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Laurie Ulrich Fuller
Ken Cook
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Access 2007 For Dummies

**by Laurie Ulrich Fuller,
Ken Cook & John
Kaufeld**



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About the Authors

Laurie Ulrich Fuller has been writing about and teaching people to use Microsoft Office since the 1980's. Her teaching career goes back to the time before Microsoft Windows - which means she also remembers the first time she taught people to use a Windows-based application, and a student picked up the mouse and aimed it at the computer screen as though using a TV remote. Nobody laughed (except Laurie, after class), because everyone was new to the mouse back then. As new as the mouse was, so was the idea of keeping a database on a computer that could fit on your desk — and Laurie'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 business to non-profit organizations.

Since those early days of Office and Windows, Laurie has personally trained more than 10,000 people to make better, more creative use of their computers, has written and co-written more than 25 nationally-published books on computers and software — including several titles on Microsoft Office. In the last few years, she's also created two video training courses — one on Word 2003, and the other on the entire Office 2003 suite. She runs her own company, Limehat & Company, offering training, educational materials, and web development services. She invites you to contact her at laurie@limehat.com,

and to visit her personal website, www.planetlaurie.com, for more information.

Laurie would also like you to know that despite being able to remember the world before Windows, she does not remember a time before cars, television, or fire.

Ken Cook has built and managed a successful computer consulting business since 1990 serving clients in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and California. 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” but his main focus is creating expert Microsoft Office solutions and Microsoft Access database solutions for Fortune 500 and small business clients.

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Introduction

You've picked up this book and are hoping it will teach you to use Microsoft Access. Of course, as the authors, we believe that it was some sort of divine intervention that led you to our pages, and we're quite certain that this is The Book For You. We could be wrong, 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 place to do that. Really. No kidding.

Of course, being a normal human being, you probably have work to do, and whether we're right about this being The Book For You or not, you need Access. You need it to organize your data. You need it to store and allow you to use 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 that 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

Because 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). And then start reading — whether you begin with Chapter 1 or whether you dive in and start with a particular feature or area of interest that's been giving you fits on your own. Just read, and then go put Access through its paces.

Conventions Used in This Book

As you work with Access, 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 that 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 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, this 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 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, you can skip the chapters on designing databases.

On the other hand, 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 2007 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.
- ✓ Want to build your own databases.
- ✓ Want to work with databases that other people have created.
- ✓ Want to use and create queries, reports, and an occasional form.
- ✓ Have either Windows XP with Service Pack 2 or Windows Vista.



If your computer uses Windows 98 or 2000, you can't run Office 2007.

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). You'll find that information within 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 tame the Access workspace, and for people who've used previous versions of Access, you'll find out about all the new doo-dads that are part of Access 2007.

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 2007's very helpful tools for starting a database with templates — cookie cutters, if you will — 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.

Part III: Data Mania and Management

You'll 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 margin for data entry errors, and build consistency within all the work you do in Microsoft Office. 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'll discover how to ask questions like "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 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.

Part V: Plain and Fancy Reports

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 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, you'll find out about the online and built-in help that Access offers.

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.