

Access XP Ansi 92 Problem

By Business & Computers <http://www.businessandcomputers.com/>

I believe I have discovered the answer to the problem with the combo box not working with Access XP. In addition to giving the solution I feel compelled to give my opinion about Access and where it's going. Please excuse the tears on the sheet as I write my opinion, you have to understand they are trying to destroy one of my loves.

The problem: After 2 service packs Access XP has a bug that under certain circumstances the combo box doesn't work. If you have 26 items (for the sake of argument the letters a to z) and type m, the combo should go directly to m. Instead it just sits at the top. If you have 5 items in the combo that will work, but if you have 2,000 your program is consider a pile of horse manure.

How to reproduce the problem: On a new Access XP database go to Tools/Options/Tables and Queries. There is a box marked "SQL Server Compatible Syntex (ANSI 92)". Put a checkmark in "This Database". Now import a table that would work well in a combo box like a company table. Make a form with a combo box using the company table. You should see the problem described above. (Note: ANSI 89 is what Access has been using.)

The Solution: On a database that you see the above problem (note you will usually have the problem on none of your combos or all of your combos) you must stop using ANSI 92. I have found no other way to solve the problem. So go to Tools/Options/Tables and Queries. Take the checkmark out of "SQL Server Compatible Syntex (ANSI 92)". Save the database. Close the database. Compact and repair the database. Then open it up and change any of your queries that used ANSI 92 syntax. (Note: some of the syntax will still work like Alike "s%" but it's probably better to change it all.)

A Further Note: If you have an ANSI 89 database and import any object from an ANSI 92 database the combos will stop working. This could drive you crazy, but it's not a problem. Just close the database and reopen it. The combos will work fine.

An Opinion about Microsoft Access: There is a story that when Access 1.0 was ready to come out, the team presented it to Bill Gates and he told them to start from scratch, it wasn't graphically integrated (drag and drop) and it wasn't all it could be. The group didn't understand because it was way above Dbase the current desktop database everyone used. Microsoft eventually came out the best desktop database the world had seen. It took over the market and the pride of the Access team was obvious. They came out with version 1.1 and then 2.0. It didn't get any better than that.

Then they came out with Access 95. It was done at the same time we all moved from Windows 3.x to Windows 95. It was a piece of trash. But eventually they got it right and their pride showed through with Access 97. It is obvious ever since then the team is a different team and the pride is not there. I have seen numerous bugs that no one cares about – Access has become an add-on you buy with Office and not the Top of the Line database it was born to be. I believe the decision to move customers from Access to .Net and SQL server went along with the fact of Access becoming a step child. My suggestion – Hoard your Access 97 licenses – I have used all versions of Access and if you are using straight Access hooking to the web through XML and so on, Access 97 is the best. If you do hook to SQL Server (you will need to some day) you probably need to go to Access 2000.

Good Luck
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