Artifact One Narrative

The artifact that I choose for the first enhancement was an Access database I made as a project for work called Catering. I developed it mostly on my own time and they ended up not using it currently for a few reasons, nothing to do with the program itself. Part of the reason is that the person that would be using it is more comfortable using paper to track what the program would have done. It was created about 6 months ago and its purpose was to enter catering orders that were taken at the store and have a way to track what orders were coming up, which ones were paid and still waiting to be paid, and which ones were put under a house account.

The entire program relates to software design/engineering as I undertook a lot of software design in its development just through the code written to make it function. Most of it is designed using individual functions to perform tasks in the program. I used coding to deal with pulling data from the tables in the database as well as adding to them and changing existing records. Through this process is how most of the forms are loaded with current information about specific events that are generated when an order is created. Dealing with when to pull records, which ones, and where to display that information were the most important parts when I designed this, and show my abilities the best. The improvements just added some more functionality to the program.

This artifact already had an interface so I just added the objects through buttons to let the user print and email two different ways an event report. The event report for a catering order has the customers information, the event information (where and when), the items for the event, the total amount of the event, and any payment information. The program already would display the report so I added a way for them to print it by just pushing a button. It separates the event report into two reports, one has everything on one page and the other separates the items by departments on different pages. The reasoning for that was for the stores to print this out and distribute the different pages to the departments so that they would only get the items they were responsible for producing. This was all accomplished in one function that was called when the user clicked the print button, it generates the reports based on the event they are currently viewing.

The bigger part was adding the ability to email the report. I added two ways to do so, one through Outlook which was more difficult, and the other through the user’s default mail service (as long as it isn’t Outlook because that seems to only work with the specific Outlook function). To send an email through Outlook I created functions in a separate module to be called from the forms page. It took some trial and error to get the program to send the reports filtered just for the specific event it was for. Sending the event report to print let me send a filter with it to get the desired result, but sending the report through an email I had to go through several steps to filter the report, use that report as an attachment, and then clear the filter from the report so that any future reports didn’t default to that same event. I learned to do all of this through different functions instead of throwing all of this into one, long function. It was a challenge to get the ability to email through Outlook as it wasn’t just one line of code that would enable it to work. I learn how to get the program to communicate with another one to work as it was meant to.