# Creating User-Friendly Databases

Databases are often created by a small number of people then used by a larger number of others. Often these people do not know how to use all the features of a database so it is advantageous to create databases that are easy to use through the use of buttons. Buttons are simply graphics placed on the screen to perform commands and allow users to navigate around forms, print reports or run macros. All the user has to do is point the *pointer* at the button and click the mouse button for the command to be run.

Buttons are created using the COMMAND BUTTON tool from the TOOLBOX. They can be placed in existing forms or in forms on their own.

In this chapter you will add buttons to a simplified database for a real estate agent which allows users access to a series of forms and reports.

Opening the Sample File

1 Copy the CHAPTER 6 folder from the ACCESS SUPPORT FILES to your ACCESS STORAGE folder. Refer to pages 2-1 and 2-2 if you have forgotten how to do this.

2 Load Microsoft Access and click on the OPEN button in the *toolbar*, or close the current file and click on the OPEN button in the *toolbar*.

3 Access your ACCESS STORAGE folder and open the CHAPTER 6 folder.

4 Click on the CHAPTER 6 file and set the OPEN box at the bottom right of the OPEN dialogue box to OPEN EXCLUSIVE. The EXCLUSIVE option allows a password to be set.

5 The database has a number of prepared tables, queries, forms and reports which are described on the next page.
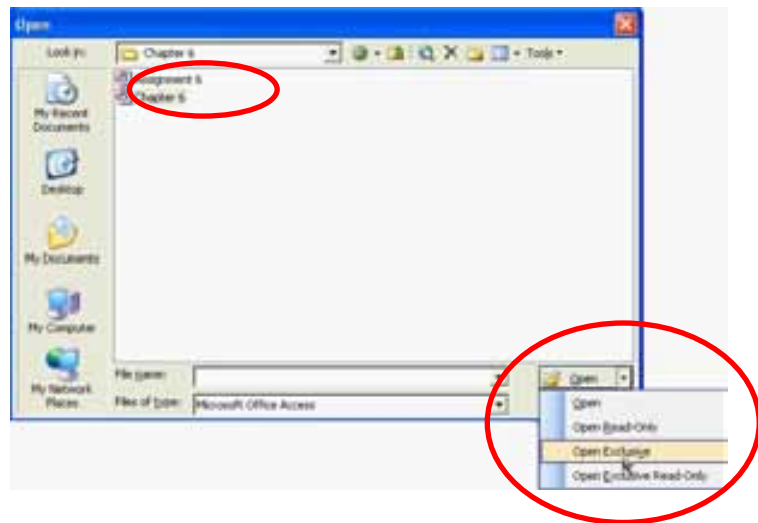
The Sections of the Database

The database consists of the following sections. Look at each in turn.

A   Tables

Owner Details: Records the property's owner details.

Property Details: Records specific details about the property, such as its location, type, description, sale type (sale, auction or rent), and price.

The tables are linked by the OWNER ID primary key field.

B   Queries

All Details: Combines details from both tables. This query is used by the DATA ENTRY form.

Properties for Auction: Filters the properties available for auction, sorted into SURNAME then FIRST NAME order.

Properties for Rent: Filters the properties available for rent, sorted in WEEKLY RENT then SURNAME order.

Properties for Sale: Filters the properties for sale, sorted into SALE PRICE order.
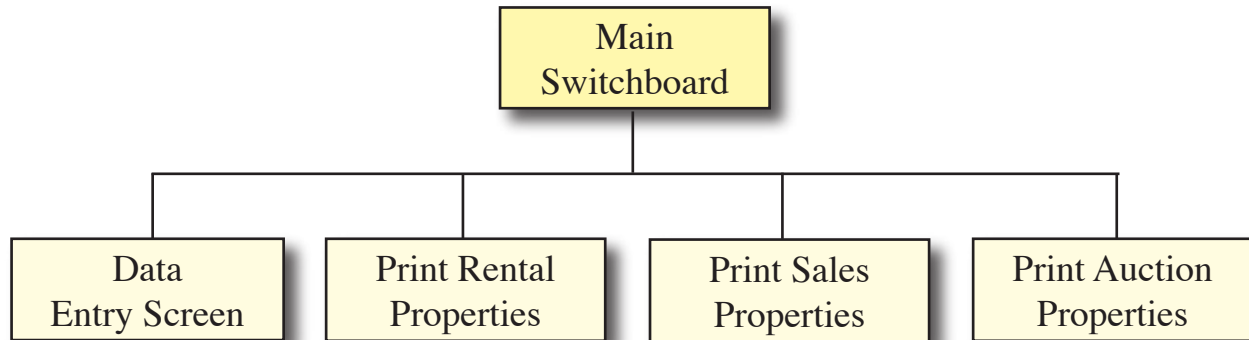
C   Forms

Data Entry: Displays all the fields from the two tables.

D   Reports

Auction Properties: Prints the Properties for Auction Query details.

Rental Properties: Prints the Properties for Rent Query details.

Sale Properties: Prints the Properties for Sale Query details.

The Structure of the Database

You will be required to add buttons to a DATA ENTRY form and to create a MAIN SWITCHBOARD form to control the use of the database. The structure of the database system that you will create is summarised in the following diagram.

```
                        ┌─────────────┐
                        │    Main     │
                        │ Switchboard │
                        └─────────────┘
        ┌──────────────┬──────┴────────┬──────────────┐
┌─────────────┐ ┌─────────────┐ ┌─────────────┐ ┌─────────────┐
│    Data     │ │Print Rental │ │ Print Sales │ │Print Auction│
│Entry Screen │ │ Properties  │ │ Properties  │ │ Properties  │
└─────────────┘ └─────────────┘ └─────────────┘ └─────────────┘
```

Completing the Data Entry Form

Buttons are needed in the DATA ENTRY form to allow the users of the database to carry out the general maintenance procedures such as adding new records, finding records and deleting records.

1   Click on the FORMS frame in the DATABASE WINDOW.

2   Open the DATA ENTRY form in DESIGN VIEW.

3   Maximise the screen. Buttons will be placed along the right of the form.

A   Inserting a New Record Button

We will use a wizard to help use create the button.

1   Check that the CONTROL WIZARD button [icon] is on in the TOOLBOX.

2   Select the COMMAND BUTTON tool [icon] from the TOOLBOX and drag a button from (13,3) to (15,3.75).
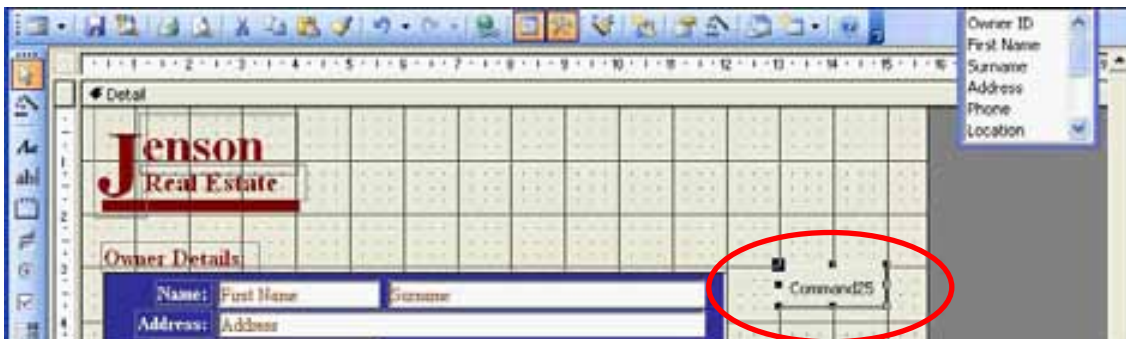
3   In the COMMAND BUTTON
     WIZARD dialogue box set the
     CATEGORIES frame to RECORD
     OPERATIONS and leave the
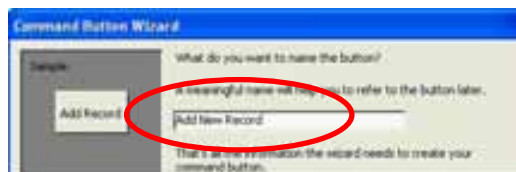   ACTIONS frame as ADD NEW
     RECORD.
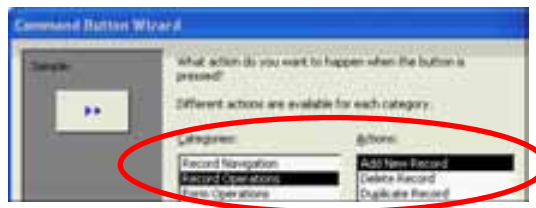
4   Click on the NEXT button and click
     on the TEXT radio button. Leave
     the text box as Add Record.
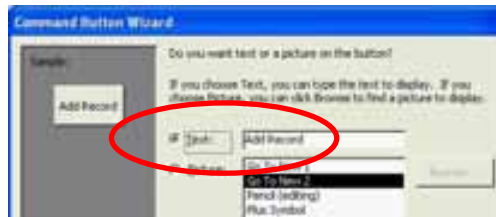
5   Click on the NEXT button and name
     the button: Add New Record

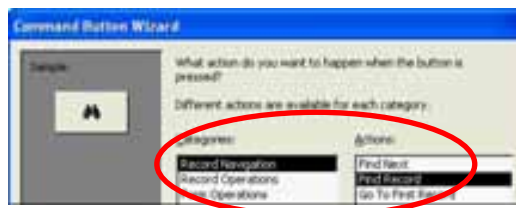6   Click on the FINISH button to
     complete the button.

7   The text in the button can be
     formatted. Set the FONT to TIMES NEW ROMAN, the SIZE to 9 point, the STYLE
     to BOLD and the FONT/FORE COLOUR to DARK RED (the same colour as the
     company logo).

B   Inserting a Find Record Button

A FIND RECORD button can be inserted to allow the user to quickly find a record rather
than needing to use the record navigation buttons.

1   Select the COMMAND BUTTON tool from the TOOLBOX and drag a button from
     (13,4) to (15,4.75).

2   In the COMMAND BUTTON
     WIZARD dialogue box leave the
     CATEGORIES frame at RECORD
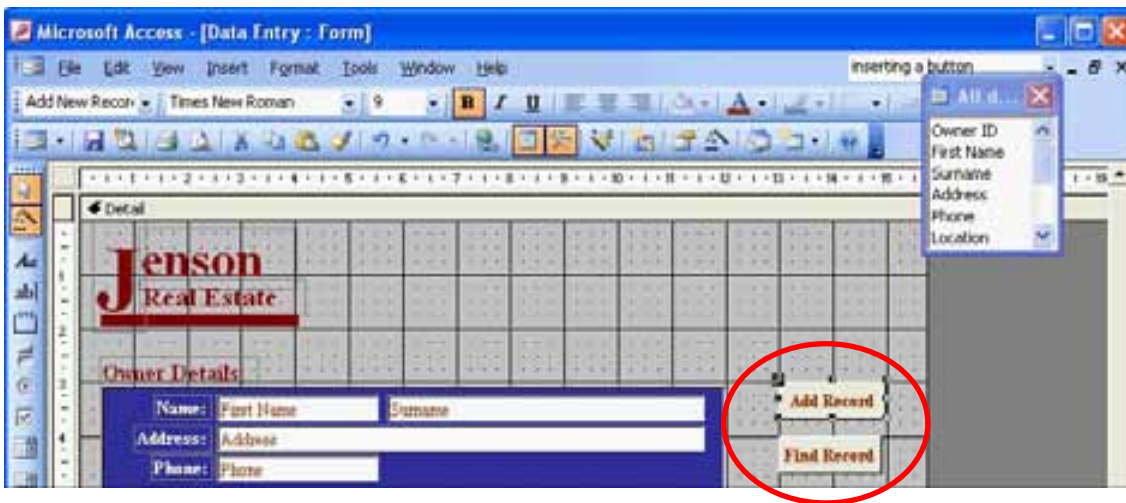   NAVIGATION and set the
     ACTIONS frame to FIND RECORD.

3   Click on the NEXT button and click on the TEXT radio button. Leave the text box
     next to it as FIND RECORD.

4   Click on the NEXT button and name the button FIND RECORD.

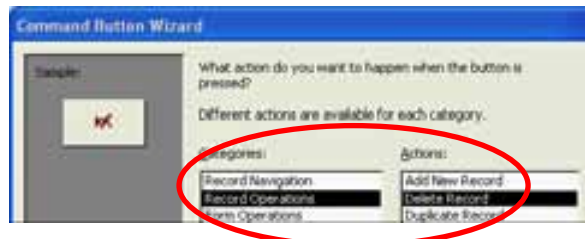5   Click on the FINISH button to complete the button.

6   We can copy the format of the text in the first button to the second. Click on the
     ADD RECORD button then click on the FORMAT PAINTER button in the *toolbar*.

7   Click the FORMAT PAINTER *pointer* on the FIND RECORD button and its format
     should be adjusted. Refer to the diagram at the top of the next page.

C   Inserting a Delete Record Button

1   Select the COMMAND BUTTON tool again and drag a button from (13,5) to (15,5.75).

2   In the COMMAND BUTTON WIZARD dialogue box set the CATEGORIES frame to RECORD OPERATIONS and set the ACTIONS frame to DELETE RECORD.

3   Click on the NEXT button and click on the TEXT radio button. Leave the text in the box next to it as DELETE RECORD.

4   Click on the NEXT button and name the button DELETE RECORD.

5   Click on the FINISH button to complete the button.

6   Click on the FIND RECORD button then click on the FORMAT PAINTER button in the *toolbar* to copy the text format   Click the FORMAT PAINTER *pointer* on the DELETE RECORD button to paste the text format.

7   The first two buttons now need to be increased in width to match the width of the DELETE RECORD button. SHIFT+CLICK on the ADD RECORD button so that both it and the FIND RECORD button have their 'handles' displayed.

8   Stretch one of the centre right size 'handles' to the right so that the right edges of the two buttons are in line with the right edge of the DELETE RECORD button. Refer to the diagram at the top of the next page.

   NB: If you have difficulty accurately aligning the buttons, use the FORMAT menu to turn off SNAP TO GRID and try again.