

# Smart Access

Solutions for Microsoft® Access® Developers

## Excellent Analysis

Peter Vogel



Delivering information as a report may not be enough for your users—they may want to manipulate, analyze, and otherwise explore the data. Unfortunately, for that you need Excel. Editor Peter Vogel shows you how to create an Excel spreadsheet that includes the most powerful analysis tool that Excel contains: the PivotTable.

**W**HEN I was head of an IT department, one of the most important functions that my department performed was to deliver usable information to our users. For most users that was a simple report. However, for many of our users, a simple report wasn't going to do the job. They wanted the information but they also wanted to be able to manipulate the information, to generate new numbers based on the existing data, and to re-organize the data to see new relationships. In other words, they wanted Excel. However, the data that our users wanted required some processing before it was ready for use, and that massaging was beyond the capabilities of end-user reporting.

Access came to the rescue, of course. A combination of VBA code and SQL allowed me to extract the data that our users needed. But when it came to delivering the report, the best that my department could do for our users was to save an Access dataset or report as an Excel spreadsheet and then e-mail the spreadsheet to those users who needed the information. However, my users were then obliged to build the Excel functionality that they needed into the spreadsheet every time they got the report.

More could have been done, I suppose, including using automation to manipulate Excel to create the spreadsheets that the users really needed. However, starting Excel on the computer that was generating these reports wasn't a trivial task. Excel can start slowly and require a lot of memory to do its job, and manipulating Excel from Access can run very, very slowly. More importantly, using automation to manipulate Excel at the server isn't supported by Microsoft (and probably violates Office licensing).

That was a very long time ago (pre-Web, among other things). Now rather

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