

Guide to the Access 2007 user interface

Applies to: [Microsoft Office Access 2007](#)

This article discusses the new Microsoft Office Access 2007 user interface (UI). The new user interface is the result of extensive research and usability testing, and it is designed to make it easier to find the commands that you need.

You will learn about the new user interface elements — what they are and how to work with them. You will also learn how to enable tabbed documents in a database, and how to navigate the new interface objects.

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Overview

The new user interface in Office Access 2007 comprises a number of elements that define how you interact with the product. These new elements were chosen to help you master Access, and to help you find the commands that you need faster. The new design also makes it easy to discover features that otherwise might have remained hidden beneath layers of toolbars and menus. And you will get up and running faster, thanks to the new **Getting Started with Microsoft Office Access** page, which provides you with quick access to our new getting started experience, including a suite of professionally designed templates.

The most significant new interface element is called the Ribbon, which is part of the Microsoft Office Fluent user interface. The Ribbon is the strip across the top of the program window that contains groups of commands. The Office Fluent Ribbon provides a single home for commands and is the primary replacement for menus and toolbars. On the Ribbon are tabs that combine commands in ways that make sense. In Office Access 2007, the main Ribbon tabs are **Home**, **Create**, **External Data**, and **Database Tools**. Each tab contains groups of related commands, and these groups surface some of the additional new UI elements, such as the gallery, which is a new type of control that presents choices visually.

The major new interface elements in Office Access 2007 are:

Getting Started with Microsoft Office Access The page that is displayed when you start Access from the Windows **Start** button or from a desktop shortcut.

The Office Fluent Ribbon The area at the top of the program window where you can choose commands.

Command tab Commands combined in ways that make sense.

Contextual command tab A command tab that appears depending on your context — the object that you are working on or the task that you are performing.

Gallery A control that displays a choice visually so that you can see the results that you will get.

Quick Access Toolbar A single standard toolbar that appears on the Ribbon and offers single-click access to most needed commands, such as **Save** and **Undo**.

Navigation Pane The area on the left side of the window that displays your database objects. The Navigation Pane replaces the Database window from earlier versions of Access.

Tabbed documents Your tables, queries, forms, reports, pages, and macros are displayed as tabbed documents.

Status bar The bar at the bottom of the program window that displays status information and includes buttons that allow you to change your view.


Mini toolbar An on-object element that transparently appears above text that you have selected, so that you can easily apply formatting to the text.

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Getting Started with Microsoft Office Access

When you start Office Access 2007 by clicking the Windows **Start** button or a desktop shortcut (but not when you click on a database), the **Getting Started with Microsoft Office Access** page appears. This page shows what you can do to get started in Office Access 2007.



For example, you can create a new blank database, create a database from a template, or open a recent database (if you have opened some databases before). You can also go directly to Microsoft Office Online to learn more about 2007 Microsoft Office system and Office Access 2007, or you can click the **Microsoft Office Button**  and use the menu to open a existing database.

Open a new blank database

- Start Access from the **Start** menu or from a shortcut.

The Getting Started with Microsoft Office Access page appears.

- On the **Getting Started with Microsoft Office Access** page, under **New Blank Database**, click **Blank Database**.
- In the **Blank Database** pane, in the **File Name** box, type a file name or use the one that is provided for you.
- Click **Create**.

The new database is created, and a new table is opened in Datasheet view.

Office Access 2007 provides a number of templates with the product, and you can download more from Microsoft Office Online. What is a template? In the context of Office Access 2007, it is a predesigned database complete with professionally designed tables, forms, and reports. Templates give you a big head start when you create a new database.

Create a new database from a featured template

- Start Access from the **Start** menu or from a shortcut.

The Getting Started with Microsoft Office Access page appears.

- . On the **Getting Started with Microsoft Office Access** page, under **Featured Online Templates**, click a template.
- . In the File Name box, type a file name or use the one that is provided for you.
- . Optionally, check the **Create and link your database to a Windows SharePoint Services site** if you want to link to a Windows SharePoint Services site.
- . Click **Create**
- or-
- Click **Download**

Access creates the new database from the template and opens it.

You can download additional templates from Office Online directly from within the Office Access 2007 user interface.

Create a new database from a Microsoft Office Online Template

- . Start Access from the **Start** menu or from a shortcut.

The Getting Started with Microsoft Office Access page appears.

- . On the **Getting Started with Microsoft Office Access** page, in the **Template Categories** pane, click a category and then, when the templates in that category appear, click a template.
- . In the File Name box, type a file name or use the one that is provided for you.
- . Click **Download**.

Access automatically downloads the template, creates a new database based on that template, stores it in your documents folder (for example, the My Documents folder), and opens the database.

When you open (or create and open) a database, Access adds the file name and location of the database to an internal list of the most recently used documents. This list is displayed on the **Getting Started with Microsoft Office Access** page so that you can easily open your most recently used databases.


Open a recently used database

- . Start Access.
- . On the **Getting Started with Microsoft Office Access** page, under **Open Recent Database**, click the database that you want to open.


Access opens the database.

Open a database by using the Microsoft Office Access button

- . Start Access.

. Click the **Microsoft Office Button** , and then click the database that you want to open, if it appears in the right pane of the menu.

-or-

Click the **Microsoft Office Button** , and then click **Open**. When the **Open** dialog box appears, enter a file name, and then click **Open**.

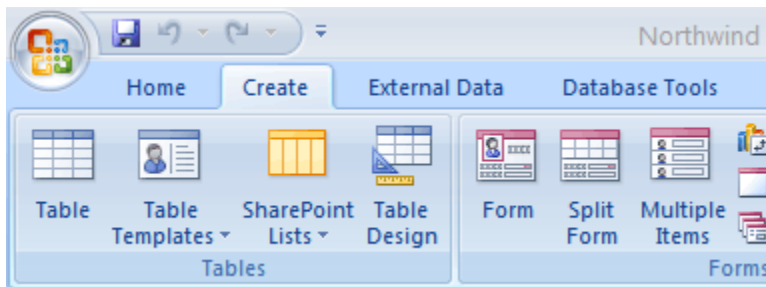
The database opens.

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The Ribbon

The Office Fluent Ribbon is the primary replacement for menus and toolbars and provides the main command interface in Office Access 2007. One of the main advantages of the Ribbon is that it consolidates, in one place, those tasks or entry points that used to require menus, toolbars, task panes, and other UI components to display. This way, you have only one place in which to look for commands, instead of a multitude of places.

When you open a database, the Ribbon appears at the top of the main Office Access 2007 window, where it displays the commands in the active command tab.



The Ribbon contains a series of command tabs that contain commands. In Office Access 2007, the main command tabs are **Home**, **Create**, **External Data**, and **Database Tools**. Each tab contains groups of related commands, and these groups surface some of the additional new UI elements, such as the gallery, which is a new type of control that presents choices visually.

The commands on the Ribbon take into account the currently active object. For example, if you have a table opened in Datasheet view and you click **Form** on the **Create** tab, in the **Forms** group, Office Access 2007 creates the form, based on the active table. That is, the name of the active table is entered in the form's **RecordSource** property.

You can use keyboard shortcuts with the Ribbon. All of the keyboard shortcuts from an earlier version of Access continue to work. The Keyboard Access System replaces the menu accelerators from earlier versions of Access. This system uses small indicators with a single letter or combination of letters that appear on the Ribbon and indicate what keyboard shortcut activates the control underneath.

When you have selected a command tab, you can browse the commands available within that tab.

Select a command tab

- . Start Access.
- . Click the tab that you want.

-or-

- . Start Access.
- . Press and release the ALT key.

The keyboard tips appear.

- . Press the key or keys shown in the keyboard tip on or closest to the command tab that you want.

You can execute a command a number of different ways. The quickest and most direct route is to use the keyboard shortcut associated with the command. If you know the keyboard shortcut used from an earlier version of Access, it should also work in Office Access 2007.

For more information on keyboard shortcuts, see [Keyboard shortcuts for Access](#).

Execute a command

- . Start Access.
- . Click the appropriate tab for the command. The following table shows a representative sampling of the tabs and the commands available on each tab. The tabs and the commands available change depending on what your are doing.

Command Tab	Common things you can do
Home	Select a different view.
	Copy and paste from the clipboard.
	Set the current font characteristics.
	Set the current Font Alignment.
	Apply rich text formatting to a memo field.
	Work with records (Refresh, New, Save, Delete, Totals, Spelling, More).
	Sort and filter records.
Create	Find records.
	Create a new blank table.
	Create a new table using a table template.
	Create a list on a SharePoint site and a table in the current database that links to the newly created list.
	Create a new blank table in Design view.
	Create a new form based on the active table or query.

	Create a new pivot table or chart.
	Create a new report based on the active table or query.
	Create a new query, macro, module, or class module.
External Data	Import or Link to external data.
	Export data.
	Collect and update data via e-mail.
	Work with offline SharePoint lists.
	Create saved imports and saved exports.
	Move some or all parts of a database to a new or existing SharePoint site.
Database Tools	Launch the Visual Basic editor or run a macro.
	Create and view table relationships.
	Show/hide object dependencies or the property sheet
	Run the Database Documenter or analyze performance.
	Move data to Microsoft SQL Server or to an Access (Tables only) database.
	Run the Linked Table Manager.
	Manage Access add-ins.
	Create or edit a Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) module.

Click the control that represents the command. Alternatively, if you know the keyboard shortcut for the command from an earlier version of Access, enter the keyboard shortcut by using the keyboard.

-or-

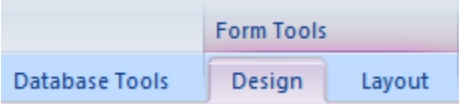
Press and release the ALT key.

The access keys appear.

Press the key or keys shown in the keyboard tip associated with the command that you want.

Contextual command tabs

In addition to the standard command tabs, Office Access 2007 employs a new UI element in Office Professional 2007 called the contextual command tab. Depending on your context (that is, which object you are working with and what you are doing), one or more contextual command tabs might appear next to the standard command tabs.



Activate a contextual command tab

Click the contextual command tab.

-or-

- Press and release the ALT key.

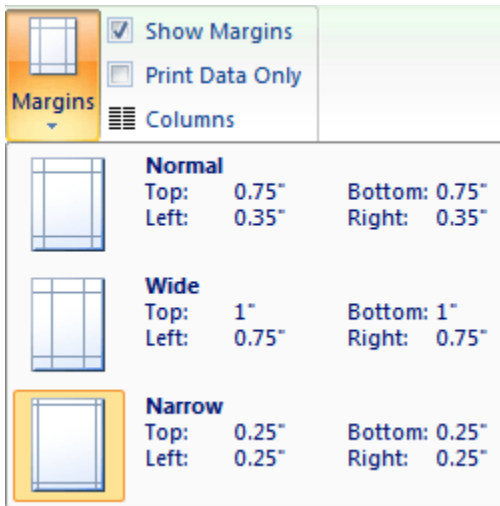
The access keys appear.

- Press the key or keys shown in the access key that appears on or closest to the contextual command tab.

The contextual command tabs contain commands and features that you need to work in a specific context. For example, when you open a table in Design view, the contextual tabs contain commands that apply only when you are working with a table in that view. As another example, when you open a table in Design view, a contextual command tab named **Design** appears next to the **Advanced Tools** tab. When you click the **Design** tab, the Ribbon shows the commands available to you only when the object is in Design view.

Galleries

Another innovation that is part of the new Office Access 2007 user interface is a new control called a gallery. The gallery control is designed to work with the Ribbon and focus your attention on getting the results that you want. Rather than merely show commands, the gallery control shows the result of using those commands. The idea is to provide a visual way for you to browse and see what Office Access 2007 can do, with a focus on the results, rather than focusing solely on the commands themselves.



Galleries come in different shapes and sizes. There is a grid layout, a menu-like representation that drops down, and even an on-Ribbon layout that places the content of the gallery itself on the Ribbon.

Hiding the Ribbon

Sometimes, you might need a little more space to devote to your work area. For that reason, the Ribbon can be collapsed so that only the bar with the command tabs remains. To close the Ribbon, double-click the active command tab. To open it again, double-click the active command tab again.

Hide and restore the Ribbon

- Double-click the active command tab (the active tab is the highlighted tab).



- Double-click the active command tab again to restore the Ribbon.

Quick Access Toolbar

The Quick Access Toolbar is, by default, a small area adjacent to the Ribbon that allows one-click access to commands. The default set of commands are those that you rely on often, such as **Save**, **Undo**, and **Redo**. However, you can customize the Quick Access Toolbar to include the commands that you use most often. You can also modify the placement of the toolbar and change it from the default small size to large size. The small toolbar appears next to the command tabs on the Ribbon. When you switch to the large size, the toolbar appears below the Ribbon and extends its full width.



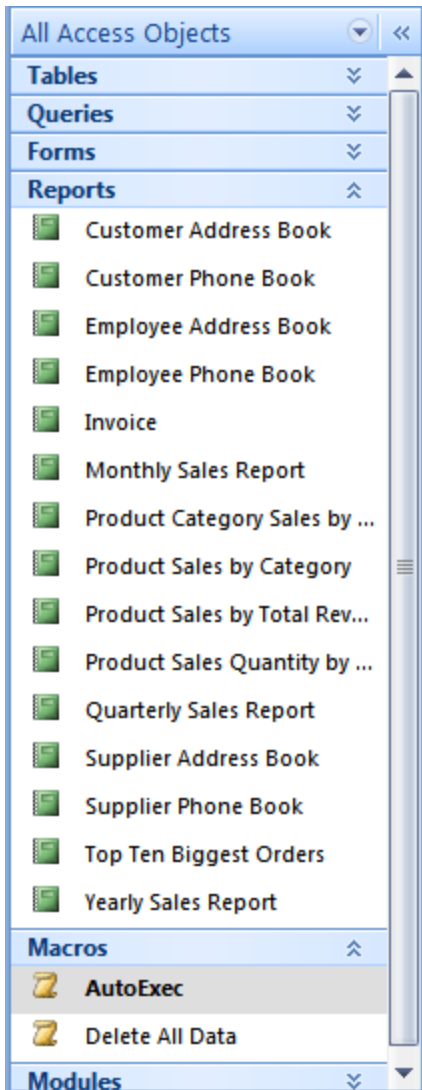
Customize the Quick Access Toolbar

- Click the rightmost drop-down arrow in the toolbar.
- Click **Customize Quick Access Toolbar**, and then click **More Commands**.
- In the **Access Options** dialog box, select the command or commands that you want to add, and then click **Add**.
- To remove a command, highlight it in the list on the right, and then click **Remove**. Alternatively, double-click the command in the list.
- Click **OK** when you are done.

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Navigation Pane

When you open a database or create a new one, the names of your database objects appear in the Navigation Pane. The database objects include your tables, forms, reports, pages, macros, and modules. The Navigation Pane replaces the Database window used by earlier versions of Access — if you used the Database window to perform a task in a previous version, you now perform that task by using the Navigation Pane in Office Access 2007. For example, if you want to add a row to a table in Datasheet view, you open that table from the Navigation Pane.



To open a database object or apply a command to a database object, right-click the object and select a menu item from the context menu. The commands on the context menu vary according to the object type.

Open a database object, such as a table, form, or report

In the Navigation Pane, double-click the object.

-or-

In the Navigation Pane, select the object, and then press ENTER.

-or-


- . In the Navigation Pane, right-click an object.
- . In the context menu, click a menu item.

Note that you can set an option to open objects with a single click in the **Navigation Options** dialog box.

The Navigation Pane divides your database objects into categories, and these categories contain groups. Some categories are predefined for you, and you can also create your own custom groups.

By default, the Navigation Pane appears when you open a database in Office Access 2007, including databases created in earlier versions of Access. You can prevent the Navigation Pane from appearing by default by setting a program option. The following set of steps explain how to take each action.

To show or hide the Navigation Pane

Click the button in the upper-right corner of the Navigation Pane () , or press F11.

Prevent the Navigation Pane from appearing by default

Click the **Microsoft Office Button**  , and then click **Access Options**.

The **Access Options** dialog box appears.

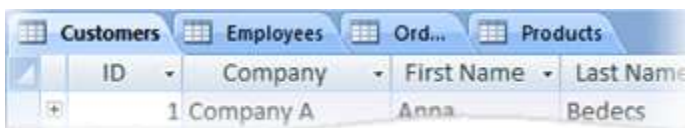
- In the left pane, click **Current Database**.
- Under **Navigation**, clear the **Display Navigation Pane** check box, and then click **OK**.

For more information about the Navigation Pane, see the article [Guide to the Navigation Pane](#).

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Tabbed documents

Starting with Office Access 2007 you can display your database objects in tabbed documents instead of overlapping windows. For everyday interactive use, you may prefer the tabbed document interface. You can enable or disable tabbed documents by setting your Access Options (see [Show or hide document tabs](#), later in this article). However, if you change the tabbed document settings, you must close and reopen your database for the new settings to take effect.



Show or hide document tabs

Click the **Microsoft Office Button**  , and then click **Access Options**.

The **Access Options** dialog box appears.

- In the left pane, click **Current Database**.

- . In the **Application Options** section, under **Document Window Options**, select **Tabbed Documents**.
- . Select or clear the **Display Document Tabs** check box. Clearing the check box turns off document tabs.
- . Click **OK**.

NOTES

The **Display Document Tabs** setting is a per-database setting. You must set this independently for each database.

After you change the **Display Document Tabs** setting, you must close and reopen your database to see the change take effect.

New databases created by using Office Access 2007 display document tabs by default.

Databases created by using an earlier version of Access use overlapping windows by default.

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Status bar

As with earlier versions of Access, in Office Access 2007, you can display a status bar at the bottom of the window. This standard UI element continues to be the place to look for status messages, property hints, progress indicators, and so on. With Office Access 2007, the status bar also takes on two standard functions that you will also see in the status bar of other Office Professional 2007 programs: View/Window switching and Zoom.

You can quickly switch the active window between one of the available views by using the controls available on the status bar. If you are viewing an object that supports variable zoom, you can adjust the zoom level to zoom in or out by using the slider on the status bar.

The status bar can be enabled or disabled in the **Access Options** dialog box.

Show or hide the status bar

- . Click the **Microsoft Office Button**  , and then click **Access Options**.

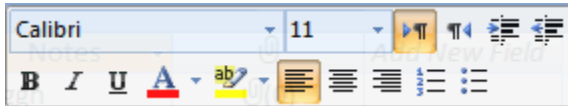
The **Access Options** dialog box appears.

- . In the left pane, click **Current Database**.
- . Under **Application Options**, select or clear the **Display Status Bar** check box. Clearing the check box turns off the display of the status bar.
- . Click **OK**.

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Mini toolbar

One of the more common operations performed in any Office Professional 2007 program is text formatting. In earlier versions of Access, formatting text often required using a menu or displaying the **Formatting** toolbar. Using Office Access 2007 you can format text more easily by using the mini toolbar. When you select text for formatting, the mini toolbar automatically appears above the selected text. If you move the mouse pointer closer to the mini toolbar, the mini toolbar fades in and you can use it to apply bold, italic, font size, color, and so on. As you move the pointer away from the mini toolbar, the mini toolbar fades away. If you don't want to use the mini toolbar to apply text formatting to a selection, just move your pointer a few pixels away and the mini toolbar disappears.



Format text by using the mini toolbar

- . Select the text to format.

The mini toolbar transparently appears above the text.

- . Apply formatting by using the mini toolbar.

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Getting Help

When you have a question, you can get help by pressing F1 or by clicking the question mark icon on the right side of the Ribbon.



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