



Microsoft Access

Introduction

Microsoft Access is a program with a similar interface to Excel, but which creates databases rather than spreadsheets. The difference between a spreadsheet and a database is that a database is stored in a file format such that it can easily be accessed and searched by programs.

A database is composed of Tables and Relationships. A table is like a spreadsheet. It holds fields (columns), and records (rows). Relationships connect fields in different tables.

Getting Started

When you first open Microsoft Access, it will give you the opportunity to create a new database. If you are starting a new database, click **Blank Database**. If you were previously working on an Access database, find the file in the **Open** section of the window. If you want to import a file from Microsoft Excel, select **Blank Database**, and refer to the section entitled **Importing Tables from Excel**. If you create a new **Blank Database**, Access will ask you to name the file. Select a folder to put the file in, and give that file a name then click the **Create** button.

Access will now present you with a new window from which you can create a table. You will need a table to store your data. Double-click on one of the choices for how to create a new table. It is recommended that beginning Access users select **Create table by using wizard**.

The Table Wizard window asks for fields to be inserted into the table. Find a sample table that represents your task, and use the > symbol to put particular fields into your table. You will be able to add more fields or modify existing fields later. When you are done, click **Next**.

In the next screen, type in a name for your table. You will probably want Access to set a primary key for you automatically, so click the *Yes, set a primary key for me* box.

In the next screen, you will probably want to select *Enter data directly into the table*. then click **Finish**.

You will now be taken to your table and can begin editing the fields and entries.

Importing Tables from Excel

Click on **File, Get External Data**, then **Import**. From within there, you will need to set the **Files of type**: pulldown menu at the bottom to **Microsoft Excel (*.xls)**. Direct the window to your Excel file, and click the **Import** button.

The next screen will show you a basic outline of your spreadsheet. Click the **Next** button to continue. In the next screen, if the first row of your spreadsheet was composed of names for your columns, check the box that says *First Row Contains Column Headings*. Click the **Next** button to continue. On the next screen, let Access know that you would like to store your data *In a New Table*. Select the fields you would like to import, then click **Next**. On the next page, you would probably want Access to add a primary key for you. On the final screen, name the new Table and click **Finish**.

Editing Tables

Editing tables is similar to editing a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel. The table view will always have one more record (row) than is in use. This is the record you use to add another record to the table. Just fill in the fields for the record, and it will automatically create a new blank record at the bottom. Continue this process until all of your data is entered. To fill in a field, simply click into the cell and start typing. If you want to make more fields, right click on a column name and click **Insert Column**. You can move columns around by clicking on the name of the column and dragging it over.

Getting Help

Help can be accessed by clicking on the **Help** menu. The ISD customer support center will only provide basic support for Microsoft Access, but can be reached at 213-740-5555.