

## Re: access 2003

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- *From:* doglover <[doglover@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:doglover@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Sun, 6 Aug 2006 07:01:01 -0700
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"Geoff" wrote:

Is there a text version of the options regarding implementing system security in access 2003. I assumed the best plan is to load the converted or new databases (data & program) then set up the security. The data will go on the server and the program database will go on each workstation. IE, administrator and user with login and password or just not allow changes on the forms, queries, reports, etc and forget the login password, etc. Suggestions or pointing me toward text to read will be greatly appreciated. There is a lot of material available but nothing replaces experience.

I have found that setting up user-level security is complex because there is so much to know and, sometimes, things don't work the way you expect them to. If you unwittingly omit a crucial piece of the jigsaw, you can compromise your security plan.

I seem to remember being caught out when Microsoft changed the security system between Access 97 and Access 2000. If I remember right, in Access 97, you can apply user-level security to modules (to prevent users getting into modules) but, in Access 2000, user-level security doesn't work for modules. I thought this was a pretty ghastly change for Microsoft to have made. I hadn't noticed the change and, as a consequence, when I upgraded a secured database from Access 97 to Access 2000, my code, which I had understood was secure in Access 97, simply became insecure in Access 2000 without warning. I would still prefer to be able to secure modules using user-level security, than the alternative of creating an mde file. You may be confronted with this issue. Check the Access 97 version of the database and see if the modules have user-level security implemented. If they did, then you're going to have a nice time sorting out how to implement security on the modules in Access 2003 (remembering that the file format is Access 2000 for your current database).

I would qualify the following comment by saying that, as always, my

## Re: access 2003

information may be out-of-date (as I don't use Access 2003). However, I think that, the only current way to make modules secure is to compile the database to create an mde file. If your code modules are in the Program database, then at least your Program database should be converted to an mde file (assuming you need to secure the code modules from user interference).

However, creating MDE files has a number of implications, which may put you off this approach. For example, you absolutely **MUST** keep the mdb version in order to do further development work and you must compile any new mdb version and release it as an mde version to the users. I believe an mde version will not allow changes to forms and reports by the user. This is because the code behind the forms and reports (as well as code in any modules) has been compiled. This means that, in the mde version of the database, all program text you write in the VBA editor has been removed from the database and all your programs have been converted to a (kind of) machine code. Therefore, even you cannot change the programming in the mde version. This could be significant if your present database deliberately allows users to change forms or reports, or if the code in your present database changes the design of forms or reports at run-time to meet different situations.

I've created one database in the past with serious user-level security. Like you, initially, I set up security manually, which took a lot of effort. However, I ended up using VBA to program the security, which took even more effort! I seem to recall I did this because it was too easy to overlook something when doing things manually. When I did things manually (in Access 97), I documented every single database object – tables, queries, forms, reports and modules – and the permissions I had given to each object. In fact, I gave different permissions to a number of different groups and made users members of appropriate groups depending on what access to the database they should have. I had a limited number of generic user names so they didn't keep changing as time went by. I documented all permissions to database objects, groups and users. It took ages and ages. Most important of all, I wrote down all the security information I used when creating the MDW file (the workgroup admin file) and kept the written record safe. The MDW file is the key that unlocks the database. If you lose the key (say the MDW file gets trashed), then you must restore a backup MDW file or recreate the MDW file from the written record. If you plan to use the existing MDW file, then my advice is to keep several copies of it very safe, both on- and off-site. This is a big subject, so give yourself plenty of time – or the frustration will drive you nuts!

As requested, here are a few suggestions for learning texts:

1. The book I originally used was:

"Microsoft Access 97 Developer's Handbook"

by Timothy M. O'Brien, Steven J. Pogge, and Geoffrey E. White

ISBN 1-57231-358-7

Publisher: Microsoft Press

Despite a number of minor errors (which most computer books have and which you, the reader, will easily spot), I still very much admire the consistent

Re: access 2003

and clear language style of this book. They must have had a very good editor. The book gives concise and clear explanations of a good selection of topics, including DAO security. I imagine the book is out-of-print – but you could search the Internet (eg Amazon) and see what comes up. A bookseller somewhere might still have a copy.

2. The other book I mostly use these days (but there is a more up-to-date version now) is:

"Access 2000 Developer's Handbook"

"Volume 1: Desktop Edition"

by Ken Getz, Paul Litwin, Mike Gilbert

ISBN 0-7821-2370-8

Publisher: Sybex

There is a "Volume 2, Enterprise edition", and a "VBA Language Reference" book. I bought all three books as a package at a reduced price. These books are clear, authoritative and indefatigable in their explanations. These books will set you back quite a bit, so I recommend you browse them in a good computer bookstore before buying to see if you feel comfortable with them. (They are much cheaper than a computer course and it's great to have a good permanent reference on your bookshelf.) Check out the authors' website:

<http://www.developershandbook.com/>

The above website suggests that the book has been updated for Access 2002, but not yet for Access 2003. Double-check with a bookstore.

3. You could search the Microsoft website to see what papers on security you can find there.

I wish you the very best of luck for your journey through the quagmire of vast, new and changing knowledge.

Regards

Geoff

Why French?

You used "Prive" for "Private".

Thank you for all of the information regarding implementing security and the related issues. I certainly have another huge project ahead of me and you certainly have pointed me in the right direction. Simple is my choice. The journey begins.

Regards,  
doglover

Re: access 2003

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