

ACCESS <<<<<<<

By Patricia Cox

Macro Tools Design Ribbon

In September 2009, we introduced the subject of macros by discussing a few of the Actions that are used most often. This month we'll look at four of the tools that are especially useful when editing a macro: Single Step, Show All Actions, Conditions, and Arguments. These become available on the Macro Tools Design Ribbon when editing a macro, as shown in Figure 1.

Single Step

Sometimes when you test a particularly complex macro, it doesn't do exactly what you thought it would. It helps to locate the problem by going through the steps in order visually and thinking the process through in your head or even out loud with someone. Other times you

simply can't solve it that way. By clicking the Single Step button, you can go through the macro one step at a time. This way you can see what happens at

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each step and increase your understanding of what happens when your macro runs. This will help you see if two Actions are out of order or if any additional Actions are needed.

Show All Actions

When using the dropdown list to add an Action to your macro, there are some Actions that you may have used in Access 2003, such as Set Warnings, that aren't shown in the dropdown list in Access 2007. Click the Show All Actions button, and, as the name suggests, all the available Actions will appear in the list.

Conditions

Sometimes you want a macro Action to happen only under certain conditions. When you click the Conditions button, a column is added to the macro design window that allows you to define a Condition that will control whether that Action will run or not. When a Condition result is false, the macro

Action doesn't run. This can be useful in a wide variety of situations.

Defining the Condition is similar to the IF function in Excel. In Excel, the first argument of the IF function is the condition—what you are checking to see if it's true or false. The second argument is the

Figure 1. The Macro Tools Design Tab

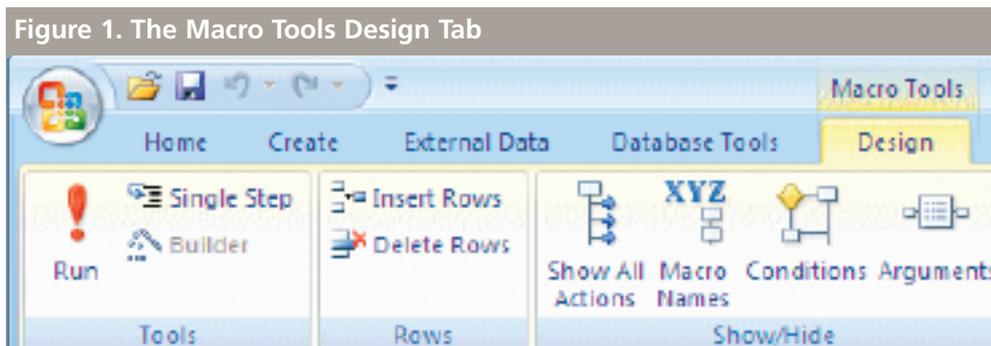


Figure 2. Macro Conditions

▲	Condition	Action	Comment
	[Forms]![Main Menu]![ThisMonth]="January"	OpenQuery	Year-End Closing Process

action to take if the condition is true, and the third argument is what should be done if the condition is false. In the March 2010 column, we discussed adding a text box to a form to enter criteria that would be used in a query. This concept is similar to that. For example, you may have a monthly process that involves running a query for each month. You can add a Condition that checks the text box on your form for a date or other value, and the Action runs depending on what is in the text box. You can use the same text box that's used to select data in queries. If you want to run a set of Actions before a certain date and another set after that date, you can right-click on the Condition column and use Build the same way you add criteria to a query. Figure 2 shows an example of a Condition that checks the text box named "This Month" on the Main Menu form. If the value of the entry in the text box is "January," then the "Year-End Closing

Process" query will be run. If it's any other month, the Action won't run.

In Access, enter the first argument—what needs to be checked—on the Condition line. Access macros run only if the Condition is true. If the Condition is false, the macro moves to the next Action.

If you only want to run some of the Actions of a macro, add a zero in the Condition column for each Action you want to skip. When you run the macro, the steps with a false (0) condition won't run. This is helpful when testing a macro and trying to identify a problem because it lets you turn off Actions that you know ran successfully before the macro was halted with the error. Remember to remove the false Conditions when you have resolved the problem and want all the Actions to be included the next time you run the macro.

Arguments

Similar to the Conditions button, clicking

the Arguments button toggles the Arguments column on or off in design view. Regardless of whether the column is displayed or not, the Action Arguments are always shown at the bottom of the macro design window.

Any questions? Feel free to e-mail me or ask them in person at IMA's 91st Annual Conference & Exposition in Baltimore, Md., in June. I will be there Saturday afternoon (June 5) to talk about moving from Excel to Access and can answer any Access questions that you have. **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.