

Re: interview questions

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Well, I'll give it a go.

To me, the most important thing is that they understand database DESIGN. Access as an application generator is easy enough to learn on their own if they have a good understanding of table design. Design your tables right, and you have an easy time with your app. Design them wrong, and you are constantly creating work-arounds to fix things that should have been done right the first time.

Several questions I use:

1) Q: What is a Primary Key.

A: It is a special kind of index whose value cannot be Null and must be unique for each record. Primary keys can be either single fields or composed of multiple fields. If composed of multiple fields, it is still a single primary key. There is no such thing as multiple primary keys in a table.

2) Q: Should an Autonumber field be used as a Primary Key? Why or why not?

A: There is no single correct answer for this, but I listen for the reasoning. Opinions vary on this topic, but if they say No, they'd better have a pretty convincing answer for me. In most cases, autonumber fields make perfectly good primary keys. However, I know experienced developers (including MVPs) who do not advocate autonumber fields for primary keys. Valid reasons, IMO, include the fact that autonumber field sometimes get confused and assign values previously assigned, and a primary key in Access creates a clustered index, which may not be the best indexing scheme for your table. Invalid reasons are dogmatic like: "my college prof said to only use natural keys".

3) Q: How do you define Relationships in Access?

A: Relationships are defined in the Relationship window by clicking a dragging the primary key field of one table to the corresponding foreign key of another table. The Referential Integrity checkbox MUST be clicked, although the Cascade options do not.

Note: I've had people proudly tell me that they never use the Relationship Window or never set up Referential Integrity. If you don't do those things, you don't HAVE relationships and are not using the power of a relational

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database.

4) Q: What is a one-to-many relationship?

A: This is where a single record in a table is related to one or more records in another table based on a primary-key/foreign-key.

5) Q: How do you create a Many-to-Many relationship in Access?

A: You cannot create a M:M relationship directly in Access. You must first create a "linking" table (it can be called other things as well), which has as foreign keys, the primary keys of the other two tables. Then you create a One-to-Many relationship between each of the tables and the linking table where the linking table is on the "many" side of both.

6) Q: What is Normalization?

A: Normalization is a methodology or process for removing as much redundant data from the database as possible, while at the same time insuring that the data will be able to be reassembled as needed. There are many stages of normalization (call Normal Forms). Most developers agree that the minimum level of normalization is the Third Normal Form (3NF) and that level is acceptable for most database applications.

Note: Many people may not have a text-book definition of normalization memorized, but have a pretty firm grasp of how to create a normalized database.

7) Q: Given a new project, how would you go about developing it.?

A: Again, there is no one right answer here, but the answer they give will tell you whether they've actually ever developed a database. One thing I look for is an indication they sit down and develop their table structure *first*.

There are no doubt more, and you could ask a LOT more about Access specifically, but these questions, to me, are key to whether the person either can develop (or can be trained to develop) Access database applications.

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"G" <G@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:9514A92A-2420-48FE-B353-19E9D26098F4@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

I know this is 'off the wall'. I have to come up with a couple interview questions for a client to determine if an applicant is qualified technically to do the job in ACCESS. The task will be to combine several databases and datasources into one usable database. Preferably with a frontend/backend. Do any of you have any suggested questions that you would pose to an

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applicant?

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Thank you in advance for your assistance. It is greatly appreciated.