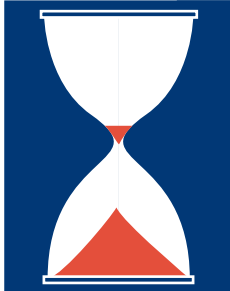


### President's Message

In the field of Information Technology, change seems to be taking place at a faster and faster pace. For all of us, no matter what the organization, it is a constant struggle to keep up with these changes. For this reason Nicom has committed to publishing a newsletter on a regular basis. In each issue we will be discussing Information Technology topics and how they relate to your organization. It is our intent to provide articles discussing the technologies, in non-technical terms, and also provide examples of how we have made use of these technologies to help our customers to become more efficient in their operations. We hope you enjoy this issue of Nicommunicate. Also, if you have any suggestions of topics for future articles, I would certainly appreciate hearing from you.



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### Countdown To The Year 2000

We are now very close to the deadline of the century, the Year 2000. There have been many articles in the press lately concerning our state of readiness as it relates to businesses, governments, airlines, power utilities, etc. As a general theme, it appears that North America should weather the millennium without too many major problems. For certain parts of the world, however, the situation is not as hopeful.

What we do know is, if you are not ready now, there is little time left to make changes to your systems and equipment before the millennium.

There are conflicting reports in the press concerning the readiness of businesses to meet the Year 2000. Some businesses view the Year 2000 as being a lot of hype while others are going to wait for the Year 2000 to arrive and then address any problems at that time.

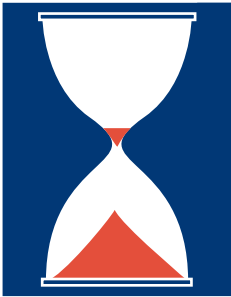
From our experience, the anticipated problems for most small businesses should be few, since the areas where you might expect a Year 2000 problem are very limited. Since most organizations run their business on packaged software systems, they can simply upgrade to the latest software release, which should address the major problem area for the millennium bug.

If you haven't taken the time to address this problem in an organized fashion yet, it is still not too late and it does not have to take a great deal of time. Simply having a one-hour meeting with all senior individuals in your organization to discuss potential problem areas will point out to you how few areas you have to address.

The obvious areas are the computers on everyone's desks, the server computer, and all of the software being used. Other, less obvious areas could include telephone systems, alarm systems, communications systems, control systems, computerized machinery, etc.

### In This Issue

- President's Message
- Countdown to the Year 2000
- Pentium III vs. Celeron Chip
- MS Access Tricks and Techniques
- How Does the Melissa Virus Work?



## Countdown To The Year 2000 Con't

The goal is to try to identify all areas in the organization that may have a computer chip as part of its function. Of course computer chips can be found in many different pieces of equipment today. Once you have identified all of the areas to be checked, it can be a simple exercise to develop a plan for reviewing each of the items identified.

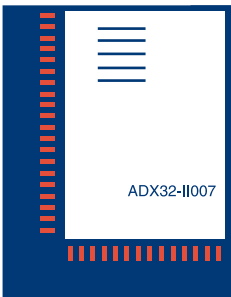
This can include contacting the appropriate suppliers and requesting the Year 2000 status for a piece of equipment or software. In some cases you will have to test the equipment to determine its readiness. This is especially true for personal computers.

Fortunately the testing process for PCs is quite painless and there are free programs available for this testing. In fact, check our web site at [www.nicomltd.com](http://www.nicomltd.com) for a free download of software designed to test the hardware status of your PCs.

Most suppliers have included a great deal of information on their web sites concerning the different products that they offer. To check Y2K readiness of your hardware and software visit the supplier Web site. In most cases the only information you will need to have readily available will be model # and Serial # for hardware and version # for software. In our experience, with this information in hand, the Year 2000 status is very easy to determine.

All in all, the Year 2000 has certainly proven to be an interesting event for the computer industry. Since this type of problem has not occurred before, we are not sure what to expect but we are hoping it will turn out to be a big "non event".

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## Pentium III vs. Celeron Chip

A frequent and recurring question we are asked of late concerns the difference between the Celeron chip and the Pentium III chip. The confusion surrounding this question is quite understandable as these chips are both manufactured by the same company, Intel Corp.

The most commonly asked question concerns the fact that the Pentium III and the Celeron chip can both run at the same speed and yet the Pentium III chip is somewhat more expensive. Does this mean the Celeron chip is not suitable for business applications?

The short answer is that the Celeron chip is very suitable for business applications.

While earlier versions of the Celeron performed rather poorly when compared to a Pentium III, the current version of Celeron

performs just about as fast as a Pentium III with a comparable clock speed, according to recent tests by PC Labs.

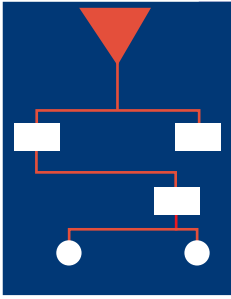
One area where the Pentium III beats the Celeron is in the area of multimedia and speech recognition. Also the Pentium III is available in faster processing speeds than currently available with the Celeron. If you are looking for the fastest system available, choose the Pentium III.

For most office system users, word-processing, spreadsheets and e-mail are the most commonly used software packages. This being the case, the Celeron will perform these tasks well.

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## Murphy's Laws of Computing

- People always remember the last mistake you made.
- He who hesitates is probably smart.



Welcome to our first installment of MS Access Tricks and Techniques. Our goal is to provide you with useful information that might not be widely known about the Microsoft Access database system.

Several projects we have undertaken over the past number of years involving MS Access have required the manipulation of legacy data. This would usually involve cleaning up the old data set before bringing it into the new system. One of the common concerns is the existence of duplicate records. Access has provided us a quick and painless method of finding duplicates. This method is the 'Find Duplicates Query Wizard'.

This wizard steps you through four screens and will then generate a query listing all records with duplicate field values. Let's take a closer look at the step-by-step process.

To start the Find Duplicates Query Wizard, open your database, click on the Queries tab at the top of your database window. Clicking the New button on the right hand side (below Open and Design) will bring up a list of options pertaining to new queries. Choose 'Find Duplicates Query Wizard' as shown here: Finally, click on the OK button to begin the Wizard.

## Step 1: Where are the duplicates?

In the first step, choose the table or query in which you wish to find the duplicate records. Once you select it, click Next.

## Step 2: What fields?

In the second step, choose the fields that might contain the duplicate data. A common request is to find all people in the database who have the same name. The primary search fields we use to find duplicate records are Customer Code, or First and Last Names. You can add one or more fields from the chosen table.

Highlight the fields in which you want to find duplicates and click Next.

## Step 3: Display other fields?

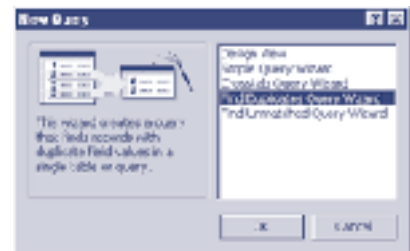
This step allows you to choose fields other than the ones chosen as duplicates, which will show automatically. Use this option to help verify that you have duplicate records. For example, you might include phone number and address fields. Keep in mind, you can add one or more fields here.

## Step 4: What do you want to name this query?

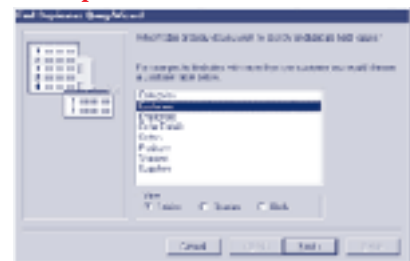
This is the fourth and final step. In the box provided, enter the name under which you wish to save this new query. You have the option to view the results now, or to modify the current design before viewing. Clicking finish will either display the results or take you into the Access query designer, depending on your choice.

To do this using other methods like macros or Visual Basic program code can be difficult and time consuming. Hats off to Microsoft for helping make our lives easier.

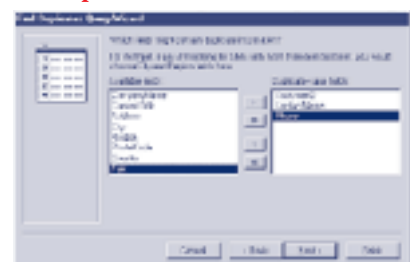
### ● Start



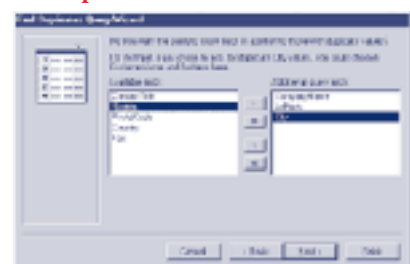
### ● Step 1



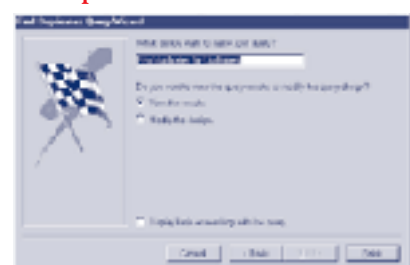
### ● Step 2

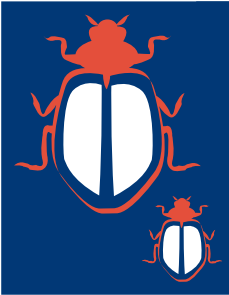


### ● Step 3



### ● Step 4





## How Exactly Does the Melissa Virus Work?

The National Center for Computer Crime Data in Los Angeles estimates that American business have lost as much as \$550 million from unauthorized access to computers yearly. The amount of lost time may be incalculable.

With this amount of time and money at stake, it would be wise for all of us to be more aware of the dangers of catching a “computer virus”. There have been many articles written about the technical manner in which viruses work. In this article we would like to explain, in non-technical terms, one of the more recent, major viruses and the damage it caused. This virus, Melissa, caused quite a stir recently when it managed to bring a number of e-mail systems to a standstill.

As it happens, this virus is effective only on Windows PCs running recent versions of Microsoft Word and Microsoft Outlook, one of the more popular e-mail programs. Melissa will show up as an e-mail with the title “An important message from (the name of someone who is probably familiar to you)”. When you open the e-mail message, there is a Word document that is an attachment. By double clicking on the Word file you start to activate the virus. Word will warn you that this document contains a macro and if you click on Yes to accept the macro, Melissa will start to run.

Since you probably know the person who sent the macro, you probably felt reasonably secure when you pressed the Yes button. Macros are a form of computer programming that are used very effectively for positive benefits but can also, as we now know, have unpleasant results. In the case of Melissa, the macro looks in your Outlook contacts folder and picks up the names of the last fifty people to whom you had sent an e-mail, and forwards the infected Word document to each of them. As each of the recipients open the Word document, the document is sent to another fifty people, and so on, and so on. As you can appreciate, it did not take very long for e-mail systems to become overloaded with unwanted e-mail messages.

As an easy method to protect yourself against such viruses, you should have a good virus detection program and be sure to keep the virus signatures up to date by following the manufacturers directions. Watch for next month's Nicommunicate when we will discuss virus protection systems in more detail.

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## About NICOM



Nicom Ltd. is a computer system consulting company based in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. We have been providing services to private industry and government departments since 1982. Our focus is on helping organizations become more efficient and profitable through the use of information technology.

### Services We Offer Include:

Project Management	Local Area Network Installation and Support Services
Requirements Analysis	E-commerce and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)
Information Technology Assessments	World Wide Web Site Construction
System Evaluation and Selection	Internet Database Integration
System Analysis and Design	On Going Hot-Line System Support Services
Database Application Development	Maximizer Contact Manager Consulting
Financial and Distribution System Procurement	

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