

# Smart Access

Solutions for Microsoft® Access® Developers

## Signing Access 2003 Projects

Rick Dobson



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If you've used Access 2003, you've probably seen several security warning messages—Access 2003 cares about your security. An important part of Access 2003 security is digitally signing your code. As Rick Dobson shows, you can do it, but preparing for digital signing is critical.

**A** digital signature acts like shrink-wrap on your project: Clients know that they're getting a copy directly from you that no one else modified. Clients will also know that they're working with "your" code and not any version of it modified by a third party. As computing moves forward into a "security conscious" era, learning how to acquire and use a digital certificate is also important for interfacing with organizations that adopt policies of only running digitally signed Access 2003 projects: Your users may refuse to accept software from you that isn't shrink-wrapped.

This article focuses on Access 2003 security for VBA macros. You'll learn how to obtain and use certificates that let you digitally sign Access projects. By using these tools, you tell your Access 2003 clients that you care enough to declare unambiguously that you wrote the code that your client is running. This kind of declaration is particularly important for VBA solutions distributed via the Internet, where your client may not know you personally.

While Access 2003 retains all of the features that make Access so special to us, it adds some new benefits too. For example, a couple of security prompts may pop up when you try to open new Access projects (either .mdb or .adp files). Some users and organizations may consider these prompts a blessing, while others may seek ways to make them go away without addressing the underlying security threats that the notices are flagging. Microsoft added these warning as part of making Access 2003 more secure than earlier versions of Access when running Access applications automated

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