

Adobe Customer Services

Merge Sequence

The following examples may help point out the common problems encountered with merging data successfully into TrueForm. Included is a sample Merge Sequence from Microsoft® Excel. Similar text files can be created by various applications such as Microsoft Word, Claris® FileMaker®, etc.

Issues addressed in this Tech Note include an introduction to Merging Data in and out of Adobe TrueForm, an outline of the various functions in the Merge Dialog box and some of the more commonly encountered problems.

As the definition goes, a Merge Sequence is a list of fields whose values will be imported into TrueForm forms from a text file; or exported from TrueForm stacks to another TrueForm form or a text file for another program.

You can set up Multiple Merge Sequences for a Single Master Form, so that you can import and export data using different text files. A common source of confusion seems to be the function of field and form delimiters, and the use of fillers.

DELIMITERS AND FILLERS

While you could use any character as a delimiter (a character that suggests an end to a field/form), the common convention used by most text files created by the leading databases seems to be a tab for a field delimiter and a carriage return for a form delimiter. Fillers may be applied to fields whose data you do not wish to merge in/out of stacks or text files.

POINTS TO NOTE

1 If you are experiencing problems with misalignment of fields in import merges, it is very helpful to open the text file in a text editor, such as Microsoft Word, before you attempt the merge sequence again. A quick glance will confirm that the correct number of tabs (between fields) and carriage returns (between records) are in place. This reduces the likelihood of encountering the various problems described later.

2 Once in TrueForm Fill-Out or Set-Up, make sure that the options you select (for delimiters, fillers etc...) in the Merge Sequence dialog box match the incoming data.

Default options:

Form Delimiter: None

Field Delimiter: Tab

Filler Delimiter: Tab



3 Please note that you will seldom have to use a form delimiter in an Import Merge Sequence. Some exceptions would be:

- When you import records with differing lengths to be printed on labels.
- If you specify 'Form Feed' to print certain kinds of forms, to forward paper etc.

The Default Merge Sequence displays all the fields in the order they were created.

TROUBLESHOOTING:

Suppose you have a file that you wish to import. It has 5 fields for each record:

Last name	First name	Social Security #	Hire Date	Recommended by
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Lets further assume that you only want to use the first 4 fields in your form.

The Ideal Set up would be:

Last Name	delimited by Tab
First Name	delimited by Tab
Social Security Number	delimited by Tab
Date of Hire	delimited by Carriage Return
NO Form Delimiter!	

But if your settings were a little different, you might have gotten these results:

Only the odd numbered records import correctly. The even numbered records have mysteriously disappeared! Stack is half the size it should be.

- This would occur if you had delimited "Date of Hire" with a tab and used a Carriage Return for the form delimiter.
- This could also occur if you used Carriage Return for both "Date of Hire" and the Form Delimiter.

The first record imported correctly, but every subsequent record appears offset one field.

- This would occur if you had delimited "Date of Hire" with a tab but used None for the form delimiter.

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