

Introduction

The Project Controls Database is an Access database and is provided as a recommended template for recording and monitoring controls within a project framework.

The accompanying document **'Information and Initial Set-Up Steps'** is provided for those familiar with Access to initially configure the database and tailor the functionality available to users.

Main Menu

On accessing the application, the Main Menu (Figure 1.1), allows access to the main database forms and a range of pre-configured reports.

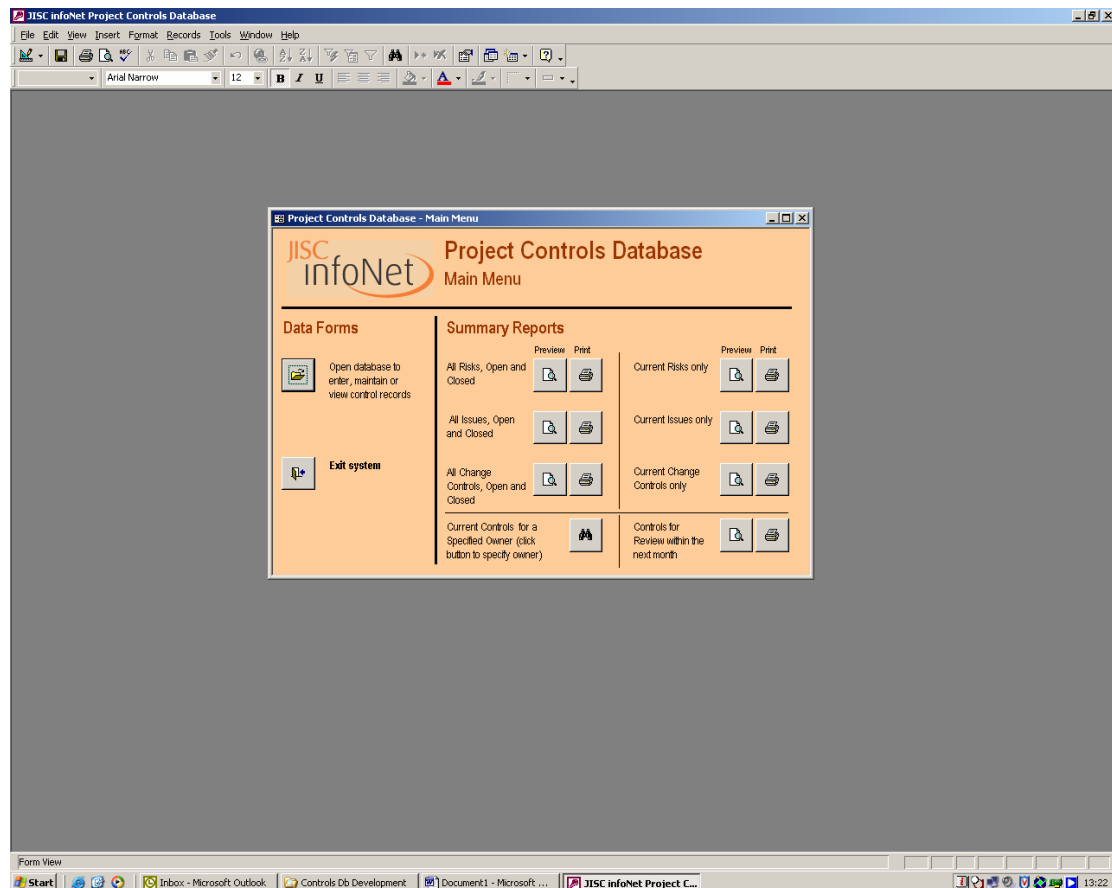


Figure 1.1 – Main Menu

Data Entry

Select the **Data Forms** button from the Main Menu. The main data entry form opens (Figure 1.2), explanations of the fields are detailed below.

Figure 1.2 – Main Data Entry form

Field	Purpose
ID	Auto-generated numeric ID (primary key), increments sequentially commencing at 1001.
Type*	List of Values. Choose from Risk, Issue or Change Control .
Category*	List of Values. Contains pre-configured values, such as Budget, Communication ; examples of usage are detailed later in this guide.
Title*	A meaningful short title for the control (maximum 80 characters).
Description	Free-text memo field allows for expansion of detail if not captured adequately in the title field.
Date Raised*	Date control was initially raised.
Raised by	List of Values. Record the details of the person initially raising the control (further details on maintaining person data follows later in this guide).
Owned by	List of Values. Record the details of the person taking ownership of the control (further details on maintaining person data follows later in this guide).

Field	Purpose
Likelihood	List of Values. This should be entered for Risks only. Select Very Low, Low, Medium, High or Very High . Further details on how this is used follow later in this guide and additional explanation is given in the Project Management and Risk Management infoKits.
Impact	List of Values. This should be entered for all Controls but has not been made mandatory as the Impact may not be assessed at the time of recording the control. Select Very Low, Low, Medium, High or Very High . Further details on how this is used follow later in this guide and additional explanation is given in the Project Management and Risk Management infoKits.
Progress Reports window	Record the date on which progress was made and enter a brief description of progress. Multiple progress records may exist for one control.
Review Date	For controls with a known review date, or in the case of longer term controls where an interim reassessment may be useful, enter the date for review. This can be used in reporting.
Closed Date	Enter the date the control is finally closed (it is also possible to resurrect a control by deleting the Closed Date if required).
Additional Notes	Space for additional notes relating to the control – e.g. for noting where additional information is filed, or for annotating information where a risk has changed to an issue.

* denotes Mandatory fields

Additional information on fields and related functionality

Type

Controls are recorded as a **Risk** (a possible event yet to happen), an **Issue** (an event that has occurred or concern that has been raised) or a **Change Control** (a change request made to the Project Scope or one or more of its deliverables). It is therefore possible that controls will change from one type to another (in particular it is common for a risk to change to an issue, and is also possible vice-versa). It is for you to decide whether such a change merits the creation of a new record (a risk that becomes an issue may still be a risk, e.g. retention of staff) or whether it is sufficient to simply change the type field on the control to select the current situation. **This field is mandatory.**

Category

Our recommended model categorises controls into eight broad areas. The areas and examples of their application are outlined below. This is primarily used to assist analysis and as a sort feature in the reports. **This field is mandatory.**

Category	Examples
Budget	Expenditure, costing and forecasts
Communication	Communication Strategy, liaison with key stakeholders
Contractual	With external suppliers, other third parties or project staff
External	Factors outside or under limited control of the internal project – e.g. changes imposed from external agencies, supplies from external providers
Plan	Agreeing, recording, publicising and monitoring the project plan(s)
Quality	Quality checking and assurance, of the plan or individual deliverables
Resources	Infrastructure – project accommodation, materials, staffing
Scope	Monitoring changes/issues raised in relation to originally-agreed scope.

Raised By/Owned By - Adding People Records

If the person you require is not available in the List of Values (LOV); click the **Add People** button to access the sub-form shown in Figure 1.3. If you were looking for a value in the **Owned by** field and the required record is in fact present when accessing the Add People form, this may be because the person is not flagged as a member of the **Project Team** - only those flagged as 'Yes' are permitted to own controls in the associated LOV on the main control screen.

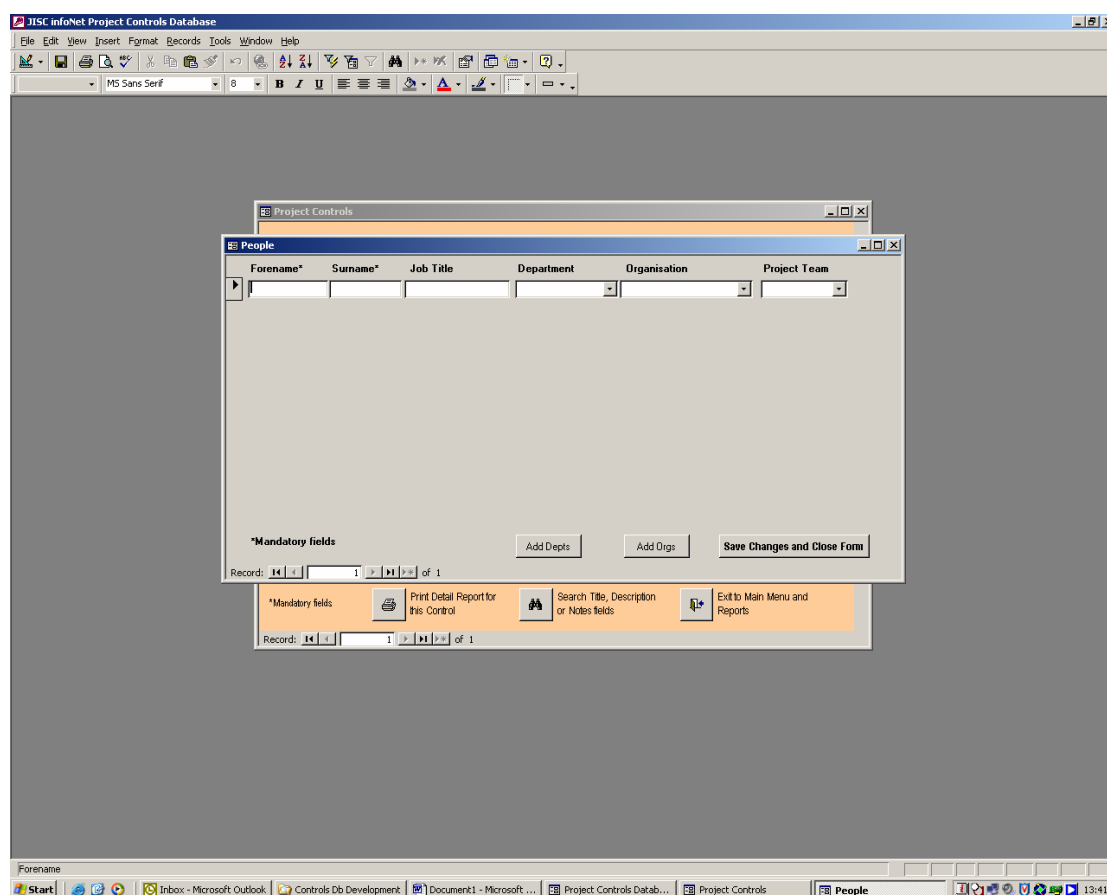


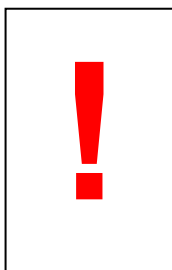
Figure 1.3 – Add People sub-form

Note further sub-forms are available to add departments and organisations to populate the LOVs on the People form. These are optional fields and so down to individual projects as to how to use them. These have been found useful to aid further analysis, particularly in larger or geographically disparate projects. After adding the required descriptions in each of the sub-forms, clicking on the **Save Changes and Close Form** button will return you to the parent form. The newly-entered values should be available for selection immediately in the appropriate LOV on the parent form.



Known issue

*Occasionally the newly-entered values are not immediately viewable in the LOV on the parent form. This is an intermittent problem; if this occurs use the **Records>Refresh** option in the main Access toolbar at the top of the screen to display the newly-entered value.*



Caution

The indexes stored in the underlying tables as you create the records are hidden with only the descriptions shown in the sub-forms. Overwriting of descriptions is permitted as there are many examples where this may be necessary, e.g. change to department name. Care should be taken not to inadvertently overwrite valid descriptions when meaning to create a new record (where records already exist, ensure you use the > navigation button to take the cursor to the start of a new record.*

Likelihood and Impact

Both fields have a list of values '**Very Low**', '**Low**', '**Medium**', '**High**', '**Very High**' already available. Likelihood has an additional value '**N/A**', as the recording of a likelihood is only applicable to a risk and not to an issue or change control.

However, no validation has been placed on the field to ensure consistency with the control type (partly because the type can change as previously explained), nor are the fields mandatory as an assessment of the likelihood (if applicable) or impact may not have been made at the time of initial recording.

For **Likelihood**, the values Very Low, Low, Medium, High and Very High have associated weights of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

For **Impact**, the values Very Low, Low, Medium, High and Very High have associated weights of 1, 2, 4, 8 and 16 respectively.

This logic is used to give controls with a higher impact a more appropriate weight – further explanation can be found in the Risk Management infoKit.

These values, or in the case of Risks the product of the two values, are used as a sort feature in the reports i.e. those controls rated higher will appear at the top of the list.

For example, a risk with medium likelihood and low impact will score a product of 2 (2x2) and therefore rank below a risk with high likelihood and medium impact (with a score of 16 = 4x4).

Additional features on the Data Entry form

As well as an Exit button which takes you back to the Main Menu (and the summary report list) there are two additional buttons available on the data form:

Print Detail Report

Prints a hard copy of the control currently being viewed.

Search

This activates the default search facility in the Access database. Note that the search will either be made relative to the field in which the cursor is placed when activating the search function, or across the whole form, depending on the value selected in the '**Look In**' drop-down list on the **Find/Replace** sub-form activated by the search button. The choices should show as the originating field or 'Project Controls' (if the latter is selected then the term entered into the '**Find What**' box will be sought throughout the whole record rather than in just the originating field). Take care to select the appropriate whole or partial matching as appropriate in the **Match** LOV, and also explore the further filtering options available under the **More>>** button. In the unlikely event of needing to use the replace facility take particular care! The facility has been incorporated primarily as a means of quickly searching the lengthier text fields (title, description, notes) for key words – e.g. searching for all controls with the word 'staff' in the title by performing Match = Any Part of Field, Find What = Staff, Look In = Title (obtaining this by ensuring the cursor is in the title field when the search button is activated).

Reports

As well as the printing facility for an individual control, available from button on the data entry form, a number of pre-configured reports are available from the Main Menu (Figure 1.1). The reports are self-explanatory and are available in preview mode as well as direct to printer.

The main summary reports are:

Report	Selection Criteria	Sort Order
All Risks, Open and Closed	Type = Risk	By Closed Date; by descending weight (Likelihood x Impact); by Review Date; by Category
Current Risks Only	Type = Risk and Closed Date is null	By descending weight (Likelihood x Impact); by Review Date; by Category
All Issues, Open and Closed	Type = Issue	By Closed Date; by descending weight (Impact); by Review Date; by Category
Current Issues Only	Type = Issue and Closed Date is null	By descending weight (Impact); by Review Date; by Category
All Change Controls, Open and Closed	Type = Change Control	By Closed Date; by descending weight (Impact); by Review Date; by Category
Current Change Controls Only	Type = Change Control and Closed Date is null	By descending weight (Impact); by Review Date; by Category

Here are two additional reports:

Current Controls for Specified Owner

Click the button to open a selection sub-form which lists only those people who own current controls (i.e. controls with a null closed date). Preview and print buttons are then available from this selection form to report for that person. All controls are shown, ordered into sections covering Risks, Issues and Change Controls.

Controls for Review within the Next Month

Produces a summary of all open controls (i.e. null Closed Date) with a Review Date within the next month (based on the current date). Note that controls with a null Review date are **NOT** extracted, as the purpose is to remind of imminent reviews where dates have likely been set some time ago. All controls are shown, ordered into sections covering Risks, Issues and Change Controls.