

iCheck™ Series Microsoft® Office 2010

Real World Applications

Unit 3: Access 2010: Business Information

Real World Connection Activities

These articles allow you to further explore various computing topics and take a quiz for review.

Introduction Learn about how organizations use database applications in the real world.

Directions Read the information below and apply what you learn to answer the questions. Check your work carefully, and click **Submit Answers**.

Why Organizations Use Databases

Most large organizations could not function without databases, which are huge collections of data organized so that information can be located and retrieved quickly. Although Microsoft Excel is an excellent tool for calculating data, database applications such as Microsoft Access are more suited for storing vast numbers of records. In Access, data are stored in tables. Data can be entered into the fields of a table directly or through a form. For example, customers making online purchases might enter credit card and shipping information into a form that puts the information into the seller's database.

The user can analyze records through queries and reports. A query is used to quickly locate information in one or more databases. For example, a query could be used to find all of the customers who live in a particular city, or the address of a single customer among thousands of records. A report presents specific data in a readable format. For example, a clothing company might create a report that presents sales and inventory data for only its blue T-shirts.

How Businesses Use Microsoft Access

Large organizations might use Access 2010 in the following ways:

- **Payroll records**, which track payments to a company's employees. A business might create a query to find the bank account information for a particular employee or generate a report that presents the makeup of the workforce.
- **Inventory records**, which keep track of how much merchandise a company has on hand. Retail companies must prevent overstocking to avoid using too much storage space, but they also must make sure their inventory is sufficient

to meet the demands of customers. Companies can create queries and reports to check the inventory and sales figures of a particular item.

- **Customer databases**, which store the personal information of a company's customers. Retail Web sites often include a form into which customers enter their address and payment information, which is stored in the company's online database. Secure Web sites require a username and password so that hackers cannot access customer records. Companies might create a query to find a particular customer's order or generate a report that presents the products with the highest sales in certain parts of the country.
- **Medical records**, which track the illnesses and treatments of patients. Hospitals use patient databases to store the medical history of their patients. Hospital administrators might create reports to determine the success rates of certain treatments. In many cases, patients are kept anonymous in medical reports in order to respect their privacy.

Assessment Questions

1. What is a database?
2. Which Access tool would you use to find information about a particular customer?
3. What does an Access report do?
4. Describe a report that a company might create about its inventory records.