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By Patricia Cox

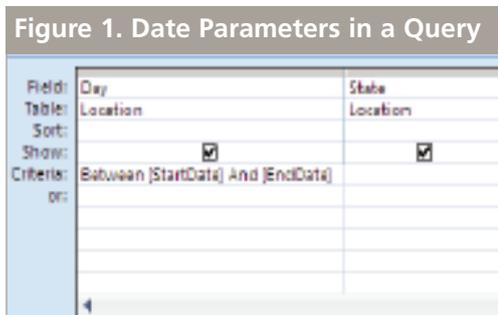
Using Forms, Queries, and Reports to Create Ad Hoc Reporting

Last month we delved into refining your reports by altering properties for report, group, and overall controls. You may have noticed that many of the same controls are used for reports and forms. While reports and forms have many things in common there is one fundamental difference: Reports are for printing and, therefore, are static, while forms are for processing data or reporting and, thus, dynamic.

Let's say you have a report for which you would like the ability to vary the date range when you run it, such as a report that you might run on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. Now that we've discussed the basics of queries, reports, and forms, we can combine what we've been learning to make these reports flexible and allow you to enter the date range when you run the report.

There are two ways to do this. The first is simple. Add a parameter to the query that allows you to enter the dates you want to use when the report opens and runs the Record Source select query to get the data. To do this, go to the design view of the query that serves as

the record source for your report. On the criteria line for the date field, type "Between [Enter Start Date] to [Enter End Date]," as shown in Figure 1. (If you don't remember the name of the query the report uses, you can look it up. In the report, open the Property Sheet. Make sure Form is selected in the drop-down. On the All tab, Record Source is the first property listed.) When you run the report, a window will appear on the screen asking you to enter a start date.



Enter the date you want to use and click OK (or press ENTER). A new window will pop up asking for the end date. Enter that as well. Then you're set—the report will generate the data using the start and end dates you want.

Although this method is simple, the downside is that the dates are only

present when you run the report. Every time you run the report, you'll need to enter the dates.

The second method of achieving the same result is a bit more sophisticated. It requires having created a Report Menu Form for running the report and involves using text boxes on the menu and connecting them to the query. One benefit of this is that you can then use the same date range for a series of reports and even create a macro to print them. This second method involves several steps:

1. Set up text boxes on the Report Menu Form and name them StartDate and EndDate. Change their format to Short Date (see Figure 2). Save the form, then change to Form View. In the new text boxes, enter the dates you want to use for the report.
2. Open the query in design view. On the criteria line for the date field, right-click and select Build. This lets you double-click to select fields from the Report Menu Form to use in your expression, as shown in Figure 3. Following the formula used in the first method, build an expression that refers to the new text boxes in the Report Menu Form: Between

Figure 2. Adding Text Boxes to the Report Menu Form

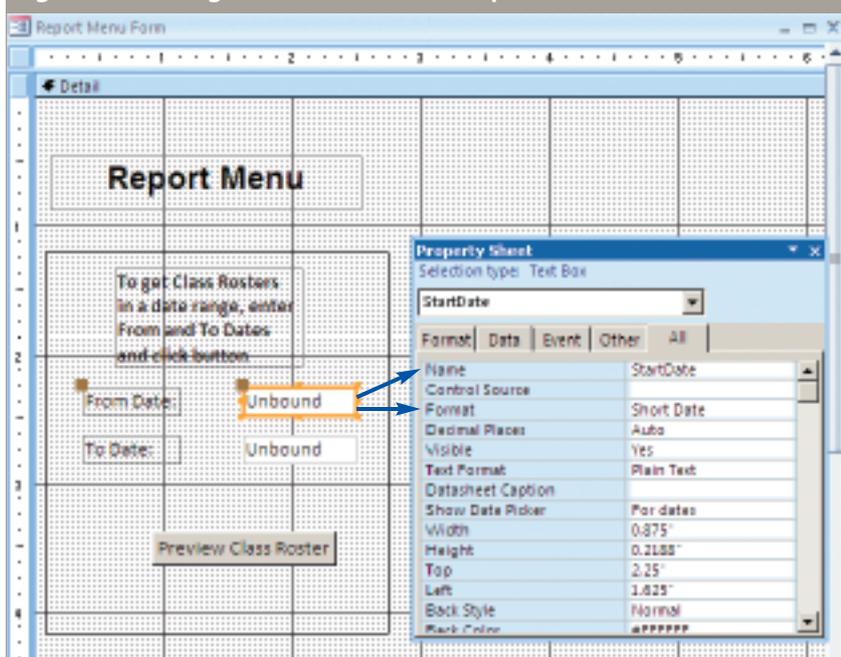
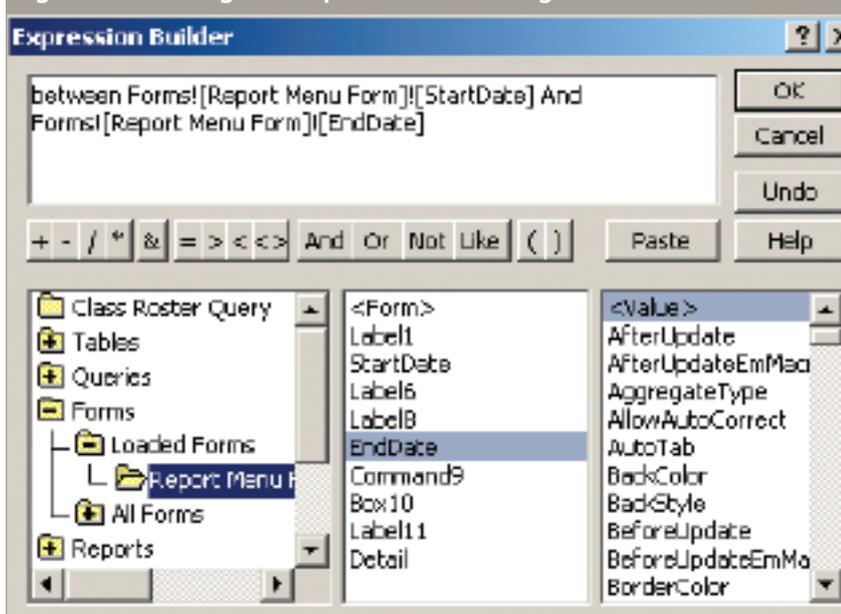


Figure 3. Building the Expression Referring to Form Controls



[Forms]![Report Menu Form]![StartDate] And [Forms]![Report Menu Form]![EndDate]. Save and close the query.

3. Move to the Report Menu Form and run the report. You'll see that it uses the dates entered on the form.

If you like this method, you can also edit the report to use the dates on the report menu form in order to reflect the dates the report is using for the data.

You do this by adding text boxes to the report and referencing the Report Menu Form controls. When you click the button to run the report, it processes the query that uses the menu form for the date range. This is a great way to get your queries, reports, and forms to work together. **SF**

Patricia Cox has taught Excel and Access to management accounting students and other college majors and has consulted with local area businesses to create database reporting systems since 1998. She is also a member of IMA's Greater Milwaukee Chapter. To send Patricia a question to address in the Access column, e-mail her at kathrynmann@tds.net.