

# Re: Detach or change SQL data source for Word template, and other

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*Source:*

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/Word/microsoft.public.word.mailmerge.fields/2006-08/msg00114.html>

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- *From:* SJMac <[SJMac@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:SJMac@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Thu, 27 Jul 2006 02:12:02 -0700
- 

Peter,

Thanks again, especially for pointing out that the multi-WHERE problem on subsequent runs -- I'd only tested it once.

Just for completeness, here's my final version

```
Sub MERGE()
```

```
On Error GoTo ExitMerge
```

```
' ... otherwise error messages are output to a new document!
```

```
CaseRef = Val( _  
InputBox("Please type in the case reference number", _  
"Case Ref"))  
' ... don't trust that the user entered a number, use Val to  
' convert string input to a number value. (Ignore fact that  
' numbers with decimal points aren't valid for CaseRef.)
```

```
With ActiveDocument.MailMerge  
.Destination = wdSendToNewDocument  
.SuppressBlankLines = True  
With .DataSource  
.FirstRecord = wdDefaultFirstRecord  
.LastRecord = wdDefaultLastRecord  
WhereIdx = InStrRev(.QueryString, " WHERE ", -1, vbTextCompare)  
If (WhereIdx > 0) Then  
.QueryString = Left(.QueryString, WhereIdx - 1) & _  
" WHERE Ref = " & CaseRef  
Else  
.QueryString = .QueryString & " WHERE Ref = " & CaseRef  
End If  
End With  
.Execute Pause:=False  
End With
```

```
Exit Sub
```

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ExitMerge:  
MsgBox Err.Description

End Sub

"Peter Jamieson" wrote:

Which actions in Access would cause a table to be locked? I assume multiple readers are OK? It looks like my user makes all changes to the DB via a series of forms, rather than editing the tables directly.

I don't know Access /that/ well – broadly speaking, if a user can have the form you want open and can still run queries successfully on another app. or machine, you are probably OK. Personally, I would probably want to see what happens when the user has made an update or insertion from the form – can another program then get the data? what data does it see? When experimenting with Access one of the things that generally screws up Word connecting to it is having a table /definition/ dialog box open, but of course that's generally not going to happen in the sort of scenario you're describing.

As for your macro,

1. I agree about validating that the value is numeric. When you construct an SQL statement programmatically, from a security perspective you should always validate all the input in case the user has typed in something that makes your SQL statement do something completely unexpected.

For example in this case supposing .QueryString has

```
SELECT * FROM mytable
```

and the user enters a value for Ref of "(SELECT xyz FROM someothertable WHERE myvalue = 123)"

then your statement ends up as

```
SELECT * FROM mytable WHERE Ref=(SELECT xyz FROM someothertable WHERE myvalue = 123)
```

OK, that's not "dangerous", but someone might well be able to think of something that is.

2. If you execute this macro more than once, you will end up with a statement like

```
SELECT * FROM mytable WHERE Ref=123 WHERE Ref=456
```

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which won't work. You really need to save the .Querystring somewhere before modifying it.

3. I would verify that changing the .Querystring always works the way you expect. Sometimes I've found that it's necessary to issue an OpenDataSource to change it, not necessarily with Access though.

Peter Jamieson

"SJMac" <SJMac@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message  
news:C4C617A5-943A-4A04-8F7A-A5EDBD673CCD@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Peter,

Thanks again, your help has been very useful helping me to understand my problem!

Not unless you run into multi-user related problems, e.g. if a table is locked while your form is displaying in Access, or the record you're looking at has been added as part of a transaction that is incomplete and Word can't see it.

Which actions in Access would cause a table to be locked? I assume multiple readers are OK? It looks like my user makes all changes to the DB via a series of forms, rather than editing the tables directly.

I'm not (yet!) a VB Programmer, but can you give me any comments on the Macro that I recorded and then edited?

I think I should at least validate that the user input is numeric, but I'm not going to bother checking that it is valid record!

```
Sub MERGE()  
,  
' MERGE Macro  
' Macro recorded 7/26/2006 by Steven Mackenzie  
,
```

```
On Error GoTo ExitMerge  
' ... otherwise error messages are output  
' in to a new document
```

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```
CaseRef = InputBox("Please type in the case reference number", "Case  
Ref")
```

```
With ActiveDocument.MailMerge  
.Destination = wdSendToNewDocument  
.SuppressBlankLines = True  
With .DataSource  
.FirstRecord = wdDefaultFirstRecord  
.LastRecord = wdDefaultLastRecord  
.QueryString = .QueryString & " WHERE Ref = " & CaseRef  
End With  
.Execute Pause:=False  
End With
```

```
Exit Sub
```

```
ExitMerge:  
MsgBox Err.Description
```

```
End Sub
```

"Peter Jamieson" wrote:

Regarding the warning's security purpose, I regard the effects of data being inserted into a document as harmless — Merge can't insert malicious code can it? Is everyone here happy to disable that warning?

This warning is a "scattergun" solution. The security problem is essentially that when Word connects to a data source, it executes code that is not part of Word, not necessarily part of Office, not necessarily supplied by MS, and not necessarily benign. The mention of SQL is a bit of a red herring, but for example if Word connects to Access via DDE and executes an Access

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query  
containing user-defined functions (i.e. defined in Access  
VBA) those  
functions may theoretically have significant side effects. But  
I could in  
theory write a text converter (in fact I have), an OLEDB  
provider or ODBC  
driver that takes the request "SELECT \* FROM mytable"  
and actually wipes  
the  
hard drive or whatever.

Now of course in an ideal world a properly configured  
system would have  
no  
such dangerous drivers/providers, and Access and every  
other database  
would  
have proper security controls so that the user+system  
administrator (if  
any)  
can know that they are not going to do anything malicious  
when they  
execute  
SQL code. In which case you could switch the warning off  
and forget about  
it. I expect most people probably do anyway as they have to  
get their  
work  
done and they cannot possibly tell whether the "SQL" they  
are about to  
execute is malicious or not.

The unfortunate thing in this situation is that there are plenty  
of  
connection types where it is difficult to see that any harm  
could arise  
unless someone has modified Microsoft code. e.g. when  
Word connects to a  
Word data source. In other cases I do not really see why the  
/Word/ user  
should get a warning.

I'm not sure that answers your question but I suppose I would  
want to  
have  
reasonable confidence that my system was safe (in this  
respect) before  
doing  
so.

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V helpful, thanks. Right now, I'm imagining that some code that pops up an input to allow the user to enter a row id, alters the QueryString, then does the merge shouldn't be hard to do, and will hide the slightly tedious MailMergeRecipients dialog from the user. I'll try ... is there a problem you'd expect me to see?

Not unless you run into multi-user related problems, e.g. if a table is locked while your form is displaying in Access, or the record you're looking at has been added as part of a transaction that is incomplete and Word can't see it.

/A/ reason to avoid using merge for many users is that a query that tries to use Access Forms!formname!fieldname syntax (which works in Access) isn't necessarily going to work – actually, I've never really investigated that area. If however you are creating a query that hits the underlying table/query, as you are proposing, you should be OK.

What an interesting kb! That would be exactly what I want, except it's not quite what the user had before.

BTW, the sample doesn't use Merge at all – that's odd isn't it?

Not really – I think it's using the "simple" approach. I would say that the main advantages of using merge come into play if you are letting the users

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modify the layout and content of the letters/documents they are producing.

In that case, there is a pre-existing UI (i.e. the various mailmerge tools)

which many users understand, at least to an extent, which allows them to

insert fields (and even nest them and so on), preview data, etc. However,

having a separate data source in the Word document complicates everything

because of

a. the SQL dialog we've discussed

b. multi-user considerations

c. the fact that if you move the data source, you run into problems if

the

Word document has the old data source set up when you open it, etc.

(and probably other stuff I've forgotten).

Peter Jamieson

"SJMac" <SJMac@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message

[news:2C187809-AD11-456C-9C44-22E9BCF9953D@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:2C187809-AD11-456C-9C44-22E9BCF9953D@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

"Peter Jamieson" wrote:

I suggest you use Google groups to have a good look through this newsgroup –

I had been doing that, but remained confused until I started recognising and understanding the term "main merge document", and discovered that "detach data source" corresponds with the Merge toolbar button "Main Document Setup>Normal Word Document".

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The simple stuff :-(

be a button  
in the  
toolbar  
called  
"Merge"  
that  
prompted  
the user to  
type  
in a

In which application?  
Access or Word?

Word – but I see that you suggest it's easier  
from the Access side of  
the  
fence (below).

When I  
open the  
Word  
templates I  
get  
warnings  
that some  
SQL is  
about  
to  
be  
executed –  
that's OK,

This prompt is displayed  
every time you open a Mail  
Merge Main  
document  
connected to a data source  
(well, there may be  
circumstances in which  
it  
is  
not displayed, but they are  
oddities). The prompt can be  
suppressed by

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changing the Windows  
registry – see  
<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb:en-us:825765>

Yup, I'd seen that, but was happy with the  
prompt temporarily so that  
I  
could tell that when there was still some  
embedded "automation".

Regarding the warning's security purpose, I  
regard the effects of data  
being  
inserted into a document as harmless --  
Merge can't insert malicious  
code  
can  
it? Is everyone here happy to disable that  
warning?

The "SQL" is created when  
the user connects the mail  
merge main  
document  
to  
a data source, and is saved  
with the document and  
re-issued when it is  
opened, along with a  
suitable connection string  
etc. You can't really  
delete  
it, since there is always  
some "SQL" – that's simply  
how Word codifies  
its  
queries. The connection  
may have been made  
programmatically using  
Word's  
OpenDataSource method,  
and the SQL may have been  
modified by changing  
ActiveDocument.MailMerge.DataSource.QueryString.  
You can find out  
(roughly)  
what Word is trying to  
issue, after it has  
successfully opened the

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data  
source, by printing the  
values of  
ActiveDocument.MailMerge.DataSource.Name  
ActiveDocument.MailMerge.DataSource.ConnectionString  
ActiveDocument.MailMerge.DataSource.QueryString

V helpful, thanks. Right now, I'm imagining  
that some code that pops up  
an  
input to allow the user to enter a row id,  
alters the QueryString, then  
does  
the merge shouldn't be hard to do, and will  
hide the slightly tedious  
MailMergeRecipients dialog from the user.  
I'll try ... is there a  
problem  
you'd expect me to see?

No data is  
inserted in  
to the  
templates  
after I open  
them. Why  
is  
SQL  
being  
executed for  
the  
template?  
Surely the  
data  
normally  
needs to be  
retrieved  
for  
the actual  
documents,  
or when I  
do the  
merge?