Creating User-Friendly Databases

Databases are often created by a small number of people then used by a larger number of others. Often these users of the database do not know how to use all the features of the database software, so it is advantageous to create databases that are easy to use through the use of buttons. Buttons are simply graphics placed on the screen to perform commands and they allow users to navigate around forms, add records, print reports, etc. All the user has to do is click on the button for the command to be run.

In this chapter you will add buttons to a simplified database for a real estate agency which allows users access to a series of forms and reports.

Opening the Sample File

The database has been prepared for you

1   Load Microsoft Access or close the current file and click on the FILE tab. Select the OPEN OTHER FILES icon in the START window or the OPEN icon in the BACKSTAGE VIEW.

2   Access the CHAPTER 8 folder of the ACCESS 2016 SUPPORT FILES and open the CHAPTER 8 file as an OPEN READ-ONLY file.

3   Click on SAVE AS in the WARNING BAR below the RIBBON.

4   Access your STORAGE folder and save the file as CHAPTER 8 COPY.

Opening the File as an Exclusive file

The file will be opened as an EXCLUSIVE file so that a password can added to it.

1   Close the CHAPTER 8 COPY file, select OPEN from the BACKSTAGE VIEW and access your STORAGE folder.
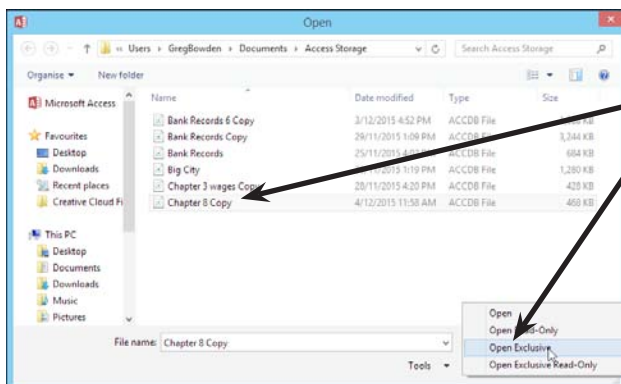
2 Select the CHAPTER 8 COPY file then click on the arrow next to the OPEN button and select OPEN EXCLUSIVE.

The Sections of the Database

Click on the ENABLE CONTENT button so that the data is displayed. The database consists of the following sections. Look at each in turn.

A   Tables

Owner Details: Records the property's owner details.

Property Details: Records specific details about the property, such as its location, type, description, sale type (sale, auction or rent) and price.

The tables are linked by the OWNER ID primary key field.

B   Queries

All Details: Combines details from both tables. This query is used by the DATA ENTRY form.

Properties for Auction: Filters the properties available for auction, sorted into SURNAME then FIRST NAME order.

Properties for Rent: Filters the properties available for rent, sorted in WEEKLY RENT then SURNAME order.

Properties for Sale: Filters the properties for sale, sorted into SALE PRICE order.

C   Forms

Data Entry: Displays all the fields from the two tables.

D   Reports

Auction Properties: Prints the Properties for Auction Query details.

Rental Properties: Prints the Properties for Rent Query details.

Sale Properties: Prints the Properties for Sale Query details.

The Structure of the Database

You will be required to add buttons to a DATA ENTRY form and to create a MAIN SWITCHBOARD form to control the use of the database. The structure of the database system that you will create is summarised in the following diagram.
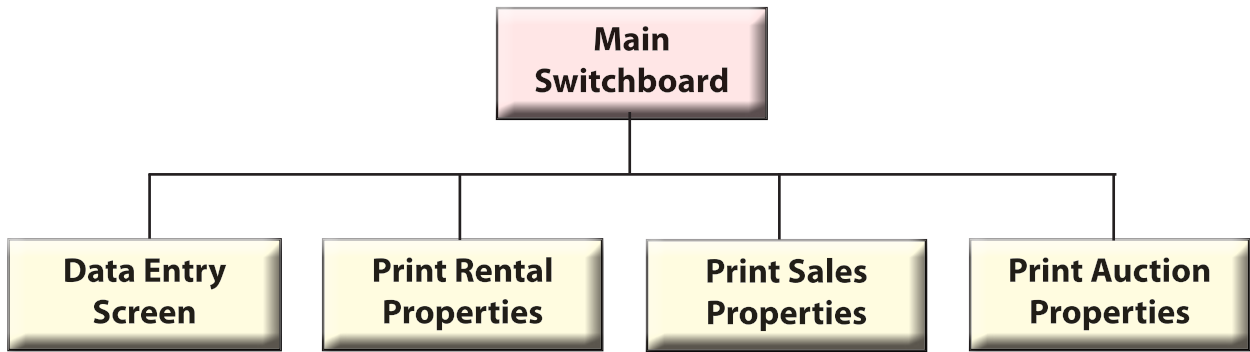

Completing the Data Entry Form

Buttons are needed in the DATA ENTRY form to allow the users of the database to carry out the general maintenance procedures such as adding new records, finding records and deleting records.

1 Open the DATA ENTRY form from the NAVIGATION pane, MAXIMIZE its window and use the VIEW icon to set the screen to DESIGN VIEW.
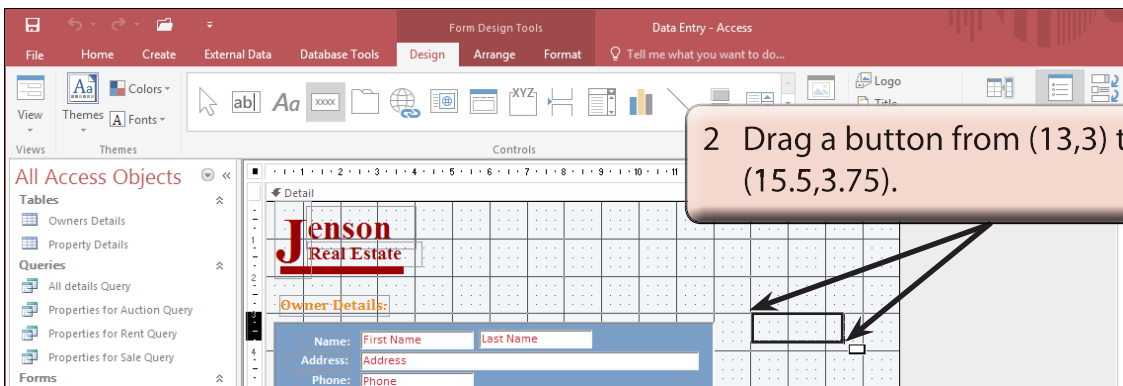
2 Buttons will be placed along the right side of the form.
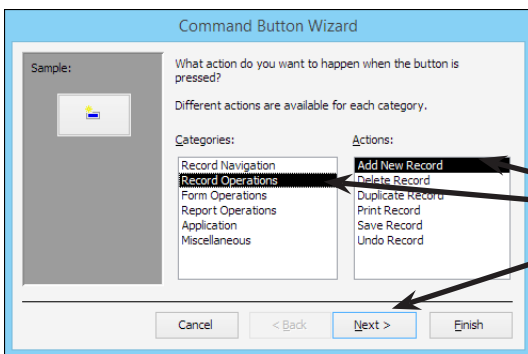
A   Inserting a New Record Button

We will use a wizard to help create the button.
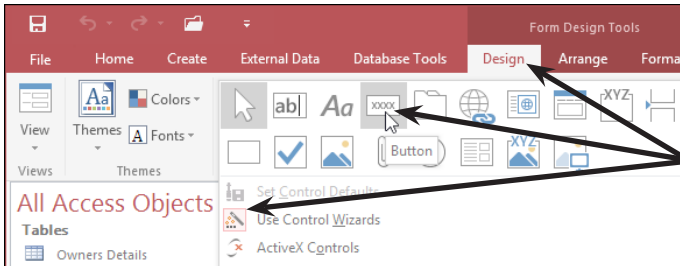
1   In the DESIGN tab of the FORM DESIGN TOOLS click on the MORE icon in the CONTROLS group, check that the USE CONTROL WIZARD is turned on (its icon should be shaded) then click on the BUTTON icon.
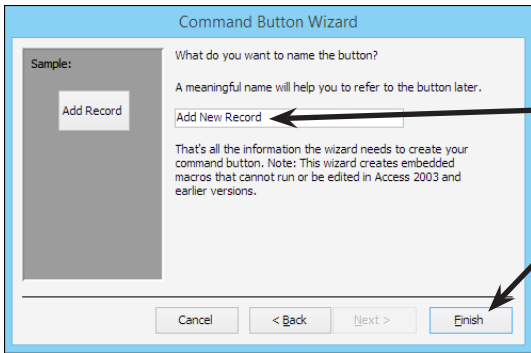

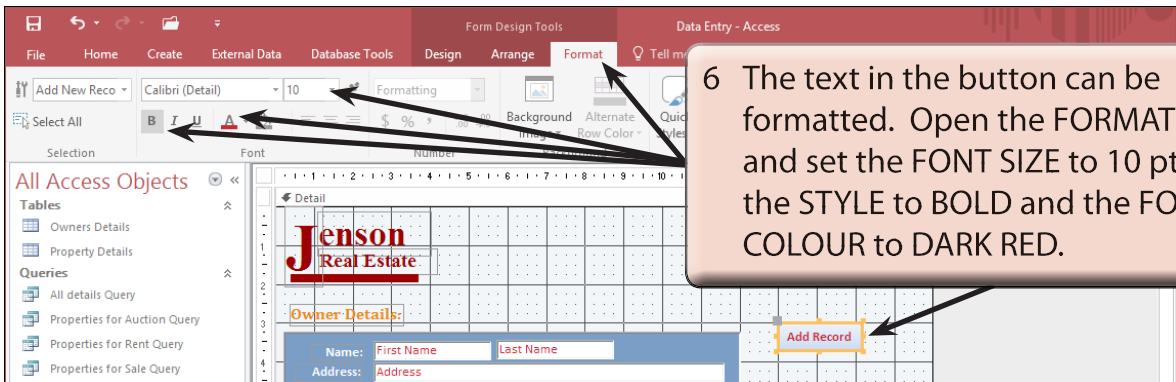2   Drag a button from (13,3) to (15.5,3.75).

3   In the COMMAND BUTTON WIZARD dialogue box set the CATEGORIES frame to RECORD OPERATIONS, leave the ACTIONS frame as ADD NEW RECORD and click on NEXT.
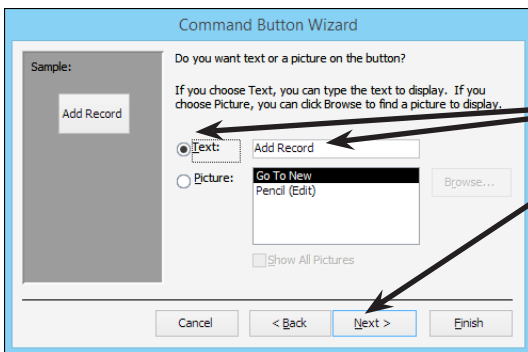
4   Click on the TEXT radio button, leave the text box as Add Record and click on NEXT.

5 Name the button:

Add New Record

and click on the FINISH button to complete the button.

6 The text in the button can be formatted. Open the FORMAT tab and set the FONT SIZE to 10 pt, the STYLE to BOLD and the FONT COLOUR to DARK RED.

B   Inserting a Find Record Button

A FIND RECORD button can be inserted to allow the user to quickly find a record rather than needing to use the record navigation buttons.
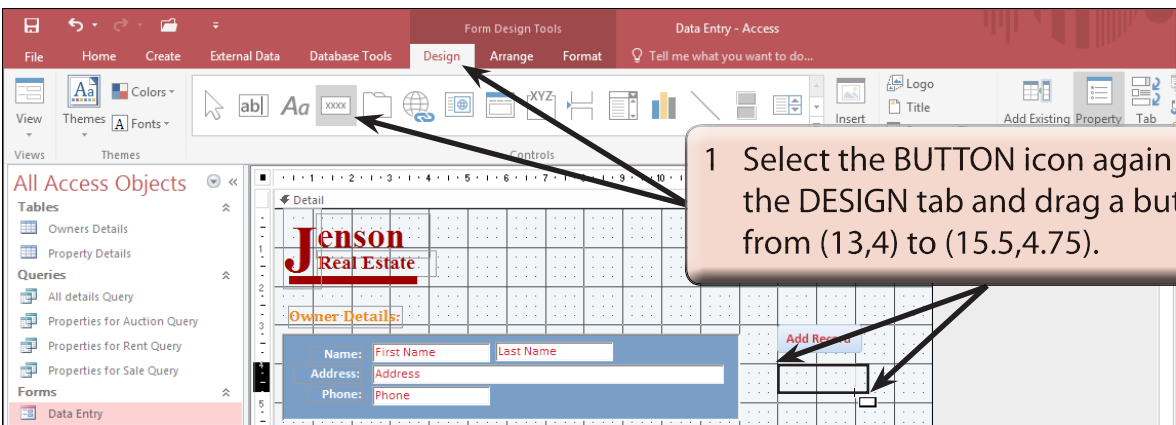
1 Select the BUTTON icon again from the DESIGN tab and drag a button from (13,4) to (15.5,4.75).