My Collection

Database User Guide
V1.0

	Program History		
rev	Description	Date	By
v.2.5	Production Version	6/20/11	Rick Straub

Overview

MyCollection is a database created using Microsoft Access for the purpose recording details about things collected. These collected items can be from any area such as memorabilia to railroadiana or anything in between. The basic concept is to create a record for each item in your collection, then associate it with groupings. At any time you can run ad-hoc queries that produce custom reports based on the groupings.

Purpose

The purpose of a database is to preserve the information about each object and to allow reports to be run. The goals are to gather and report on costs and dates of the acquired items. MyCollection was created for the average collector who may be using a word processor that does not give robust reporting or a spreadsheet that does not have premade reports.

This is a tool that is designed to be flexible, powerful and easy to use. Please send any inquiries to:

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<u>Usage Agreement</u>

This application was created by Rick Straub in 2010 for general use.

Limitations To Remedies – IN NO EVENT WILL CREATOR BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ANY DAMAGES, INCLUDING ANY LOST PROFITS, LOST SAVINGS, OR OTHER INCIDENTAL OR CONSEQUENTAL DAMAGES ARISING OUT OF THE USE OR INABILITY TO USE THE PROGRAM.

Problems encountered may be resolved by first checking the troubleshooting section, then by contacting the creator.

General Provisions – You may not sublicense, assign or transfer program or documentation without permission of creator. The data housed in this database is the property of the user. The data is considered private and not available to anyone for any reason, without permission of the collection owner.

Mechanics - This is a relational database meaning it is broken up into pieces that are inter related. These relationships allow the user to populate common strings and then "point & click" to update. A menu system is set up for easy access to common tasks. Proper operation can only be attained if file structure is followed and data is backed up regularly.

Availability – If you know of anyone interested in a copy of the program and/or documentation, please forward their names.

	Document History (Guide)		
rev	Description	Date	By
v.1.0	Original Draft	2/6/10	Rick Straub

System Requirements

If you can run Microsoft Access on your PC you can run the MyCollection Data Base. The tool is intended for a single user application. The ability of sharing drives over a network to create a multi-user environment is possible, but not in the scope of this guide. Contact originator for special uses or changes to the configurations. Some versions of Access will act differently such as 2007 and the increased security built in.

Personal Computer: Microsoft Windows:
Each user needs a PC with Microsoft Access. Each user will be running a separate instance of a collection.

File Requirements

The database files are linked together which means they **MUST** be in the following folder on the C: drive.

C:\CSDdata\Collection

MyCollection_v25.mdb is the menu's and functionality. In this example version 2.5

Mycollectiondata.mdb is the data tables.
This file needs backed up periodically. Usually after lots of entries or every few weeks. Make a copy, rename and save it on a flash drive or CDROM

MyCollectionv25.zip Updates come in compressed files.

To Install the application right click on the zip file and extract to the above folder.

MyCollection_guide.pdf This user guide

List.ico is the icon

Augustus.gif is the logo on two pages

Installation

Initial installation of the files requires the folder structure as noted on the opposite page. On the installation disk a batch file will create the structure for you and copy the files.

Running the application requires only the two main files and a image file for the main menu icon.

If you are a current user you can extract the functionality file from the supplied zip file by extracting everything into the correct file structure.

To restore a previous backup, use the supplied utility or overwrite the data file with one of the backups. Ensure the name is the same if changed.

Take Notes and record here about your install and backup files so you can repeat the process if needed:

Planning

The Data Base is capable of storing and reporting on large amounts of data. It is important to identify the uses as well as limitations to your needs.

The purpose of this tool is to generate custom reports on items you have collected. Each object is a record in the database. You assign each record as a member of the five groups. Customized reports are generated by basically picking different combinations of these groups. You may create as many members of the groups as you like to represent you collection

The groupings are as follows w/examples:

Sector - The sector was intended to separate like items at a high level such as Railroad, Airlines, Military, Trading Card or Models.

Size - The size can be as simple as large or small and can be as specific as 3.5 in or 5x8. The idea is to be pick a size that describes more than a single item.

Type - The type is within the sector, originally thought of as locomotive or rail car but can be uniform, patch, dagger, china, pin, map or boxcar depending on the sector.

Collection - The collection is a place where the items are located. If documents value it could be a safe deposit box, closet or storage locker. If a group of items are on lone to a museum or display this can be a person or company who possesses the items.

Organization - This is for the name of the original user of the item. For railroads it would be L&N or Penn. For Airlines it would be Delta, American or Eastern. For military items you may want to describe the unit, battle or era in history.

An Update Form is provided to add/update/remove grouping names. It is accessible from the main menu. Groups can be created from the Item Detail screen but can only be changed or deleted from the Update Form screens.
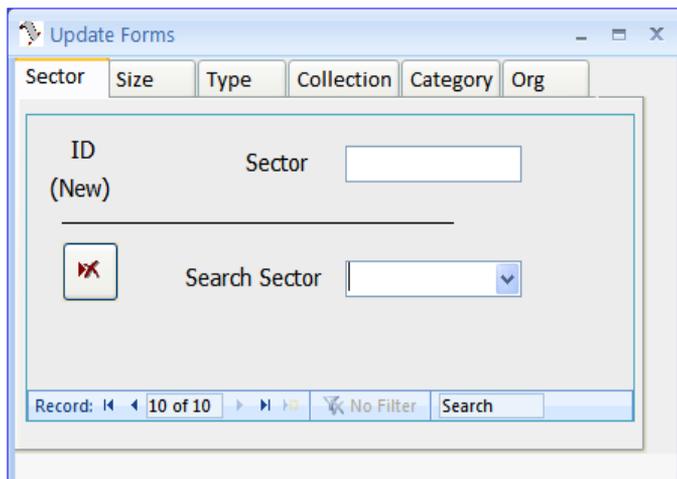
The Main Menu is your starting point. The version number at the bottom is an important identifier. Always mention what version you are using when reporting an issue.

Item Details

 The following page has an example of the Item Details Screen populated for a railroad china piece. Each field has the character limit next to it.

Number (25): This is the Item ID and can be a combination of letters and numbers. The system **DOE'S** allow duplicates. In the example "RR" is for railroad, "CH" for china and "001" is first item. By placing a check in the "Number Help" a list is provided to easily find the last number sequence used.
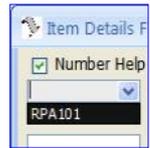
Name (50): Item short name.

Quantity (Number): How many do you have ?

Description (255): Keep brief and descriptive

Notes (255): Keep brief

Value: The dates here are selected from a calendar and the value is a total of all 4 pieces together.

Collection: If a book, number it to keep separated.

Grouping

  The groups are selected from a list. There are two options to populate the list. You can go to the update menu screen or just start typing the new name and the following box will appear when leaving the dropdown list box. Select OK to add the new name.

 If this is not what you want select "Cancel" and hit Esc to clear the field. **Note:** If the name is spelled incorrectly you must use the update menu's to fix or delete. Never delete a group that is being used by an item.

Navigation

By default the Item Details screen opens up empty or in the insert mode waiting for you to enter a new item. You can move forward and back through the list using the arrow buttons at the bottom toolbar. This is not a good way to find an item as it is in order of entry.

The best way to find an item to update is by the steps in red at the bottom of the screen.

1.) Select the Sector, and then
2.) Select the Item Number in the list

The item number can be anything you like. In the example RR is the Sector, CH is the Category and 001 is the first item of the type.
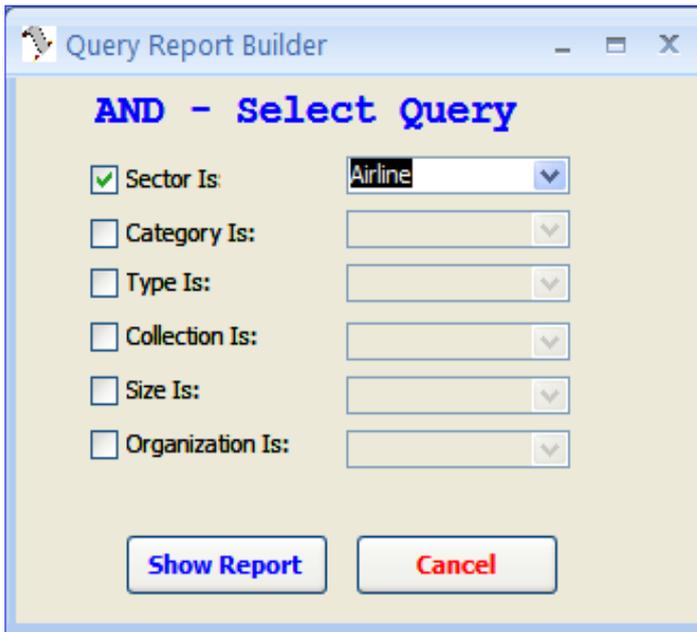
Reports

There are two ways to build a report.

AND reduces the list by selecting items that must all match. This is good for when the collection is very large you can make smaller reports.

OR increases the list of items that match any of the selected items.

The checkbox opens the drop-down list. Once selected you must choose from the list.

Enter Parameter Value

 To create custom reports a line is printed across the top of the Select Query Report. The name of the report is typed in each time the report is run. The name is not required,

 Select the "Show Report" button and the follow dialog box appears. Type the name you would like to appear on the report and select OK.

Enter Parameter Value ? X

Report Name

| |

OK   Cancel
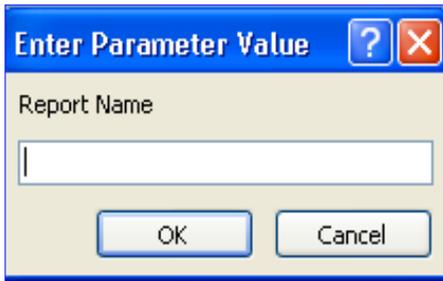
 In this example I have chosen the Sector = Railroad and the Type = Book from the names previously entered.

I therefore typed the Report Name as "Railroad Books" so it would appear at the top of the report and give me an indication of the subject of the report.

Selected Query Search Results   Railroad Books

Item #	Item name	Qty	Paid	Date	Value

Data Structure

The following structure shows the tables linked together which makes up our relational database. The ID from the grouping is stored in the item record, not the name, this is the relationship. All of these tables are located in the file MyCollectiondata.mdb
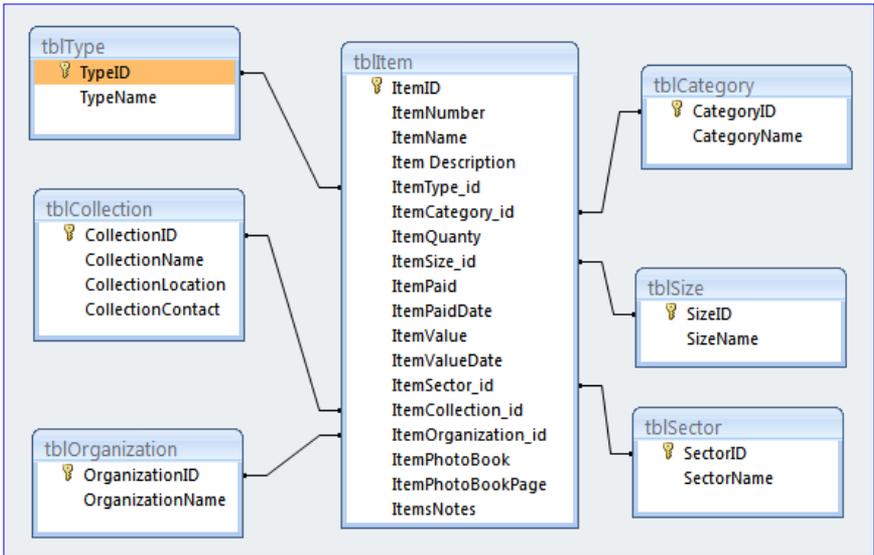
Reports, menu's and functionality code is located in the file MyCollection.mdb. This allows for updates to functionality without affecting the data. The tables above are linked to this file internally and must be in the folder "C:\CSDdata\Collection" or the menu's will not display correctly.

Note: (Advanced users)
The files must be located in the correct directory (folder) or the links will be broken. The advanced user can use the Link Manager within Microsoft Access to modify the location in special cases. It is recommended that the files remain in the intended directory for proper use.

Application Folder

The application folder is located on the C: drive and named "CSDdata". Under that folder is where all database programs a stored with associated data files

To View the folder and contents:
- **Right-click** on start button and **select** Explore from the option list.
- Select the + next to the folder to expand

The explore window has two parts, left for folders and right for contents of folder.

You can create other folders for documents or older version of data as long as the files on the opposite page remain in the main folder.
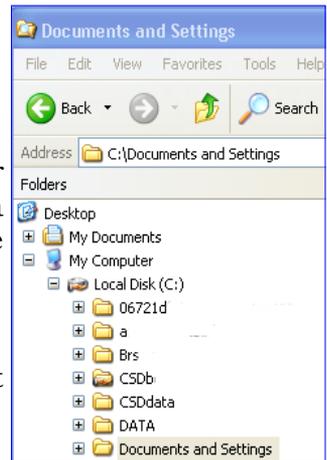
Create a desktop shortcut:
- Open Explore window and select the + next to folder CSDdata
- Select the folder Collection
- In the right half of window select the file MyCollection_vXX (where XX is the version number). Right click and select Create- Shortcut.
- Drag the shortcut icon to the desktop

Backup

- You can make a copy of the entire Collection folder
- Right-click on the file MyCollectiondata and select send to option, and then select the drive letter, other than C: that you wish to back it up to.
- Use built in utility and supplying a valid drive letter of a disk or memory stick.

Troubleshooting

 Step one is to write down any error alerts or notifications so they can be investigated further.

1.) Files structure - Be sure the correct files are in the correct folders. See page two for file names.

Security Warning: Some active content has been disabled, enable content. This is due to the security built into newer versions of Access. You should trust the source because there could be malicious macro's embedded in the code. You must enable the content.

Item Screen presents an error
 There was an error executing the command file.
The file structure is not correct. C:\CSDdata\Collection where the data file is located. You can correct this manually if it appears to be correct by using the Linked Table Manager.

On Access 2007 or 2010 find the icon on the ribbon. Once it opens with a list of tables, press Select All button and OK. Next navigate to the folder that holds the data files MyCollectiondata.mdb, select it press OK. You should get a message "All selected tables were successfully refreshed. Select OK to close.

Backup or Restore

The backup or restore utility will create or load a file called MyCollectionData.mdb from the designated drive letter. This may or may not be suited for an advanced user.
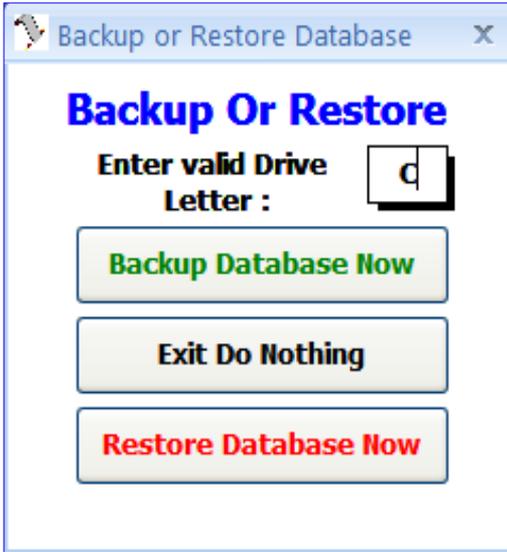
An alternate way of backing up the files is to use the Explore window and either copy the hole folder over or right click on the data file and select copy, then right click again to select paste.

Request For Change (RFC)

As with most applications you cannot just make changes every other day because there would be too many versions running around. Distribution and testing would be a nightmare. Changes are however needed to make the application better for everyone. Request for Change is a term used for making a formal request. The code portion of the database is password protected but is available upon request to authorized (advanced) users. When requesting a change be sure to give enough detail. Send all correspondence to rick@straubpublishing.com

Request Date:
Requestor:
Current Application Version:
Nature of Change:

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