

How to access non-Paradox tables using ODBC

by Liz A. Woodhouse

© Copyright 2000, by Liz A. Woodhouse. All rights reserved.

Please see use restrictions and disclaimer at the end of this document.

Note: for those trying to use ODBC for databases other than MS Access. All of the steps below apply, except that you may not need DAO/MDAC - though, depending on your databases, these packages may have relevant drivers. Everywhere MS Access or it's driver is mentioned, simply substitute your database program and its ODBC driver. Drivers may be installed by your software (sometimes custom install is needed), or you can check DAO/MDAC, or you can check <http://www.merant.com/> to see if they make a driver for your database software. There may be more than one driver for your database software - if so, you may wish to try each of these as different versions/capabilities may be supported by different drivers. Please note that some of the ODBC DSN setup steps may vary slightly from driver to driver - simply use your best judgement when setting up your particular DSN.

How to access MS Access tables in Paradox

Note: This method uses ODBC, because I found certain things weren't possible using the native BDE driver alone.

1. If you don't already have MS Access or DAO (or possibly MDAC) installed on your machine, go to <ftp://ftp.corel.com/pub/WebPublishing/WebDATA/> and download DAO.EXE and install it (if this link ceases to be valid, search <http://www.microsoft.com> for 'data access').
2. In the Windows Control Panel, start the ODBC applet (applet name varies depending on version, but always includes the letters ODBC).
3. In ODBC, make a new DSN (the User, System and File tabs have a little blurbs about when to use that type of DSN).
 - a. From the driver list, pick: Microsoft Access Driver (*.mdb).
 - b. Put a descriptive name in the Data Source Name field.
 - c. In the Database section, click the Select... button, and select your .MDB file.
 - d. Click on OK to close the ODBC Microsoft Access Setup dialog (other settings can be left default - unless the file requires a user name and password, in which case, click on the Advanced button and fill in those fields... I've never tested this part).
4. Close ODBC and open the BDE Administrator.
5. In the BDE Administrator, make a new alias to point to your ODBC DSN.
 - a. On the Databases tab, right click in white space and select New from the popup menu.
 - b. Select Microsoft Access Driver (*.mdb) in the resulting dialog (New Database Alias) and click OK.
 - c. Give the new alias a name, or keep the default (ODBC1).
 - d. On the right, enter the full path to your .MDB file in the DATABASE NAME field; in the ODBC DSN combo field, select the Data Source Name entered in step 3b (you may need to save changes to the new alias before this list will display names to choose); if required/desired, fill in the USER NAME field (haven't tried this); you may also wish to fill in the LANGDRIVER and/or SQLQRYMODE fields, couldn't begin to tell you want to do with the SCHEMA CACHE DIR field or the other fields filled in by default - I just left those as is.

e. Save all changes and close the BDE.

Note on step 5: the DSN you created in step 3 will appear in the list of BDE aliases. In some cases, this BDE alias may be available immediately for use in Paradox, in other cases, you may be able to simply edit some of the fields mentioned in step 5 (even if you edit them to the same value - sort of kick-starting the alias), and in other cases, you will have to follow the instructions in step 5 and create a separate alias.]

Open Paradox (if Paradox was open during the above steps, you must restart Paradox after making the above changes), and you should be able to use this alias. Note, the alias won't show up in the Project Viewer, but it will show up in most of the dialogs that let you select an alias and then select tables from that alias (e.g. Open Table, Select File, Data Model, etc.).

To open an MS Access table, use the Open Table button on the toolbar or choose File > Open > Table... from the menus, select the alias created in step 5, then select the table. Note that certain types of MS Access queries will also show up in the Open Table dialog. Note also that the Open Table dialog changes slightly after opening the alias, and you can choose types of tables to list from the 'List tables:' drop-down field. Finally, note that when you select the alias in the Open Table dialog, you'll get a login screen asking for user name and password - if these aren't required by the .MDB the alias points to, just leave the fields blank and press OK.

You can query MS Access tables in much the same way - simply create a new query or add a table to an existing query and in the Select File dialog, select the alias which points to your .MDB file.

MS Access tables can be used for reports and forms and can be written to directly in Paradox.

Final note, I've also installed MDAC on my computer, and don't know if this makes any difference (the following steps were taken to get access to MS Access tables working again after it stopped working for unknown reasons):

Re-ran the install for MDAC (Microsoft Data Access Components) - don't know if this makes a difference or not, if I were you, I wouldn't bother with it unless DAO alone doesn't work. I got the file I used from:
<http://www.microsoft.com/data/download.htm>

I then rebooted my machine as requested. I then re-ran the DAO install mentioned above (ran after it broke, didn't run again just because MDAC was installed). I then followed my own directions (above) and successfully opened and queried (QBE) a table from an .MDB file in Paradox (v8).

Disclaimer/Terms of use: This information is provided free of charge for any legal use or activity. Illegal use is strictly prohibited and you are solely responsible for such actions.

All information provided with this file is provided as-is with no implied or explicit warranties of any kind whatsoever. While I make good-faith efforts to provide accurate information, you should always verify my findings before incorporating this information into your own projects and processes. You are strictly and solely responsible for your use of this information. If you damage your system, data, reputation, ability to work, mental stability, or any other material (or immaterial) asset while using the information in this file, it is your responsibility. Practice safe computing--make a backup!

This file may be redistributed freely under the following terms: This file (ODBC.PDF) may not be altered (include your own file if you wish to include additional information), and you may not charge anyone any kind of fee (monetary or otherwise) for this file.