



Technical Support Document

Topic: Increasing the Speed of your Access Database by Decompiling, Compiling, and Compacting

For: Access 2003, 2002 (XP), Access 2000, or Access 97

To make an Access application run at its best possible speed there are a number of things you should do once you have completed development. Most users know how to compile and compact the database files that are used by the application.

Generally an application contains one or more program files and one or more data files.

- A *data* file (an Access database .mdb containing just tables) can only be *compacted*.
- A *program* file (an Access database .mdb, or .mda) containing forms, reports, & VBA code) should be *compiled, decompiled, and compacted*. (.MDE files are already compiled)

Decompiling

A secret known among the best Microsoft Access developers is the undocumented **decompile** option. This is a great way to make Access databases run faster. This has little to do with your data file and everything to do with the size of the program file. Simply put, smaller is better. The smaller you can make your program file (especially when it contains a lot of VBA code), the faster it will run whether or not it is compiled.

Our experience has taught us that if you first *decompile* and then *compact* the program file skipping the compile step, the program file is as small as it can get (often 10-50% of the original size). It runs extremely fast and rarely reports the normal memory errors developers frequently encounter when they are constantly changing forms, reports, and writing and debugging VBA program code.

Compiling

Once you have completed development you will want to *compile* your database for several reasons. It performs one last check to make sure all of the code is syntactically (computer grammar) correct and because it makes forms initially display faster. If you don't compile, each form or report is compiled before it is opened. This can cause a form to open slowly as it first must compile prior to opening.

Compacting

Compacting cleans up your database by removing copies of forms, reports, and code that was stored for later undo commands. It also performs some other magic internally that often fixes other problems. You should always compact your program database after you make changes to it (queries, forms, reports, module code). If you are using Access 2000 or higher, you will want to compact your program and data files on a regular basis as these versions of Access (specifically Access 2000) are notorious for bloating the database size, which decreases performance.

To decompile your program file follow the steps below:

1. Close out of Access if you are currently in it. (Access should no longer be running)
2. Open Access by clicking on the *Start* button and selecting **Run**.
3. Enter **msaccess.exe /decompile**



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Note: There is a space after "msaccess.exe" and before the /decompile. If you have more than one version of Access on your computer you may have to specify the correct path where msaccess.exe is located.

4. Access will start. Select the database you want to work with.
5. Before you open your application, including our Business! or Yes! I Can program file, --- *Hold down the Shift* key and keep it held down until the hourglass disappears and the main database window is displayed.

Note: Business! users should decompile **buspro.mdb**, Yes! I Can users should decompile **yes4plus.mdb**

6. Once you see the main database window, you can release the SHIFT key. Only Access 97 users will see a message box stating that "Access has converted your file to the current VBA, etc.

Note: If you are decompiling Business! or Yes! I Can and you see the Business! or Yes! I Can splash screen followed by the main menu you did not hold the Shift key down long enough and you must start all over again. Letting the program file run the startup code ruins the decompile.

7. Once the Decompile has finished, close out of Access completely.

This is very important. If Access is not immediately closed, the decompile does not work!

Compacting a Database

1. Open Microsoft Access as you normally would.
2. Select **Tools** from the main database window menu and then select **Database Utilities**.
3. Choose *Compact and Repair Database* (Access 2000/2002 Users) or *Compact Database* (Access 97 Users).
4. Select the database you want to compact. You can watch the progress of the compact operation on the status bar at the lower left corner of the Access window.
5. Once the compact is complete, the database can be opened for use. You will now find that it is much smaller in size, especially if you are using Access 2000.

Compiling a Database

1. Start the application you just decompiled. If this is the Business! or Yes! I Can program hold down the **Shift** key as you open it to bypass the startup functions from running.
2. You will see the main database window.
3. Click on the *Module* tab. Select *any module* listed. Press the *Design* button.
4. Select **Debug** from the module window menu and then choose *Compile* (Access 2000/2002 Users) or *Compile and Save All Modules* (Access 97 Users)
5. Once the compile completes, the selection will turn gray. If the selection is already gray, the program is already compiled. If you get an error message you must fix the problem and try again.
6. Close the module window. You should return to the main database window.