

1

Getting Started

7

What is Access 2007?	8
The Getting Started Screen	9
The Quick Access Toolbar	10
Using the Office Button	12
Personalizing Access 2007	15
Converting Older Databases	16
Using Office Online	18
Get Training Online	19
Downloading New Content	20
Downloading New Templates	21
Using Templates	22
Using the Ribbon	24
Using the Navigation Pane	25
Using the Help System	26

2

Designing Databases

27

Relational Databases	28
Relationship Types	30
Database Design	32
Before You Even Start Access	33
Designing Tables	34
Primary and Foreign Keys	35
Fine-Tuning Your Design	36

3

Creating Tables

37

The Table Window	38
Using Table Templates	39
Using Datasheet View	40
Adding and Deleting Fields	41
Data Types in Datasheet View	43
Using Design View	44
Creating a Table	45
Inserting a Design View Row	46
Deleting a Design View Field	47

Setting the Primary Key	48
Using Data Types	49
Using Attachments	51
Specifying Field Properties	52
Using Validation Rules	53
Creating an Input Mask	54
Setting a Default Value	55
Using Indexes	56
Creating a Lookup Column	58

4

Defining Relationships

61

The Relationships Window	62
Adding Tables	63
Specifying Relationships	64
Referential Integrity	66
Specifying Join Properties	68
Left and Right Joins	70

5

Working With Data

71

Entering Data	72
Inserting Rows	73
Using the Clipboard	74
Copying and Pasting Data	75
Copying Directly from Excel	76
Copying Data to Excel	77
Importing Data from Excel	78
Importing Data from Access	83
Linking to Access Databases	85
Managing Import Tasks	87
Collecting Data with Email	88
Filtering Data	94
Totalling Columns	96
Spell-Checking Data	97
Formatting Data	98

6

Querying Databases

101

What is a Query?	102
Using the Query Wizard	103
Query Design View	106

Adding Criteria to a Query	108
Querying Multiple Tables	109
Using Criteria for Numbers	110
Using Criteria for Text	111
Creating a Make Table Query	112
Creating an Append Query	114
Creating an Update Query	115
Creating a Delete Query	116

7

Using SQL

117

Using SQL	118
The Three Languages of SQL	119
Opening the SQL Window	120
Using the SELECT Clause	121
Using the WHERE Clause	122
SQL Aggregate Functions	123
Creating Union Queries	124

8

Creating Forms

125

What is a Form?	126
The Anatomy of a Form	127
Using a Form for Data Entry	128
Filtering Forms	130
Applying a Detailed Filter	131
Using the Form Wizard	132
Creating a Simple Form	135
Using Split Forms	136
Using Multiple Item Forms	139
Finding a Record	140

9

Fine-Tuning Forms

141

Using Design View	142
Using Layout View	143
Using the Field List	144
Adding Headers and Footers	145
Adding Controls to a Form	146
Fine-Tuning Controls	147

Changing Control Properties	148
Creating Calculated Controls	149
Changing Tab Order	150
Creating a Tabbed Form	151
Using Buttons	154
Creating a Modal Dialog	156
Using Macros	160

10

Creating Reports

161

Using the Report Wizard	162
Creating a Simple Report	166
Using Report Design View	167
Adding Fields to a Report	168
Adding Controls to a Report	169
Adding Headers and Footers	170
Sorting and Grouping Data	171
Printing Labels	172
Setting Custom Label Sizes	175
Using Print Preview	176
Printing Reports	177
Send Your Report via Email	178

11

Sharing Access

179

Password Protection	180
Making an ACCDE Database	182
Backing-up Access Databases	183
Splitting a Database	184
Interacting with SharePoint	186

Index

187

1

Getting Started

Starting up Access 2007 for the first time can be a daunting experience for the uninitiated. This chapter briefly explains how Access works and introduces Access 2007's new user interface.

- 8** What is Access 2007?
- 9** The Getting Started Screen
- 10** The Quick Access Toolbar
- 12** Using the Office Button
- 15** Personalizing Access 2007
- 16** Converting Older Databases
- 18** Using Office Online
- 19** Get Training Online
- 20** Downloading New Content
- 21** Downloading New Templates
- 22** Using Templates
- 24** Using the Ribbon
- 25** Using the Navigation Pane
- 26** Using the Help System

Hot tip

Start thinking about your database now. What do you want it to do? What information do you need to keep?

What is Access 2007?

Access 2007 is the latest incarnation of Microsoft's popular Database Management System, or DBMS for short. By using Access 2007 you can:

- Store data using user-friendly forms
- Query the database for specific information
- Create attractively styled business reports
- Share data with colleagues over a network of computers

However, Access 2007 is much more than a means of entering and retrieving data. If you want to, you can build complete software applications limited only by your requirements and creativity.

And the good thing?

You don't need to be a computer scientist to use it. To be honest, you can use nearly all of Access's functionality without entering a single line of code. All that is required is a bit of patience, forward planning, and a clear idea of why you are building a database in the first place!

So What is a Database?

A database is simply an ordered collection of records. For example, the Rolodex on your office desk is a type of database. Open it up and you have the names, telephone numbers, and addresses of your business contacts.

In a computer, database information is organized in a much more structured way but the general idea is the same. Access keeps data in tables. A table is like the Rolodex – it contains all the data we need. Each row of the table contains data about a specific thing. In a Rolodex it would be a business card. The columns of the table help us to organize the data. Each column contains some specific item of data such as the address of a contact.

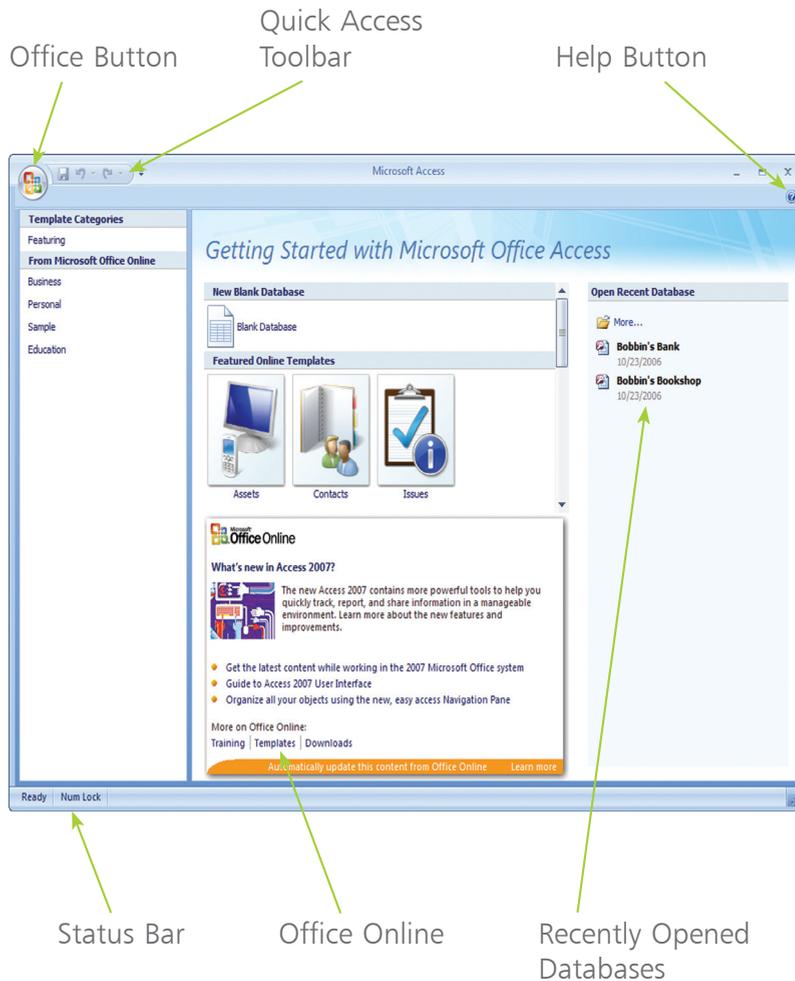
In the next chapter we take a deeper look at the way databases are structured and how to create them. For now, the rest of the chapter is devoted to getting you started with Access 2007.

The Getting Started Screen

Every time Access 2007 is launched you'll be greeted by the new, welcoming face of the Getting Started screen. Designed to do exactly as its name suggests, the Getting Started screen provides all the options you need to get the most out of Access 2007.

Below are some of the components that we will be discussing throughout this chapter.

Components of the Getting Started Screen



Don't forget



You can get to the Getting Started screen at any time by closing all open databases.

The Getting Started screen changes dynamically as new content and features are introduced. For example, you will see new database templates added as Microsoft makes them available.

The Quick Access Toolbar

The Quick Access Toolbar provides quick and convenient access to commonly used commands such as Save, and is normally found at the top left of the Access 2007 screen.

By default the Quick Access Toolbar features only three buttons: Save, Print, and Undo. Although these are useful in themselves the choice of action is somewhat limited. As your confidence with Access 2007 increases you will soon want to have certain actions within easy reach. Luckily we can customize the Quick Access Toolbar and add or delete extra buttons.

Hot tip



To add any action to the Quick Access Toolbar simply right-click its icon on the Ribbon and select 'Add To Quick Access Toolbar'.

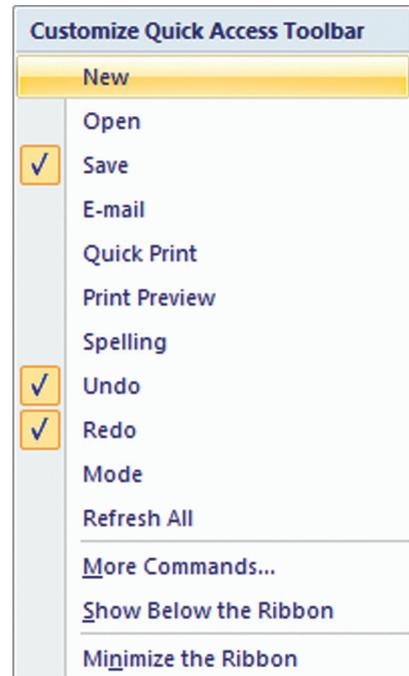
Customizing the Quick Access Toolbar



- 1 Press the arrow to the right of the last button
- 2 Click a menu item to add that command to the Quick Access Toolbar

Adding an Action

Some of the most useful commands can be added to the Quick Access Toolbar using the menu to the right. However, many more functions can be added by clicking the "More Commands..." menu item. This launches the Customization dialog, which is discussed in more detail on the opposite page.



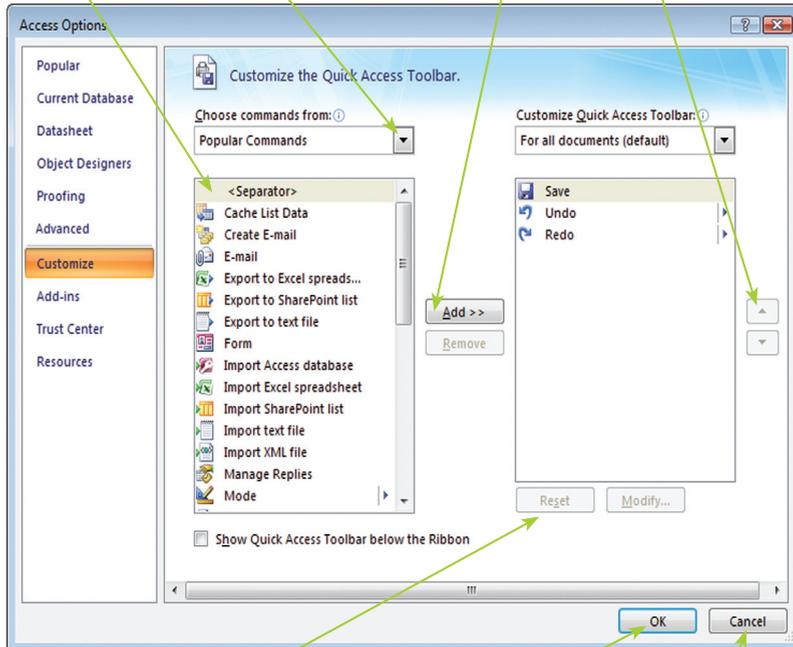
...cont'd

Select the actions to add here

Click here to see different groups of actions

Click here to add the selected action

Change the order in which actions are displayed on the Toolbar



If you make a mistake click Reset to undo your changes

Click here to confirm your choices

Click here to cancel your choices

Hot tip



It's often convenient to distinguish between different groups of actions according to their function, for example separating file access actions from table creation actions. In order to separate actions on the Quick Access Toolbar choose the Separator action.

Repositioning the Quick Access Toolbar

- 1 Click the arrow at the end of the Quick Access Toolbar
- 2 Click the "Show Below the Ribbon" menu item

Don't forget



The Quick Access Toolbar can be returned to its previous position above the Ribbon if need be.

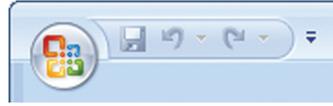
Hot tip

To open the Office Button menu quickly, press the Alt+F keys.

Using the Office Button

The Office Button eases both file management and database administration tasks. Not only does it allow you to open and save databases; the Office Button can also be used to email databases to colleagues or perform maintenance operations on your database.

The Office Button is located to the left of the Quick Access Toolbar.



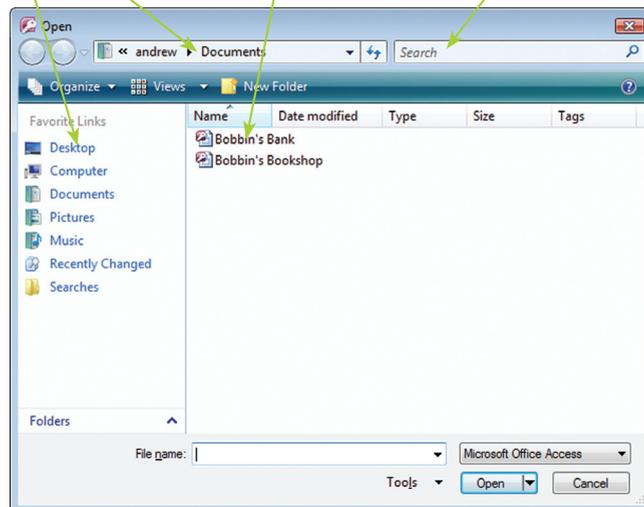
Opening a Database

- 1 Click the Office Button
- 2 Click Open from the Office Button menu
- 3 Find the database you want to open using the file dialog
- 4 Double-click the database name to open it

Click here to change directory

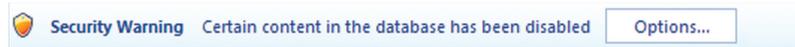
Double-click a file to open it

Type a file name here to search for it



...cont'd

By default Access opens a database in a restricted mode of operation. Specifically, it disables the execution of Visual Basic for Applications code and macros. To enable all the features of the database click the “Options...” button located between the Ribbon and the main database window.

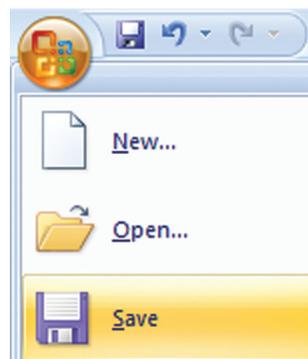


This displays a security dialog. Click the “Enable this content” radio button and then press “OK”.



Saving a Database

- 1 Click the Office Button
- 2 Click the Save option



Beware



Only enable content if you are absolutely certain that it doesn't contain malicious code. In most cases such code would only be present if you were opening a database from someone else.

Hot tip



To save a database quickly at any point press Ctrl+S.

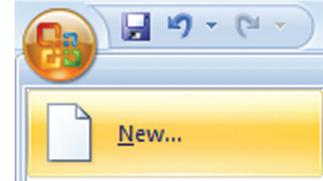
Beware

By default Access 2007 suggests the name 'Database' followed by a number: for example, 'Database1'. Avoid naming your databases in this manner, as having a lot of similarly titled databases hanging around your hard disk will cause confusion and will result in mistakes being made.

...cont'd

Creating a New Database

- 1 Click the Office Button to display the drop-down menu
- 2 Click the New menu item
- 3 Choose a name for your new database and enter it into the text field
- 4 Press the Create button



To save your database in a directory other than My Documents, click the Browse button.



Exiting Access 2007

Access 2007 is great, but despite its brilliance there will come a time when you want to switch it off. Here's how to do it:

- 1 Click the Office Button
- 2 Click the Exit Access button at the bottom right of the Office Button menu

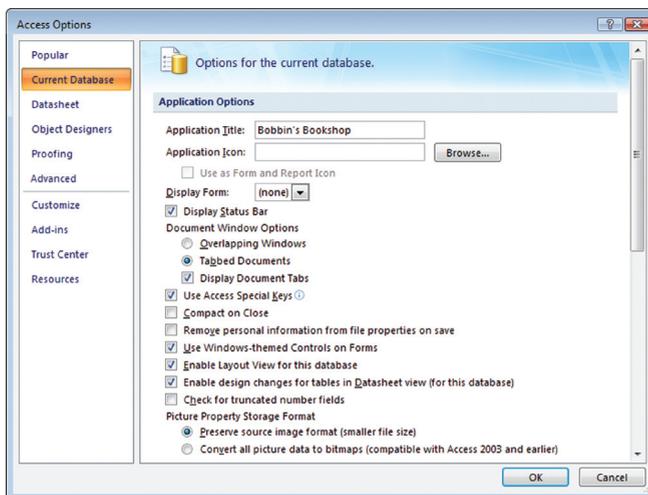
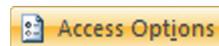


Personalizing Access 2007

The Personalize options screen contains various settings that affect the way you view and interact with Access 2007. For example, you can decide whether or not you want Enhanced ScreenTips such as the one below to appear.



- 1 Click on the Office Button
- 2 Click on the Access Options button located at the bottom right of the Office menu



- 3 Click the menu items at the left-hand side of the Access Options dialog to switch between sets of options
- 4 Click on the drop-down menus to change option settings

Converting Older Databases

Access 2007 makes it easy to open and work with a database created with an older version of Access. The older database will look and feel exactly the same as a database created with Access 2007. The only drawback is that you won't be able to make use of the new features packed into Access 2007, such as the Multi-Valued Look-up Fields and the new Attachment data type.

Luckily, Access 2007 can quickly convert your old database to the new ACCDB file format so that you can use these features.

Beware

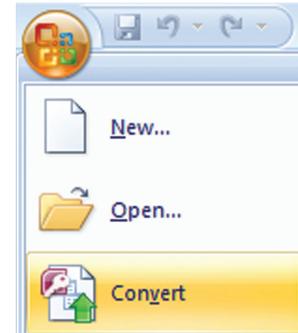


Once you've converted a database you will no longer be able to use it with Access 2003 or earlier versions of Access.

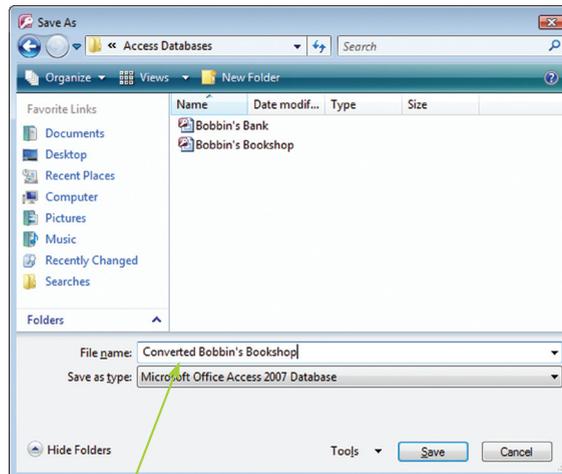
1 Open the database you want to convert

2 Click the Office Button

3 Click Convert



4 Choose a directory in which to save the converted database using the Save As dialog

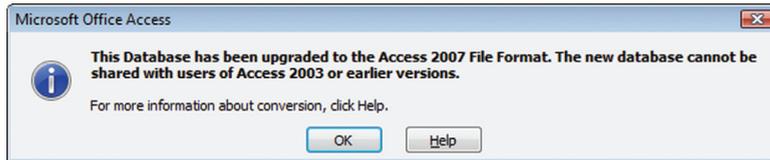


5 Type a name for your database here

6 Click the Save button

...cont'd

- 7 Click OK to get rid of the warning



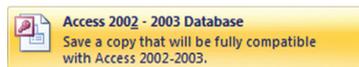
Converting Databases to Older File Formats

There may come a time when you need to share your database with others and as a consequence you may have to convert your Access 2007 database to a file format that will work with previous versions of Access. Perhaps your database is to be kept in a shared folder and updated by your colleagues directly.

- 1 Open the database you want to convert
- 2 Click the Office Button
- 3 Hold the cursor over the arrow at the right of the Save As command



- 4 Choose a file format to convert the database to



- 5 Use the Save As Dialog to navigate to the directory in which the converted database is to be saved
- 6 Type a name for the database in the "File name" field
- 7 Click the Save button on the Save As dialog

Beware



Consider your options carefully before you convert a database to an older file format, as you will no longer be able to use the new features of Access 2007.

Using Office Online

Office Online is an invaluable new feature of Access 2007 that quickly and conveniently helps you to search for new content such as database templates, improve your knowledge with online training programs, and keep your installation of Access 2007 up to date with program downloads and updates. In fact, Office Online is such a convenient feature that Microsoft have kindly incorporated it into the Getting Started screen.

Beware



The templates on this screen will be updated over time.

New Blank Database

Blank Database

Featured Online Templates

Assets Contacts Issues

Events Marketing projects Projects

Microsoft Office Online

What's new in Access 2007?

The new Access 2007 contains more powerful tools to help you quickly track, report, and share information in a manageable environment. Learn more about the new features and improvements.

More on Office Online:
[Training](#) | [Templates](#) | [Downloads](#)

- Get the latest content while working in the 2007 Microsoft Office system
- Guide to Access 2007 User Interface
- Organize all your objects using the new, easy access Navigation Pane

Automatically update this content from Office Online [Learn more](#)

Click here to download these templates

Click these links to get the latest content from Microsoft

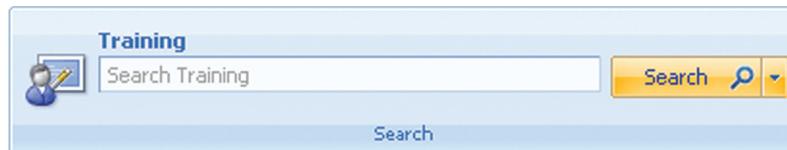
Getting free help and training has never been easier

Get Training Online

Although using this book will give you a good understanding of how to design and administrate databases effectively, Access 2007 contains many more features than could possibly be covered here. As you become more confident with Access 2007 you should actively search the Office Online training pages for courses that will help you to improve your databases and so keep one step ahead of the competition. To access the Office Online training pages simply repeat the following:

- 1 Open the Getting Started screen by closing all the databases that are open
- 2 Click the Training hyperlink located under the label "More on Office Online"
- 3 Enter Access 2007 into the Search utility at the top of web page

More on Office Online:
[Training](#) | [Templates](#) | [Downloads](#)



- 4 Select a training course from the search results by clicking on its hyperlink

Searched [Training](#) for "access 2007"

 Want better search results? Tailor results to the Microsoft Office products you have installed.

Results 1-25 of 64, sorted by best match

Page: **[1]** 2 3  Next 

 **Up to speed with Access 2007**
Help and How-to > Training > Access 2007

 **Up to speed with the 2007 Office system**
Applies to: Access, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Word

Hot tip



If you can't find the training you want, search again using related keywords. You might find that the help you need is covered in another topic.

Downloading New Content

New content is being made available all the time thanks to Microsoft's continual improvement of Access 2007. The content in question can either be conversion tools that let you work with databases created with older versions of Access, or product updates that add further functionality to your current installation of Access 2007.

Don't forget



Visit the site regularly to get all the latest updates.

1 Open the Getting Started screen by closing all the databases that are open

2 Click the Downloads hyperlink located under the label "More on Office Online"

More on Office Online:
[Training](#) | [Templates](#) | [Downloads](#)

Get third-party downloads, services,
and solutions
Explore Office Marketplace



Browse Downloads by Product

My Products | **2007 Office System** | Office 2003 | Office XP | Office 2000

2007 Microsoft Office System

Desktop Applications

- Groove 2007
- 2007 Office system

Servers

- Live Communications Server 2005

Services

- Live Meeting 2005

Other Microsoft Office Programs

- Groove 2007

Hot tip



To find something specific use the Search utility at the top of the web page.

3 Access now opens a web browser. Scroll down to the section entitled "Browse Downloads by Product" and click the 2007 Office System tab once

4 Select the specific content you wish to download by clicking its link and then clicking the download button on the content summary screen that follows

Downloading New Templates

Access 2007 contains many professionally designed database templates and for many users these templates will more than meet their needs, albeit with a bit of tweaking. However, not all users have the same needs and if none of the pre-installed templates meets your requirements there is a good chance that a template on Office Online will.

- 1 Open the Getting Started screen by closing all open databases
- 2 Click the Templates hyperlink located under the label “More on Office Online”
- 3 If a template catches your eye, click on its hyperlink for more information

More on Office Online:
[Training](#) | [Templates](#) | [Downloads](#)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Get Answers from Other Template Users Community Templates » Recently Submitted » Submit a Template » My Templates Things to Do » Suggest a Template Additional Resources » About Downloading the ActiveX Control » Work Essentials » More Third-Party Templates » Outlook Internet Calendars » Use Office at Home » Download Clip Art » Discover New Fonts Feedback » Send Us Your Comments 		<p>Find new ways to that dazzle with b Microsoft Office s</p> <p>2007 Office sys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 2006 Calendar » Students datab » CD/DVD label (f » Basic organizat 							
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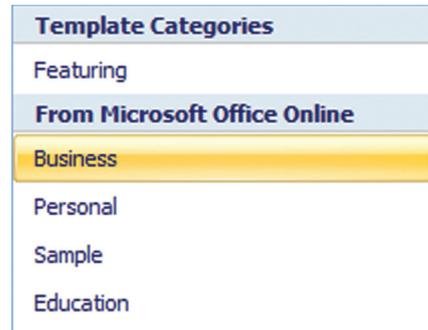
Using Templates

Access 2007 ships with many high-quality templates that, for most people, can be used straight out of the box. For example, if your sole reason for investing in a Database Management System is to maintain the contact details of your customers then Access 2007's Contact template might be perfect for your needs.

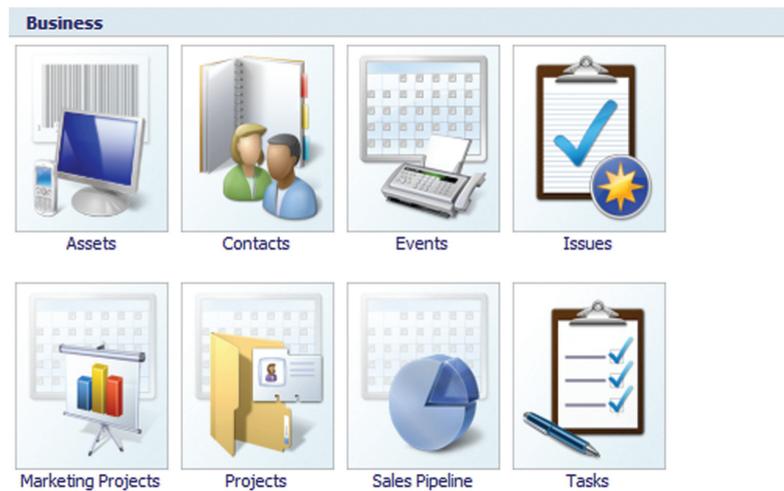
The best way to see if Access 2007's templates are right for your organization is to open them up and see what they do.

Opening a Template

- 1 Open the Getting Started screen by closing all the databases that are open
- 2 Click once on a template category



Access displays the templates currently available within that category in the center of the Getting Started screen.

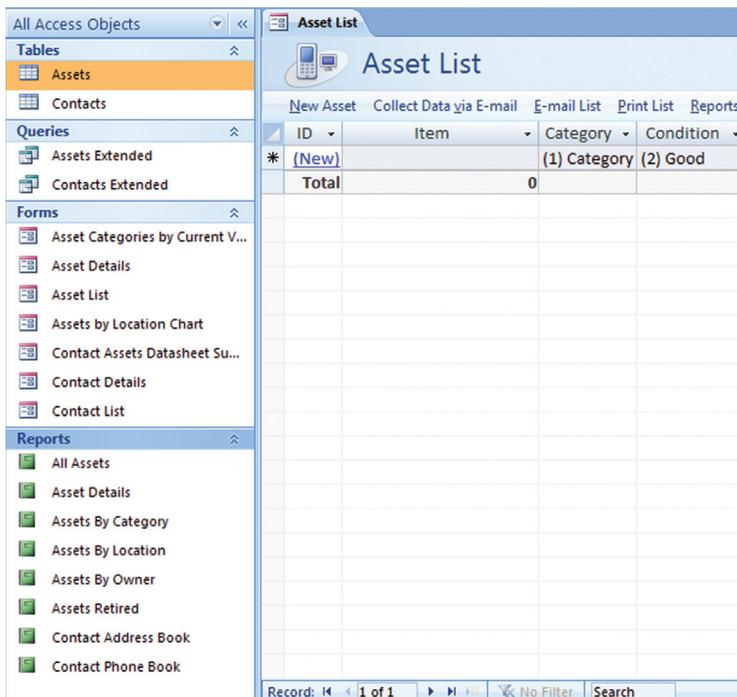


...cont'd

- 3 Select a template by clicking once on its icon
- 4 Click the Download button at the far right of the Getting Started screen



Once a template is downloaded, Access 2007 prepares it for use and opens it automatically.



Hot tip

To view keyboard shortcuts press the Alt key. This displays a letter next to Ribbon icons. Press the letter on the keyboard associated with the Ribbon icon you want to use, as a quick alternative to clicking an icon with the mouse.

Hot tip

When you have a lot of windows open and space is at a premium you can minimize the Ribbon by double-clicking the tab that is currently selected.

Using the Ribbon

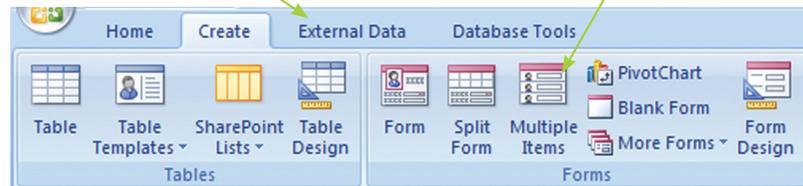
In previous versions of Access users created and interacted with databases by choosing commands from menus, but not any more. You interact with Access 2007 using a menu of icons called the Ribbon.

Rather than laboriously searching through an uninspiring collection of gray menu items, you can find the command you need more quickly and easily with the help of the icons of the Ribbon.

The Ribbon

Click the tabs to switch between different collections of icons

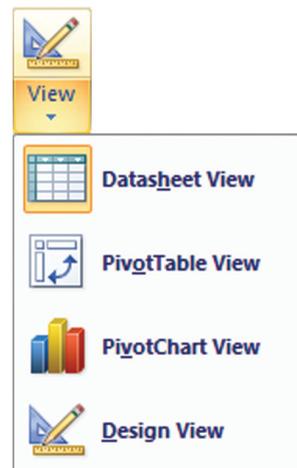
Click an icon once to use it



Icons are grouped according to their function

Switching Between Views

- 1 To switch between views click the down arrow beneath the word View
- 2 Select the desired view by clicking on its icon



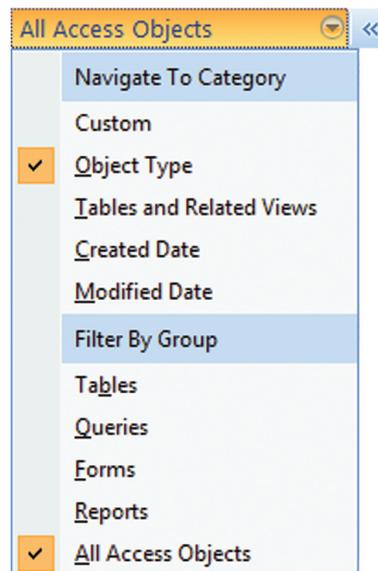
Using the Navigation Pane

Just as the old Access menu bar has been superseded by the Ribbon, so the Database Window has been replaced by the Navigation Pane. This can be found at the side of the main screen whenever a database is open.

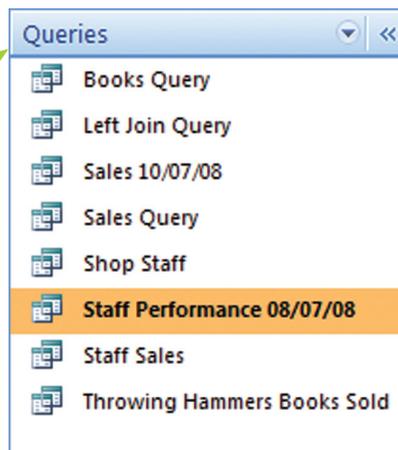
The Navigation Pane makes finding Database Objects such as Tables and Queries easier by filtering them according to their type, the date they were created, and their group.

Filtering Database Objects

- 1 Click the down arrow at the top of the Navigation Pane
- 2 From the drop-down menu select a category to filter by clicking the category name once
- 3 Further refine your filter by clicking once on a group name



Navigation Pane with the "Query" Object type filter applied



Hot tip

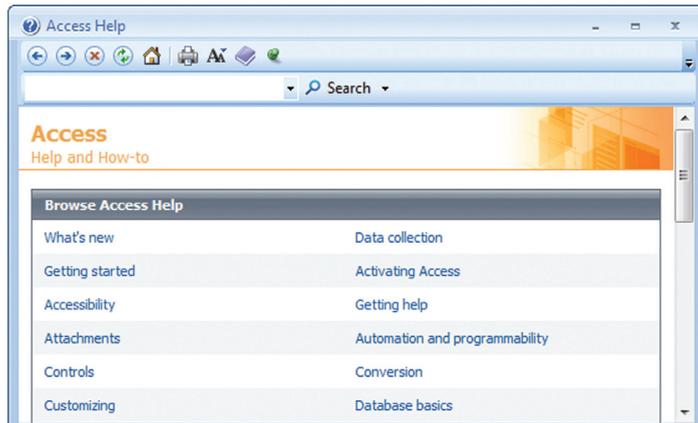
Open the Help screen at any time by pressing the F1 key.

Using the Help System

Screaming “Help!” is a common side-effect of working in close proximity to computers. Thanks to Access 2007’s revised user interface it is now even easier to find the help you need.

As you’ve already seen, Office Online is a convenient means of finding help online, but that doesn’t mean that you have to be connected to the Internet to get help.

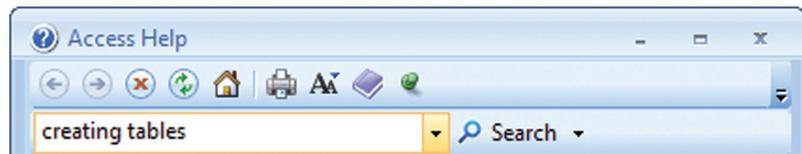
- 1 Click the Help Button at the top right of the Access main window.



- 2 Click on a link to read an article

Searching for Specific Topics

- 1 Type a query into the Search text field and then click Search



- 2 Access will give more than one answer to your query. Choose one that interests you by clicking its link