

<GenericDB> The ASP Web Database Engine

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The Config File

The Config File is your interface to GenericDB. It contains the settings which guide how GenericDB displays your data. This is a minimal Config File, see the Reference sections below for syntax and explanations:

```

<%
' Minimal interface to the Northwinds Employee table.
Session("dbGenericPath") = "/Eli/ASP/"
Session("dbExitPage") = "http://www.ofifc.org/Eli/ASP/GenericArticle.asp"
Session("dbTitle") = "Northwinds Employee Table"
Session("dbConn") = "dbEli"
Session("dbRs") = "Employees"
Session("dbKey") = 1
Session("dbDispList") = "011101000000100010"
Session("dbViewPage") = Request.ServerVariables("PATH_INFO")
Response.Redirect Session("dbGenericPath") & "GenericList.asp"
%>

```

Quick Reference

Setting		Syntax
Session("dbCanAdd")	=	0 (or 1, defaults to 0)
Session("dbCanDelete")	=	0 (or 1, defaults to 0)
Session("dbCanEdit")	=	0 (or 1, defaults to 0)
Session("dbCombo")	=	"LIST, value1, desc1, value2, desc2,..." (values to store and descriptions to display in a pull-down/combo box)
Session("dbCombo<x>")	=	"TABLE, tablename, RowForVal, RowForDesc, BlankVal, BlankDesc, WhereClause"

Session ("dbConfirmDelete")	=	0 (or 1, defaults to 0)
Session("dbConn")	=	"myDSN" (Data Source Name or DSN connection)
Session("dbDebug")	=	0 (or 1, defaults to 0)
Session ("dbDefault<x>")	=	<value> (default value for field x, use any value appropriate for the field)
Session ("dbDispEdit")	=	"011101" (1's or 0's representing whether each field will/won't be displayed)
Session ("dbDispList")	=	"011101" (1's or 0's representing whether each field will/won't be displayed)
Session ("dbDispView")	=	"011101" (1's or 0's representing whether each field will/won't be displayed)
Session ("dbExitPage")	=	"http://www.home.com/myhomepage.htm" (URL of the page to exit to)
Session("dbFields")	=	"field1, field2, field3" (SELECT string or Field List, defaults to all fields)
Session ("dbFieldNames")	=	"field1, field2, ..." (defaults to actual Field Names, can customize here)
Session("dbFont")	=	"Arial, Helvetica" (font list)
Session ("dbFontSize")	=	2 (0 to 4, defaults to 2)
Session("dbFooter")	=	0 (or 1, defaults to 0)
Session ("dbGenericPath")	=	"/mypath/" (relative path to the GenericDB files)
Session ("dbGroupBy")	=	"field list" (a GROUP BY clause)
Session("dbKey")	=	1 (field number to use as the Key field, usually an Autonumber field)
Session("dbOrder")	=	2 (field number to sort by)
Session ("dbOrderBy")	=	"field1 DESC, field2 ASC, etc." (ORDER by clause)
Session ("dbRecsPerPage")	=	10 (number to display per page, default is all)
Session("dbRs")	=	"table name or FROM clause"
Session ("dbSearchFields")	=	"011101" (1's or 0's representing whether each field will/won't be displayed)
Session ("dbStartRec")	=	51 (a record number, default is 1)
Session ("dbSubTable")	=	"Title, ConfigFile, LinkingField"

Session("dbTitle")	=	"My Page Title"
Session("dbType")	=	"Access" (or SQL or UDF, defaults to Access)
Session("dbURLfor3")	=	4 (display field 3 as a link to the URL stored in field 4)
Session("dbViewPage")	=	Request.ServerVariables("PATH_INFO") (DO NOT CHANGE)
Session("dbWhere")	=	"fruit='apples'" (a WHERE clause)

Unabridged Reference

Session("dbCanAdd") = 1

- Can the user add a record? 1 means yes, 0 means no.

Session("dbCanDelete") = 1

- Can the user delete records? 1 means yes, 0 means no.

Session("dbCanEdit") = 1

- Can the user edit records? 1 means yes, 0 means no.

Session("dbCombo") = "LIST, <value1>, <desc1> [, <value2>, <desc2>]"

Example 1: Session("dbCombo11") = "LIST, ??, Unknown, CA, Canada, US, United States, DE, Denmark"

OR

Session("dbCombo") = "TABLE, <tablename>, <RowForVal>, <RowForDesc>, <BlankVal>, <BlankDesc>, <WhereClause> "

Example 2: Session("dbCombo3") = "TABLE, tlkpProvince, 1, 2, ??, Unknown, Country='Canada'"

- Display a "pull-down" combo box to edit a field. Options will be drawn from either a list or a lookup table. Example 1 makes field eleven a combo box (hence dbCombo11) taking values from a list. Example 2 works on field three (dbCombo3) taking values from a table.
- LIST: The rest of the line is a list of paired values (like Canada, CA). The first of the pair is the value actually stored in the table, the second shows up on the screen in the pull-down.
- TABLE: Parameters passed are the table name (which must be in the same database/connection/DSN as the table currently being displayed), the number of the field/row which contains the value you want stored, the number of the

field/row which contains the text to display, the value to store when the field is blank, and the value to display when the field is blank. The final parameter is an optional WHERE clause (Country='Canada' in Example 2 above). If you include a WHERE clause it cannot contain commas.

Session("dbConfirmDelete") = 1

- 0 = Don't confirm (default), 1 = Confirm deletions. A screen will be presented to the user to confirm that the record should be deleted.

Session("dbConn") = "dsnNorthwinds"

The name of the ODBC System data source name (DSN) as it's set up on your server. If your data source requires a username and password, this string should have the following format:

"DSN=dbEli;UID=sa;Password=mypass"

If you have an Access database without a DSN you can create a **DSN-less** connection by using a string with the following format:

"DRIVER={Microsoft Access Driver (*.mdb)}; DBQ=c:\database\mydata.mdb"

Session("dbDebug") = 1

- This value of 1 or 0 decides whether the link to the dbInfo page is shown. Once you're done setting up the field display lists you will probably want to change this to 0.

Session("dbDefault6") = Date()

Session("dbDefault11") = "Canada"

- Use this format to set defaults for new records. The first example sets field 6's default value to Date(). In the tblEmployees.asp example this sets HireDate to today's date. The second sets the default value of field 11 (Country) to Canada.

Session("dbDispEdit") = "011111111111111111"

- Sets which fields appear on the Edit page. Same format as dbDispList and dpDispView.

Session("dbDispList") = "0111010000001000"

- This string of 1's and 0's decides which fields will be shown on the Lister page. 1 means show, 0 means don't show. In this case we're displaying fields 2, 3, 4, 6, and 13 as shown by the positions of the 1's. The best way to construct this string is to start it off with "11111", save it, open the Lister in your browser, head to the dbInfo page and read off the field list as you type the 1's and 0's into your editor.

Session("dbDispView") = "1111111111111111"

- This string of 1's and 0's decides which fields will be shown on the Viewer page. It is formed the same way as Session("dbDispList"), above. Leaving it blank (Session("dbDispView") = "") will prevent the View links from being displayed.

Session("dbExitPage") = "http://www.ofifc.org/Eli/"

- Each page has an "Exit" link and this is where you decide what page that link goes to.

Session("dbFields") = "EmployeeID, Title, UserLevel, ParkingPass"

- Sets the list of fields to display. That's right, you're no longer limited to selecting all the fields. See the dbGroupBy setting below for a tip on how to use this to build complex queries.

Session("dbFieldNames") = "<field1>[, <field2>, <field3>, ...]"

Session("dbFieldNames") = "EmployeeID, Last Name, First Name, Title"

- Set field names to use when displaying the data instead of the raw field names from the database.

Session("dbFont") = "Arial, Helvetica"

- Set the font used by GenericDB.

Session("dbFontSize") = 2

- Set the font size used to display data.

Session("dbFooter") = 1

- Set this variable and create a GenericFooter.inc file if you would like a standard footer on each page. GenericFooter.inc should contain everything you want to appear in the page footer (horizontal line, copyright notice, etc.).

Session("dbGenericPath") = "/Eli/ASP/"

- The relative path of your Generic Database files (GenericList.asp, GenericEdit.asp, etc.) This path is used to build the links on the pages.

Session("dbGroupBy") = ""

- Sets a GROUP BY clause.

- **Tip!** To execute a relational query (great for building reports)
 1. Build a SQL query in any SQL Query Editor. In Access, build your relational query in design mode and then select the SQL view.
 2. Copy everything after **GROUP BY** into the **dbGroupBy** variable
 3. Copy the text after **ORDER BY** into the **dbOrderBy** variable.
 4. Copy the text after **WHERE** into the **dbWhere** variable.
 5. Copy the text after **FROM** into the **dbRs** variable.
 6. Copy the text after **SELECT** into the **dbFields** variable.
 7. Set dbCanEdit, dbCanAdd, and dbCanDelete to 0.
- **Note!** If your query JOINS two or more tables then Edits, Adds and Deletes should always be disabled. Attempting these operations will most likely generate errors.

Session("dbKey") = 1

- A unique key field, in this case it is the first field in the table (Field 1) or the [Employee ID] field. This should always be a Counter or Auto-Number field. Why? It is the only way to guarantee a unique identifier for each record. Auto-Numbers should be assigned randomly if possible (this is an option in Access 97).

If you don't have a Key field then set this value to 0, but you will not be able to Edit or View records from the lister since there is no guaranteed unique key to load the pages. Note that the Key field is not editable in the GenericEdit screen to encourage the use of Counters and Auto-Numbers.

Session("dbOrder") = 2

The field to sort the records by. In this case we've chosen the second field (Field 2) or [Last Name].

Session("dbOrderBy") = "[Last Name] DESC, [First Name]"

- Sets an ORDER BY clause. dbOrderBy uses a full string to set sort order as opposed to dbOrder which only takes a single field number to sort on. Note that dbOrder has precedence, if you have both variables set, dbOrderBy will be ignored. See Session("dbGroupBy") above for a great tip to form a relational query using both dbGroupBy and dbOrderBy.

Session("dbRecsPerPage") = 10

- Sets the number of records to show per page and displays Previous and Next buttons for navigation.

Session("dbRs") = "Employees"

- The name of the table in the ODBC datasource.

Session("dbSearchFields") = "011100010010001000"

- When this variable exists, a Search box appears on the List page. The 0's and 1's determine which fields are searched, and are limited to string and memo fields for now (no dates, no numbers, no greater than or less than, just text).

Session("dbStartRec") = 1

- Indicates which record to begin displaying at. Useful to force GenericDB to start at 1, or if for some reason you want to start from the middle. GenericDB is "smart" enough to begin at 1 each time you use a different recordset, but if you have two Config Files for different views of the same recordset, you may need to force it to begin at 1.

Session("dbSubTable") = "Title, ConfigFile, LinkingField"

Session("dbSubTable") = "Access Log, tblAccessLog.asp, EmployeeID"

- Allows sub-tables. This example presumes a table exists which contains access logs. The title **Access Log** will be the displayed on a link beside each user listed in the Lister, **tblAccessLog.asp** will be the asp file (use the same format as any other Config File but **NO dbWhere setting** and your **dbExitPage** points back to the main table's config file), and **EmployeeID** is the key field used to set the relationship.

Session("dbTitle") = "Northwinds Employee Table"

- Here's where you set your page's title.

Session("dbType") = "Access"

- Possible values: SQL or Access. Default is Access.
This declares the type of database driver used on the host. Microsoft Access allows spaces in table and field names and therefore requires [brackets] around table and field names to identify where the names start and stop. SQL hosts do not allow spaces and therefore don't know anything about the use of brackets around field names.

In GenericDB all queries are built using the brackets, and setting this switch to "SQL" will have it strip the brackets out using the Replace() function.

Session("dbURLfor2") = 20

- This setting displays a field as a link using the URL stored in another field. In this example, the 2nd field will be displayed as a link to the URL stored in field

20, which might be the employee's Home Page.

Session("dbViewPage") = Request.ServerVariables("PATH_INFO")

You won't normally need to change this one, it gets the name and location of the current file (our tblEmployees.asp) for use in making the links on the pages. If you don't want these settings to be reloaded whenever the user pressed Refresh, you might change this line to:

Session("dbViewPage") = Session("dbGenericPath") & "GenericList.asp"

That would cut this tblEmployees.asp file out of the loop once the Generic interface got rolling.

Session("dbWhere") = ""

A SQL Where clause. Leave it empty to display all records. If we only wanted to view Employees whose titles begin with "Sales" we would set this as Session ("dbWhere") = "Title LIKE 'Sales%'"

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