

Getting Started on the MSACCESS Forum

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Microsoft Access Support Forum! Welook forward to your questions and contributions.

The MSACCESS Forum is an extraordinary resource for people who use, or are considering using, Microsoft products. Forum members are knowledgeable, unselfish, and available virtually 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist you. They will not only provide you with the information and help you need, but they'll do so with a generosity of spirit that truly means "support."

The forum is a place to get your questions answered -- Microsoft tech support is here (Monday through Friday) as well as many people who are very knowledgeable in Microsoft products, hardware, other software, and just about everything else (e.g. music, Star Trek, medieval literature, the list goes on and on).

Yet the forum also offers more than a place to come for help...

- you can learn about new trends in the industry and the philosophy of database approach in general
- you can share your thoughts about Microsoft and our line of products, request changes and enhancements, and gripe if you need to
- you can contribute your own knowledge and have the satisfaction of helping others
- and you can just hang out and chat with people who might become some of your best friends.

Our main purpose here is to provide information, guidelines and tips to help you get "up to speed" as quickly as possible.

Although we have a responsibility to watch this forum and see that questions are answered, problems resolved, and concerns are addressed, we hope that you will play an active part participating in the process. The forum works best when we all contribute and help each other. Not only does this make for good technical support, it also helps us to determine where the product can stand some improvement in order to prevent questions in the first place. We also get a good idea of who our customers are and what they need to be more productive.

2.0 HARD AND FAST RULES

These are simple.

This forum requests that you use your full name in your CompuServe (CIS) identification. If you have omitted your first name or last name, please change it.

To change your name, get on-line in CompuServe and type GO MSACCESS to get to the CompuServe prompt. Then type OPTIONS which will show you a menu of options you can change. Choose option 4 (name), enter the new name, press <RETURN> and then tell CIS to make the change permanent. You can also do this quickly by typing "OPT;N <newname>;P" which will bypass the menus.

If you normally use a company CompuServe account with the company name but plan to be a regular participant, please change the identification (at least locally in this forum) to your name and enclose the company name (or abbreviation) in brackets after your name. If several people will be using the *same* account, each individual should include his or her complete name in the body of the message.

Please refrain from using profanity, being abusive, advocating illegal actions, or performing any act that may injure another. Microsoft reserves the right to deny access to the forum to anyone posting offensive messages.

This isn't a "hard and fast rule" but it is highly recommended -- please do not type your messages all in upper case (use mixed case as you would in a letter). Upper case is hard to read and is considered "SHOUTING" on CompuServe -- you'll see what I mean if you read enough messages.

There are no other "rules" but there are some conventions of behavior that will ease your life in the forum. Please see the "Manners and Ambience" section, next.

3.0 MANNERS AND AMBIENCE

This is the MSACCESS forum, so naturally what brings people together is an interest in Microsoft products -- most of the people here are working with Microsoft Access. These include developers, people using the products to manage their own

data, and hobbyists. The range of skill and expertise is very wide -- from the loftiest Access Basic guru to the absolute beginner. Experts and beginners are equally valued -- beginners sometimes ask the best questions!

In addition to the people who write messages on the forum, there is another group we (affectionately) call "lurkers" -- people who monitor the forum (reading messages, downloading files) but for one reason or another haven't chosen to write any messages to us. We might tease lurkers from time to time but we value them as well.

Although intended as a "working" forum for sharing information and professional expertise, this forum is also a friendly and informal place. People here can become quite close -- and a newcomer will hopefully find him/herself quickly accepted. When you join the forum, "old timers" will treat you as a friend as long as you behave yourself (smile).

As with any group of friends, you'll find that there are lots of "in" jokes, many teasing comments, heated debates, occasional spats and feuds, people having a bad day who may be cranky -- the usual stuff of human interaction. You'll find the reason we're friends is because we share common interests, are working in generally the same field, and appreciate the opportunity to communicate. For some of us who are isolated, the forum members are the only people we know who understand what we're talking about (grin).

So, when you "walk" into the forum, it will be more like walking into a large party with people who share professional interests than like walking into an office or a professional association. It's kind of like a user's group with no specific agenda. As with all CompuServe forums, forum members range widely in personality, geography, race, sex, religion, etc. and this is **definitely** an equal opportunity forum.

3.1 Manners

So, now to manners. Basically all we ask is that you be considerate of everybody else. When I say "considerate", I mean **consider** that the person on the other end of your message is a human being with ups and downs, strong and weak points, good days and bad days. Consider that a person may reside in a non-English speaking country and use English as a second language. Consider that a person might be handicapped or that a person may not be the sex you **think** he or she is based on his or her name.

Also, **please** consider that people here represent different nationalities, races, ethnic groups, religions, abilities/disabilities, and sexes, and **respect** these differences. In this forum, it is important to us that we provide an environment where we **all** feel safe. If any one of us is ridiculed or insulted, we all lose since we lose their enthusiasm to participate with us and contribute to the work we do.

Consideration can be most important when you are upset. Within the bounds of consideration, you can complain, whine or throw tantrums, if you need to -- I think we all have at one time or another. But it takes a certain amount of skill to complain, whine or throw a tantrum politely and with consideration for others. If you're upset, consider how your message might affect **you** if you were to receive it.

If you're considerate, you shouldn't run into too many problems here. But I must warn you that you are subject to teasing (because you're considered a **friend** from the beginning -- please don't take this personally) and if you should stray beyond the bounds of what's considered "appropriate" behavior, you may receive a gentle admonition. If you are really out of line, a Sysop may decide to step in -- a Sysop is a final authority on behavior, and even long-term forum members quake before a Sysop's pronouncements (smile).

As a rule of thumb, a belligerent attitude is frowned upon -- it tends to make us uncomfortable because it upsets the balance of friendliness and consideration, retards the free flow of communication, and, frankly, we seem to be able to have very "loud" arguments without resorting to this approach.

3.2 Who's Microsoft and who isn't

People on the forum who work for Microsoft tech support have [MSFT] or "Sysop" after their names in their identification. If somebody doesn't have [MSFT] or "Sysop" after his or her name, s/he is **not** an employee of the company and is just being helpful. Some forum members are so helpful, people sometimes assume they work for Microsoft even if they don't.

You may be interested to know that senior managers and many of the staff at Microsoft review the forum messages every day. They are all paying attention to what you have to say and their products reflect this interest. Also various Microsoft staff members will contribute to the forum from time to time. They will either have (Microsoft) after their name or identify themselves in their signature.

3.3 What to do if you're upset

It's not uncommon for people to log onto the forum for the first time because they're upset

- because they've spent hours and hours working on a problem and can't solve it
- because something about Access doesn't work the way it should or the way they think it should (often there's a difference)
- because they've tried calling tech support and haven't received an acceptable answer yet
- because they had something working in one product that suddenly doesn't work in an upgrade.

We understand and sympathize -- and it just may be that we can help you if you give us a chance. If this is true for you, here's what we recommend: first, **consider** the other forum members (see Manners) and second, start your message with "I'm upset" (this lets us know that you're upset and we'll be sympathetic - that's a promise). Then try to explain your problem as succinctly as possible (for further guidelines -- see Asking Questions, section 6.0).

4. EMOTICONS AND ACRONYMS

You may have noticed that humorous comments have so far been expressed with such things as (grin) or (smile). One of the things that most puzzles newcomers is the use of acronyms and what are called "emoticons". Here is an explanation of the important ones.

4.1 Emoticons

In an electronic medium such as the forum, it's pretty hard to get across certain elements of face to face communications that would otherwise be expressed with tone of voice, inflection or body language -- elements like humor, irony, sadness and various non-verbal "comments" on what is being discussed. Consequently, certain conventions have arisen to express this kind of thing.

Technically, an emoticon is an "icon designating emotions" depicted with symbols. Perhaps the most common of which is:

:-) a smiling face on its side (tilt your head to the left to read it).

(There are literally hundreds of others.) However, the term is also being used to apply to text-based equivalents which are more commonly used on this forum.

<g> grin -- either the previous comment was meant humorously or one is responding with a laugh to somebody else's humorous comment -- perhaps the most widely used symbol on this forum.

<s> smile -- usually means that one is smiling at somebody else's comment or could refer to one's own comment that is slightly humorous.

<gd&r> grinning, ducking and running -- the previous comment was a "tease" and the person issuing the tease is now hiding out from his or her target. Some variations of this are a simple <gd> (grinning and ducking) or <gd&rvvf> (grinning, ducking and running, very very fast).

<rofl> or <rof,l> rolling on the floor laughing -- the ultimate acknowledgement of somebody else's humor or an indication that you think you just said something yourself that is pretty ridiculous.

* or _ -- as in **emphasize** or _emphasize_ equivalent to italics or underlining.

Creative people on the forum will sometimes make up their own emoticons from time to time but they almost always explain them since nobody would otherwise know what they're talking about <g>.

4.2 Acronyms

Many acronyms have also become standard -- mainly to save typing. Some of the common ones are explained here. Any others you encounter, you'll have to figure out for yourself, but once you've got the "trick" down, it's kind of fun.

General CIS-wide acronyms:

BTW	-- By the way
CIS	-- CompuServe Information Service
FWIW	-- For what it's worth
IAC	-- In any case (also IAE -- in any event)
IANAL	-- I am not a lawyer
IMO	-- In my opinion
IMHO	-- In my honest/humble opinion (in the latter case a sure sign the opinion is not going to be humble at all <g>)
IOW	-- In other words
JIC	-- Just in case
KOW	-- Knock on wood
OIC	-- Oh, I see!
OTOH	-- On the other hand
PITA	-- Pain in the "acronym"
POV	-- Point of view
PPN	-- Programmer project number, i.e. a CIS user's id#
RSN	-- Real soon now (computer lingo for "don't hold your breath")
RTFM	-- Read the f* manual (variously interpreted for public consumption as read the fine manual, read the fabulous manual, you figure it out <g>).
TIA	-- Thanks in advance
TSR	-- Terminate and stay resident program
WYSIWYG	-- What you see is what you get
YA...	-- Yet another (as in YAA -- yet another acronym)

Here are some other product-related acronyms:

API	-- Application programming interface
DD	-- Data dictionary
ER	-- Enhancement request (request for an enhancement to the product or documentation)
GUI	-- Graphical user interface
MU	-- Multi-user
OO, OOP	-- Object oriented, object oriented programming
SU	-- Single user
UDF	-- User defined function
UG	-- Users Guide

In addition there are a large number of platform specific acronyms and abbreviations such as QEMM, DV, WIN, INIT, CDEV, DA, which you'll either know or can ask about.

5.0 FORUM ORGANIZATION -- MESSAGES, THREADS, SECTIONS

The forum is comprised of individual messages from one forum member to another. These messages are organized by thread -- a "thread" is simply a string of related messages and replies brought together under a "thread topic", which serves as the "message header" for every message in that thread. Here's an example of a message header:

#: 83761 S1/Non Tech Services * message number, section
06-Dec-92 11:38:01 * date and time
Sb: #83591-#Access is Way Cool... * responding to message#, topic
Fm: Nancy Jacobsen 72230,2664 * from forum member
To: Dan Madoni 70761,640 * to forum member

Threads begin when an individual creates a new message (not replying to a previous message) and grow as other individuals reply. A new thread may also be created when replying to a previous message by changing the topic or posting the reply to a different section.

Threads are further organized by forum section (such as Queries or Forms -- a list or sections is included in Message Etiquette, section 7.2. New threads should be posted to the section appropriate to the topic.

Messages themselves may be either public or private (see below) and cannot exceed about 2,000 characters in length. For assistance in composing and posting messages, please refer either to the CIS help files or to the documentation provided with your communications software. Further information as relates specifically to this forum will be included in this document in appropriate places.

5.1 Message Traffic and Scroll Rate

Message traffic is the number of messages which get posted to a forum in a day. The volume on the MSACCESS is very high -- ranging from about 100 messages a day when a lot of folks are at Comdex to as many as 500 messages a day when something really interesting happens. Message traffic probably averages about 200-300 per day.

A CIS forum is limited to a certain number of message "slots" or total number of messages at any one time. As messages are posted, the message slots fill up. When they are full, messages begin to "scroll off" (disappear) on a First In, First Out basis (early messages scroll off before later ones). With message traffic (also called the scroll rate) of 300 messages a day, the first messages in the queue will disappear in about 6 days.

5.2 What the Heck All This Means to You

The nature of threads and the high scroll rate in this forum frequently have consequences for how you ask questions, how you formulate replies, and how you can help the forum function efficiently. Details will be included in later discussions where appropriate.

6.0 ASKING QUESTIONS

Forum members are very helpful, patient and forgiving -- no matter what level of expertise you have. You will almost certainly get an answer to your questions, if you are aware of certain facts of life.

Due to the high message volume on this forum, forum members who read all the messages (and there are many) are trying to keep up with forum traffic, be helpful, earn a living, and live something like normal lives -- all at the same time.

It's recommended that you check in again within two or three days after you leave a message and that you read all the messages in your thread -- otherwise you might 1) miss responses that have disappeared due to the high scroll rate and 2) miss responses that may not have been addressed **directly** to you -- people tend to reply to the most recent message in the thread rather than going back to your original inquiry. Any message sent **directly** to you and not read before it scrolls will automatically be sent to you via CompuServe Mail.

6.1 Phrasing your question

The way you phrase your question can make a big difference in the kind of response you get.

Here's the "worst case" question -- one that forum members will want to avoid (tech support will answer, of course, but you may be missing an opportunity to get a speedy reply from someone else):

"I just got Access and it doesn't work. Can anybody help?"

Obviously, the first thing anybody has to ask is: What do you mean it "doesn't work"? Just finding out the basics could take quite a bit of time.

So, here are some guidelines:

Be SPECIFIC. (and be sure to post your message in the appropriate section of the forum -- a list of forum sections is included later in Message Etiquette, section 7.2).

Tell us whether you are writing a program or using Access interactively.

Tell us exactly what error messages you are getting, if any.

Tell us what you are trying to do, what you did just before the problem occurred, and *exactly what happened*.

Please include specific *step-by-step* instructions that will help use to reproduce your problem.

If it's a programming problem, post the actual bit of code or macro group that you think is causing the problem or a close approximation.

In addition:

Post your question to the proper forum section (see Message Etiquette for a list). Some forum members only read messages in specific sections -- if you post in the wrong place, the person with the answer might not see it. And choose a suitable, informative, and specific *topic* for your message.

"Report Sum Question" in the Reports section will almost certainly get a better response than "HELP!".

Post any program code or formatted messages as UNFORMATTED. CompuServe normally "formats" or "word wraps" code that's uploaded to the forums -- i.e. it strings all the lines together if they are not separated by a completely blank line. This will turn your carefully indented code into a garbled mess which is very difficult to read. You can avoid this when you're on-line with CIS by using the "POST UNFORMATTED" command. With various programs such as TAPCIS or Navigator (that allow you to read and respond to messages off-line -- explained later in this document), use their "Unformatted" option. You may also insure proper indentation by preceding each line of code with one or more spaces or a tab.

Roughly, if you're having a problem which appears to involve the way Access interacts with your hardware such as loading or operating slowly, not loading at all, running out of memory or disk space, video display problems, running on a network, etc., please be as specific as possible about your operating environment, perhaps including your operating system (Windows 3.1, DOS 5.0), your DOS CONFIG.SYS, AUTOEXEC.BAT, type of network, network settings, and so on and so on <g>.

6.2 Uploading files

If you have a very difficult or complex problem, it may eventually be resolved only by sending it to someone else for review. There are two approaches:

1) If tech support *SPECIFICALLY* requests that you send them your problem (and at no other time), upload it to the forum libraries. Problems sent this way will be treated as private communications -- however, if you want to have the problem reviewed by non-Microsoft folks, you may specifically ask the sysops to post it publicly to the libraries. Uploading to forum libraries is free of connect charges so this is definitely the most efficient way to send things to Microsoft. More information about uploading files to libraries can be found in Uploading Files, section 9.2.

2) If a non-Microsoft forum member has been assisting you, you can send your problem to him or her via CompuServe mail. However, there is something like a "rule" about this:

DO NOT UPLOAD ANYTHING TO ANYBODY WITHOUT THEIR *SPECIFIC* PRIOR APPROVAL.

Downloading something from CompuServe costs the recipient money in phone and CIS connect charges. Many active forum members use automated programs to download their messages and files and these programs do not give them the chance to refuse a download -- anything in their box is downloaded automatically. It's simply not fair to impose this burden on them without their consent. The above rule also means that if somebody has been kind enough to look at something before, it doesn't necessarily mean they want to look at it again, no matter how great it is now <g>. It's a simple matter to request and receive permission before you upload -- do it!

In EITHER CASE, when you upload something to somebody, be considerate again -- send them the minimum that's necessary to "get the job done", i.e. give them the information they need to assist you and compress the file (using PKZIP -- more on this later) to reduce transmission time.

6.3 Responding to answers

If you have asked a question and someone has replied with an answer, read what they have to say carefully. If they've solved your problem, great! If they haven't, but are trying to help, *answer their questions*. Remember they may be in a hurry, or have misunderstood your question or situation, or may even be telling you something incorrect (not on purpose, of course), so if you don't understand something they say, don't be afraid to say "I don't understand."

6.4 Acknowledgments

If somebody helps you out, a simple "Thanks!" is appreciated.

If you've had a particularly knotty problem that appears to have been a challenge to resolve and/or if many people have made a lot of different and possibly conflicting suggestions -- when you've finally got it working, we'd appreciate knowing what exactly you did that worked. The reason we appreciate this kind of summary is because many of us may have or anticipate having the same kind of problem, and we'd like to know the answer too! In addition, it may be a valuable addition to Microsoft's Knowledge Base - a tool that we use to help you solve your problems.

6.5 If you don't get an answer

If you leave a message and nobody responds, it may be because it "just happens" that nobody has time to respond, because everybody simultaneously decides that "somebody else will answer", or because your message was unclear and nobody knew *how* to respond.

You can increase your chances of having a response to your message by:

- Posting your message again -- and saying that your original message was not addressed.
- Posting your message directly to a sysop or to "all".
- Rephrasing your message.

7.0 TIPS FOR THE ACTIVE PARTICIPANT

As mentioned earlier, the message traffic on the MSACCESS is very high. It can be quite a chore to manage this volume of communication and keep CIS connect charges to a minimum. Here are a variety of hints that may prove useful.

7.1 Thread Integrity and Continuity

All forum members, experienced and novice, benefit from the forum threads. Often a thread will address a problem that many other forum members have or anticipate having. Consequently, it is important that all messages that contribute to the thread remain available during its lifetime (thread integrity). In addition, it's extremely useful if relevant messages are contained _within_ the thread and in the proper order (continuity). With this in mind:

- public messages should not be deleted if they contribute to the thread.
- relevant responses to existing messages should be generated by **replying** to the message rather than starting a new message.
- multiple part messages, as much as possible, should be kept together (more on this a little later in Message Etiquette).

Related to this issue is the "other side of the coin" where messages are no longer relevant to the topic. It is possible on CIS to scan available messages by "message header" or thread topic. This can be a useful approach if you're trying to save on connect charges. However, this is not **guaranteed** to be a foolproof approach. Threads on this forum tend to wander, and strict adherence to a thread topic is not rigorously enforced. Consequently if you're downloading a thread whose topic looks interesting, you may discover:

- the messages have wandered off the thread topic
- the messages have deteriorated into a series of jokes

At a rough guess, some of us estimate that the really relevant messages in a thread are the first 1 to 10, although that is not necessarily the case -- when a topic is complicated, messages may still be useful during the thread's entire life or, OTOH, a thread may deteriorate into jokes almost immediately. Unfortunately, due to the high message traffic, the beginning of a thread may scroll off so that all that remains in the forum are the less relevant messages. This is not to say that the messages which aren't relevant to the topic aren't useful <g> -- indeed, they are frequently useful -- and the jokes are often good, too.

7.2 Message Etiquette

In consideration of forum members who do not read all the messages (those who download the threads whose topics sound interesting) and to support thread integrity and continuity, please observe the following suggestions:

Please post your message to the most applicable section. MSACCESS sections are (note that these sections will change from time to time):

1. Non Tech Services
2. Tables/DB Design
3. Queries
4. Forms
5. Reports/Printing
6. Macors/Modules
7. Import/Export
8. Multi-user/Networks
9. OLE/DDE
10. SQL Server/ODBC
11. Security
12. Setup
13. Suggestions/Mktg

14. User's Groups

15. Third Party

When starting a new thread, try to name it something that captures the essence of your message and be as specific as possible -- unless it's the Chatter section where you can name it anything you like <g>.

When replying to a message, if your reply is substantially changing the subject, please post it under a different topic and to a different section if applicable.

If your reply is directly relevant to the current topic, please DO NOT post it to a different topic or section. Use CIS or your off-line software to REPLY to the message.

If you want to make sure that a specific person sees your message and sees it as quickly as possible, make sure you address it specifically to him or her and **be sure to include his/her CIS id number**. This is important because:

Some people only read messages addressed directly to them and will miss your message entirely. (Note: reading only personal messages is not recommended practice in this forum because you will almost certainly miss further possibly relevant messages in a thread.)

Many active participants will read their personal messages during the day and download everything else in the evening -- so they might not see a particular message until later.

If the message scrolls off before the addressee sees it, CompuServe can not forward it to CompuServe mail without an id number.

Long messages: If you have a particularly long message, remember that individual messages are limited to about 2,000 characters. When a message exceeds that limit, you can either send it via CIS Mail to an individual or you can split it into parts and post it on the forum. CIS Mail has a very high message length limit, but no one on the forum will see messages sent that way.

In the interests of thread integrity and continuity:

Post long messages that are relevant to an existing thread, or that are of general interest, to the forum not to CIS mail so we can all benefit. Other long messages may of course be posted as well. If you find that you seem to be engaged in a topic that is not particularly Access related or is really a conversation between you and one other person, consider moving that conversation to CIS mail (you might want to ask first to see if anybody has been following the conversation and would like to see it continue).

There are two approaches to splitting messages which are a little contradictory.

First, there is an option called /SPLIT (please refer to CIS help or your CIS communications software documentation). By inserting /SPLIT at the bottom of a message, the next message you send will automatically continue the message. The benefit of /SPLIT is that it keeps the parts of your message **together** when they are posted. The drawback is that subsequent messages are addressed to **you** rather than the person to whom you were originally replying. Since (as mentioned earlier) some people only read messages addressed directly to themselves, these people will not see the continued parts (or may not see them until later).

The alternative approach is to send continued messages by simply continuing to reply to a message and manually inserting

"more" and "continued" in your messages as appropriate. The benefit of this is that the intended recipient will be sure to receive all parts of the message in a timely fashion. The drawback is that messages split this way may not get posted together and can be interrupted by other replies (which impairs continuity).

Rule of thumb: Use /SPLIT unless you want to guarantee that the recipient will see all parts or all parts as soon as possible. In the latter case, continue to reply.

7.3 On-Line vs Off-Line

CIS connect charges are high and MSACCESS message traffic is high -- the two can combine to deliver whopping credit card bills (not, unfortunately, much to joke about). If you plan to frequent the forum or other CIS forums, it is highly recommended that you investigate several programs that download and upload forum messages in a more efficient and less costly way.

Note: CompuServe offers a product called CIM (CompuServe Information Manager) which is useful to manage your work on CIS -- however, it mainly works on-line and will not reduce your connect charges as much as the products I will discuss here.

A couple of programs we would recommend are OzCIS and TAPCIS. These programs will log onto CIS for you, upload and download messages and files, and provide you with other utilities. Their major advantage is that they allow you to read and respond to messages *off-line*. Not only is this *considerably* cheaper, but also it allows you to review and respond at your leisure. If you want to get up to check a manual or break off for a moment to test something in a program, you can do so without the terrible pressure of connect charges eating away at your pocketbook. Moreover, it allows you reflect on what you say, change your mind, correct your mistakes, and improve the quality of your messages in general.

Another advantage is that these programs can be used in a variety of ways to capture only the messages you really want to see and further cut down your connect charges. For example, with TAPCIS, you can read only certain forum sections, you can read all messages or download the thread topics (which you can mark off-line to be downloaded the next time you log on), or you can read only messages addressed to you personally.

These programs offer a further advantage in that they provide an option for retaining past messages (yours and others) in a file on disk for future reference. These files can be archived from time to time and transferred to floppies or otherwise managed. Forum members have a variety of strategies for managing these files. As an example you can archive (using PKZIP) the message file about once a week and keep about a month's worth of zipped files on your hard disk.

Some forum members keep *all* their messages. Some rely on the forum archive files to capture the "best parts".

In addition to the basic programs, the offline communications programs often have many additional utility programs.

More information about downloading files from libraries can be found later in this document.

OzCIS

OzCIS is freeware. Files to download from CIS, from the IBMCOM forum (GO IBMCOM), Library 12, are:

OZCIS.BRO...7868 (<-file size)

This file outlines many of the capabilities and features of OzCIS version 1.2 and later. Plain ASCII text file; can be READ online or downloaded.

OZCIS.REQ...5940

This file describes the minimum hardware and software requirements in order to run OzCIS version 1.2a and later. OzCIS is a big program and requires considerable system resources; reviewing this file before downloading the main program files could save you considerable online time.

Plain ASCII text file; can be REAd online or downloaded.

OZCIS1.EXE...279454

OzCIS is a auto-navigator to automate CompuServe access for Mail, Forums and other areas of the service. This is Part 1, the Main Program file.

OZCIS2.EXE...167057

This is Part 2, the Online Processor file.

OZCIS3.EXE...131049

This is Part 3, the Accessories file.

OZCIS4.EXE...138820

This is Part 4, the Documentation file. Note: Changes/additions to the documentation since version 1.0 are in the README.1ST file included in the Part 1 and 2 files.

OZHELP.ZIP...159173

The files included in this archive are intended to provide the ability to reference the OzCIS documentation from within OzCIS as a supplement to the on-line help. This on-line documentation is intended to be used with the shareware documentation reader, AUTOREAD.EXE, installed as an EXTERNAL under OzCIS. AUTOREAD may be found in IBMSYS LIB 6 (BRO /KEY:AUTOREAD).

TAPCIS

TAPCIS is a shareware program. Files to download from CIS, from the TAPCIS forum (GO TAPCIS), Library 1, are listed below. You can also order the program by calling Support Group, Inc. at 800-USA-GROUP.

TAPCIS.INF...13963 (<-file size)

This file describes TAPCIS in detail along with its requirements and pricing. You should download and read this file before downloading the TAP.EXE program and TAPDOC.EXE documentation files from Library 1.

TAP.EXE...211812

TAPCIS(tm) Version 5.4, The Access Program for the CompuServe Information Service. TAPCIS completely automates CompuServe Mail and Forum messages and libraries. TAPCIS cuts online time to a minimum and frees you to do other things while it does all online actions without user input. We guarantee you'll love TAPCIS with a 21 day shareware trial and a 90-day money back guarantee. Copyright (c) 1991 Support Group Inc. Manual in TAPDOC.EXE. Prev downloads: 43,430+

TAPDOC.EXE...154832

TAPCIS(tm) 5.4 Documentation in a self extracting file. This program will expand into all ten sections of the TAPCIS docs plus appendixes, table of contents, and index. See file README.DOC included in this file for more information. You will need this documentation to set up TAPCIS

properly. Program is in TAP.EXE.

9.0 LIBRARIES

The forum libraries contain many informative and useful files. An exploration of the libraries is well worth the trouble. The MSACCESS libraries are the same as the MSACCESS sections. You should post your file to the section that it relates to most closely. If you don't know what that is, you could post it to Non Tech Services.

Files in the libraries come in two basic forms: ASCII and binary. ASCII files are text files which will be readable without further attention. Binary files are *either* files (including text files) that have been compressed to save space and downloading connect charges *or* other binary files like programs or graphics files.

9.1 Compressed Files

There are several types of compressed files:

.ZIP files -- Compressed using PKZIP -- these are uncompressed by using PKUNZIP.EXE. PKZIP/UNZIP are shareware programs available for downloading from the MSACCESS forum.

.EXE files -- Mostly this extension indicates that the file is a "self-extracting" compressed file. This means that the file will unpack itself when you type the file name. *Usually* these files are also compressed using PKZIP -- however since they're self-extracting, they do not require PKUNZIP.

.ARC files -- Compressed using Arc utilities or such commonly available compatible programs as ARC-A.COM. Can be uncompressed with ARC-E.COM, available in the IBMCOM forum, library 2, and elsewhere (look for ARC-E.COM and ARC-E.DOC).

9.2 Uploading Files

Most files in the libraries have been uploaded by forum members for use by other forum members and we encourage you to do the same. If you have developed a utility or a function or a bit of code or have some particular information to share that appears to spark general interest, please send it on up! Remember, uploading to forum libraries is free of connect charges.

If tech support *SPECIFICALLY* requests it (and at no other time), you can also upload code that you're having a problem with and which appears to be too lengthy or complex to post on the forum itself.

The mechanics of uploading a file can be fairly tricky. Please refer either to CIS Help or your CIS communications software documentation. If you want additional help, CIS has a practice forum (GO PRACTICE) where you can practice uploading a file, writing messages, etc. Time spent in the practice forum is free of connect charges.

Here are some guidelines for uploading:

- Combine and compress any files you are sending into one archived file using PKZIP or the self-extracting options of other compression schemes.
- For some reason, CIS limits file names in libraries to only 6 characters (not including extension). It's better if you limit your file name to 6 characters yourself -- otherwise CIS may truncate the file name in a way that you don't really want. File names should begin with a letter and contain *only* letters and numbers. They should not contain spaces or punctuation (including underlines and hyphens), or miscellaneous characters like * or ^.

- When uploading, please include a brief but complete description of the files included and what they do. If space allows, I always like to see the name of the person who's sending it and a note about how large the file will be when uncompressed (disk space is sometimes tight <g>).
- The sysop will check the file for viruses and perform some other maintenance. Consequently, it may take a few days before the file becomes available to others.
- Let people on the forum know that you've uploaded the file, what its name is, and where you sent it.

NOTE: If you are uploading a file with the *same* name as a file you previously uploaded, the old file will be replaced with the new one. However, if you are uploading a revision and want to use a new name, please help with library housekeeping by deleting the old file yourself using the CIS Library Menu.

10.0 AFTERWORD - The Spirit of Contribution

We need all the help we can get! <g> We need people to be more specific and precise asking questions (and it would certainly help if people check the manuals and other product documentation resources first). We need people to be more careful about thread continuity and integrity. We need people to be more considerate (tempers are sure to fray <g>). And we need people to help others more than ever before.

One of the things we want to distinguish the MSACCESS Forum from others is the very unselfish way forum members help each other day after day. We feel there is an underlying intent on the part of most forum folk to make a contribution to others on the same path. We also feel as long as this "spirit of contribution" remains a force, the forum will work well for all of us.

You can really help maintain the value of the forum by logging on with an *intent to contribute*. If you want to ask a question, ask it with an eye toward contributing to our knowledge as well as yours. Share experiences that you feel will be of value to others. Answer the questions of others. And try, especially, to keep to the public agenda and avoid self-promotion.

There's certainly opportunity on the forum for vendors of products and services to offer their wares (in moderation), and vendors are *just the kind of people we need* to help us. Yet it's always a little irritating when we see a vendor log on *only* to promote something while so many others are helping for free. If you are a vendor, hang around a little and contribute; give back a little to the community that supports you. (And from a purely practical point of view, establishing a helpful presence on the forum should serve to enhance your marketability.)

Although making a contribution is always a source of personal satisfaction, we believe that there's more at stake here -- we are building a community that can support us in our work and in our lives. That's something worth investing in -- contribution is truly an investment in our future.

See you on the forum!