

MS Access 2003 - Lesson 16: Check your presentation

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After the table layout has been defined, you need to check and improve the table. You can do this easily by using the Datasheet mode for the table. Display the Datasheet for the Business table (if you need help, go back to Chapter 2). You should see an empty datasheet as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Mode of the Datasheet for the Business Customers table.

It takes a while to wait for Datasheet to appear. If the field names do not appear as you have set them, go to the Design view window and make changes to the Caption properties of the fields with unsatisfactory labels. (You can recall from Chapter 3 that Access displays the Caption property at the top of each Datasheet column). To switch between Datasheet and Design view, use the leftmost icon on the toolbar.

That's how to refine the table, you enter information into Datasheet mode. Then, go to the Design view window to make changes. When the change is complete, return to Datasheet to continue importing information. The iterative process helps you quickly make the best satisfactory table.

With the design table completed, enter a record. For the first record, use the information in Table 1.

Name of School Account Number Access **Value** automatically filled Company Name Birch Enterprises Address 1 3456 Maple Lane Address 2 PO Box 549 City Kansas City State MO Code Code 64133 Main Phone 8162375632 Fax Number 8162375633 Contact Ed Birch Contact Phone Account Opened 3/2/99 Credit Limit 1500 Last Order 7/8/99 Salesperson John Davis Comments (0)

Table 1: Information for the first record.

When entering information, you can provide a way to make data entry easier. For example, entering a phone number would be easier if you set the Input Mask property for the phone number field.

Return to the Design view window and select the first phone number field (Main Phone). Set the Input Mask property for this field according to the following steps:

1. Click your mouse on the **Input Mask** box at the bottom of the Design view window. You will see the **Builder** icon (a button with 3 dots) appears on the right side of the box.
2. Click on the **Builder** icon. You see the *Input Mask Wizard* dialog box appear. Select the **Input Mask** as Phone Number (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Input Mask Wizard dialog box

If you want to use input masks for phone numbers, click your mouse on the **Next** button. The dialog box continues to display as shown in Figure 3.

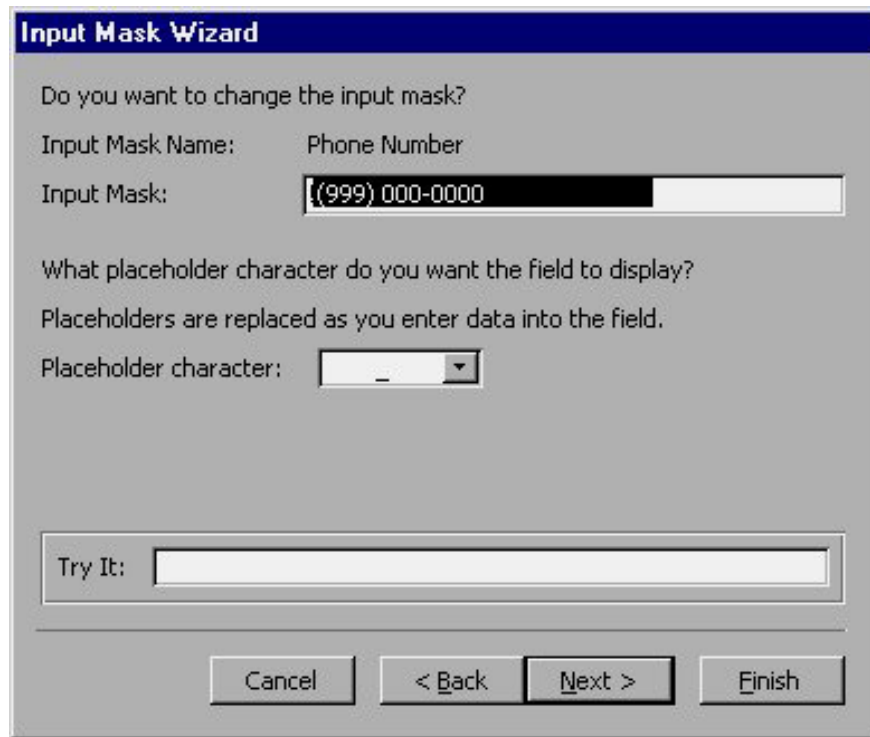


Figure 3: You can change the location of the characters in this dialog box

1. If you want, change the separator that the input mask will use (usually the default is the underline).
2. Click your mouse on the **Next** button. The dialog box appears as shown in Figure 4.

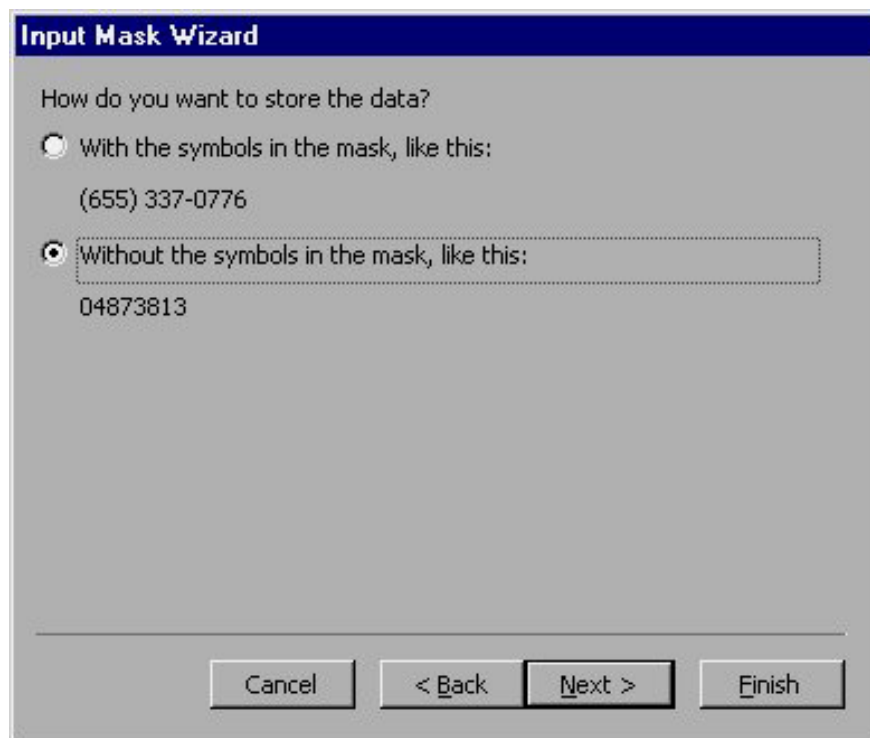


Figure 4: You can change how Access stores information in this dialog box.

1. Specify how you want Access to keep the information saved through the input mask. Can save phone numbers by formatting characters or not (default). The field length for phone numbers is usually 10 characters, so you should save the non-character format value.

2. Click your mouse on the **Next** button. Access displays the final dialog box as shown



Figure 5: The final dialog box of the Input Mask Wizard.

Click your mouse on the **Finish** button. Then, Access updates the Input Mask attribute in the Design view window and it appears as follows:

!(999) 000-0000 ;; _

You can repeat steps 1 through 8 for each different phone field. When exiting the Input Mask property, notice that Access reformat the mark as follows:

!(999 ') ' 000-0000 ;; _

Access adds characters so that the mask fits into its internal characteristics.

When you have completed the input mask, click your mouse on the Datasheet view tool. In response, Access asks you if you want to save the changes to sort the table (Figure 6).

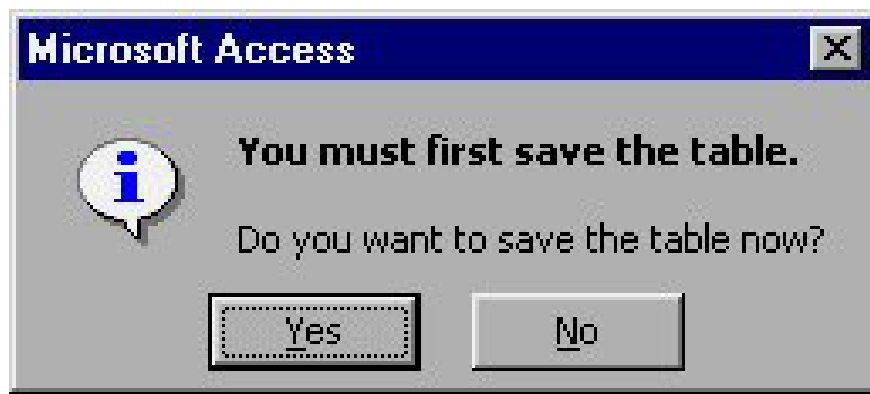


Figure 6: Access asks you if you want to save the changes.

Click on **Yes** to save and return to Datasheet mode. You can enter another record now to see the result.

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