How to use Microsoft Access with NVDA – Part 1(The Basics)

DISCLAIMER!: anything between asterisks(\*) is what is spoken by the screen reader.

# Introduction

Hey everybody, its Thee Quinn here and I’m back with another exciting video. As you can tell by the title, in this video I will be teaching you guys how to use Microsoft Access with NVDA. Yes, this is finally here. This video has been suggested by many persons and I finally have this tutorial out for you. This will be a series with many parts in which I will be teaching you how to create tables, how to create a form, how to run queries, and also how to make reports in Microsoft Access. So let’s get right into it.

# Start of Tutorial

Ok so here is some information on Microsoft Access before we get started. Microsoft Access is a relational database program and its mostly used to keep track of data such as customer’s orders and assets. It also allows you to create forms, write queries, and create reports based on the data. Within Access, the main objects are tables, queries, forms and reports. There are also other objects but we wont be getting into those in this tutorial.

So firstly, we would need to open Microsoft Access. So a quick way to do it, let’s go to your start menu by pressing your windows key. Then start typing access. Then when it pops up, press enter to open it. \*Access, new grouping, featured list, blank database\*. Now right here where it says blank database, press Enter. \*Database1 edit selected\*. Now here is where you would put the name of your database. I want to call it tutorial database, so I’ll type that. Then after you type the name, you will press tab. \*button browse for a location to put your database\*. And you will enter on here and choose where you want the database to be saved. After you are finished choosing that, you will tab again. \*create button\*. Then press enter. \*grid\*. Now I know it says grid, but what it does is places you into an empty table. And this table is in what we call datasheet view.

So in Access there are two main views for the table. You have datasheet view and you have design view. Datasheet view is where after you set up the fields, you will be able to enter the actual records in the table. While in design view, that is where you get to setup your different column headers(which are called fields), their datatypes, and a description if you find it necessary.

So this table doesn’t have any fields or anything inside of it already. So what we need to do is go into design view. In order to go into design view, first we will have to go into the menu. So we will press the Alt key. \*fields tab selected\*. Then press tab. \*views grouping, views split button collapsed\*. And it is a split button. Note, to open a menu that is a split button, you would use your Alt plus your Down Arrow. So let’s do that. \*datasheet view checked\*. So you see that it is in datasheet view. Now we will down arrow to design view and press enter to open it. \*save as dialog, table name: edit selected table1\*. Now you realize, it will ask you to save the table. Anytime you switch from a view to another view, it will ask you to save the changes to your table. Now I have not saved this table as yet. And I want this table name to be called customers because I am running a T-shirt business. So I’ll type it. Then I can just click enter. \*ID edit ID\*. So the design view allows you to edit the different field names (which are the column headers), and the datatypes of those different fields. It is my customers table, so I want it to list my customers and also different information about my customers. Now what Access uses, this part right here that they already have as default which is called ID, this field name. access uses something in which we call a primary key, which is a unique number or ID which is given to each record so we can use it to identify it. Now, I don’t want my field to just be called ID, I want it to be specific. I want to say “Customer ID”. So in order to edit this field, once its selected I would just start typing. So let me start typing “Customer ID”. Now I am finished typing in the name of this field now I want to choose the datatype for this field , so I would tab over to the part that says datatype. \*Row 1, column datatype, auto number collapsed\*.

Before we change this datatype here is a list of the datatypes in Microsoft Access:

* Number: this is used for numerical data.
* Large number: this is used for larger numerical data.
* Date/time: this is used to record dates and time.
* Currency: this is used for monetary data.
* Auto Number: this is a unique number generated by access for each new record.
* Short Text: this is used for alpha numeric data(names, titles, etc..) and allows up to 255 characters.
* Long Text: this is used for large amounts of alphanumeric data. For example, sentences and paragraphs. And it allows for about 64,000 characters.
* Yes/No: this is a Boolean and uses a checkbox to determine if the data is true or false.
* OLE Object: this can be used for pictures and graphs.
* Hyperlink: this is used for a link addressed to a document or file on the internet or on your computer.
* Attachment: this is used to attach files such as pictures, documents and spreadsheets. This field can contain an unlimited amount of attachments per record.
* Calculated: this is used to create an expression that uses data from one or more fields. You can designate different result datatypes from the expression.

So now, as you heard a while ago, if we let it stay at the auto number datatype, you wouldn’t have to put in a customer ID for yourself. What I realize is that once you go over to your next column header / field and start typing in the record, Microsoft Access will give a unique identifier starting from the number 1. But I don’t want that, I want a custom customer ID. So I want to change this collapsed box right here. There are two ways to do this. Just as how I just showed you the different datatypes , you can just start typing like say half of the name of that datatype, or just type in the full name. and then you tab over to your next field. Or, if you don’t remember your different datatypes, there is a way to go through this collapsed box. What I realize is that it is not like regular collapsed boxes, where you just press your down arrow and go through. With Access, you open collapsed boxes by using your Alt plus your Down Arrow. But I realize once you start down arrowing through the box, NVDA wont announce to you the option that you are on. So you would have to Alt plus Down Arrow to open it. Down arrow once , then use your Insert plus tab key to hear the option that you are currently selected on. And if that is not the option that you want, you would have to down arrow again and use the Insert plus tab keystroke again. and continue doing that until you hear the datatype that you want. But I think that the most effective method is knowing the datatype that you want and just typing it in yourself.

So right here I want short text, so let me type it in. I have already typed “Short “ so I can just tab away and it will put in the short text for me. \*Row 1, column description(optional)\*. So this is where you will type a description if you want one for your field. But I don’t find that necessary right now, so I won’t do it. And if you should Shift tab back to the datatype you would realize that it automatically puts in the short text. Now let’s tab until we hear it say row 2 to go down to the next field. \*row 2, column field name\*. I want the customer’s name to be in this field. Now you can choose to have it first name different from last name, but I want customer name in just one field by itself. So let me type that in “Customer Name”. now let me tab to the datatype. \*row 2, column datatype, short text collapsed\*. And it already has in short text. Now let me tab to my row 3 which will be my third field. \*row 3, column field name\*. now, I want the customer’s address to be in here. So let me type in “Address”. And I want to note one thing to you. When you are entering the different field names , or sometimes even when entering data in the datasheet view in Microsoft Access. If you make a mistake, say you type a S instead of a D. It is not like in Microsoft word where if you backspace a s you will hear it say S. NVDA will not announce to you that something has been backspaced. So I just wanted to note that to you. So let me tab over to my datatype. \*short text edit short text\*. And that is the datatype that I want. So let me tab to my next field. \*row 4, column field name\*. now, I also want the customers email. So let me put that in “Email”. Then Tab to the datatype. \*short text edit short text\*. Then tab to my next field. \*row 5, column field name\*. now the last thing I want for my customer is their phone number. So let me type that in “Phone Number”. Then tab to the datatype. \*short text edit short text\*. And for my phone number I am going to put a space or a dash between the numbers. So I am going to leave it at short text. And that is how I want my fields to be set up for this customers table.

Now we need to go back to the datasheet view so that we can enter our records into the table. And I must note that every row represents a record in datasheet view in Microsoft Access. So first I will save my table because if I just switch to datasheet view, it will prompt me to save my table anyways. So let me just save it by using Ctrl plus S. Now let’s go to my menu, so Alt. Then tab again, and use Alt plus Down Arrow. Then down arrow to datasheet view and press enter. \*edit\*. Now you realize that it just says edit. It doesn’t tell me the row number or the field name that I am currently on. I know that it is customer ID but I can just simply right arrow, and left arrow back over to where I am to know which row or column I am in. \* row 1, column customer ID\*. So it tells me that I am in the Customer ID column. And I said that I wanted it to be unique, a mixture of numbers and letters. So let me do something easy like “1TQ” for Thee Quinn. Now when you are finished typing that in. in order to go over to the next column in the same row, you can either use your side arrows or your tab. So let me use my right arrow right now to go over into the next column. \*row 1, column customer name, edit blank\*. Now let me type in a name “Bob Stewart”. Then right arrow to the next column. \*row 1, column address, edit blank\*. And type in his address “Kingston 5”. Then right arrow. \*row 1, column email, edit blank\*. And enter his email “bstewie@gmail.com”. Then right arrow. \*row 1, column phone number, 0 edit 0\*. And lets type his phone number “876 363 4634”. And now I know that I am in the last column in my row. And I have just finished creating my first record. Now in order to create another record in which you can edit. once you are in the last column in the row that you are currently editing, the way to create that new record is by either using your tab key or your enter key. so let me use my enter key right now. \*new row, row 2, column customer ID\*. And you realize that I am now in row 2. So go ahead and I’ll add about 4 more records and then I’ll get right back to you. But one thing I must tell you before you go. Once you are on any row. Say I already entered 5 records. But I want to enter a new record under Bob Stewart at the top. If I go up to Bob Stewart at the top and use the keystroke Ctrl plus the plus sign, it will create an empty record right under Bob Stewart.

Now I am finished doing all the records that I want to do in this table. But one thing I forgot to tell you before I went to type in my records. You will realize after entering your records, you can use all 4 arrow keys to navigate around the table to hear the different records. You will also realize that in each cell, NVDA will announce what is in the cell twice. So don’t think that if you have 2 in the cell and it says “2 2” that means that there are two two’s in the cell. it is just reading it twice. Now I am finish with this table. So I want to close this table. what I will do is save it first, so Ctrl plus S. Then I would press Ctrl plus F4 to close just this table. \*All Access objects button\*. Now if you want to go back to that table to open it. If you hear this all access objects button, you can press enter. \*temporary context menu pop up menu\*. Then down arrow until you hear table list. \*tables and related views button\*. Then press enter here. \*customers grouping, customers : table button\*. And there we go. And if I want to open the customers table, I would press enter on here. And as we create tables, you will realize that this list will list all those different tables that you created. Also if you currently have a table open, if you want to get over to this table list to open another table. What you can do is use your F6 key until you hear the list of the tables. then you down or up arrow to the table that you want, and then press enter.

But wow this video has been a mouthful and I have to end this video before it gets too long. But the last thing for this video. Sometimes you want to do something to your columns like renaming the field, or sorting it , changing the size, or maybe hiding it or deleting it. There is a way in which you can do that. First you would have to go into that column or field while in the datasheet view. Then you would use Ctrl plus spacebar to select that column. And you would press your applications key (or Shift plus F10). And then you can down arrow through that menu and select any one of those options.

So there you go guys. That’s it for today’s video. I hope you learned a lot. And remember if you found this video helpful, be sure to like, subscribe, and turn on that notification bell to be notified when I’ll post the next video. be sure to also comment below and let me know what you think about this video. And if you have any enquiries, be sure to use my email which can be found down in the description below to contact me. But stay tuned for the next video where we will be creating another table from scratch, and I will also be showing you how to import tables from Excel into Microsoft Access. So thanks again for watching and I’ll see you next time.