

Microsoft® Office
Access™ 2007
ALL-IN-ONE DESK REFERENCE
FOR
DUMMIES®

**by Alan Simpson, Margaret Levine Young,
Alison Barrows, April Wells, Jim McCarter**



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

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About the Authors

Alan Simpson is the author of over 115 computer books on all sorts of topics: Windows, databases, Web-site design and development, programming, and network administration. His books are published throughout the world, in over a dozen languages, and have sold millions of copies. Though definitely in the techno-geek category, we let him contribute anyway because sometimes people like that come in handy.

Margaret Levine Young has co-authored several dozen computer books about the Internet, UNIX, WordPerfect, Access, and (stab from the past) PC-File and Javelin, including *The Internet For Dummies* (Wiley) and *Windows XP Home Edition: The Complete Reference* (Osborne/McGraw-Hill). She met her future husband Jordan in the R.E.S.I.S.T.O.R.S., a high-school computer club before there were high-school computer clubs. Her other passions are her children, music, Unitarian Universalism (www.uua.org), reading, and anything to do with cooking or eating.

Alison Barrows has authored or co-authored books on Windows, the Internet, Microsoft Access, WordPerfect, Lotus 1-2-3, and other topics. In addition to writing books, Alison writes and edits technical documentation and training material. In real life she hangs out with her “guys” — Parker, 6, and Mason, 4, and Evan 2 — and tries to carve out some time to practice yoga. Alison lives with her family in central Massachusetts.

April Wells is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh and holds an MBA from West Texas A&M. She is a database administrator with expertise in a wide variety of enterprise database software programs, including Oracle, DB2, MySQL, and Access. She is the author of several books and white papers on database software and is a frequent public speaker, trainer, and consultant.

Dedication

To Susan, Ashley, and Alec, as always. (AS)

To Matt, Parker, Mason, and Evan. (AB)

To the three people who are always there for me, always support me, and never let me down — my family, Larry, Adam, and Amandya. (AW)

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Introduction

Whoa! What happened to menu bars, toolbars, and all that other stuff I used to have? Well, in case you haven't noticed yet, they're all gone. Of course, if you never used Access before in your life, then you're starting fresh, so never mind. Whether you never used any version of Microsoft Access, and aren't even sure what a "version" is, you've come to the right book.

The basic idea behind Microsoft Access is to allow individuals and small businesses to manage large amounts of information the way the big corporations do — with relational databases. The difference is that while the big boys spend millions on computer hardware, software, and staffs of nerdy database-administrator types, Access allows you to do it all yourself with a run-of-the-mill PC and a realistic software budget.

Microsoft Access 2007 is the latest-and-greatest version of a long line of Access versions, starting (not surprisingly) with Version 1. Not that this is the 2,007th version. Somewhere along the way Microsoft switched from using sequential numbers for versions to using years — an idea first pioneered by the automotive industry, which sells things like "2007 Ford Mustangs" as opposed to "Mustang Version 9.3's."

Without going into boring detail about what's new in Access 2007, you find the usual kind of stuff you find in new versions these days — more power, more flexibility, more things you can do with it. And of course — along the lines of the Holy Grail of Everything Computerish these days — more taking advantage of everything the Internet has to offer. But the most noticeable change for the Access-experienced is a whole new look and feel — along with some new ways of doing things.

About Access 2007 All-in-One Desk Reference For Dummies

If you ever have the misfortune of trying to read anything written by one of the aforementioned database-administrator types, you know all about being faced with a decision among the lesser of *three* evils:

(Option 1) Try to figure it out by guessing-and-poking until you break something.

(Option 2) Part with your hard-earned money to hire someone to do the work for you, only to have someone with poor taste in clothing look at you like you're an idiot every time you open your mouth.

(Option 3) Forget computers altogether and stick with index cards.

Option 1 is the one most people try first — until they get to the part where they start breaking things and it starts costing money to get them fixed. Option 2 is too odious to warrant serious consideration. Option 3 just isn't very realistic nowadays unless you're dealing with a tiny amount of personal information. Which leaves a new Option 4 — this book.

The nerds who wrote this book are aware of the fact that *nobody* on the planet was *ever* born knowing what *any* technical term means. In fact, if at all possible, we avoid technical terms like a root canal. But because you are probably faced with technical terms outside this book, we do explain what they mean along the way.

As a rule, big fat computer books aren't such a great option. For that reason, this isn't really a big fat computer book. It's several *smaller* computer books combined into one. Each small book represents a single topic that you can pursue — or ignore — as your personal tastes and immediate needs dictate.

The idea here is definitely *not* to try to read the book cover to cover, unless you're desperately seeking a cure for insomnia. Rather, use the Table of Contents up front, or the Index out back, to look up information when trying to figure it out by guessing just isn't cutting it.

To prevent this book from topping 3,000 pages, we don't explain every possible way to do every possible thing in Access. Instead, we chose what we think are the most important database-management tasks, and we show you the best way to do each one.

Conventions

Speaking of insomnia, this book, like most books, follows certain conventions to alert you to different kinds of stuff, as follows:

Boldface: Stuff you actually *do* while sitting at your computer is shown in boldface, to distinguish it from boring information you probably don't care about anyway.

Italics: When reality rears its ugly head and we're forced to use a technical term, we always show that term in italics the first time it's used. Then we define that term, right there on the spot. Of course, that doesn't mean you won't forget the definition two minutes later. But you can easily flip back a few pages and locate the definition amidst all the other words on the page.

`Monospace:` Monospace text (text in that typeface right back there) represents *code*, instructions that are written for computers, rather than people, to follow. Computers are so stupid, the term "stupid" is a compliment. Unconscious, non-thinking, non-beings (a.k.a. *machines*) is more like it.