

Smart Access

Solutions for Microsoft® Access® Developers

Fuzzy Dates

Rebecca M. Riordan



This month, Rebecca Riordan strays from the subject of building interfaces in Access to look at the subject of handling dates. She begins by examining the DateTime data type and the joys of VBA date functions, but the core of this article is how to store values that represent periods in time. As Rebecca points out, much date-like data can't (or at least shouldn't) be stored in traditional DateTime fields.

MICROSOFT Jet, SQL Server, and Access VBA all support a DateTime data type (see the sidebar, "Counting Time," for details of the supported types and the values they can contain). Of course, Jet and SQL Server engines handle dates differently—anything else would be too easy—but by and large the DateTime data types work well for storing and manipulating dates in the vast majority of business applications.

Access VBA supports a wide range of functions for manipulating dates and times. The majority of these are straightforward, but you must always be careful about manipulating the time component of a DateTime or a VBA date variant.

For example, the Date function returns the current system date, while Now returns both the date and the time, and you have to be careful when you mix two functions. If, for example, you use Date as the default value of a field on one form, and Now on another, comparisons may return unexpected results. This expression will always return False because of the addition of the time value in Now:

```
Date = Now
```

Unless you really do care about the time component, always use Date rather than Now when creating DateTime values, and for safety, use the DateValue function for comparisons. The expression will return True, because DateValue will strip off the time component:

```
Date = DateValue(Now)
```

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