

Technology

Using Databases to YOUR Advantage

We've all received those annoying telemarketing calls trying to get us to sign up for everything from local newspapers to credit cards. Ever respond to one? Peppared with personal questions for the next 5 minutes you divulge your information. Guess what, you've just been entered into a database. Sounds scary, all that information at their disposal, easy to search, easy to filter, easy to use to their benefit. But remember, databases come in all shapes and sizes, so why not use them to your advantage instead?

A database is simply any method of storing information in a logical and easily retrievable manner. Companies used to use paper cards with holes in them, which represented various pieces of information, for their database. Today we are a little more advanced, but databases still come in all shapes and sizes. Microsoft Excel is itself nothing more than a database (data is stored in fields (columns) with various records (rows) entered into it). Most companies, though, like to use products like Microsoft Access and SQL Server to store and retrieve their data. Through user-friendly interfaces database operators can enter information, print documents, retrieve and analyse data and more. But, why do companies bother with using databases?

Time

Ever had to write out the address of a client on an invoice, sales order or some other type of correspondence? Now, imagine doing that dozens perhaps hundreds of times. With databases all that information can be stored and added into documents with the click of a button. Buying the same item from the same company and need to copy out a Purchase Order? Why write out a new one when at the click of a button a copy of the previous order can be duplicated and even automatically updated with the new date. The timesavings that databases afford are astonishing.

Control

Don't want your salesman selling something you don't have in stock? Never know exactly how many of an item you have on hand at any given time? When used for inventory purposes databases give you greater control and insight into the status of your stock.

Reporting

Ever wonder which customers buy most of your Product A? Or how much of Product B each customer buys when they also buy Product C? How about who your best salesman are? Databases are a wealth of information that allows you to make informed decisions about your company. An endless stream of reports can be developed giving you deep insight into every aspect of your organization.

These are just a few of the reasons why companies use databases. Such databases serve many roles. You can use them for Accounting and Payroll, Sales and Purchase Orders, Inventory Control (including Shipping and Receiving), Client Information and more.

Some companies use pre-made databases and adapt their procedures to them, while others opt for custom-made programs that suit their requirements perfectly and are flexible to future needs. These can be designed by knowledgeable staff or outsourced to expert designers like www.jnsoftware.ca. Having just completed a database project for a client I am continually amazed at the excitement that the program engenders in the users. "This is so much easier than before." They keep telling me. "I'm so excited." They add. And I'm confident you will be too when you look to use databases to improve your organization.



The constant influx of ever-changing technology is hard to keep up with, and it can be overwhelming to keep modernized. Offering solutions that help you get farther - faster, **JN Software Consulting** can assist whether you are heading back into the workforce and need up-to-date training, or are a small business that needs a website or a bookkeeper. Joy Neuhold is a computer training expert, not to mention a certified Microsoft Trainer, with 5 + years experience. Her career has involved many technology-oriented stints with insurance firms, medical companies and computer magazines but nothing compares to the freedom of doing what she loves, computer consulting. "My favorite thing about training is to watch someone's face when they find an answer to a problem they have been struggling with for so long!"

See more of Joy's articles from her [Ask the Expert](#) column.

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