

Simple Filemaker: An Introduction



I've spent most of my adult life as a geek, first as a data entry clerk, then onto being an entry-level software developer, database engineer, project manager, until launching my own tech company in 2006. I wanted this blog to be about anything but technology. But guess what, blogs can and should evolve, if there is valuable information to share.

A while back I posted [post](#) about the hiatus I took from everything else to manage a charity golf tournament. Like most people who run these types of events, I captured everything in a huge spreadsheet. The former database engineer in my balked at this approach, and I promised myself that I would find a better way for this year's tournament.

I didn't find an off-the-shelf solution that did what I wanted that the charity could afford. But I could donate some more of my time to the tournament, and the idea of building something useful sounded fun (a lot more fun than looking at financial statements and board meeting minutes).

Simple plan, right?

I opted to use FileMaker as it provides all the features I would need in my new app -- data management, reporting, mass mailings, etc. -- while also being affordable. Being a former software engineer, building the app would be, well, a snap. Shoulda, woulda, coulda.

There are many excellent references on FileMaker, both online and in print. But all the ones I found were heavy and developer-centric, not the quick and dirty approach I was looking for. These materials seemed to be more interested in illustrating all the bells and whistles FileMaker provides than providing easy-to-follow solutions to simple problems. It took me four hours of Googling and leafing through reference books to figure out how to do one task.

And browsing through discussion groups showed me there were others who faced similar problems.

So, I'm going to introduce technology into my blog, by taking my readers through the process of building an app, start to finish, without the distraction of teaching every juicy tidbit about FileMaker. I'm going to dig deep enough technically to solve the problem and no deeper (there are plenty of other excellent resources for that). Every week (or more), stop by for the next post, and we build our Golf Tournament App, together.

What do you need for this tutorial?

You don't have to be an experienced software or database engineer to follow this tutorial. FileMaker is to the Mac what Microsoft Access is to Windows, and if you can build a useful tool in Access, you can do it in FileMaker (FileMaker Pro comes in a Windows version as well). But you will need to do some prerequisite work:

- Download and install FileMaker Pro. I am using version 15, but if you have version 14, that should work. A trial version

ofFileMaker Pro can be requested [here](#).]

- Take the FileMaker Pro tour. On the Mac, from the File menu, click Get Started. In the FileMaker Get Started window, scroll down to the Learn More section and click the Tour FileMaker Pro button. This tour will cover the basics of navigating FileMaker.

Just enough technical stuff to make you scary.

I'll dive into the geeky stuff only deep enough to solve the problem at hand and no further. It's not about all the bells and whistles, it's about solving the problem.

Ready?

Links to related posts

[TourneyTime Golf App: The Software Development Process](#)

[TourneyTime Golf App: Gathering Requirements Part 1](#)