

Access 2010: Cleansing Excel data for import into Access

Practical workbook

Aims and Learning Objectives

By the end of this workbook, you will be able to:

- explain the problems that can be encountered if data is not consistently entered
- cleanse Excel data for import into a simple, multi-table Access database;
- import cleansed Excel data into multiple Access tables;
- create relationships between the tables;
- modify the tables so that data input via Access is simplified.

Document information

Course documents and files

This document and all its associated practice files are available on the web. To find these, go to <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/it-services/learning/resources> and in the Keyword box, type the document code given in brackets at the top of this page.

Related documentation

Other related documents are available from the web at:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/it-services/learning/resources>

Introduction

This document provides you with experience of the tasks that you will have to do if you want to import data held in Excel into Access tables. The reality is that this process will be time-consuming and fiddly and in real life almost certainly a lot more difficult than in the following tasks.

There are several important things to keep in mind when doing this for real:

- Make sure that you have designed a viable data model (i.e. that you have the right tables and the right relationships)
- Keep backups at all times, just in case you scramble your Excel data
- Be extra careful when manually entering key field data – get this wrong and you'll be joining the wrong records together in Access

Prerequisites

Experience of the currently-supported versions of Excel and Access are required.

You will get more out of this document if you have done one of the following:

- Attended “Access 2010: An introduction” (ITS-ACC10-1) and “Access 2010: Building Access databases” (ITS-ACC10-2).
- Worked through course documents for the above two courses.

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Task 1 Spreadsheet examples

Objectives To look at a spreadsheet where the data has been cleansed and to look at a more usual spreadsheet example with multiple examples of bad practice.

Comments Entering data into a correctly-designed database precludes many of the problems that are faced when using spreadsheets for data entry, such as having to type the same data over and over again and threat of typos.

Spreadsheet with cleansed data

It is useful to see an example of good practice so that you can better identify bad practice when you come across it.

1.1 To see an example of good practice:

- Open the Excel file **PlanningYourDatabaseGood.xlsx**.
- Sort the spreadsheet by the **Title** column.
- Notice that every entry, where the same artist appears more than once, is spelled and formatted exactly the same.
- Sort the spreadsheet by the **Format** column and repeat the above scrutiny.
- Do the same for the **Label** column.
- Have a general look through and close the file.

Spreadsheet without cleansed data

1.2 To see an example of the more usual type of spreadsheet:

- Open the Excel file **PlanningYourDatabaseBad.xlsx**.
- Do the same as above and jot down the problems you find in the box below.

Note Check how many Beatles records are grouped together in the sort – there are actually six Beatles records in the Spreadsheet. Also, see if you can find, by sorting or searching, out how many recordings of steam locomotives there are.

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