes/no** data types are also displayed as check boxes. To display text instead of check boxes:

1. Select the table containing the **yes/no** data types you want to change.
2. Click the **Design** button on the **Database** toolbar.
3. Select the field containing the **yes/no** data type.
4. Press **F6** to transfer to **Field Properties**.
5. Click the **Lookup** tab.
6. Select **Check box** from the **Display Control** drop down list box.
7. Repeat the process for all **yes/no** data types within the table.
8. Save the changes you made to the table design.

How do I renumber the values assigned to records with an AutoNumber/Counter Data Type?

After records have been deleted in a table, **AutoNumber** values will never be reassigned causing your table to appear as if records are missing. To renumber the **AutoNumber** values of the records in the table:

1. Select the table containing the **AutoNumber** data type you want to renumber.
Note: Tables that are used in a relationship should not be renumbered. The existence of orphan records in related tables may result.
2. Click the **Design** button on the **Database** toolbar.
3. Select the field with the **AutoNumber** data type you want to renumber, and press the **Delete** key on your keyboard.
4. Click the **Yes** button on all warning dialog boxes displayed.
5. Click the **Insert Rows** tool on the toolbar.
6. Add the field again, giving it the same field name and **AutoNumber** data type as before.
7. Save the table. The records in the table are now renumbered starting with **1** again.

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Adding a Custom Menu to a Toolbar or Menu Bar

How do I add a custom menu to a toolbar or menu bar?

1. From the menu bar, select **View...Toolbars...Customize**.
2. Show the toolbar or menu bar you want to add the custom menu to.
3. Click the **Commands** tab.
4. From the **Categories** list box, select **New Menu**.
5. Drag the **New Menu** from the **Commands** list box to the displayed toolbar or menu bar.
6. Right-click the new menu on the toolbar or menu bar. A quick menu will be displayed.
7. Type a name for the new menu in the **Name** text box and press the **Enter** key on the keyboard.
8. Drag the commands you want from the **Commands** list box over the **New Menu**. The menu will display a list of commands (or a **blank box** if it's **new**), point to the location where you want the command to appear on the menu and release the mouse. Continue this procedure until all the commands you want have been added.
9. Click the **Close** button.

How do I convert a customized menu macro to a menu?


1. Open the database.
2. Click the **Macros** tab.
3. Select the name of the macro you want to create a menu bar for.
4. From the menu bar, select **Tools...Macro...Create Menu from Macro**.
5. You can now customize the menu bar by selecting **View...Toolbars...Customize**.

Note: Access will not delete the original macro after it creates the new menu bar.

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Using Macros to Automate Tasks

How do I create an AutoKeys Macro?

1. Create a new macro and click the Macro Names button  to display the Macro Name column.
2. Type the key syntax that you would like to use to perform the action. The following table shows the key combinations that you can use:

Key Syntax	Key Combination
^A or ^2	CTRL + any letter or number
{F1}	Any function key
^{F1}	CTRL + any function key
+{F1}	SHIFT + any function key
{INSERT}	INS
^{INSERT}	CTRL + INS
+{INSERT}	SHIFT+INS
{DELETE} or {DEL}	DEL
^{DELETE} or ^{DEL}	CTRL + DEL
+{DELETE} or +{DEL}	SHIFT + DEL

3. Add the set of actions you would like the key combination to perform.
4. Add as many key combinations you would like, and save the macro as **AutoKeys**.



Macro Name	Action
^o	OpenForm
^c	Close
{f7}	GoToControl

How do I create an AutoExec Macro?

When you open a database, Microsoft Access looks for a macro named **AutoExec**. If one is found, it is automatically run for that database. To create an **AutoExec** macro:

1. Create a macro that contains the actions you want to run when the database is opened.
2. Save the macro as **AutoExec**.

Note: If you do not want the **AutoExec** macro to run, hold down the **SHIFT** key when you open the database.

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Importing Data

How do I import data and/or menu bars and toolbars from another Access database?

1. Open the database you want to import the objects into.
2. From the menu bar, select **File...Get External Data...Import**.
3. The **Import** dialog box will be displayed. Select the database you want to import data from and click the **Import** button.
4. The **Import Objects** dialog box will be displayed. Select the object(s) you would like to import from each **Object** tab. If you want to import menu bars and/or tool bars, click the **Options** button and click the **Menus and Toolbars** check box under the **Import** section.
5. Click the **OK** button.
6. The selected objects and/or menus and toolbars now appear in the displayed database.

How do I import queries as a table from another Access database?

1. Open the **Database**.
2. From the menu bar, select **File...Get External Data...Import**.
3. The **Import** dialog box will be displayed. Select the database that you want to import data from.
4. Click the **Import** button.
5. The **Import Objects** dialog box will be displayed. Click the **Options** button.
6. Click the **Query** tab and select the query you would like to import as a table.
7. Click the **As Tables** check box in the **Import Queries** section.
8. Click the **OK** button.
9. The selected query should now appear as a table in the displayed database.

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Exporting Data

How do I export data to an outside source?

Access 97 Users

1. Open the database.
2. Select the object to export.
3. From the menu bar, select **File...Save As/Export**.
4. The **Save As** dialog box will be displayed. Verify that **To an External File or Database** is selected.
5. Click **OK**.
6. The **Save Table 'Name of Table' In** dialog box will be displayed.
7. Select the **file type and location**.

Note: If you are exporting data to **Excel 97**, click the **save formatted** check box. The database will convert the data with the same fonts, lookup fields, and column widths.

8. Click the **Export** button.

Access XP Users

1. Open the database.
2. Select the object to export.
3. From the menu bar, select **File...Export**.
4. The **Export 'Name of Object' To** dialog box will be displayed.
5. Type a **file name** and select the **file type and location** for the exported data.

Note: If you are exporting data to **Excel**, click the **Save formatted** check box. The database will convert the data with the same fonts, lookup fields, and column widths.

6. Click the **Export** button.

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Linking Files

How do I link data to a spreadsheet file?

The data must have the appropriate tabular format, when linking to a spreadsheet file. You can link the entire spreadsheet, or to a named range within the spreadsheet.



1. Open the database.
2. From the menu bar, select **File...Get External Data...Link Tables**.
3. Select the appropriate directory from the **Link** dialog box.
4. Select the **source file type** from the **Files of Type** drop down list box.
5. Select the spreadsheet you want to link and click the **Link** button.
6. On the **Link Spreadsheet Wizard** dialog box, select the sheet or range you want to link and click the **Next** button.
7. Verify that **First Row Contains Column Headings** is **NOT** checked and click the **Next** button.
8. Name the linked table and click the **Finish** button.
9. A message will be displayed stating that the link has completed, click the **OK** button.

Note: If you change the location of a file containing a link, Access will not be able to use this file. Linking a database table that does not have a primary key, Access can view the data, but will not allow updates.

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Using Date Expressions and Formats

How do I create a control showing a person's age?

1. Create a field in your table called **BirthDate**. Enter the birth dates of all the people you are adding as records to the table.
2. Create a form or report based off that table and click the **Text Box** button  on the **Toolbox** to create the control that will contain the number of years old.
3. With the new control selected, click the **Properties**  button on the **Standard** toolbar.
4. In the **Control Source** text box for the new control, type:

=DateDiff("d",[BirthDate],Now())/365

Note: The "d" will return the number of days between their birth date and today's date (**Now()**), then divide by 365 to give you the number of years old they are.

3. Select **Fixed** from the **Format** drop down list box.
4. Type **1** in the **Decimal Places** text box.
5. Close the **Properties** screen.

Are there other date formats I can use besides predefined formats?

The following table shows some commonly used custom date formats:

Symbol	Description
/	Used to separate dates.
d	Displays the day of the month as one or two digits as needed (1 – 31).
dd	Displays the day of the month as two digits (01 – 31).
ddd	Displays the first three letters of the weekday (Sun – Sat).
dddd	Displays the full name of the weekday (Sunday – Saturday).
m	Displays the month of the year as one or two digits, as needed (1 – 12).
mm	Displays the month as two digits (01 – 12).
mmm	Displays the first three letters of the month (Jan – Dec).
mmmm	Displays the full name of the month (January – December).
y	Displays the number of the day of the year (1 – 366).
yy	Displays the year as two digits (01 – 99).
yyyy	Displays the full year (0100 – 9999).

Example: Type **mmmm dd, yyyy** in the **Format** property field to display **February 1, 2006**.

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Creating Mailing Labels

How do I create mailing labels?

1. Open the **Database**.
2. Click the **Tables** tab.
3. Click the **New** button.
4. The **New Table** dialog box will be displayed. Select **Design View** and click **OK**.
5. Create a table and save as **Labels** (or a name of your choice). Sample fields: **Name, Address, City, State, and Zip Code**.
6. Switch to **Datasheet View** and enter **data** into the appropriate fields.
7. **Save** and **close** the table.
8. On the database window, click the **Reports** tab.
9. Click the **New** button.
10. The **New Report** dialog box will be displayed. Select **Label Wizard** from the list.
11. Select the **Labels** table and click **OK**.
12. The **Label Wizard** dialog box will be displayed. Select the **label size** and click the **Next** button.
13. Select the **font** and **color** of the label text and click the **Next** button.
14. Construct the label by positioning the fields and click the **Next** button.
Note: Be sure to include any necessary punctuation and spacing.
15. Select the field to **sort** the labels by and click the **Next** button.
16. Type a **name** for the mailing labels report and click the **Finish** button.
17. View the **mailing labels**.
18. Print the labels.

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Using Mail Merge

How do I use Mail Merge in Access?

1. Open the **Database**.
2. Click the **Reports** tab
3. Click the **New** button.
4. Select **Design View**.
5. Select the table created in the **Creating Mailing Labels** section of this document.
6. If using letterhead paper, proceed to **step 11**, otherwise in the **page header**, create an unbound object frame and insert a graphic of your choice.
7. Right-click on the graphic and select **Properties** from the quick menu.
8. On the **Properties** window, click the **Format** tab.
9. In the **Size Mode** field, select **Zoom** to size the graphic inside the unbound object frame.
10. Close the **Properties** window.
11. Select **Insert...Date and Time**.
12. Review the list of **date and time formats**.
13. Make a **selection** from the list and click **OK**.
14. Move the **date** to a desired location in the **page header**.
15. **Minimize** the report.
16. Open the labels report created in the **Mailing Labels** section of this document in **Design View**.
17. Select the **label design** and click **Copy** on the toolbar.
18. Close the labels report.
19. Maximize the **Mail Merge Report**.
20. Paste the **label design** into the **Detail** section of the report.
21. Create a **text box** after the label design.
22. Delete the **label**.

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23. In the **text box**, type =“**Dear** ” & ([Report]![Name]) & “:”.

Note: Include the **equals sign** (=), and surround any text that you want to appear in the letter in quotation marks. Also include any spacing and punctuation (E.g. “**Dear** ” and “:”). This note also applies to the steps below.

24. Create another **text box** after the salutation.

25. Delete the **label**.

26. In the text box, type =“**This is a test letter. USED FOR TESTING PURPOSES ONLY.**”

27. Create another **text box** after the body of the letter.

28. Delete the **label**.

29. In the text box, type a **closing**. (E.g. =“**Sincerely,**”).

30. Create another **text box**.

31. Delete the **label**.

32. In the text box, type your job title. (E.g. =“**Customer Service Representative**”).

33. Right-click on the **Detail** bar and select **Properties** from the quick menu.

34. Click the **Format** tab.

35. In the **Force New Page** field, select **After Section**.

Note: This will force a new page after each label design is used.

36. Click the **Print Preview** button on the toolbar to view the letter(s).

37. Print the letter(s).

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Example Mail Merge Letter



Oakland County

1200 N. Telegraph Road
Pontiac, MI 48341

Tuesday, March 28, 2006

Jane Doe
2584 Sal Road
Lake Orion MI 48301

Dear Jane Doe:

This is a test letter. USED FOR TESTING PURPOSES ONLY.

Sincerely,

Customer Service Representative

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Inserting the Report Name in the Footer

How do I insert the report name into the footer of the report?

1. Create a **text box** in the **Report Footer** section of your report.
2. Delete the label.
3. Click in the **text box** and type **=CurrentDb.Name & “ ” & CurrentObjectName** to insert **report’s name** and **direct path location** of the report.

Note: To insert only the report name, type **=CurrentObjectName** in the text box.

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Maximizing and Restoring an Object Window

What is the shortcut for Maximizing or Restoring an object window?

1. If an object window is currently maximized, double-click on the **Title Bar** to restore the object window to its previous size.
2. If an object window has been restored to its previous size, double-click on the **Title Bar** to maximize the object window.

Note: Clicking the **Restore/Maximize** button in the object window's upper-right corner will also have the same effect.

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Using Hide/Unhide Columns

How do I hide columns in Datasheet View?

1. Open a table, query, or form in **Datasheet View**.
2. Select the **columns** you want to hide.
3. From the menu bar, select **Format...Hide Columns**.

How do I show hidden columns in Datasheet View?

1. With the table, query, or form displayed in **Datasheet View**, select **Format...Unhide Columns**.
2. The **Unhide Columns** dialog box will be displayed.
3. Click the check box to the left of the column(s) you want to display and click the **Close** button.

How do I hide columns in a List Box or Combo Box?

1. Open the form in **Design View**.
2. Select the **List Box** or **Combo Box**.
3. Click **Properties** on the toolbar.
4. Click the **Format** tab.
5. In the **Column Widths** field, a semicolon separates each column width. For each column you want to hide, change the column width to **0**.

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Changing the Name on the Application Title Bar

How do I change the name of the Application Title Bar?

To create a more descriptive name other than Microsoft Access:

1. Open the database.
2. From the menu bar, select **Tools...Startup**.
3. Type a new title in the **Application Title** text box and click the **OK** button.

How do I delete the Application Title?

1. From the menu bar, select **Tools...Startup**.
2. Delete the title in the **Application Title** text box and click the **OK** button.

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Using Input Masks and Formats

What is the difference between Input Masks and Formats?

Input Masks make data entry easier and control the values users can enter in a text box control. **Formats** control the display of data in Access. These two controls can work together or apart, however, these controls are not related.

This is how they work together:

The user can apply an input mask of **Short Date** to a field forcing the user to enter **01/01/06** as the format. Then, the user can apply a **Medium Date** format to the field – **01-Jan-06**. After the record is saved, Access will convert the data into the **Medium Date** format.

Using these controls independently, **Input Masks** would control how Access will view the data and data entry. **Formats** will only control how Access views the data. For example, the selected format could be **Short Date – 01/01/06**, but you can enter the date, **January 01, 2006**. After you tab to the next field, the date will convert to **01/01/06** format.

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Counting Rows in a Query

How do I count common cell rows within a field using a Query?

1. Open the **Database**.
2. Click the **Query** tab.
3. Click the **New** button.
4. Select **Design View**.
5. Add the **table** you want to use in the query and close the **Show Table** dialog box.
6. In the first column field, type **Count(*)**.
7. Click in the **Show** box, a check will appear in the box.
8. Select the **field** you want to count in the second column.
9. Surrounded by quotation marks, type the **information** you want to **count** in the criteria field. For example, you want to count all records where the department is sales. You would select **department** as the field to count and type “**sales**” for the criteria.

Note: UNCHECK the **Show** box.
10. Run the query (!).

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Setting the Default Directory

How do I change the default directory in Access?

1. From the menu bar, select **Tools...Options**.
2. The **Options** dialog box will be displayed. Click the **General** tab.
3. In the **Default Database Folder**, type the **default directory**.
4. Click the **Apply** button.
5. Click the **OK** button.

Note: These changes will be effective the next time you open Access.

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Conversion Issues

Table Links

Access 97 does not convert linked tables. Make sure the external tables are in their original folders. If Access cannot find the tables' links, you will not be able to use the new database. Once the conversion process is complete, use the Linked Table Manager to re-establish the table links.

Margins

Margins set to **Zero** in Access 2.0 will not convert into Access 97. When the document converts, it will reset to the **default settings**. To solve this problem in your Access 97 database:

1. From the Menu bar, select **File...Page Setup**.
2. Click the **Columns** tab.
3. Adjust the **Number of Columns**, **Column Spacing**, and **Column Size** in the report.

Note: Verify that the new settings are equal to or less than the paper width.

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