

Smart Access

Solutions for Microsoft® Access® Developers

The Sub-Subform You've Always Wanted

Peter Heskett



Access won't let you have a subform within a subform if the data has to be displayed in a continuous form. But necessity is the mother of invention, and Peter Heskett found a way by using senior and junior subforms. He also shares a few other tricks for handling forms.

AFTER more than 10 years of developing business systems for clients, I thought I'd done it all. But with one new client, I found myself having to work out a new way of form handling to give them what they wanted.

My client's distribution business involves four levels of detail. First is the Consignment (Level 1), which consists of a container full of boxes, which the company has to distribute to various destinations in Spain. Each Consignment is broken down into Trips (Level 2), one Trip for each destination in the Consignment. On each Trip the company can deliver to a number of different clients who get a Receipt (Level 3). Each Receipt will include a number of Boxes (Level 4), which are priced according to box type.

Are you still with me? The traditional solution to this would be to have a Consignment form with a Trips subform, then a drill down to the next level of detail (the Receipt) with, perhaps, a pop-up for Boxes. But that wasn't going to suit this client, who wanted to manage the Trip with its Receipts and related Boxes all on one screen.

What I needed was a Trip main form with two subforms: one for the customer Receipts and the other for the Boxes to be delivered to the individual customers. The only problem (in Access 97 and 2000) is that you can't have a subform within a subform if the main subform is set to continuous forms.

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