Making Everything Easier!™

Microsoft®
Access 2010
FOR DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Navigate the Access interface and understand database architecture

- Link information within your database

- Share data and create forms and reports

- Extract data from Access and get the answers you need

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Access® 2010 For Dummies®

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by Laurie Ulrich Fuller and Ken Cook

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About the Authors

Laurie Ulrich Fuller has been writing about and teaching people to use Microsoft Office for more than 20 years. She's been there through every new version of Access, as Office has evolved to meet the needs of users from all walks of life — from individuals to huge corporations, from growing businesses to non-profit organizations.

In the meantime, Laurie has personally trained more than 10,000 people to make better, more creative use of their computers, has written and co-written 30+ nationally-published books on computers and software — including several titles on Microsoft Office. In the last few years, she's also created several video training courses, teaching online students to use Microsoft Office and Adobe Photoshop.

Laurie's own firm, Limehat & Company, offers training and educational materials as well as graphic design, marketing, promotions, and Web-development services. She invites you to contact her with your Office-related questions at `help@limehat.com`, and to visit her Web site: www.limehat.com.

Ken Cook has built and managed a successful computer consulting business (now called Cook Software Solutions, LLC) since 1990. He began as a trainer — training numerous users (too many to count!) on a

variety of software packages — specializing in Microsoft Office. Currently he "dabbles in training" (specializing in online synchronous training) but his main focus is creating expert Microsoft Office solutions and Microsoft Access database solutions for Fortune 500 and small business clients.

Ken is also a published author on Microsoft Excel, having contributed chapters on macros and VBA to *Special Edition: Using Excel 2000* and *Special Edition: Using Excel 2002* published by Que. Ken also contributed chapters on Microsoft Access to the book *How to Do Everything with Office XP* published by Osborne, and coauthored the previous version of this book; *Access 2007 For Dummies* published by Wiley.

Prior to his career in computers, Ken was a Product Manager for Prince Manufacturing, Inc. He is a graduate of Syracuse University with a bachelor's degree in Marketing. He can be contacted through his Web site (www.kcookpcbiz.com) or by e-mail (ken@kcookpcbiz.com).

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Introduction

You've picked up this book and are hoping it will teach you to use Microsoft Access 2010. Of course, as the authors, we believe this was a wise decision — or that (at the very least) it was some sort of divine intervention that led you to our pages. We're quite certain that this is The Book For You — but not just because we wrote it. Rather, we base this conviction on the fact that both of us have been teaching and using Access for a very long time, and we know how to share what we know with our students. That's right, you're now one of our students — at least that's how we feel about you as our reader. Now, we *could* be wrong here, but that happens so infrequently that we're hardly considering it. No, the reason you picked up this book is that you want to learn Access, and this is the best book to help you do just that. Really. No kidding.

Of course, being a normal human being, you probably have work to do, and whether or not we're right about this being The Book For You, you need Access. You need it to organize your data. You need it to store — accessibly, of course — all the information that's currently spilling out of notebooks, file drawers, your pockets, your glove compartment, everywhere. You need it so you can print out snappy-looking reports that make you look like the genius you are. You need it so you can create cool forms that will help your staff enter all the data you've got stacked on their desks — and in a way that lets you know the data was entered properly, so it's accurate and useful. You need Access so you can find little bits of data out of the huge pool of information you need to store. You just need it.

About This Book

With all the power that Access has (and that it therefore gives *you*), there comes a small price: complexity. Access isn't one of those applications you can just sit down and use, "right out of the box." It's not scarily difficult or anything, but there's a lot going on — and you need some guidance, some help, some direction, to really use it and make it sing and dance. And that's where this book — a "reference for the rest of us" — comes in.

So you've picked up this book. Hang on to it. Clutch it to your chest and run gleefully from the store. (Stop and pay for it first, please; we'd never want to encourage you to embark on a life of crime.) And then start reading — whether you begin with Chapter 1 or whether you dive in on your own and start with a particular feature or area of interest that's been giving you fits. Just read, and then go put Access through its paces.

Conventions Used in This Book

As you work with Access 2010, you're going to need to tell it to do things. You'll also find that at times, Access has questions for you, usually in response to your asking it to do something. This book will show you how to talk to Access, and how Access will talk to you. To show the difference between the two sides of that conversation, we format the commands as follows:

This is something you type into the computer.

> This is how the computer responds to your command.

Because Access *is* a Windows program, you don't just type, type, type — you also mouse around quite a bit. Here are the mouse movements necessary to make Access (and any other Windows program) work:

Click: Position the tip of the mouse pointer (the end of the arrow) on the menu item, button, check box, or whatever else you happen to be aiming at — and then quickly press and release the left mouse button.

Double-click: Position the mouse pointer as though you're going to click, but fool it at the last minute by clicking twice in rapid succession.

Click and drag (highlight): Put the tip of the mouse pointer at the place you want to start highlighting, and then press and hold the left mouse button. While holding down the mouse button, drag the pointer across whatever you want to highlight. When you reach the end of what you're highlighting, release the mouse button.

Right-click: Right-clicking works just like clicking, except you're exercising the right instead of the left mouse button.

What You Don't Have to Read

Now that we've told you that you should read the book, we're telling you that you don't have to read *all* of it. Confused? Don't be. This section of the introduction exists to put your mind at ease, so you won't worry that you have to digest every syllable of this book in order to make sense of Access. And more than just being a required section of the introduction, the heading is true. You don't have to read the whole book.

You should read the chapters that pertain to things you don't know, but you can skip the stuff you do know or that you're fairly sure you don't need to know. If the situation changes and you eventually *do* need to know something, you can go back and read that part later.

If you only use Access at work, and you're using an Access database that some über-geek in your IT department created, chances are you can't tinker with it. Therefore, if you only need to know about using an existing Access database (or unless you have designs on that IT geek's job), you can skip the chapters on designing databases.

Of course, it might be nice to know what's happening "behind the scenes," but you don't have to read those chapters if you don't want to.

Foolish Assumptions

You need to know only a few things about your computer and Windows to get the most out of *Access 2010 For Dummies.* In the following pages, we presume that you . . .

Know the basics of Windows — how to open programs, save your files, create folders, find your files once you've saved them, print, and do basic stuff like that.

Have some goals that Access will help you reach. You either

- want to build your own databases

and/or

- want to work with databases that other people have created.

Want to use and create queries, reports, and an occasional form.

Have either Windows Vista or Windows 7.

If your computer uses Windows 98, 2000, or XP, you can't run Office 2010.

You don't *have* to know (or even care) about table design, field types, relational databases, or any of that other database stuff to make Access work for you. Everything you need to know is right here, just waiting for you to read it. Of course, you may *want* to know what's going on under the hood (so to speak). But if you do, you'll find that information in this book's pages.

How This Book Is Organized

Here's a breakdown of the parts in this book. Each part covers a general aspect of Access. The part's individual chapters dig into the details.

Part I: Basic Training

In this first part of the book, you'll find out what Access is, what it isn't, how it works, and how you open it up and start using it. You'll find out how to navigate and master the Access workspace — and people who've used previous versions of Access find out about all the new features and tools that are part of Access 2010.

Part I also takes you through the process of planning your database — deciding what to store, how to structure your database, and how to use some of Access 2010's very helpful tools for starting a database with templates and themes — cookie-cutters, to use a fun and accurate metaphor — for a variety of common database designs. Be prepared to pick up some helpful jargon, as you learn a bit about a few specialized terms that you really need to know.

Part II: Getting It All on the Table

Part II takes you a bit deeper, starting out with a chapter on setting up more than one table to store related data — and moving on with chapters on setting up relationships between those tables, customizing the way data is stored in your tables, and ways to control how data is entered into the tables in your database. You'll also find out about

new tools that create new data in your tables — based on existing data — automatically.

Part III: Data Mania and Management

Here you find out all about *forms* — the customized interfaces you create to make it easier to enter, edit, and look at your database. You'll also discover cool ways to share your Access data with other programs and how to bring content from Word documents and Excel worksheets into Access to save time, reduce the likelihood of data-entry errors, and build consistency within all the work you do in Microsoft Office.

Speaking of saving time and building consistency, you'll also learn about the new Application Parts feature, through which you can recycle parts of your existing databases to build new ones. You'll also find out about using Access tables on the Web, and how to publish your database to the Internet. Look out, world!

Part IV: Ask Your Data, and Ye Shall Receive Answers

In Part IV, you get ready to ask questions such as, "How many customers do we have in Peoria?" and "How long has that guy in Accounting worked here?" Of course, you already know how to form and speak sentences that go up at the end (so people know you're asking a question), but when you ask a question in Access, the pitch of your voice rarely makes any difference. You'll need, therefore,

to know how to sort, filter, and query your data to get at the information you're storing in your Access database. You'll also want to know more about Action Queries — and these, too, can be found in Part IV.

Part V: Plain and Fancy Reporting

Reports are compilations of data from one or more tables in your database. That statement might sound a bit scary, because "compilations" has four syllables and you might not be sure what a table is yet. Have no fear, however, because Access provides some cool automatic tools that let you pick and choose what you want in your report, and then it goes and makes the report *for you.* How neat is that?

Automatic reports weren't good enough for you, eh? If your job relies upon reports not only being informative but also attractive and attention-grabbing, Part V will be like opening a birthday present. Well, not really, but you'll find out about charts, printing labels, and putting everything from your logo to page numbers on your reports.

Part VI: More Power to You

Part VI gives more power in the form of the Access Analyzer, a tool that tunes up your database for better performance. It also gives you more power by showing you how to create a user interface that controls what people see, which tables they can edit, and how they work with your database overall.

Part VII: The Part of Tens

The format of these chapters is designed to give you a lot of information in a simple, digestible fashion so you can absorb it without realizing you're actually learning something. Sneaky, huh?

Appendix: Getting Help

This isn't really a whole part, but it's darn useful. Remember how your mom told you the only foolish question is the one you don't ask? In this appendix, accessible at www.dummies.com/go/access2010, you find out where to go to ask — namely, the online and built-in help resources that Access offers.

Note: We went to the trouble of typing up a ton of records in a few sample databases that are designed to show you the tricks of the Access trade. You can find all the samples at the aforementioned Web site, www.dummies.com/go/access2010.

Icons Used in This Book

When something in this book is particularly valuable, we go out of our way to make sure that it stands out. We use these cool icons to mark text that (for one reason or another) *really* needs your attention. Here's a quick preview of the ones waiting for you in this book and what they mean:

Tips are incredibly helpful words of wisdom that promise to save you time, energy, and the embarrassment of being caught swearing out loud while you're alone. Whenever you see a tip, take a second to check it out.

Some things are too important to forget, so the Remember icon points them out. These items are critical steps in a process — points that you don't want to miss.

Sometimes we give in to the techno-geek lurking inside us and slip some technical babble into the book. The Technical Stuff icon protects you from obscure details by making them easy to avoid. On the other hand, you may find them interesting. (Your inner techno-geek will rejoice.)

The Warning icon says it all: *Skipping this information may be hazardous to your data's health.* Pay attention to these icons and follow their instructions to keep your databases happy and intact.

Where to Go from Here

Now nothing's left to hold you back from the delights and amazing wonders of Access. Hold on tight to this copy of *Access 2010 For Dummies* and leap into Access.