

Technical Notes

Notes for IT Staff

WorkExpo - Work Experience Database by Info Plan Software

Summary - Background notes for IT staff installing and configuring WorkExpo for use.

- Introduction
- System Requirements
- Installation Options
- Registering WorkExpo
- Manual Installation
- Network Installation
- File Structure
- WorkExpo on a Mac
- WorkExpo ISO image
- Updating WorkExpo
- Can I use WorkExpo with Google Drive?
- Repair and compact
- Setting WorkExpo up on a new machine

Introduction

WorkExpo is an Microsoft Access database. The front-end and back-end database files are separate.

1. *workexpo.mde* (Front-end) This is the file that the desktop shortcut icon links to.
2. *data.mdb* (Back-end) This file contains all data for WorkExpo, including student, employer, placement and archived records.

Please Note: employers.mdb - This file does **not** store employer data. It is a read-only, front-end user-interface file for students to browse employer records.

System Requirements

- 4 GB RAM minimum
- 185 MB disk space (250 MB while installing)
- Windows XP, Windows 7 (32 or 64 bit), Windows 8 (32 or 64 bit), Windows 10 (32 or 64 bit)
- Microsoft Office (32 bit or 64 bit) including Microsoft Access. Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Outlook should also be installed.
- Screen resolution minimum 1024 x 768

Database File Structure

1. WorkExpo has a single back-end database file and a single front-end file.
The front-end is ***workexpo.mde*** The back-end file is ***data.mdb***
Both or either file can be renamed but it is recommended they are not.
2. These two files comprise the central components of WorkExpo.
The default installation path is: *c:\program files\workexpo* (*Recommended path*)
When installing the program via the installer, a desktop icon is created which points to *workexpo.mde* on C: drive.
3. There is an additional, optional front-end file *employers.mdb* (which does not store any user data). This is a read-only user-interface for searching employer records. You may create a shortcut to this file if staff require access to read-only employer information. This shortcut can also be created from within WorkExpo clicking a button in WorkExpo *Options / Misc*.
A desktop shortcut for browsing read-only employer records is created.
4. The file *employers.mdb* is found in the default install path: *c:\program files\workexpo\employers.mdb*

Installing a fresh copy of WorkExpo

WorkExpo is available on-line for download. There are no CD's. If you have old WorkExpo CD's, please dispose of them.

You have two options when installing WorkExpo. Install WorkExpo using *setup.exe* (recommended) or install WorkExpo manually.

1. Download the WorkExpo installation ISO media here: <https://www.infoplan.com.au/workexpo/download.html>
2. Run *setup.exe*
3. It is recommended that you install to the default path: *c:\program files\workexpo*
4. WorkExpo can be installed to *c:\workexpo*

Installing an update to WorkExpo

WorkExpo does not need to be uninstalled to be updated. An update installs a fresh copy of the WorkExpo front-end only over the existing copy without disturbing user data.

To install an upgrade to an existing WorkExpo installation:

1. From the WorkExpo main menu click *Run Latest Update*
OR
2. Install or update WorkExpo after downloading installation media from website.
3. Run *setup.exe*
4. WorkExpo will detect the install path of the previous version and install the update in the same path e.g *c:\program files\workexpo*
5. Updating WorkExpo will not overwrite existing data. It's always a good idea to back-up before updating.

Manual Installation

WorkExpo can be installed or updated manually by copying files to the workstation. To set up WorkExpo manually follow these steps:

IMPORTANT : Never overwrite the data file – *data.mdb*. All other files can be overwritten but not *data.mdb*. This is a critical file.

1. Create a folder *c:\program files\workexpo* - (workexpo destination folder), if it does not exist.
2. Copy all files in the COMMON folder on the installation media to the destination folder.
3. Select the Access version which matches the user's installed version of Office on the installation media and copying these files into the destination folder.
4. Create a shortcut on the desktop pointing to *workexpo.mde* and change the desktop icon shortcut to "WorkExpo" using *workexpo.ico* as the shortcut icon.

How to Register WorkExpo

All installations of WorkExpo are initially installed in demo mode with sample records and *Sample or Demonstration College* showing.

You can use the database for up to 60 days without subscribing in order to evaluate it for your needs.

Subscribe to WorkExpo and enter your school name in **OPTIONS**. WorkExpo will detect the registration information based on the school name of the school.

Click **Subscription Details** on the Main Menu to confirm your school's details.

It is recommended that you install WorkExpo to the default path: *c:\program files\workexpo* - Although you can also install to *c:\workexpo*

Network Installation (Multiple user setup)

1. Install WorkExpo as a stand alone installation in the first instance accepting all defaults in the default path: *c:\program files\workexpo*
2. Close WorkExpo and **move** the master WorkExpo data file *data.mdb* from the installation machine to a shared folder on the network.
Important note: All WorkExpo users must have full **read/write/create/delete permissions** on the shared network folder.
3. Start WorkExpo on the user's machine and point to the new location on the network from **File / Open**.

4. Once connected to a network database, it is recommended to delete or rename the sample data file on C: drive if it is present.
5. It is recommended that you use a **UNC path** when connecting to a WorkExpo data file rather than a mapped drive.

Further notes:

1. You can download the latest ISO image from <https://www.infoplan.com.au/workexpo/download.html>. Use the ISO image to install a fresh copy of WorkExpo or upgrade an existing copy of WorkExpo. You can also download a simple version without ISO. Instead look for [WORKEXP FULL VERSION](#) - Includes all updates. **Setup.exe** version. (169MB)
2. There is no need to un-install older versions of WorkExpo. No serial number nor unlock key is required. WorkExpo uses the NAME of the school for registration purposes. Check the school name is entered correctly.
3. WorkExpo supports upgrading older WorkExpo versions.
4. It is recommended to accept all defaults during setup for best results. However, you can install to `c:\workexpo` if necessary.
5. Open and close WorkExpo once or twice to make sure all is working properly and to properly set background system parameters in the Windows registry and remove warning messages.
6. On new installations you should see 'Sample or Demonstration College' with 15 sample student records. If necessary, these sample records can be deleted from the **Utilities / Tools** menu.

WorkExpo on a Mac computer

WorkExpo is a Microsoft Access database. WorkExpo relies on Microsoft Access being installed and also Microsoft Office being installed. Why? Because WorkExpo uses Microsoft Excel to create reports, Microsoft Word for Mail Merges and Microsoft Outlook to generate emails from WorkExpo. Although there is a version of Microsoft Office for the Apple Mac it unfortunately does **not** include Microsoft Access. If Access cannot run on Mac, neither can WorkExpo, or any other Access database for that matter.

In the Apple Store there are several apps (e.g. *MDB Explorer*, *MDBLite*, *Viewer For Access* etc.) all purporting to be able to run an Access database on a Mac. These are all basic tools and only allow limited database functionality, e.g. viewing tables or records etc. WorkExpo will not work properly with any of these tools.

There is a work-around where WorkExpo can be installed on a Mac, but it has several drawbacks:

- You could install Windows in parallel with an Apple operating system using **Parallels Desktop for Mac** software.
- You would also need to install Microsoft Office including Microsoft Access, and lastly, of course, WorkExpo.
- Using dual operating systems like this means you might need to switch back and forth between the Apple interface and the Windows interface to run different programs. This might be cumbersome and tedious.
- A powerful computer would also be required to run two OS systems at once and in addition, there would be IT support to set this up and maintain it.
- Sharing the WorkExpo database with other users under this set-up may be slow and/or problematical.

There are currently no plans to re-write WorkExpo for Mac computers. It is not recommended to run WorkExpo on a Mac machine.

If your school plans to move to Apple Mac computers in future, you have three options, none of them ideal:

1. Use the work-around (or an alternative workaround) as outlined above **or**
2. Purchase a Windows computer and dedicate it for use with WorkExpo only, **or**
3. Unsubscribe from WorkExpo and look for suitable alternatives that work on Apple PC's. (I know of none).

WorkExpo ISO Image or EXE

1. You can download the WorkExpo ISO image or EXE files from <https://www.infoplan.com.au/workexpo/download.html>.
2. Mount the WorkExpo ISO directly from the ISO image (recommended). Windows 10 and later allows INSTALL from the right-click shortcut menu.
3. You can use the ISO image to install a fresh copy of WorkExpo or upgrade an existing copy of WorkExpo.
4. There is no need to un-install older versions of WorkExpo.

5. During setup accept all defaults for best results.
6. Open and close WorkExpo a few times (at least twice) to make sure all is working properly and to set background system parameters.
7. You should see 'Demonstration College' or 'Sample College' with 15 sample student records.
8. If necessary, close WorkExpo and copy the old WorkExpo data file *data.mdb* from the old machine to the new machine in the path shown on the WorkExpo main menu.
9. Please note that users must have full **read/write/create/delete permissions** on the folder where WorkExpo is installed. There can be no restrictions on user access.

Can I share an Access database like WorkExpo using Google Drive, OneDrive or DropBox?

The simple answer is “No”, it either isn't going to work, or it will work but you risk corruption, data loss, and poor performance; plus there are better, more reliable, ways of sharing your database.

Why can't I share Access using Cloud Storage?

When you edit a document e.g. Word or Excel saved in cloud storage such as Google Drive or OneDrive, you're basically creating a 2nd copy which is then reloaded on top of the original when you save. This works OK with documents, but databases are far more complex. If multiple users tried to open an Access database like WorkExpo they would each end up with their own copy, and the last person to save would wipe out any changes made by the other users.

The other reason Access won't work with cloud storage is that it is designed to work on a fast, local network, or stand alone on a PC. Access needs to make continuous read/write transactions to its backend database. Even though modern fibre broadband is potentially as fast as an office network used to be, it is still not reliable enough, and the slightest packet loss could corrupt your database.

I read a good analogy online with someone comparing it with the teleport in Start Trek, imagine you're half way through the fizzy shimmery bit when your connection to the planet goes down, Scotty would be in bits, literally. The same thing would happen with your Access records if the internet had a “blip”.

Repair and Compact the WorkExpo data file

From time to time it's a good idea to repair and compact the WorkExpo data file.

Why? Because during normal use the database creates hidden temporary records. Repair and Compact removes these unnecessary temporary records and the database becomes smaller and lighter. Only temporary records are removed during repair and compact, not the records you and others have added to the system. If the database has not been compacted for a long time it will become much smaller. This means it is faster to load and unload.

In addition, running repair and compact will repair any small traces of corruption which may make the database behave oddly on occasion e.g. crashing or closing unexpectedly.

Running Repair and Compact is like giving a car a service. You can run it as often as you like. I'd recommend two or three times a year.

Here's how:

1. Make sure all users are logged out of WorkExpo. Ask all users to log out OR perform the operation early or late in the day when other uses are not logged in.
2. Navigate to the WorkExpo data file (The PATH to this file is shown on the WorkExpo main menu.) Make sure your copy of WorkExpo is closed.
3. Simply double-click the WorkExpo data file (typically called **data.mdb**)
4. The database will open using Microsoft Access, not WorkExpo. It will look different to what you usually see. If necessary, click 'Enable Content'.
5. Select the DATABASE TOOLS TAB and click COMPACT AND REPAIR DATABASE. (In earlier versions, from the Microsoft Access FILE menu choose REPAIR and COMPACT)
It should take just a few seconds, a minute at the most.
6. Close Microsoft Access and that's it! Done.

Setting WorkExpo up on a new machine for an existing user

To set WorkExpo up on a new machine for an existing user, please follow these steps:

1. Install WorkExpo on the new machine (using the ISO image) and open and close it a few times, then copy (or point WorkExpo to) the old WorkExpo data file – *data.mdb* using **File / Open**
2. During setup on the new machine accept all defaults (recommended).
3. Open and close the WorkExpo on the new machine a few times (at least twice) to make sure all is working and to set background system parameters.
You should see 'Demonstration College' with 15 sample student records.
4. Close WorkExpo and either:
 - a) copy the old WorkExpo data file *data.mdb* from the old machine to the new machine
 - b) point WorkExpo to the old data file *data.mdb* on the network, using **File / Open** on the WorkExpo menu.
5. Use UNC paths rather than mapped network drives if possible.

Please note that users must have **full read/write/create/delete** permissions on the network folder.