

Using Microsoft Access to generate WebCT Quiz Upload Files

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The Microsoft Access application described here can be used to translate tab-delimited text files containing multiple choice or true and false questions into the format required by WebCT for uploading into the WebCT quiz database.

Answers can be in separate files, or in the same file. The program has import routines for questions, with or without answers, as well as for answers only.

The Three Steps

1. Prepare the questions in the text file formats described below.
2. Load the Access database **WebCTQuiz.mdb**, select **Merge Text Files** from the application menu, and import the files, merge the True & False and Multiple Choice holding tables into the QUIZ table.
3. Select **Create Upload File** from the application menu, and create the WebCT upload file.

1. Text file formats for import into Microsoft Access

There is a different file layout for the two kinds of quiz questions that this application handles. The first record in each file type contains the field names that are used in Access. Use tabs to delimit the fields.

True and False (implemented as Multiple Choice in WebCT)

Format of file with Questions **and** Answers:

Field	Type	Description
Prefix	Text	A code to indicate the topic
Section	Text	Week number, chapter, lesson number, learning objective
QuestionNum	Numeric	Question number
Question	Text	The true or false statement.
CorrectAnswer	Text	'F' = False, 'T' = True

Format of file with Answers **only**:

Field	Type	Description
Prefix	Text	A code to indicate the topic
Section	Text	Week number, chapter, lesson number, learning objective
QuestionNum	Numeric	Question number
Question	Text	The true or false statement.
	Text	

The remainder of the file contains one whole question per record.

Here is a header record followed by two sample records (^t represents a tab character):

```
Prefix^tSection^tQuestionNum^tQuestion^tCorrectAnswer  
MIS^t1^t8.^tData have been shaped into a form that is meaningful and useful to human beings.^tF  
MIS^t1^t9.^tComputer technology and information systems describe the same concept.^tF
```

Here is the WebCT upload file that this will generate:

```
:TYPE:MC:1:0:C  
:CAT:MIS01TF  
:TITLE:01TF08  
:QUESTION:H  
Data have been shaped into a form that is meaningful and useful to human beings.  
:ANSWER1:0:H  
True  
:ANSWER2:100:H  
False  
  
:TYPE:MC:1:0:C  
:CAT:MIS01TF  
:TITLE:01TF09  
:QUESTION:H  
Computer technology and information systems describe the same concept.  
:ANSWER1:0:H  
True  
:ANSWER2:100:H  
False
```

Multiple Choice

Format of file with Questions **and** Answers:

Field	Type	Description
Prefix	Text	A code to indicate the topic
Section	Text	Week number, chapter, lesson number, learning objective
QuestionNum	Numeric	Question number
Question	Text	First part of the multiple choice statement
a1	Text	Letter for first choice (“a” – ignored)
Answer1		First answer choice
...		
a5		Letter for the fifth choice (“e” – ignored)
Answer5		Up to 5 answers can be given (unused answers can be omitted)
CorrectAnswer		Letter of the correct choice

Format of file with Answers **only**:

Field	Type	Description
Prefix	Text	A code to indicate the topic
Section	Text	Week number, chapter, lesson number, learning objective
QuestionNum	Numeric	Question number
CorrectAnswer	Text	Letter of the correct choice
	Text	

The remainder of the file contains one whole question per record.

Here is a header record followed by two sample records (^t represents a tab character):

Prefix^tSection^tQuestionNum^tQuestion^ta1^tAnswer1^ta2^tAnswer2^ta3^tAnswer3^ta4^tAnswer4^ta5^tAnswer5^tCorrectAnswer

MIS^t2^t4.^tThe information systems level that helps knowledge and data workers design products, distribute information, and cope with paperwork is the:^ta.^tknowledge-level.^tb.^tstrategic-level.^tc.^tmanagement-level.^td.^toperational-level.^te.^tall-around level.^ta

MIS^t2^t5.^tTypes of systems include:^ta.^texecutive support systems.^tb.^tknowledge work systems.^tc.^toffice automation systems.^td.^ttransaction processing systems.^te.^tall of the above.^te

Here is the WebCT upload file that this will generate:

:TYPE:MC:1:0:C

:CAT:MIS02MC

:TITLE:02MC04

:QUESTION:H

The information systems level that helps knowledge and data workers design products, distribute information, and cope with paperwork is the:

:ANSWER1:100:H

knowledge-level.

:ANSWER2:0:H

strategic-level.

:ANSWER3:0:H

management-level.

:ANSWER4:0:H

operational-level.

:ANSWER5:0:H

all-around level.

:TYPE:MC:1:0:C

:CAT:MIS02MC

:TITLE:02MC05

:QUESTION:H

Types of systems include:

:ANSWER1:0:H

executive support systems.

:ANSWER2:0:H

knowledge work systems.

:ANSWER3:0:H

office automation systems.

:ANSWER4:0:H

transaction processing systems.

:ANSWER5:100:H

all of the above.

2. Import files into MS Access and Merge into the QUIZ table

2.1 Import Files

1. Click Merge Text Files on the main menu.
2. Enter text file name to import, or click Browse to locate it.
3. Click a radio button to select File Type.
4. Click Import File.

Note: Under certain circumstances (such as a new installation of Microsoft Access), the import may fail with an error message indicating key violations. I have found that this situation can be corrected by doing a manual import where specify the name of the saved import specification to use.

1. Go to the Database Window. If it is not visible, click Window > WebCTQuiz : Database on the toolbar.
2. Click **Tables** in the list of objects on the left of the Database Window.
3. Click **New** in the Database Window toolbar.
4. Select **Import Table** and click **OK**.
5. Browse to the file you wish to import, select the file name, and click **Import**.
6. Click **Advanced...**
7. Click **Specs...**
8. Selection the appropriate specification and click **Open**.
 - MCA Multiple Choice Answers
 - MCQ Multiple Choice Questions (or questions with answers)
 - TFA True and False Answers
 - TFQ True and False Questions (or questions with answers)
9. Click **OK**.
10. Click **Finish**.
11. This will create a table with the same name as the text file you imported from. You can delete it if you wish.
12. Run **Import File** from the Access application again.

2.2 Merge Files

Even if the answers are contained in the same file as the questions, this step is necessary. It will merge answers with questions if necessary, then it will append the questions to the QUIZ table.

1. Click **Merge T**rue and **F**alse.
2. Answer prompts:
 - Yes – the update query merges any answers loaded separately with the questions in the True and False holding file.
 - Yes – allow the update to proceed, even if 0 rows will be affected.
 - Yes – the append query adds the records in the True and False holding file to the QUIZ master table.
 - Yes – allow the append to proceed, noting the number of records being added.
3. Click **Merge M**ultiple **C**hoice.
4. Answer prompts as for True and False.
5. Click **E**xit.

3. Create Upload File

1. Click Create Upload File on the main menu..
2. Enter the Prefix you want to select from the questions you have loaded into QUIZ. The drop down box will list all the possible prefix codes you have loaded.
3. Enter the Section you want to select from the questions you have loaded into QUIZ, or use * to select all sections. The drop down box will list all possible Sections for the Prefix you have chosen.
4. Enter the upload file name you want these questions to be loaded into, or click Browse to search for a location on your disk.
5. Click Create.
6. Click Exit.