



White Paper

Strategic Management of MS Access

Does your business rely on a multitude of disparate Access databases that are necessary (and in some instances – critical) – for business continuity but are difficult to identify and control? Do you know how much MS Access is costing your business now and in the future as a result of supporting older versions of Access?

How does it occur?

Organisations are plagued with a proliferation of disparate databases that have been developed by business units or projects in response to immediate or local business needs. Typically, these databases do not appear on the organisation's application register, are not included in the enterprise budgets, and critically, are often not included in backup schedules. The problem is often found during SOE upgrades or when recoveries are performed but the issue is typically 'worked around' rather than addressed. The fall out is often escalating SOE environment costs, loss of critical data, loss of business continuity and individuals or teams becoming despondent, vocal and adversarial due to "their application" being lost.

The solution – "ARCU Pathways"

ARCU Pathways focus is on a total solution that ensures organisations can derive the maximum benefit from the numerous business solutions created from MS Access DB's. The total solution encompasses a four-step methodology - Audit, Register, Categorise and Upgrade. ARCU is designed to: show the problem scale and impact and provide organisations with sustainable mitigation choices via the following stages:

1. **Application Audit.** This encompasses both network and stand-alone assets to identify all MS Access databases in use.
 - Manual searches of stand-alone assets to identify rogue databases.
 - Use of surveys to identify rogue databases reducing consultancy costs
 - Automatic searches of all network assets to identify the location and designation of the databases is also available.
2. **Database Register.** Develop a register of all databases including location, owner/creator, business function it provides and integrity of the database. This will be carried out by qualified technical business analysts and skilled application architects who will:
 - Analyse the business functionality and interview

application owners.

- Provide a complete a technical review of database structures.
 - Identify the type of data stored by the solution – allows for integration and consolidation
3. **Categorise Databases.** Each database will be categorised into four classifications.
 - Cat 1: Non-business critical and does not support a core business outcome. Identify, register and usually result in the organisation taking no further action.
 - Cat 2: Business critical single purpose.
 - Cat 3: Business critical multiple purpose or multiple databases with same functionality.
 - Cat 4: Business critical enterprise level access.
 4. **Application strategy.** Develop a costed application strategy for the client organisation that can be budgeted for and implemented over multiple financial years. The typical strategies could include:
 - Migrate the application to Access 2010/2013
 - Migrate the database to SQL Server 2010/2012, and the interface to Access 2010/2013
 - Re-develop the solution in Microsoft .Net and SQL Server or similar solution
 - Identify a product (COTS) to provide capability at better value and cost
 - Leave as is (Usually only if a retirement strategy can be implemented)
 5. **Audit.** Provide a six monthly review service to ensure the register is maintained and new databases are captured.

Benefits

- Reduced support and upgrade costs through information and effort efficiencies
- Protection of business critical data, ensuring your business can continue its operations
- Centralising data and providing opportunities for data mining
- Capturing and harnessing organisational IP
- Leveraging innovative solutions
- Recognition of staff achievements

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