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Sophomore Programming and Web Development

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Creating a Switchboard in Microsoft Access

During my sophomore year at Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech in Programming and Web Development, I learned a new way to connect pieces of a Microsoft Access database together using a mechanism called a switchboard. First, I retrieved the Switchboard Manager command from a list of hidden commands. Afterwards, I tinkered with the controller to format pages into a main page, making sure everything functioned properly. Lastly, I manipulated the settings to cause the form to appeal to me visually. Using my new skill, I can now connect data and make the database user-friendly.

As I looked to generate the Switchboard, I could not find the option anywhere. The first thing I did to begin solving this dilemma is I directed myself to the Access Options window by

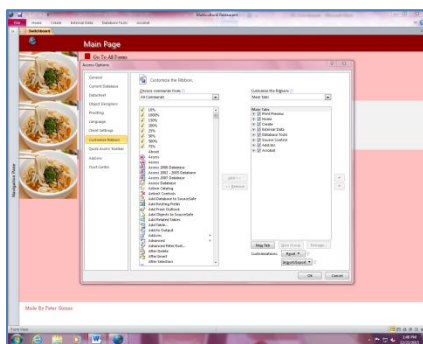


Figure 1: A Print screen of The Database with the Access Option Open and the Customize Ribbon text selected.

clicking File in the ribbon and Options in the directory. Once I chose the Window, I opted for the tab “Customize Ribbon”. I tried to search for the command in the “Popular Commands” category. In order to acquire it, I searched under the “All Commands” section. Finally, I created a new group to place the command in under the section “Database Tools” and inserted the Switchboard manager inside of the category. As a result, an

option to open a Switchboard manager was now available for use.

Now that I could use the controller, I chose the command from the ribbon. A window opened up that asked me if I wanted to make a new Switchboard and I replied with yes by selecting the Yes button. A larger window with only a Main Page appeared. In order to start forging new pages, I picked the “New...” button. The program prompted me to create a name in which I called the page “Forms”. I repeated the process to make another page called “Reports”.

Once I built the page, I double-clicked the name and alternated to another window where I could decide what demanded to be constructed within that page. I managed to construct three pages the each lead to another sub-page. Inside of each sub-page (which I

established in the section of the manager where the Main Page is located and fastened them to the “Forms” page) are two links to a form.

One adds new records to the forms and the other can fabricate records and edit existing records.

For the “Reports” page, there are two links that attach to each report in the database. Now that the pages were produced, I needed to ensure that I can direct myself throughout the entire controller. I lacked a Switchboard Item to each page (excluding the Main Page) called “Back” so I can guide myself to previous sections. First, I pressed “Edit...” on the page I changed. After I pressed the button, a new window appeared and I chose “New...” I entered “Back” where the window told me to enter text. Out of the options shown in Dropdown menus, I settled “Go to Switchboard” for the Command and “Main Page” for the Switchboard (since I was on the Forms page) and selected Ok. I did the same instructions for each page besides the Main Page. For the Default Page, I made a link that exited the program instead. After everything was said and done, the controller functioned properly.

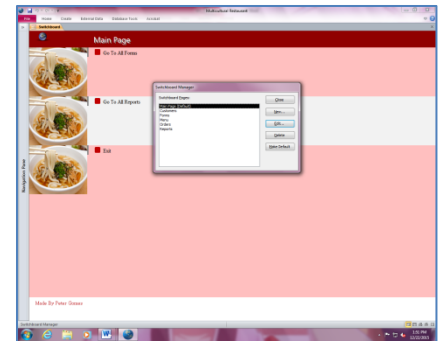


Figure 2: A Print screen of the Switchboard Window open.

While everything operated suitably, the form did not strike me as appealing. Before anything else, I switched the form into Design View so a new set of tools were now available at my disposal. I right clicked the header and favored the Properties option. A side bar appeared and I wandered to the Back Color area since the color did not soothe me. I altered the color to a dark red, which automatically made the form improve a lot cosmetically. I repeated the initial task to the links and the text colors, ending with a dark red header, light red and white backgrounds to each link, a white title, and black links. The sections for the links were slightly

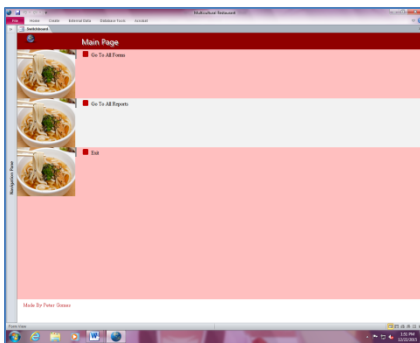


Figure 3: The final product for the Main Page.

smaller than I hoped. In Design View, I grabbed the edge of the Detail section and dragged it down, which resized each link into the size I preferred. Lastly, I used “Insert Image” in the Design tab and fixed a picture to each link and a different image next to the title in the header. Although it was tedious getting the final result, it worked out just fine.

Overall, I found the task rather simple to do and amusing. Obtaining the Switchboard manager was an easy task, but the task would have been nearly impossible without knowing where to find the options. I then amended the controller and its pages which came to me easily. Last, but not least, I tampered with the form settings and view which I enjoyed being creative. This task was easily done and very useful to learn in the field of database.