DYNAMICS

of Dbase

From A to Z

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COLUMN ROW PRIMARY KEY IMPORT
COLUMN ROW PRIMARY KEY IMPORT
COLUMN ROW PRIMARY KEY IMPORT
COLUMN ROW PRIMARY KEY IMPORT

Keith Hammand

3

CONTENTS
Table of

Dynamics Of Dbase
A to Z
Hammond

The popularity of databases has increased phenomenally since the early 1990s. I was writing databases in FileMaker Pro on the Mac for a client responsible for sending mailings to 17 ecumenical churches in southwest Minneapolis at the time.

Since then, Access came along made it both easier to use and to design. However, although very user-friendly, depending on the size, functionality, number of users, data integration needs, and portal to the web, Access is not an out of the box application.

It takes an experienced database architect to design a front-end application that is visually appealing, combined with giving users back end functionality.

Because of the increase in companies requiring their data to be mobile, able to be ported to virtually any platform and to be accessible across many networks, the availability of experienced technical people to manage it all becomes logistically impossible. Thus, Data Architects are in high demand.

Databases are designed for a variety of uses. They can be a simple rolodex containing the names, company info, addresses, city, state, zip, phone numbers and email of all your contacts, or as complex as a database designed to resemble a spreadsheet with columns and rows full of products, ID numbers, bar codes, SKU numbers, descriptions, shipping and receiving logs, stock information, and a whole lot more. Databases can be created in just about any format your can think of and be designed to give the user full control over the searchability, use, functionality and flow inside forms containing buttons and links to the information they and other end users need.

I've designed databases to keep track of church membership, to provide up to date access to annual pledge information, to produce reports on patient care and medicine disbursement in a hospice, to track inbound and outbound shipments across several regions and zip codes, to give accessibility across the Internet to a group of salespeople to show real-time information to prospective clients during sales calls, national job banks, and a variety of other databases that run the gamit on use, function, user, and type of data. In this book, we'll look at and discuss how such databases can be helpful to you too.

INTRODUCTION

4

CHAPTER ONE

5

- FORMS
- FLOW
- FUNCTION

A good data architect should also have web design and graphics skills, as well as the ability to develop network diagrams, write technology and strategic plans, and be able to lead people. The training, tips and tools outlined in this book, covers nearly every aspect of being in charge of small to large amounts of data using single and multiple databases, for anyone who is either looking to be employable in this field, or just end users condensing their data into a more functional application.

Whatever your use, having a reliable and scalable database can make your job or projects easier in many ways.

For example, say you're a growing church that is lookng for a way to keep up with and keep on top of all the members. You should already have the names and other information on all your members, and if you're like most churches, it's probably sitting in a file folder somewhere, on the same index card they wrote it on when they first became members.

CHAPTER ONE

- FORMS
- FLOW
- FUNCTION

Therefore, creating a database that is both searchable, and with several modules that include date they joined, who they're connected to, job info, their skills so you can generate reports when duties in the church arise and know who has the skillset to be able to handle it. In addition to contact info, and other key and vital and pertinent information, a database will make it much easier to stay on top of things. Even down to just clicking one button to send a notice out to every member who has email.

This is the membership screen of a database I programmed for a church I served at for 12 years. It contains member info with pictures, pledge information for various fundraising campaigns, produces membership reports of any kind. And acts as a contact base to send broadcast mail to anyone on the email list. Unfortunately, it was never used.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Brother Keith is a born again Christian. He is a Spirit-led man of God, teacher and author. His life has been transformed from things such as pride and prison to passion and purpose.

God is the author of the Bible. It is meant to be our instruction manual, our roadmap home. Without it, we are lost. Use the information in these books to help you and others.

God destroys the darkness behind us, to direct us toward our destiny ahead. So whatever you do on your journey, never turn back. God bless you in your walk with Christ. Amen.

Brother Keith Hammond

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