

Need advice on table structure

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<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/Access/microsoft.public.access.tablesdbdesign/2007-05/msg00007.html>

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 - *Date:* Tue, 1 May 2007 07:38:02 -0700
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Hi all,

I have an application that already has a contacts table and a 'facilities' table (which includes everything from businesses to facilities within our own organization). Both those tables have addresses. Now my 'clients' want to add invoice functionality where they can input invoices associated with files in the database. The invoices are paid to what they term as "vendors".

In the original design, 'facilities' weren't really used as entities themselves, but always as foreign keys in a file, or as foreign keys in a contact's record. A contact may or may not be associated with a facility, and a file (files being the focus of this app) may or may not have a facility associated with it.

Here's the rub: Vendors can be both people (contacts) AND businesses (facilities).

I don't really like the idea of pulling all contacts and all people into a single combo box due to the sheer numbers of choices that presents, plus it seems like it would be a pain for me to address the 'not in list' if the entry was a new one when you have essentially two different forms you'd want to use. Mainly, it just seems wrong to me.

So, what are my options and, more to the point, how should I integrate 'vendors' into the existing setup? Should I just add a 'vendors' table and have a third 'entity' type (contacts, facilities, vendors)? Could I designate some contacts and some facilities as 'vendors' by adding another field to the two tables and then use a query to combine them and some additional step for the 'not in list' so that people could pick 'contact vendor' or 'facility vendor' so the not-in-list uses the appropriate form? Is there a better way?

Just a point in the right direction would be helpful. Thanks!
CW

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