

Acrobat PDF Form Interaction With Database Demonstration

This sample form demonstrates a PDF Form's interaction with a database. Complex forms' interaction with databases are not illustrated on this web site in order to focus on fundamental concepts. Web programming and database design works are needed before the PDF form can successfully interact with a database. Our consulting department provides services in this area. We can also host your PDF forms. Email us at sales@pureforms.com for details. Email support@pureforms.com for technical questions. Note: [PF-Merge](#) is a different product.

In this form, you will find the various Acrobat's field types that are supported : Text, List Box, Combo Box, Check Box and Radio button. Each type can be use in a Search to locate records, and certainly in a Save.

Unique – when a PDF field that corresponds to a unique database field is use as the search criteria, only a single record will be found, if it exists at all. If you use a non-unique field, one or more records may be found. In latter case, only the first record will be displayed for modification or deletion.

1. Text Fields

Identity (see glossary below)

(Pseudo) Social Security Number as Unique Identifier

- ❖ **Unique identifier** enables you to uniquely locate a record, since no two persons have the same SSN. In contrast, more than one person may share the same telephone number, which makes it a bad candidate as a unique identifier.

Text Field2

- ❖ This text field corresponds to a non-unique database field. However, you can search by it. Since it is non-unique, more than one record may be found that match its value. However, only the first record will be displayed. See glossary on "*wildcard search*".

2. Check Boxes

Grand Canyon

Yellow Stone

Yosemite Vacation

- ❖ A check box has only 2 states: either checked or unchecked. Therefore, it is not a good candidate for unique identifier because it will limit the table's capacity to just two unique records. However, you can include it as a search criterion.

3. Radio Buttons

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

- ❖ The above are 3 radio buttons of a single radio group. Within a radio group, only one radio button can be selected. Since the number of radio buttons within a group is finite and usually below five count, radio button is not a good candidate for unique identifier. However, you can include it as a search criterion.

4. Combo Box (Editable)

5. List Box (Multi-Selectable)

Unique

A database field's attribute where its field values are never duplicated across records, i.e., there is at most one record with that field's value. For example, Social Security Number; each record has a unique SSN field value. Searching by a unique field will always return at most one record.

Identity

A database field's attribute where its field values is numeric and is automatically generated/ incremented. An identity field may not have been set Unique, but it should be set as Unique in the database. When you add a new record this field is non-enterable, since it is auto-generated. You can search by an identity field.

- ❖ Identity attribute is called "AutoNumber" in Microsoft Access. Called "Sequence" in Oracle and is called "Identity" in the other database platforms. On this form, the word "auto" appears during New record mode.

Require

A database field's attribute where its field's value must not be blank; data entry is always needed. Therefore, you cannot save a new or modified record if you have blanked out any Require fields.

Indexed

A database field's attribute such that its field's values are pre-sorted in the database, thus enabling speedy retrieval of searched records. Therefore, it is not a good idea to Search by non-indexed field, although you can.

Export Value

"What you see is not what you get". This applies to Acrobat's objects of type Combobox, ListBox, Radio Button and Check Boxes. For example, the above radio button "Morning" ("what you see", or face value) has an export value of "1" (the real value or "what you get") when it is saved into the database. You can change the word "Morning" to a French word, and it will not affect the form's interaction with the database, but only if you do not change its export value. In short, you can modify "face value", but not "real value", for a given application.

Editable ComboBox

Acrobat's combo box can either be non-editable or editable. The latter enables you to type a value into the combo box should any of its preset values are not suitable for your purpose. Acrobat's ComboBox does not allow a blank *export value*. Therefore, a special export value is used to act as blank, namely, "pf_ignore". The item "*Blank Equivalent*" on the combo box has this "pf_ignore" as its export value.

Multiple Selectable Listbox

This is Listbox that allows one or more items to be selected. Use Shift+Click or Ctrl+Click to make multiple selections. See ComboBox on "Blank Equivalent".

Wildcard Search

Most mainstream database platforms have wildcard search capabilities. PF-Printmerge incorporates those capabilities. The wildcard character used is the % symbol. Example: 1) John% 2) %John% 3) %John
Example #1's retrieval includes data field's value that *begins* with the word "John". Example #2 includes value that *contains* "John". Example #3 includes value that *ends with* the word "John".