

Smart Access

Solutions for Microsoft® Access® Developers

Alternative Buttons

Paul Millennas



With Access, the rule for buttons seems to be “You can have any color button you want, as long as it’s Battleship Grey.” But you don’t have to be that limited: You can expand your buttons’ range in color, texture, and functionality, provided that you’re prepared to bend the rules a little. Paul Millennas shows you how.

YOU won’t get much credit for providing an elegant technical solution if the aesthetics of your application aren’t just as elegant. An application with a boilerplate switchboard and great code underneath won’t make as strong an impression on your users (or the people paying your bills) as one with a pretty interface and less code. Users become more demanding every year and fewer will accept a GUI that looks like it was built with a Microsoft Access wizard. Part of the problem is, of course, the Web—the most common user experience. Your users expect your application to show the same kind of responsiveness that they’ve seen on their favorite Web sites.

I can’t cover everything that you need to create an interface that will make your users say, “Wow.” But I can give you some tools to spice up one of the most common components of your user interface: your buttons. And this isn’t all just “glitz and glamour.” As you’ll see, these techniques also enable you to provide your users with more guidance and feedback as they use your application—and that’s always a good thing.

Rollover/hover buttons

Almost every Web site, it seems, has rollover buttons (also called hover buttons). The difference between a rollover button and a regular Access command button is how the button changes when you hover your mouse over it. After that, the buttons have more differences than shared features (for instance, some hover buttons can have focus and some can’t; some change appearance when you click them and others don’t). As you’ll see, I’m not

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