

# ACCESS



By Patricia Cox

## Create a Navigation System

As you use your database, it may be helpful to create a system of forms to help you navigate among all the reports, forms, and tables you've created and easily locate what you need.

The basic navigation system is organized into three forms: a Main Menu, which serves as a switchboard/dashboard; a Data Entry Menu to open various forms so that you can enter data

into tables; and a Report Menu to let you review your reports and easily print them. We will create buttons on these forms to help you move from menu to menu more easily, to close menus and data entry forms, and to exit the Access database. We will also create a simple macro to open the main form when the database opens.

Figure 1 illustrates the structure for the

navigation system, which is built from the bottom up. You've already created the data entry forms, queries, and reports. To build the navigation system, create your Data Entry and Report Menu forms first, and then the Main Menu form.

### Create a Menu Form

On the Create ribbon, click Blank Form. Save the form with the appropriate name—Data Menu, Report Menu, or Main Menu—then go to Design View. On the Design Ribbon, click Title (located in the Control Group) to add a title to the form. To give the menus a clean appearance, it helps to remove any items that don't relate to navigation forms. In Design View, open the form's Property Sheet and turn off the items you don't want, such as Record Selectors, Navigation Buttons, Dividing Lines, and Scroll Bars, by changing their setting to "No" (or "Neither"), as shown in Figure 2. Close the Property Sheet to save your changes.

### Add Buttons to a Form

Depending on the type of menu you're creating, you can add different buttons to the form to ease navigation. On the Data Menu form, add buttons that will

Figure 1

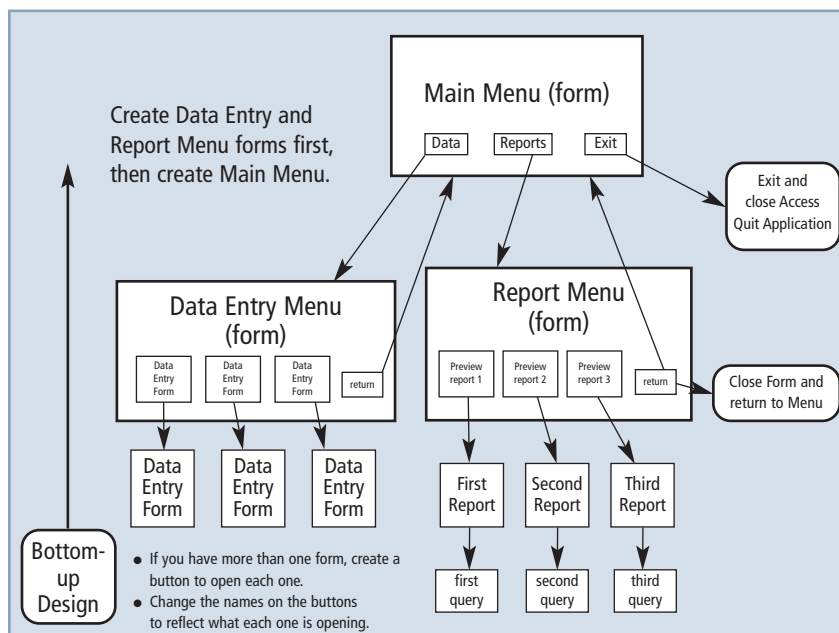
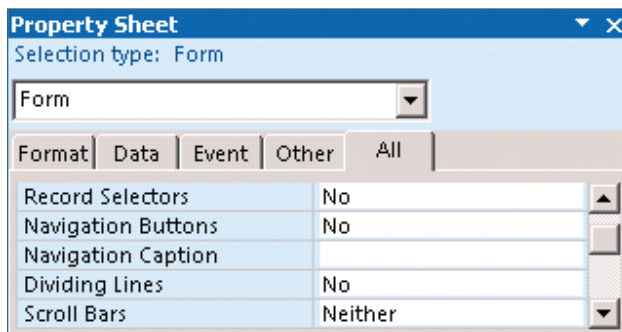


Figure 2



open the various data entry forms in the database, add buttons to your Report Menu form to review reports, and add buttons to your Main Menu form to open the other menus.

On the Design ribbon, click on the Button icon, then click on the navigation form (while still in Design View) to place the button. This will bring up the Command Button Wizard (see Figure 3). Frequently used command buttons include Open Form and Close Form (in the Form Operations category), Preview Report (in Report Operations), Quit Application (in Application), and Run Macro (in Miscellaneous).

## Create a Macro to Open the Main Menu Form

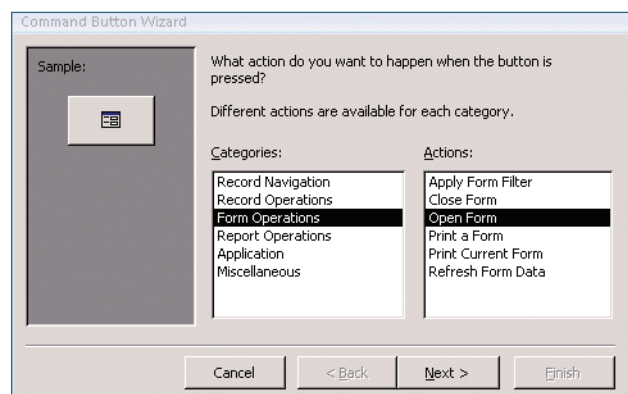
We'll discuss macros in greater detail in future columns, but there's a simple,

two-action macro

you can create quickly to automatically open the Main Menu when you open the database. Go to the Create Ribbon and click Macro to open a new macro in Design View. For the first action, choose OpenForm from the dropdown menu in the Action column. This will bring up the Action Arguments section at the bottom of the window. In the Form Name field there, choose the Main Menu form you created. To add the second action, simply go to the next row of the Action column and select Maximize. Now save the macro and name it autoexec. By naming it that, the macro will run when the database opens.

Once the Main Menu is open, the other navigation buttons will allow you to move easily through the database. Each time you create a new data entry

Figure 3



form or report, you can easily add it to this structure.

Now that we have a basic knowledge of Access and its fundamental structure and capabilities, we will be able to start covering more complex items. If you have specific questions, feel free to e-mail them to me, and we may address them in an upcoming issue. **SF**

*Patricia Cox teaches Excel and Access to management accounting students at Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisc., and has consulted with local area businesses to create database reporting systems since 1998. She is also a member of the Greater Milwaukee IMA Chapter. To send Patricia a question to address in the Access column, e-mail her at [kathrynmann@tds.net](mailto:kathrynmann@tds.net).*