



V1, Rev. 05

Updated: August 3, 2006

Table of Contents:

Before We Begin	3
Features	4
Instructions	5
Starting the Database	5
Comic Book Entry	6
Storage Location Entry	7
Continuing Comic Book Entry	8
Reports	9
Statistical and Cost Reports	10
Known Issues	11
Database Details	12
Tables	12
Queries	13
Reports	13

Before We Begin

- The Comic Book Collection Database (CBCD) is available free of charge for personal, individual, non-profit use. The database is presented in its original form and no attempt has been made to lock or in any way obstruct any changes, additions or adjustments that an individual user chooses to implement *for his/her own use*. As long as you have Microsoft Access 2000 or later, you should have access to modify any and all of the of the system.
- The database was written to be simple and was never intended for public release. It is not a serious or professional undertaking. It was simply suggested that I share it with fellow collectors and I didn't see why I shouldn't have it on the website for download.
- The CBCD was created to store my collection and meet my needs. As a result, many possible data fields have not been included. For example, I have not included fields to record character appearances, creative talents (writer, pencils, inks, etc.) or the comic's grade. I haven't included a mechanism to sell or remove comics (other than deleting them, thereby deleting the history). And I didn't include a facility to scan in and store comic covers or print labels for my boxes. I simply didn't want to take it that far (...although the labels are a good idea and may be included in a future revision). Anyway, you can certainly add these fields and functions and any others you want.
- This is important: You may not distribute, modify, transmit, reuse, report, or use the CBCD or this ReadMe document for public or commercial purposes without the express written consent of bobbeltrami.com. You are not being granted a license under any copyright, trademark, patent or other intellectual property right, period. All such rights are retained by bobbeltrami.com. Downloading this file signals your agreement with and acceptance of these terms.
- A last note. If you find an error or omission, or you have an idea, please don't hesitate to send me an e-mail (see "Contact Us" link at bottom of webpage). I may not respond or use your idea, but I read everything I receive and have implemented several helpful suggestions and ideas that have been sent in.

-Bob Beltrami
www.BobBeltrami.com

Features

- CBCD stores an unlimited number of titles with an unlimited number of issues per title. Whether your collection is small and growing or already huge, every book will fit in the database.
- CBCD keeps the most important information on your comics while avoiding the burden of having to fill-in dozens of unnecessary fields. The fields include:
 - Publisher,
 - Title,
 - Series,
 - Current Subscription,
 - Issue#,
 - Issue Date,
 - Cost,
 - Comments and
 - Storage Location.
- CBCD lets you associate Titles with a Series (i.e. Detective Comics is part of the Batman Series). No matter how many titles you have, you can determine how many Batman, Flash, X-Men, etc., comics you have.
- CBCD provides reports of your collection including costs, counts and statistics, and provides printable subscription lists, catalogs and inventory sheets.

Instructions

I wish I could say that the CBCD is “easy-to-use” and/or “intuitive”. But I’ve never received any feedback. So I’ve assumed it is neither easy-to-use nor intuitive and have created these instructions in an attempt to document everything that has been incorporated. Hopefully, after a short time using the system, you will agree that it is neither difficult nor complex. Here we go...

Starting the Database

Start the database by double-clicking on the icon:



Microsoft Access should execute, bring up the Comic Book Collection Database and present you with the Main Switchboard (fig.1):

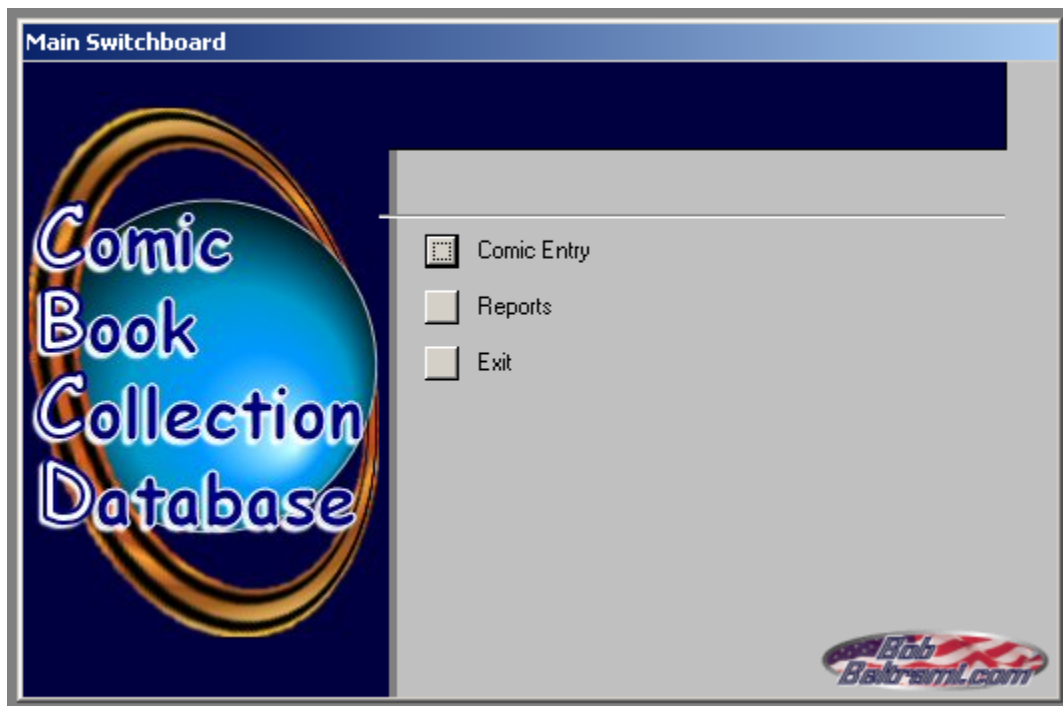


Figure 1 – The main switchboard for the Comic Book Collection Database.

Clicking on the **Comic Entry** button will bring up the comic book entry form (fig. 2). Clicking on the **Reports** button opens a second page on the switchboard and allows you to select from a list of reports (fig. 4). Clicking on the **Exit** button closes the database.

Comic Book Entry

Click on the “Comic Entry” button on the Main Switchboard and bring up the comic book entry form. Begin entering the comic information into the form, starting with Publisher and Title (the only required fields in the database). Continue entering data where applicable (refer to figure 2).

Comic Book Entry

Find Title:

Publisher Series

Title

Current Subscription ☐

Add Storage Location

Close

Issue Info:

Issue#	Issue Date	Cost	Comments	Storage Location
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Record: 1 of 1

Figure 2 – The central entry screen for the Comic Book Collection Database.

- Here is a listing of the data fields on the form and what they store:

Publisher (Required) – The Company that produced the comic. Examples include DC, Marvel, Image, Dark Horse, etc.

Title (Required) – The actual title of the comic, usually as represented in the indicia. Examples include Detective Comics, World’s Finest, Uncanny X-Men, Tales to Astonish, etc.

Series – The series that the comic belongs to. For example, Detective Comics, Nightwing, Robin, Batman Chronicles, Legends of the Dark Knight, Detective Comics Annuals and other “Batman” related comics can be recorded as belonging to the “Batman” Series. For many titles, this field will be left blank.

Current Subscription – This checkbox should be checked if the title is a current subscription.

- Next we move into the “Issue Info” sub form, just below the Title, where we enter the information about each issue:

Issue# – This is the actual issue number from the indicia of the book. The CBCD only accepts numbers in this field. Issue numbers that include letters can be noted in the Comments field.

Issue Date – The month and year of publication.

Cost – Amount paid for the comic.

Comments – Any relevant details of the story or significance of the book.

Storage Location – Pull-down list populated by the entries in the “Storage Location Entry” form (fig. 3, next page).

Storage Location Entry

Before the database will accept an entry in the storage location field, you have to populate the pull-down list by telling the database what locations are acceptable. The first step is to click on the button labeled “Add Storage Location” in the upper right-hand of the Comic Book Entry form. This should bring up the “Storage Location Entry” form (fig. 3).

Location	Sort Order
Unknown	20
*	

Close

Figure 3 – Form for entering storage locations.

Enter the location in the left column and the sort order for that location in the right column.

Location – is a brief description of the storage place. Examples include: Box 1, Magazine Box, Safe, Filing Cabinet, etc. If you loan books to friends, you can put their names here and know who has which of your books. Also, if you have a book in the system but have misplaced it or don't know where it is, “Unknown” is a default entry in the system and already has a report associated. Do NOT remove the “Unknown” entry in this list.

Sort Order – is a numerical value representing the order that you want the locations sorted in. This applies to pull-down menus and reports. Note: If a location is entered, a Sort Order is REQUIRED.

For an example, let's say over time your collection has grown to three long boxes for new comics, one magazine box for odd sizes and a fire safe where you store your really valuable issues. You've also found that you're unsure where several books are. Entered into the database over time, the Storage Location Entry might look like this:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Sort Order</u>
Box 1	3
Magazine Box	2
Fire Safe	1
Box 2	4
Unknown	6
Box 3	5

This sort order will result in pull-down menus and the inventory report sorting in the following order:

- Fire Safe
- Magazine Box
- Box 1
- Box 2
- Box 3
- Unknown

This is just an example. Obviously you are free to develop your own system for sorting your locations for inventory. Enter your particular locations and sort order, and then close the form when you're through. Refresh the Comic Book Entry form to load the new location entries (If this is unsuccessful, close and reopen the Comic Book Entry form).

In the way of an explanation, the location subsystem was originally created so that I could more easily find a title without having to search through a bunch of boxes. The problem resurfaced when I went to inventory my collection and could not get a printout in the order I wanted. It may seem picky, but the database only alphabetizes. This means that Box 1 is followed by Box 10, THEN Box 2 through 9. That's no good. I'd like the fire safe and magazine box up front so I can inventory them first. By creating the table with the sort order, I can have the boxes ordered and the inventory report organized according to whatever scheme I choose.

Now that we've been through all of this, I need to let you know that the location information is not required, just highly recommended. If you choose not to utilize this part of the database, you don't have to. However, as a side effect, you won't have any data in the Location fields of the reports, the Inventory Listing report will be empty and there will be no Unknown Location report.

Continuing Comic Book Entry

If you have more than one issue of a certain title, simply tab or click on the next line and continue entering issues for that title. If you make a mistake during data entry, simply make the corrections on the form. If you enter an issue under the wrong title, delete it and navigate to (or create) the correct title. To move to the next title, you can click in the title or publisher field and use the mouse scroll wheel to move to the next record. You can also use the record navigator at the bottom of the form to move to the next title or blank page.

Find Title: – As your collection grows, you may find the "Find Title" field useful (see fig.2). With over 500 titles in my collection, it makes it much easier to jump to a title compared to scrolling through the entire list. You can either use the pull-down or begin typing the title in the field, and hitting enter will take you to that title's page.

Reports

Be advised, some of the reports utilize tiny fonts. This is especially true for the Listing and Catalog, where the font is an iris bending 5 point! This works for me, as my collection is 35 pages long and I can read 5 point. If you have a smaller collection or need a larger font, feel free to make a change to the reports.

To access them, click on the “Reports” button on the Main Switchboard to bring up the listing of available reports:

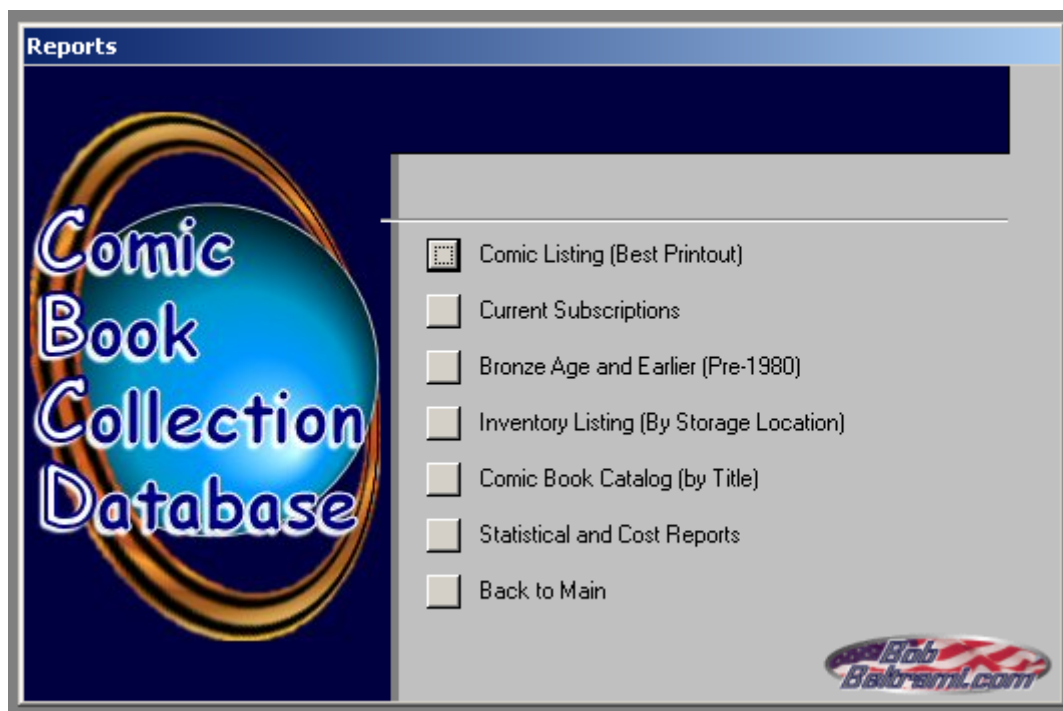


Figure 4 – Switchboard for reporting.

- **Comic Listing** - Most compact printout of the entire collection, but also the smallest font. Header provides the total number of issues. Report includes: Publisher, Title, Issue#, Issue Date, Cost, Comments and Location. Sorted by Title and Issue#.
- **Current Subscriptions** – Perfect for handing to your local comic retailer, the report lists the comic titles checked as “Current Subscriptions”. Includes Publisher and Title. Sorted by Title.
- **Bronze Age and Earlier (Pre-1980)** – Lists comic books published before 1980. Header provides the total number of bronze issues. Report includes: Issue Date, Publisher, Title, Issue#, Comments and Location. Sections headed by Issue Date. Sorted by Issue Date, Title and Issue#.
- **Inventory Listing** – Created to help when physically checking the comic inventory, each Location starts a new page. The report provides the total number of books in each location along with the cost of the location. Includes: Publisher, Title, Issue#, Issue Date, Cost, Comments and Location. Sections headed by Location. Sorted by Location, Title and Issue#.
- **Comic Book Catalog** – Conventional comic list reports the entire contents of the database. Header provides the total cost of the collection and the total number of issues. Report includes: Publisher, Title, Issue#, Issue Date, Cost, Comments and Location. Sections headed by Publisher and Title. Sorted by Title and Issue#.
- **Statistical and Cost Reports** – Opens Statistical and Cost Reports switchboard (fig. 5, next page).
- **Back to Main** – Returns you to the Main switchboard (fig. 1, page 4).

Statistical and Cost Reports

In addition to the “Standard” reports, above, the CBCD also includes a page of additional reports:

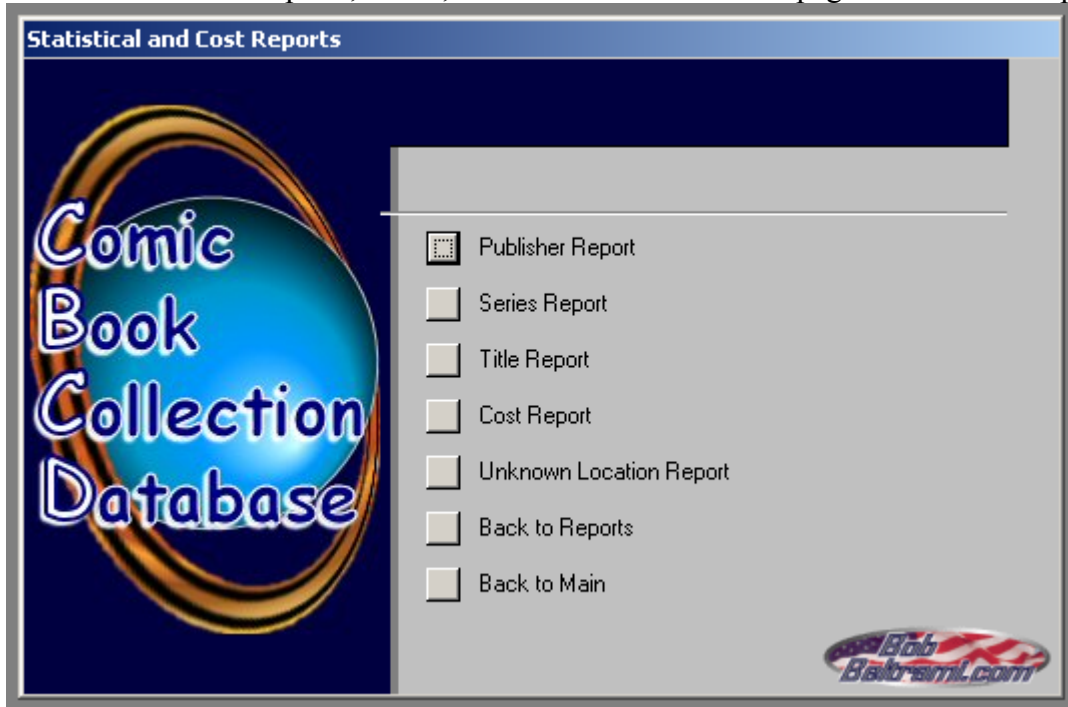


Figure 5 – Switchboard for Statistical and Cost reporting.

- **Publisher Report** – A quick listing of Publisher information. Includes: Publisher, Number of Issues and Cost. Sorted by Number of Issues
- **Series Report** – Report on Series data. Includes: Series, # of Issues and Total Cost. Sorted by # of Issues
- **Title Report** – Comic Titles listed with quantity and cost information. Header provides total number of titles in the collection. Report includes: Publisher, Title, # of Issues and Cost. Sorted by # of issues and Cost.
- **Cost Report** – Summary provides total cost of the collection, average cost per book, most spent per single issue, least spent per single issue and the total number of comics in the collection.
- **Unknown Location Report** – Suitable for insurance purposes, this report lists all of the comics listed as “Unknown” in the Storage Location field.
- **Back to Reports** – Navigates back to the main Reports switchboard (Fig. 4, page 8).
- **Back to Main** – Returns you to the Main switchboard (fig. 1, page 4)

Known Issues

- When clicking out of the “Storage Location Entry” form, the “Comic Book Entry” form does not automatically update the pull-down to include the Storage Location entries you just created. However, the entry will be accepted if correctly typed into the field. If you wish to have the entry appear in the pull-down, pull-down the “Records” menu on the toolbar and click “Refresh”.
- If a mistake is made and an Issue is entered under the wrong Title, there is currently no way to move the book to the correct title. You must delete it, then navigate to the correct title and enter the issue on that page.

Database Details

Here is some basic technical information about the database to help facilitate any changes or additions that you wish to make.

Tables

The CBCD has three tables. The first two store the data relating to the comic books while the third simply stores a static list. Let's have a look at the core of the database, pictured in figure 6:

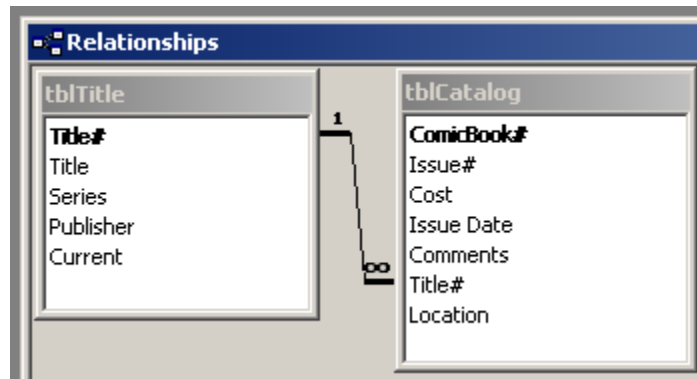


Figure 6 – The two primary tables in the Comic Book Collection Database.

tblTitle stores information only relating to the comic book's Title:

- Title# (auto-number primary key)
- Publisher
- Title
- Series (if Applicable), and
- Current Subscription

tblCatalog in turn stores the more detailed information about each issue:

- ComicBook# (auto-number primary key)
- Issue#
- Issue Date
- Cost
- Comments
- Location
- *Title#* (foreign key)

The relationship between the two tables is dependent on the *Title#* (foreign key) in **tblCatalog**. The benefit to this setup is that you only have to enter a title one time. From then on you only enter the issues.

The third table in the CBCD was created to support the Location subsystem. As a result, there is no relationship between **tbl_Location** and **tblTitle** or **tblCatalog**. It is used to populate a pull-down in "Location" in **tblCatalog**.

tbl_Location

- Location
- Sort Order

Since the place where the books are physically stored is so important, I felt compelled to create a “hard list” to circumvent any possibility for typos or other errors. So rather than use a query to create the list live or “on the fly” (as I did with other pull-downs in the CBCD), I’m forcing myself to enter the location(s) ahead of time into the “Location” field to populate the list of available choices. Another more visible benefit to the location subsystem is the “Sort Order”, which allows you to sort your locations in any order you want for inventory.

Queries

qry_list_Location – From tbl_Location, lists the Locations by the Sort Order (for pull-down list).
qry_list_Publisher – From tblTitle, lists Publishers in alphabetical order (for pull-down list).
qry_list_Series – From tblTitle, lists Series in alphabetical order (for pull-down list).
qry_list_Title – From tblTitle, lists Title in alphabetical order (for pull-down list).
qry_rpt_Age – From tblTitle and tblCatalog, populates the “Bronze Age and Earlier” (rpt_Age) report.
qry_rpt_Catalog – From tblTitle and tblCatalog, populates the “Comic Listing” (rpt_Catalog_List) and “Comic Book Catalog” (rpt_Catalog) reports.
qry_rpt_Cost – From qry_rpt_Catalog, populates the “Cost Report” (rpt_Cost).
qry_rpt_Location – From tblTitle, tblCatalog and tbl_Location, populates the “Inventory Listing” (rpt_Location) report.
qry_rpt_Publisher – From tblTitle and tblCatalog, populates the “Publisher Report” (rpt_Publisher).
qry_rpt_Series – From tblTitle and tblCatalog, populates the “Series Report” (rpt_Series).
qry_rpt_Subscription – From tblTitle, populates the “Current Subscriptions” (rpt_Subscriptions) report.
qry_rpt_Title – From tblTitle and tblCatalog, populates the “Title Report” (rpt_Title).
qry_rpt_Unknown – From tblTitle, tblCatalog and tbl_Location, populates the “Unknown Location” (rpt_Unknown) Report.

Reports

rpt_Age – From qry_rpt_Age
rpt_Catalog – From qry_rpt_Catalog
rpt_Catalog_List – From qry_rpt_Catalog
rpt_Cost – From qry_rpt_Cost
rpt_Location – From qry_rpt_Location
rpt_Publisher – From qry_rpt_Publisher
rpt_Series – From qry_rpt_Series
rpt_Subscriptions – From qry_rpt_Subscriptions
rpt_Title – From qry_rpt_Title
rpt_Unknown – From qry_rpt_Unknown