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Increasing the Speed of Business! Accounting Software or Yes! I Can Run My Business by Decompiling, Compiling and Compacting

Works With: Access 2007, 2003, Access 2002 (XP), Access 2000, or Access 97

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To make an Access application run at its best possible speed there are a number of things you should do once you have completed development. Most users know how to compile and compact the database files that are used by the application. In fact both Business! and Yes! I Can have menu options on the Utilities tab to do this.

Generally an application contains one or more program files and one or more data files.

- A **data** file (an Access database .mdb containing just tables) can only be *compacted*.
- A **program** file (an Access database .mdb, or .mda) containing forms, reports, or Visual Basic code) should be *decompiled*, *compiled*, and *compacted*. (An .mde file is always compiled and compacted).

Decompiling

A secret known among the best Microsoft Access developers is the undocumented **decompile** option. This is a great way to make Access databases run faster. This has little to do with your data file and everything to do with the size of the program file. Simply put, smaller is better. The smaller you can make your program file (especially when it contains a lot of Visual Basic code), the faster it will run whether or not it is compiled.

Our experience has taught us that if you first *decompile* and then *compact* the program file skipping the compile step, the program file is as small as it can get (often 10-50% of the original size). It runs extremely fast and rarely reports the normal memory errors developers frequently encounter when they are constantly changing forms, reports, and writing and debugging Visual Basic program code.

Compiling

Once you have completed development you will want to *compile* your database for several reasons. It performs one last check to make sure all of the code is syntactically (computer grammar) correct and because it makes forms initially display faster. If you don't compile, each form or report is compiled before it is opened.

Compacting

Compacting cleans up your database by removing copies of forms, reports, and code that was stored for later undo commands. It also performs some other magic internally that often fixes other problems. You should always compact your program database after you make changes to it (queries, forms, reports, module code)

To decompile your program file follow the steps below:

1. Close out of Access if you are currently in it. (Access should no longer be running)
2. Open Access by clicking on the *Start* button and selecting **Run**.
3. Enter **msaccess.exe /decompile**
There is a space after "msaccess.exe" and before the /decompile. If you have more than one version of Access on your computer you may have to specify the correct path where msaccess.exe is located.
4. Access will start and then display a dialog box where you will select the database to open.
Before you select your Business! or Yes! I Can database --- ***Hold down your Shift key*** and keep it held down until the hourglass disappears and the main database window is displayed.
5. Select your program file: Business! users (**buspro.mdb** or **busstd.mdb**) or Yes! I Can users (**yes4plus.mdb**)
6. Once you see the main database window, you can release the SHIFT key. Only Access 97 users will see a message box stating that "Access has converted your file to the current VBA, etc."
If the program runs and you see the Business! or Yes! I Can splash screen followed by the main menu you did not hold the Shift key down long enough and you must start all over again. Letting the program file run the startup code ruins the decompile.
7. Close out of Access completely. (Access should no longer be running).
This is very important. If Access is not immediately closed, the decompile does not work.

To compile your program file (manually)

1. Start your Business! or Yes! I Can program as you normally would, but with the **Shift** key held down. You will see the main database window.
2. Click on the *Module* tab. Select *any module* listed. Press the *Design* button.
3. Select **Debug** from the module window menu and then choose *Compile* (Access 2007/2003/Access 2002/2000 Users) or *Compile and Save All Modules* (Access 97 Users)
Once it has completed compiling the selection will turn gray. If the selection was already gray, the program was already compiled. If you get an error message you must fix the problem and try again.
4. Close the module window. You should return to the main database window.

To compact your program file (manually)

1. Select **Tools** from the main database window menu and then select **Database Utilities**. Choose *Compact and Repair Database* (Access 2003/2000/2002 Users) or *Compact Database* (Access 97 Users). Access 2007 users can compact a database by clicking on the Office button located at the top left of the Access window, then choose Manage, Compact and Repair Database.
You can watch the progress of the compact operation on the status bar at the lower left corner of the screen. When the compact is complete, start Business! or Yes! I Can application as normal.

To compile the program file using the Utilities tab option

You can also use the built-in option within Business! or Yes! I Can to compile the program file.

1. Display the **Utilities** tab from the main Business! or Yes! I Can menu and select the option *Compile Program File*.