Redesigning A Database Application

Purpose of Redesign

The redesign of the database system should accomplish a number of objectives, some of them being:

- To create a consistent, easy-to-use user interface
- To create a consistent design to the tables, fields, queries, forms, and reports following standard methods of relational database design
- To add any items that are missing from the current database system
- To delete any items that are not needed in the current database system
- To explore additional designing capabilities available in the programs of today
- To explore additional information processing possibilities with Access, Word, Excel, MapPoint, etc.
- To automate, as much as possible, the processing of information, reports, exports, etc.
- Using a professional to design the database system rather than an employee who may know just enough about designing an object-oriented, relational database using MS Access

Consistency of Design

Each user sees the same interface. The learning curve for using the database is steep. Users can navigate in the various areas without being retrained. This is important for current users who change positions within the company. It also is important to managers who must go into all the areas for various reasons.

Ease of Use

The interface is designed with the end-user in mind. Navigation is performed in English and not obtuse buttons or non-intuitive processes. This is important for new users as well as current users. Someone hiring in can utilize the intuitive database system with little instruction.

Elements to Add or Delete

In many cases, there are items that need to be added that weren't included in the original design. This makes the database a better tool to use. Also, there are a number of items that are in the database which are not needed. Deleting these objects will make the database structure, management, and running more efficient.

Exploration of additional items

The newer version of the programs allow the designer to accomplish things that were not available in earlier versions. Also, there are a number of processes that can be handled automatically by combining the efforts of such programs as the Microsoft Office.

Automatic processing

Many processes, especially the manual ones, can be lumped into one, time-saving event. For example, by clicking one button in the database, the user can print a group of letters, the envelopes for those letters, and a report on who the letters were sent to. Also, for example, the use of bar-coding has replaced the keying in of data, which helps to speed up processing.

Professional Design

Using a professional to design the database accomplishes many of the objectives listed above. One has to look at the TOTAL COST Of OPERATION to see that using a professional database designer is the more cost-effective method versus an internal employee doing the design. Even though the professional's hourly rate is more than the internal employee's, the professional can design the same thing in half the time it would take an employee. Also, the quality of the design is much better as well as the knowledge of how to design and what to incorporate into the database. There should be less problems and less maintenance in the future by using a professional. By eliminating many manual operations, the professional helps to make the employees more efficient in their output of work, thereby increasing their productivity.