

Subject: Fax List Management Tips

Topic: **How to remove duplicate Fax Numbers using Microsoft Access®**

Access removes duplicate records by using a key field, which only allows unique values in the table (list) for that field. The following is a guide to perform the de-dup function. This task should only be performed after all other modifications to the fax number are done (removed non-numeric characters and blank spaces).

First, if your list is not already in an Access table, you need to import your list into Access. Your list can be imported from one of these file formats: .csv, .txt, .xls, .tab, .dbf or some others.

Import the file: Open Microsoft Access. Under the **Objects** list, highlight **Tables**, then click on **File / Get External Data / Import**. In the Import window, select your input file type from the 'Files of type' list. Find your data file, then double-click on it to begin importing it into Access. Follow the prompts to identify the fields in your list. Name your fax number field **faxnumber**, and name your list (Table) whatever you wish.

Make a copy of the table: Highlight the new table, then click on **Edit / Copy**. Copy to a new table by clicking **Edit / Paste**. You will get a new window called **Paste Table As**. Type in a new table name, then click on **Structure Only**, then **OK**.

If you open this new table you will see there are no records in it – which is correct.

Make the fax number in the new table a key field: Highlight the new table, then click on **Design**. Highlight the line with the **faxnumber** field, then click on **Edit / Primary Key** (this makes the fax number a key field, which can not allow duplicates). Now you can close the window, and **Save** your changes.

Create a Query: Under the **Objects** list, highlight **Queries**, then click on **New / Design View / OK**.

1. Highlight your first input Table, then click the **Add** button to select it into the query. **Close** the Show Table window. Now click on **Query**, then **Append Query**. Use the window to select the copied Table (the one with no records), then click **OK**. You won't see this second file added to the query, but it's there.
2. Double-click the asterisk (*) in the table window, which tells Access you want to append the data from all the fields of the first (input) table into the copied table (now you will see the table name that the records will be copied to).
3. Click the red exclamation point (!) to run this Append Query. It will tell you how many records it is going to Append (copy) from the first table to the second table. Click **OK**. Then if there are duplicate fax numbers, it will tell you how many records could NOT be appended (copied) due to 'key violations' in the **faxnumber** key field. This is the number of records you are de-duping. Click **Yes** to approve the query to finish copying the non-duplicates from your input table to the output table. **Close** the Query.

Export your list: Under the **Objects** list, highlight **Tables**, then open your new, copied table (your de-duped list). Click **File / Export**. In **Save as type**, select **Text files**. In your file name, end it with **.csv**. This will save it on your hard disk in a csv file format.