



# FileMaker and Microsoft Access: A Criteria-Based Comparison

If you're trying to decide what database is going to best fit your needs, but have been wondering what the difference is between Microsoft® Access and FileMaker® software, below is a comparison based on the criteria that third-party reviewers use to evaluate database products. Discover why FileMaker is the #1-selling, easy-to-use database and has received the most awards from the experts.

Criteria	FileMaker	Microsoft Access
<b>Ease of Getting Started</b>	<b>Simple to learn</b> 30 basic database templates and intuitive, graphical interface allows new users to get started fast.	<b>Requires database expertise</b> More intricate user interface and lack of built-in database views makes initial learning curve high for new users.
<b>Ease of Finding and Viewing Information</b>	<b>Automatically creates views</b> Automatically creates table, list, and form views for all information. Able to view live web pages associated with database records. Web pages update when data is modified.	<b>Views created manually</b> Must manually create each view of information. Finding data requires mastery of a query system.
<b>Scripting &amp; Programming</b>	<b>Point &amp; Click scripting</b> Point & click scripting language with over 130 script steps allows users to easily automate any task. Programming expertise not required.	<b>Programming knowledge required</b> Selection of 56 macros covers some database tasks but many solutions require use of Visual Basic – a more complex programming language.
<b>Customization</b>	<b>Simple customization</b> Toolbars guide users in modifying fields, layouts, reports, or menus* in a few straightforward clicks.	<b>High-level customization</b> Numerous options and click paths require prior experience to navigate. Extensive customization requires knowledge of Visual Basic.
<b>Reporting</b>	<b>Drag &amp; Drop reporting</b> Drag & drop reporting tools help create a variety of custom reports. Create and share Adobe® PDF files using built-in PDF Maker.	<b>Manual design interface</b> Wizards aid in creating simple reports however modifications require use of an advanced design interface. No PDF creation capabilities without add-in.
<b>Database Capacity</b>	<b>8 terabyte capacity</b> 8 terabyte limit per database**. Fields can hold 2GB of data.	<b>2 gigabyte capacity</b> 2GB limit per database. Text fields hold 255 characters, memo fields hold 65,535 characters.
<b>Scalability</b>	<b>Supports individual to large workgroups</b> FileMaker Pro supports up to 9 simultaneous users, and FileMaker Server handles up to 250 users.	<b>Supports small workgroups</b> User may experience less than optimal performance with 20 or more users. No Access server available.
<b>Web Publishing</b>	<b>Share complete solution via web</b> In one click, publish an entire database solution to the web using FileMaker Pro – no additional software required. Sharing allows users full read/write privileges with built-in security features.	<b>Share components of solution</b> Share individual forms and reports over the web, but not an entire database solution. Requires users to have installation of Microsoft Office to share files.
<b>Security</b>	<b>Field-level access</b> Flexible security options allow user to restrict access to databases, or specific layouts or fields within a database.	<b>Database-level access</b> Allows user to restrict access at database level only, more granular security not supported.
<b>Platforms</b>	<b>Windows and Mac compatible</b> Runs on both Windows and Mac (databases can be shared across platforms): Mac OS X 10.4.8 for PowerPC-based and Intel-based Macs, Windows XP Professional and Windows Vista Ultimate.	<b>Compatible with Windows only</b> Runs on Windows Vista.

Comparison is based on FileMaker 9 and Microsoft Access 2007.

\*Menu customization is available in FileMaker Pro 9 Advanced.

\*\* Capacity represents the limits imposed by the FileMaker architecture, the actual usable limits will vary based on other factors such as disk space, RAM, OS resource limits, etc.