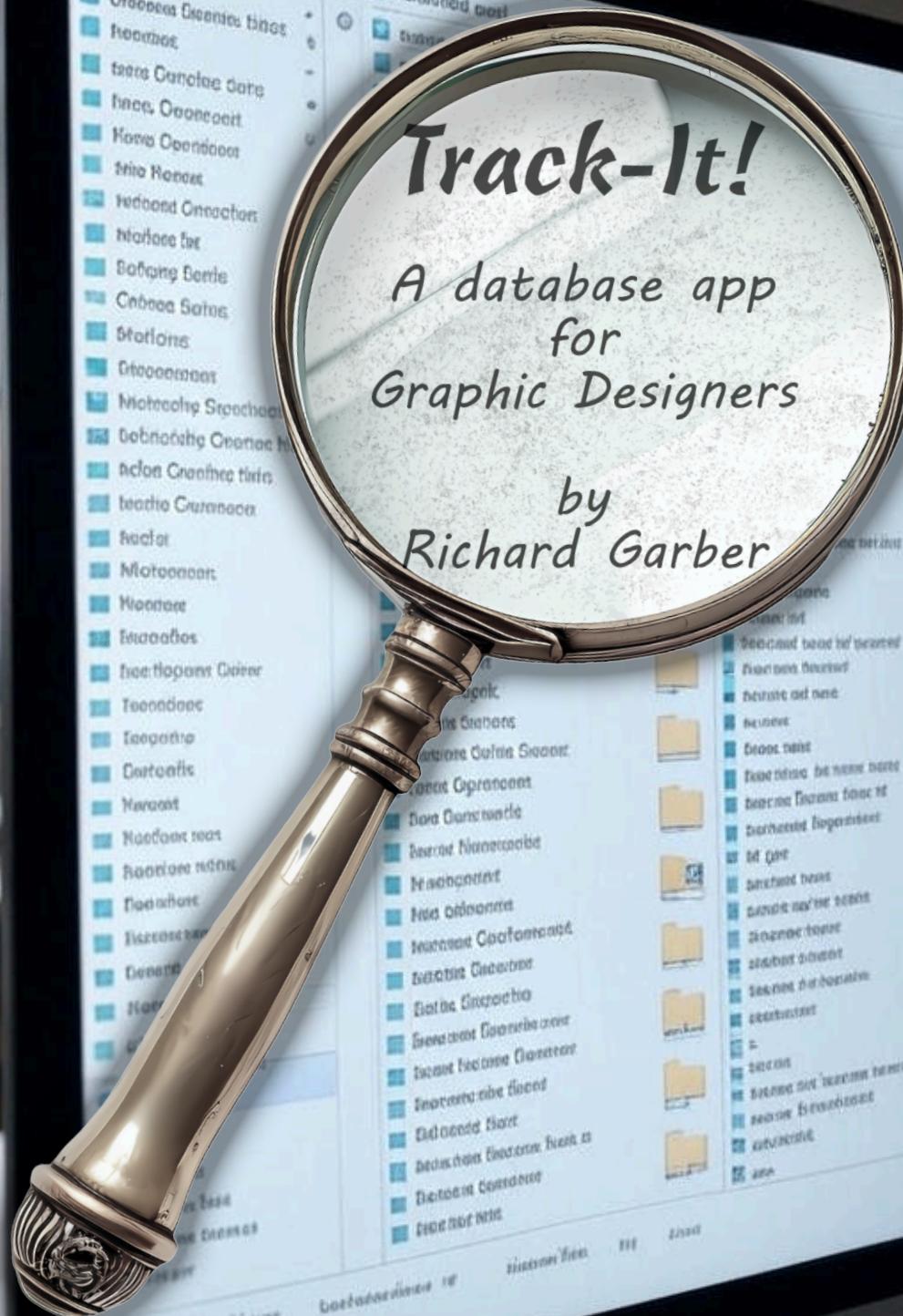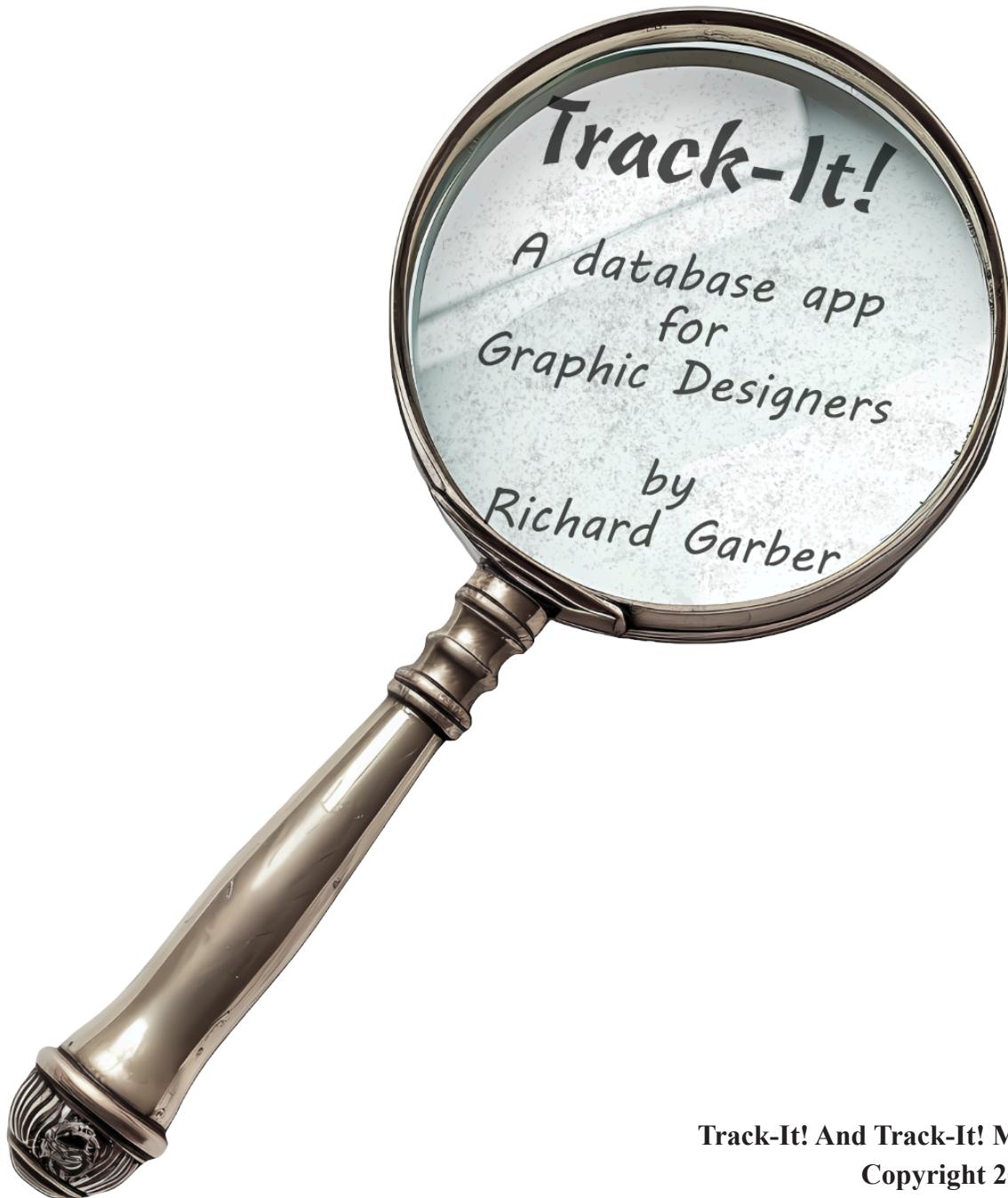# Track-It!

A database app
for
Graphic Designers

by
Richard Garber

Especially written for the Graphic Design community!

Add-on Inventory management software

Track-It!

A database app
for
Graphic Designers

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Table Of Contents*

*With the mouse, click on any Table Of Content heading to jump to that section.

Table Of Contents* (continued)

*With the mouse, click on any Table Of Content heading to jump to that section.

Read This First Before Installing

Track-It is a Microsoft Access dependent database, and therefore needs a version of MS Access installed on your computer before you can use it. If you already have Microsoft Access on your computer then you already have the necessary requirements to run Track-It.

If you <u>do not have</u> Microsoft Access installed on your computer then you'll need to acquire the free Runtime app which is a limited version of MS Access (no editing functions). With Track-It, you don't need any editing tools, you will be perfectly fine with the Runtime.

Microsoft Access hereafter called MS Access or just Access and Microsoft Access Runtim Version, hereafter called Runtime.

Tip: Important to know, you can't have both the full version of MS Access and the Runtime on the same computer. (Disclaimer: "That's what I read, don't quote me").

Let's first discuss **how you install Track-It <u>with the full version of MS Access</u> already installed on your computer**.

It's very simple to do. Simply extract Track-It to a folder of your choosing. Any location will do. If you already have MS Access on your computer you only have to open Track-it from Access and you are ready to start.

If you don't have MS Access on your computer then you'll need to acquire the free version of MS Access Runtime. Click on the link below to download the Access Runtime. Warning! Do not download the Runtime if you have the full version of Access!

https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/download-and-install-microsoft-365-access-runtime-185c5a32-8ba9-491e-ac76-91cbe3ea09c9

Make sure you download and install the x64 bit version of the Runtime. There is one caveat to this, and it goes something like the following: If you have, or are running MS Office in x32 bit mode, trying to install the x64 Runtime version won't give you the option to install the x64 bit version. <u>Track-It is a x64 bit application so it must have the x64 bit version</u>.

If you find that the x64 bit version of Runtime will not let you install it, at all, it means you either have a x32 bit version of MS Office installed on your computer, or, you have remnants of a x32 bit version still on your computer. This happened to me and what I did to get rid of those remnants was to obtain a free version of **Revo Uninstaller** to completely remove those remnants and then I could install the x64 bit version of Access Runtime.

Once you have installed the Runtime, you don't actually run Track-It with it. Instead, create a short-cut or double-click the Track-It program file and Track-It will start up and seem to run by itself. That's not what's happening. The Runtime is actually running Track-It, just so you know.

You'll immediately encounter a message box during the first start-up asking you where the data file is kept. That discussion is coming shortly!

Introduction

I, myself, am a graphic designer. My own collection of add-ons for my usage of Blender as my 3D Designer tool, had grown significantly. While I wasn't completely disorganized, my occasional attempts at organizing the folders I kept the archives in, never left me feeling "in control" of what I had. After trying, using a PDF listing, I decided to address the problem and concluded that only a database, of some sort, would be the most effective solution. Reflecting on my 90s experience of writing software for small businesses, I remembered one of the programs I used was Microsoft Access 1.0? Did it even exist still today? After months of non-stop development, I use Track-It today for my personal use and it's incredible!

Tip: Here's how I think one should organize their add-on folders. I store all my add-ons in folders on an external hard drive grouped by categories that characterizes the group. Each of the individual folders is named after the add-on and contains the downloaded files plus a screenshot from the ad webpage. I did used to also include an internet shortcut via file explorer that would open the add- on's webpage. With Track-it I no longer create the internet shortcut as it's now included on the Main Record Form in Track-It.

Getting Started With Track-It

To begin using Track-It, extract the zip file into a folder of your choice. You can select any location. And by the way, Track-It is divided up into two files. First is the program file that ends with an ACCDE extension. The second file is the data file which holds your add-on data. This file ends with an ACCDB extension. What's unique to Track-It is you can rename either file but you must keep the extension exactly as they are. You can even move the data file to a different place on your hard drive. For example you could keep the program file (ACCDE extension) on your C drive and have the data file (the ACCDB extension) on the D drive.

The Help sub-folder are images that display help versions of many Track-It forms. The picture files come with text highlighting functions you'll encounter. Browsing these images provides a quick overview of how Track-It operates.

Now this is very important but mostly for the first time you start up Track-It. The two files of Track-It are linked to each other and most likely the linkage currently linking both files will not be correct. Track-it will give you a message as such and you'll be guided through the process of linking the two files together. By linking, I mean, that the program file needs to know the path to the data file. You'll be given a file dialog which you will use to point Track-It to the data file. It's pretty easy to do, just browse your hard drive and find the location of the data file and then press OK. If, like most, you keep them both in the same folder, well, you won't have very far to go - but you still have to do it. Track-It will then display a final message that the two files are linked and you are ready to continue.

For clarity, the two files I mentioned earlier, the program file and data file, do have reference names you'll need to remember: the Track-It executable is referred to as the "frontend," and the data file is called the "backend."

Prepping Track-It

When I first started using Track-It, I was overwhelmed by the sheer number of add-ons I had accumulated—many I'd nearly forgotten about. But also because in my planning of Track-It I didn't consider the variety of add-ons I had. Let's briefly discuss what an add-on is.

At that time, I mostly considered an add-on to be something I had purchased. But as I became more familiar with what I had, I realized many of the add-ons were instructional materials, like videos, even free. Do I consider a video an add-on? I do now. And that I also use the Steam version of Substance Painter, that compelled me to also accumulate a lot of smart materials for it. And what about 3D models I purchased as well? How was Track-It to remember all the different kinds of add-ons and list them sensibly? These realizations gave me a new found respect for the need to inventory my add-ons.

So I introduced the concept of Catalogs. Even better, it seemed a good idea to not lock the user into my idea of what Catalogs there should be. Therefore, you, the user is able to create your own Catalogs based on your own add-on acquisitions. And you can create as many Catalogs as you like.

Because of this Track-It evolved from being about add-ons made for, say your 3D Modeling app, to including anything you as a graphic designer might have in your library. Even for the different software applications you own.

With this it might seem Track-It could become a clerical nightmare. However, Track-It was authored by somebody, me, who didn't want to become a data entry clerk. I devised a simplistic system of inputting data that mostly consists of copying and pasting from the add-on's web page to Track-It!.

The beauty of Track-It is its ability to bring clarity to your inventory. With just a few clicks, I can retrieve details about any add-on I own, or instantly access downloadable files for the add-ons, or browse add-on web pages, or even access or view the archive folder the add-on is stored in. And all within a glance. What was once a huge source of frustration in locating just about "anything" is now organized and accessible, and it all happens very fast!

Consult the Getting Started PDF included with the Track-It download. It's got some useful insight in how to begin some thoughtful analysis on how to start your inventory journey.

Track-It Start-up

Once Track-It launches (assuming the Track-It program and data file are properly linked), you'll encounter the Menu. The Menu and the Main Records Form are the two primary areas where you'll spend most of your time. Each form or report in Track-It opens in its own tab, referred to as Folder Tabs throughout the manual. To switch between opened forms, simply click on the actual tab to bring that form into focus.

The Menu
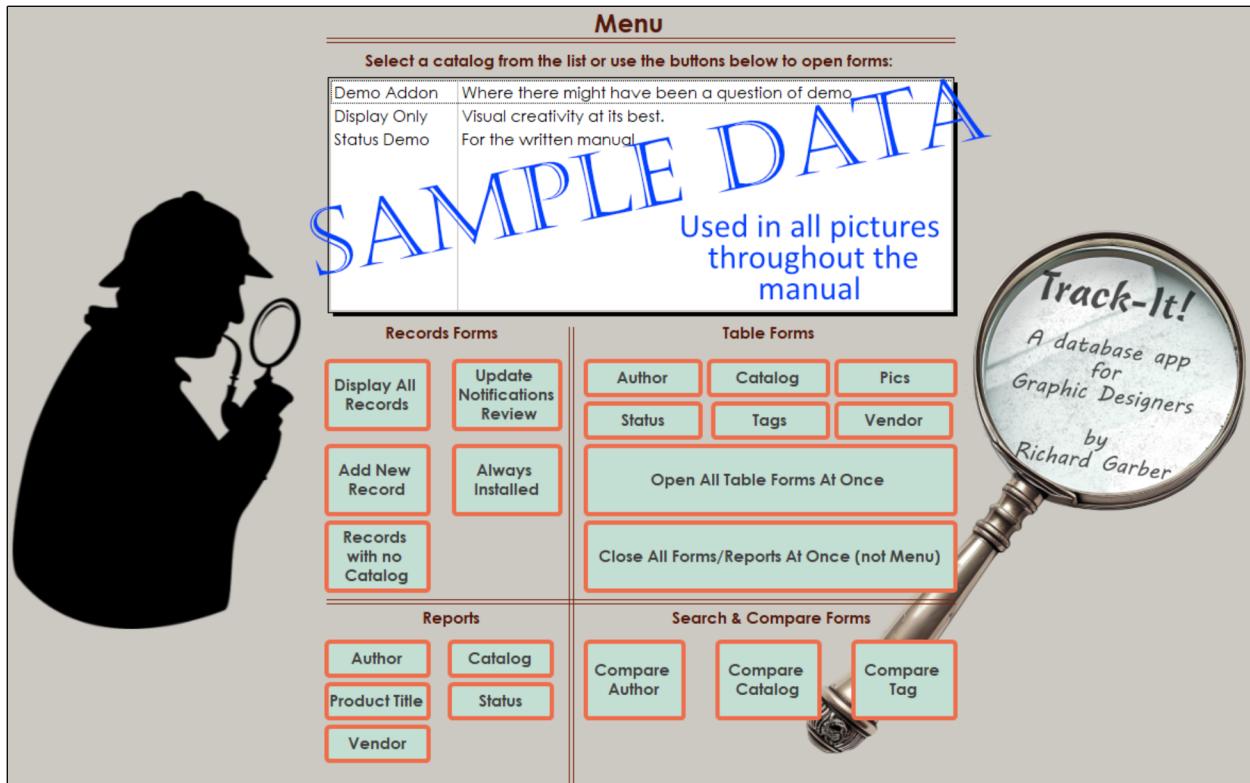
Refer to the Menu sample (above) for this section.

When you first open Track-It for the first time, the white box is empty and of course, you have no data. You have two options to enter data. Either add a new record and begin to build your add-on data through the Main Record Form, or click on the Table Form buttons and enter data there. We'll talk about this more shortly.

The big white box lists all the Catalogs you created. Choosing a Catalog in the list via a single left mouse-click, and that Catalog will open provided there's data in it. Assuming that there are records, the Main Record Form opens but to only those records associated with the Catalog picked. However, if there are no records associated with that catalog, a message will appear saying as such and suggest how you can start adding new record(s).

Below the Catalog Listing are a number of buttons divided up into four sections. Note there is a title above each section of buttons. We'll cover the Records Forms buttons first.

Record Forms

Display All Records: Pressing this button will open the Main Record form with no regard to any catalog. All the records in your data will be accessible.

Add New Record: For adding a new record. At the beginning of a new Track-it installation, this is the only way to add the very first new record.

Records With No Catalog: This is more of a troubleshooting feature. When filling out records it's tempting to skip over fields and leave blank fields. Regarding Catalog, since it is the first tier of information for you, it's best to always fill in the Catalog field. But if you have skipped over the Catalog field and left a few blanks, this button will allow you to fix those records. It's also a way to find out if you have blank new records that were added by mistake and delete them.

Now, let's briefly discuss the other two buttons:

Update Notifications Review: How many times do you get an email for an add-on that has been updated? If you're like me you get emails all the time and it's hard to keep up with them. Via the Main Record form you can tag add-ons needing attention. This button will open a form (discussed in it s own section) listing all records (kind of like a to-do list). A report can be printed of these records to the screen or printer.

Always Installed: One of the issues I have with every new major update for Blender is deciding whether to keep my current add-ons installed or just start afresh and re-install the add-ons I use all over again. Except how to remember which add-ons I had installed? Via the Main Record form, you can tag an add-on as an add-on to be installed when a major new version is to be installed for Blender or maybe your own modeling tool. This button will open a form (discussed in it s own section) listing - all records (kind of like a to-do list). A report can be printed to the screen or a printer of these records.

Table Forms

The next section of buttons, to the right of Records Forms, are the Table Forms buttons. What are Table Forms? Track-It stores your data in data tables, which are related to the main records via a link, or key. These tables include: Catalog, Author, Vendor, Status (or disposition of an add-on), Picture(s) (filenames only), and finally, Tags. You don't really need to remember this as inputting data into the proper table is Track-It's concern.

Here are the six Table Forms in Track-It:

Author: the author of the add-on.

Catalog: the categories you created to group add-ons into.

Status: every add-on record needs a status. It's a way for you to "keep in touch" with your add-ons especially as your inventory of add-ons grows.

Tag: Every record can have one or more tags associated with it. A tag is what you use to describe the add-on with. Eventually you can then search your inventory via those tags and a list of records will be displayed that match the tag..

Pics: You should, and if possible, have a picture for each add-on that comes from the add-on's webpage. I found that the expression "a picture is worth a thousand words" true when trying to recollect what an add-on's features are.

Vendor: There may be times when you want to know from an add-on is from.

10

There are two more buttons, time savers mostly, in this section.

Open All Table Forms At Once: As the name implies pressing this button will open all the table forms all at once. Each form opens in its own tab. You can move from form to form by simply mouse-clicking on the tabs. You can also grab a form by the tab and drag it along the form tab row to rearrange the forms. Sometimes this is handy to do!

Close All Forms/Reports At Once (not Menu): Pressing this button will close all the opened forms and reports except the Menu. Important! You don't ever want to close the Menu because the only way to reopen the menu is to exit Track-It and restart it.

Reports

The next button section is the lower left set of buttons for Reports. There are five reports. They are for Author, Catalog, Status, Title, and Vendor. Reports will initially be displayed on screen, however, they can also be made a hard copy of via the Ribbon, under Report Options. See Report Options for more information.

The reports are:

Authors: prints a report to screen (or hard copy) of all authors and their add-ons in your inventory.

Catalog: prints a report to screen (or hard copy) of all your Catalogs. Includes add-ons and authors.

Status: prints a report to screen (or hard copy) of each Status. Includes add-ons designated with its associated status and Catalog for that add-on.

Title: prints a report to screen (or hard copy) of all add-on records by Product Title.

Vendor: prints a report to screen (or hard copy) of each Vendor and the add-ons purchased from them as well as their assigned Catalog.

Tip: If you find in your reports that one or more records are missing, check the Main Record Form for those records and see if any of the white ba ckground fields are blank. If so, fill the blanks in as they are the reason records will not show in other forms and especially, reports.

Search & Compare Forms

The last section of buttons opens forms that are a bit different from the previous forms mentioned. I consider them to be the "smart" forms. Essentially they act as a type of search, but they also allow for records to be compared. Please see the Search & Compare Forms section for more information.

Here are these forms:

Compare Author: Search records to compare by Author.

Compare Catalog: Search records to compare by Catalog.

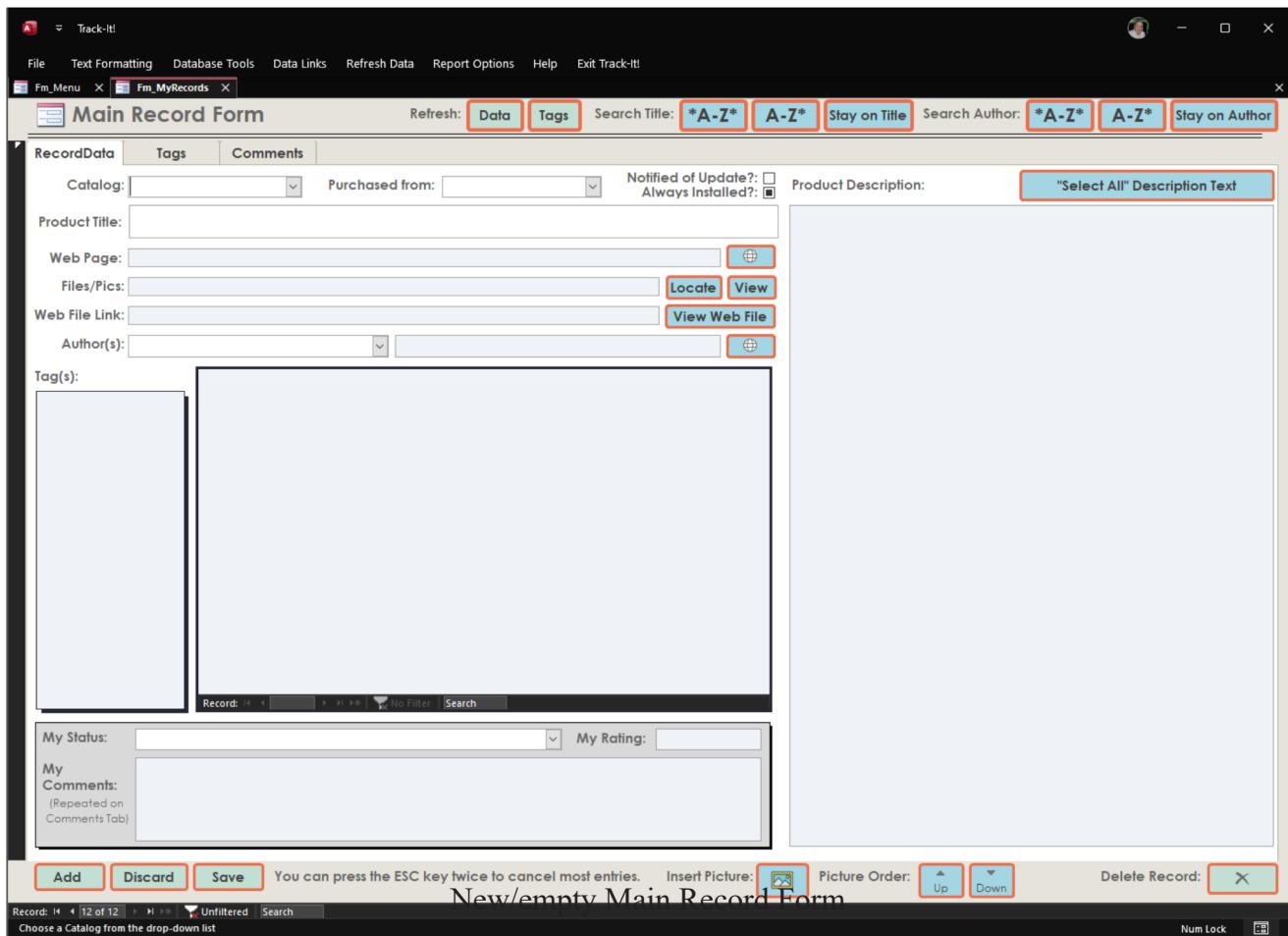**Compare Tag**: Search records to compare by Tag.

Main Record Form - Data Fields

The Main Record Form is the heart of Track-It. But don't confuse what Track-It does with other statistically based database apps where the records are like a reservoir of logistical information collected and inputted by the user. Track-It is more like a facilitator with single clicks speeding you to places you need to get to. Also, and unlike other statistically based database apps, Track-it does not require a lot of typing. Mostly what you'll be doing is "copy and pasting" from the vendor's websites, information you'll store in Track-It.

Main Record Form (filled)

New/empty Main Record Form

At first glance, we can see the main record form includes three tabs (just under the title Record Form): Record Data, Tags, and Comments. Clicking on each tab will give you a little more data to input, though the Comments tab simply repeats what's in the My Comments field down near the bottom of the Records Data tab. Most of your effort for each record will be in the Record Data tab.

Let's get started. You'll start the data entry process for every record at the top of the Record Data tab starting with the two list boxes, **Catalog** and **Purchased From**. List Box fields are where you click on the down arrow on the right-hand side of the field which causes a list to appear. But, that's only if you already have a list of names in the database. And starting out, you don't have any, unless you chose to input data through the Table Forms. I did suggest you didn't do that so let's see how this works.

First type in a couple letters of your first Catalog to input. It doesn't matter what order you put the Catalogs in, most lists or forms or reports in Track-It are all presented in alphabetical order. With just a partial or full entry of your first catalog inputted into the list box, now, press the Enter key and a message box will appear suggesting that what you just typed in, isn't in the list. To continue, press YES, and a small form appears called Add Catalog. This form is set up that you can only focus your efforts on it. Everything else in Track-It will be frozen while this form is open.

With the Add Catalog form open, enter the Catalog Name, Description and the "Whereabouts" of these add-on archives are, like a hard disk, external drive, etc. If you like what you entered press the Close Window (X) in the upper right-hand corner of the form. If you don't like what you have,

delete only what's in the Catalog Name field and then close the form. Track-It will assume when it sees a blank Catalog field that you are aborting the entry process. Aborting will not add any information to the Catalog table.

Now that the Add Catalog form is closed, you will still need to pick the new catalog name from the list. Click the down-arrow and the new catalog entry will appear in the list. Simply click it on the Catalog you just entered and it will appear in the List Box field as the Catalog. Satisfied, you can move onto the next field.

Tip: If you aborted the Add Catalog entry, you will still see the remnants of that initial attempt in the list box field. Press ESC twice and the field will go back to being blank.

What you just witnessed will be exactly the same for the other List Box fields: Purchased From (Vendor), Author, Status and Tags.

Tip: In time as you add new records via the Main Record form you will have populated enough catalog entries and vendor entries, including the other list box fields, that you won't have to add new data to these fields unless it's something not in the list.

Tip: Looking at the Main Record form, all the fields either have a white background or have a background with a blue tint. Fields with a white background are fields that will show up in other forms and/or reports. If those fields with white backgrounds are left blank you will end up with a forms/reports missing data. Fields with a blue tint are less critical but you should still fill them in as much as possible. Blue tinted fields don't show up anywhere else so to a degree you are safe if you must leave them blank.

Let's go to the next two fields, which are check boxes. These fields are **Notified Of Update** and **Always Installed**. These fields are normally clear by default. If you get an email about an add-on being updated, or if you decided you like the add-on enough that you want it installed every time an update to your 3D modeling program requires a new install, click within the appropriate check box. When these boxes are checked, the record will appear in forms/reports. A good way to keep

up with records in need of attention is to use the **My Comments** field (discussed shortly) to advise what the check boxes are checked for.

The next field, **Product Title**, while obvious in its meaning, will also warn you if you are about to create a duplicate of an earlier title entry. For one thing, you can't have two titles with the exact same name, Track-It won't let you. Note that capitalization is ignored by Track-It. For example, Cat and cat are the same to Track-It. A number of fields in Track-It behave this same way and in each case will give you a warning a duplicate was found. Most of the time you will have to abide by the warning and the duplicate must be changed.

I wrote earlier that there is hardly any typing to do in Track-It, so how is the Product Title inputted? If not all the time, most of the time when you are inputting data especially to the Main Record Form, you're likely to have the webpage for the add-on opened in your Browser in the background. Simply copy and paste the tile into Product Title. Because most of the data in Track-It is inputted this way, it only takes a few moments to add a new record. Don't paste any more than necessary because that record will always show up with that excess.

Now let's look at the next four fields below Product Title.

The first is **Webpage**. Paste the webpage URL of the add-on into this field. While you are on the product webpage, go to the browser address window where the webpage address is and then highlight it. Windows users can use Ctrl+A as a shortcut to highlight the whole URL at once. Then copy the address (Ctrl+C), and paste it (Ctrl+V) into the Webpage field.

Beside the Webpage field is a button with a globe on it. Pressing the globe button will display the add-on's webpage instantly using the link you pasted into Webpage field. Did you get that? In one press of a button, you just opened up the add-on's webpage without having to search through the vendor's endless website pages or even your account dashboard. The next three fields with their buttons are just like this.

Files/Pics is the next field below the Webpage field. Files/Pics is where you store the downloaded files for the add-on within your data archives. Your hard disk, that is. Whether it's internal or external, when pressing the button next to the File/Pics field, **Locate**, it will open a standard Windows dialog, and you will need to navigate to the add-on's archived folder and select Okay. The file dialog will close, and the folder path will appear in File/Pics.

Tip: You can save time by creating a new folder for a new add-on by right-clicking within the folder directory for add-ons and choosing from the menu, Create New Folder while the file dialog is open.

The next button beside Locate is **View**. View is where you can look at the contents of the folder path in the File/Pics field. Did you catch that? With one mouse-click you can view your downloaded files for that add-on, how's that for speed and efficiency!

Let's collect some more data from the add-on's webpage while its still open. But let's also discuss just what an archived add-on folder should look like.

I typically download all the files for the add-on into its own archived folder. And with the those files, I will include one or two of the pictures from the ad's website which best describes what the add-on does. It could be weeks or months before you might see that add-on again, but even just one picture will give you almost instant recollection for what the add-on does even after all that

time.

The next field **Web File Link** is an incredible time saver. The Web File Link field is the link to where your add-on files are stored online. You'll most likely find there's a URL address associated with that page. Highlight the address, then copy/paste the address into the Web File Link field. And then the next time you need to go to a add-on's downloads, click the globe button next to the Web File link. And you are taxied there instantly!

Excuse me, but let's not just let another "whoa" moment pass without appreciating what just happened. As long as it took to press a button, you just opened to the downloads page for that Add-on!

Now, onto the **Author** field. Just like with the previous list box fields the Author list box field works the same way. After typing in the author or a couple letters of the author's name, Track-It will search the Author table and if there is no match, you will be prompted with the message you've seen before asking if you want to input a new Author record. Click "Yes", and as before, Track-It will open the Add Author form which like the other Add forms only lets you edit the contents of the form while the rest of Track-It is frozen until you close the Add Author form.

You will also be tasked to input the author's web URL. You'll often see that on the add-on's webpage that the author's name is underlined or in a different color than from the rest of the ad text. Usually this is a link to the author's other products page. This is very handy information to know and keep track of. Click on the author's link to get to the author's webpage and then highlight, copy/paste the author's URL into the author's web address field. If all is correct, close the form (exit using the X in the upper right-hand corner).

Tip: If you ever need to abort an author entry, just like the other Add forms, simply follow the instructions at the bottom of the form and wipe clear the name field. After the Add form has closed you will still need to empty the list box field to cancel out the aborted entry (hit ESC key twice).

When you exit the Author field by use of the tab key, or Enter key, or even moving the mouse to another field, the author's URL will automatically appear in the field next to it the Author list box. Just as before, pressing the globe button next to the link field will open your browser to that webpage and you're looking at the author's other products.

Note! This concludes the upper portion of the Main Record Form. Very little typing was necessary for any of the fields covered thus far. Mostly, it's highlighting, copying, and pasting from the add-on's web page to its field of destination.

The next feature to discuss is accomplished via the **Insert Picture** button found at the bottom of the Main Record form.

So, the question is: how do we get an ad picture? Looking at the add-on's webpage again, you probably know that most of the time you can right-click on a picture and there will be an option to Save Image. That's how you do it, and make sure it gets put into the add-on's archived folder. Now, you could put all the ad pictures into a folder designated for just pictures but I don't suggest you do that. If you end up with having more add-ons than you thought, that folder could end up really big and make finding a single picture costly, time-wise.

If the "save image" option isn't available or if the picture has an unusable extension, then you'll need to resort to using a screen capture program in combination with a "paint" program to create a picture you that can put into the add-on's archived folder. I use the Print Screen button to capture a picture, and then I use a paint program (Affinity Photo) to crop the picture down to just what I need. Then I'll export the picture as a PNG and give it a sensible filename and save it to the add-on's archived folder.

Before covering the picture insertion method, I need to emphasize that "to see" a picture displayed in the Main Record Form, note that its a combination of the path stored within the File/Pic field AND the picture filename, which of course is included with the picture. But it's only the picture filename that's stored in the Picture table. Hence, you need both the File/Pic field and the picture to see a picture.

Tip: If you created the picture filename yourself, be sure it doesn't include special characters Windows can't use in filenames.

The Picture Frame can hold any number of pictures. Personally, I keep one or two pictures for each record because it's just as easy to jump to the add-on's webpage to re-familiarize yourself with the add-on.

Tip: While this hasn't been covered yet, pictures you might have wanted to add into the Product Description field are best inserted into the Picture Frame field instead. Because pictures in the Picture field are linked to the database and not embedded as they would be if stored in the Product Description field.

We're going to skip over the tags field for just a moment and discuss the **Picture Frame** field which is the large box centered in the form.

Examine the example Picture Frame field pictured right. Note that in the picture, and towards the bottom, are some functions. The first "red (x) looking" button is for deleting a picture. If a picture becomes unnecessary, or you accidentally inserted a blank, you can delete it by pressing the pinkish x button when the offending picture or blank is displayed. You will get an "Are you sure?" message before the deletion, and a cancel button is included in case you need to abort.

Next to the picture delete button is the picture filename. Note too that only the filename is actually stored in the Pictures table. Unlike the Product Description field where including a picture would be added to the data file, not so with pictures seen in the Picture field. These pictures are linked to and thus you can include pictures without affecting the size of the data file.

Over to the right side of the picture frame are picture resize options. You have three options where the first is Clip, then Stretch and Zoom. Select the size option which best resizes the picture to look best. The last resize option you select is saved to that record.

Within the picture frame and at the very bottom is the navigation controls for moving through the pictures if there is more than one. For the actual navigation explanation look to the Navigation Pane chapter.

I have a couple of cautions you should heed regarding navigation.

First, add the picture(s) into the frame in the order you would like the pictures to appear. Only one picture can be displayed at a time. Second, while navigating through multiple pictures don't navigate past the last picture, or you might add a blank picture by mistake. If you do, simply delete it using the pinkish delete picture button.

Below the picture frame are the next three fields within a large gray rectangle. They give a Situational Awareness for the add-on. These fields are opinion fields based on the user's judgment of the add-on. For me, I intended these fields as a means to "refresh my memory" of add-ons I've used and maybe, removed, and how I thought they best impacted my workflow. By "remove" I mean that the add-ons might no longer be in use for whatever reason.

So let's first start with the field, Status. Status is just like all the previous list boxes. Since it's functionality is the same and has already been discussed, let's discuss what Status is meant for. A good description would be to think of Status as the add-on's current disposition. For instance, is the add-on installed, or is it on a waiting list for testing? Is it useful or not?

In many instances, especially where Substance Painter (I own the Steam version) is concerned, I have a pretty large library of smart materials and I would like them all to be available when I'm in

Substance Painter. So, I have a status description which simply reads as "Installed" or "not installed" and I use these to describe most of the add-ons too. The best feature about Status is you get to customize your own list of Status descriptions.

Tip! How does one edit a Status, or for that matter, any list box description that's been added? Only through the table form for each list box can you do this. Do not try to edit a list box entry using the list box field. Track-It will see the revision as a new entry instead. See the Table Forms section for more on this.

Add Status

Status Description:

Explanation:

To abort: clear Status Description field and close the form.
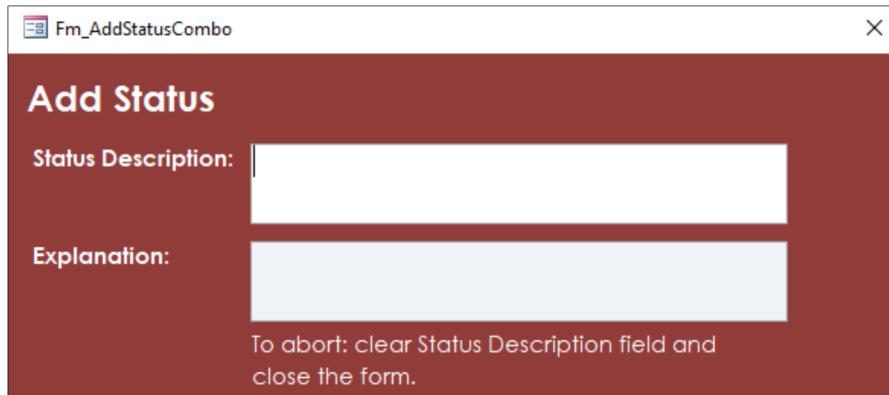
Moving on from Status is a field called **Rating**. Rating is arbitrary, as this field doesn't affect anything else in Track-It. Whether it's a numeric value or text, what you put into the field to represent your rating system is purely up to you. I use it as a fast means to determine what I thought of the add-on. Mine is 1 to 10 with ten being the best and one being not so good. You can also include text so if you prefer a short description like "really good", you can.

My Comments is a special field in that it can hold a large amount of text. That text can be formatted with text effects, though I will get more into that with the Product Description field as they are both the same kind of field. My intentions for the My Comments field were such that it would be used as a combination of 1) the history of the add-on, and 2) your feelings about the usefulness of it. You can come up with your own uses, as well.

I mostly use My Comments to make a diary of the add-on. For instance, I often record when a new add-on is purchased, and I'll include the date of purchase. Then in subsequent additions to the My Comments, and when there is an update, a brief description of the update. And then there are those times when I include a comment about if the add-on's usefulness measures up to the hype I read from the add-on webpage.

The way you should add comments to the MyComment field is to add the newest entries at the top and push the previous entries downward. Of course, that would push previous entries out of the MyComments field, right? By clicking on the third tab within the Main Record Form, a new tab form will open with a much larger MyComments field included and now you can see all the previous entries. Both fields are actually the same field. So whatever is typed into one of the MyComments fields will show in both fields. The amount of text you can put into either of the MyComments field is quite large so don't worry about running out of space.

Tip: If I may interrupt before talking about Product Description, I think it's important to point out the grouping of the fields that they are in fact organized into three groups. The first group, including what I call the taxi buttons which open up the web links and hard drive archives, are typical database stuff. Granted, there's not much because it's the web pages that's really meant to do much of the explaining what the add-on is about.

The second group, tags (which has not been discussed yet) and the Picture Frame field, are for recollection. I mean that these fields are to help invoke an instant recollection of that add-on even if its been months since you've seen it.

And the third grouping of fields, notably all within the large gray rectangle, are for Situational Awareness. When you need to know what's what with an add-on, the Status, Rating and MyComments field are provided to do just that. This is where Track-It becomes more than just a database. Just as the taxi buttons do likewise. They and the Situational Awareness fields put Track-It in its own category of databases, acting more as an instrument to help you know your inventory much further beyond than just relying on your memory can do.

The last field to cover on the Record Data tab is the **Product Description** field. Product Description is similar to My Comments though with Product Description this is where you will more likely format text to look more closely like the add-on's ad or just to make it look more fancy. Product Description can hold a lot of text.

Where does the information come from? Just like most of the other fields you will highlight information from the ad webpage itself. Then, copy/paste into the Product Description field. I don't usually copy everything all at once, usually I do it smaller sections. In the end, I want enough information copied that I have enough information that when I'm looking at an add-on, I have a good representation of what the add-on does. Right, is a small sample from one of my records.

What about the formatting, and different text fonts? How is that done?
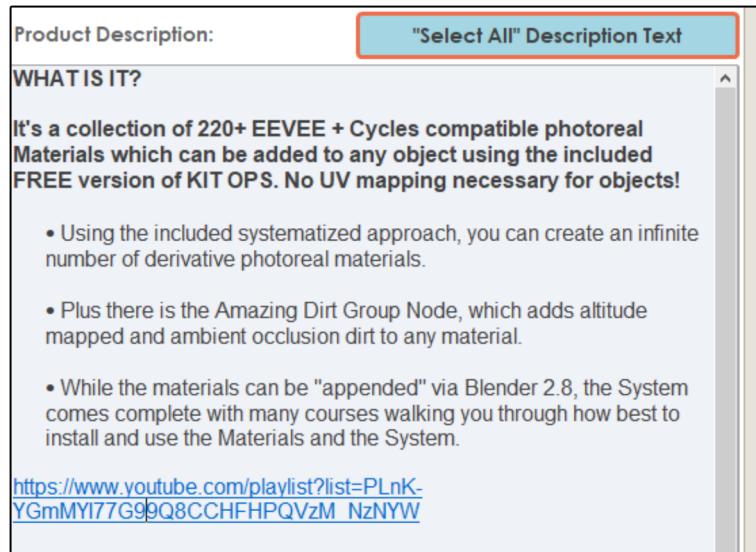
Note: partial screen capture using Chipp Waters Eevee & Cycles Material System Add-on for Blender

The first thing to do is highlight the text you need to affect. If it's all the text that needs formatting, use the button that's labeled "**Select All" Description Text**. That will highlight all the text in the Product Description field. If you need only a small amount of text, to effect, then use your mouse to highlight that text and in a moment, a small menu (called the mini-menu) will appear with text formatting controls. It works the same as the Text Formating controls in the Ribbon, but, has the annoying habit of disappearing when you need it the most. Worst, you can't just bring it back with a hot key. Instead you would have to re-highlight the text.

So it's better to use the **Text Formatting** section included in the **Ribbon menu** up top.

In the sample, pictured above, the use of bold text with bullets, indents and yes, you can include hyperlinks - that when clicked, will open in the browser, give your records a flair. Especially useful for linking to tutorials.

You can also include pictures, but I would discourage that because pictures inserted into the

Product Description field will be embedded into the data file, and that will increase the size of your database dramatically. An MS Access data file can only be 2 gigs big.

If you need to include a picture, use the Insert Picture option to insert pictures into the Picture Frame and make a note of that in the Product Description field. All pictures inserted via the Insert Picture are linked, and thus do not expand the size of the data file. To keep things organized include that picture within the add-on's folder to keep everything associated with that record, in one place.

Now, it's time to talk about the skipped over **Tags** field. The Tags field by itself on the Record Data tab is only a Repeater. It's non-editable but it does list the tags you've inputted for that record. To actually input Tags into the record you have click on the **Tags tab** and the add tags there.

There's only one field you need to be concerned with on this tab. And it's a list box just like the previous list boxes that have been mentioned. But first, a little tour of the Tags tab. The left side fields are read-only. They exist only to repeat the Product Title and the webpage link, which you
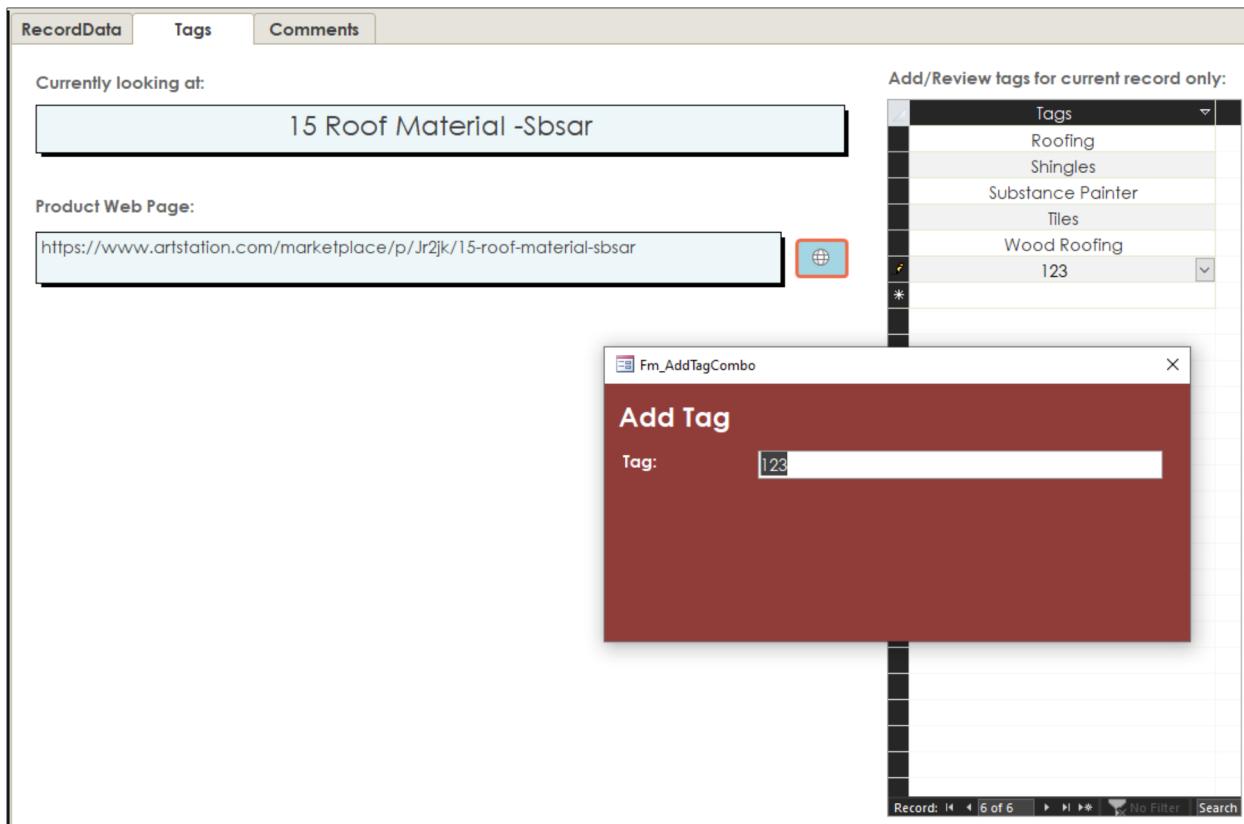
can open by clicking on the globe button next to the link. Both of these fields are for reference only.

On the right side of the Tags tab is the a list box where you can actually see a list. This is for inputting a multiple number of tags for the current record only.

In the example screenshot above, the tag field behaves the same as the previous list boxes covered. In the list box I had typed in the numbers "123" as the new tag which triggers the Add Tag form to open. Track-It automatically copies any list box entry to the Add form (which ever one it is). You can add to that text, in the Add form, or subtract text, even delete it if you wish to abort the entry.

In any event, to accept the new tag, I would need to press the (X) to close the form. The action of adding a new tag and closing the form only inputs the new tag into the Tags table. I still need to confirm the entry into the list box by choosing that tag from the down-down list.

Had I chosen to abort the entry within the Add Tag field, I would have first cleared the tag so the field is empty and then pressed the close button. Then, once the Add Tag form is closed, I would have cleared the tag remnants from the drop-down list by pressing ESC twice.

Tip: To delete a tag, select the row the tag is within inside the tag list. Then right-click on that row to bring up a small menu and then click on Delete Record. Important! This only deletes the tag for that record. Only from its Table form can you delete a drop-down list entry completely out of the database.

The tags repeater won't refresh until the data for tags is saved. The quickest thing to do to show all tags in the repeater is to press the Tags refresh button at the top of the form. Please note that pressing the Tags refresh button does not save the record. Use the Save Record button for that.

As explained earlier **MyComments** has its own tab, **Comments**. This extended version of the MyComments field is exactly the same data as what's in the My Comments field on the Record Data tab. Only it is enlarged so you can see all the data, at once, without having to use the scroll bar.
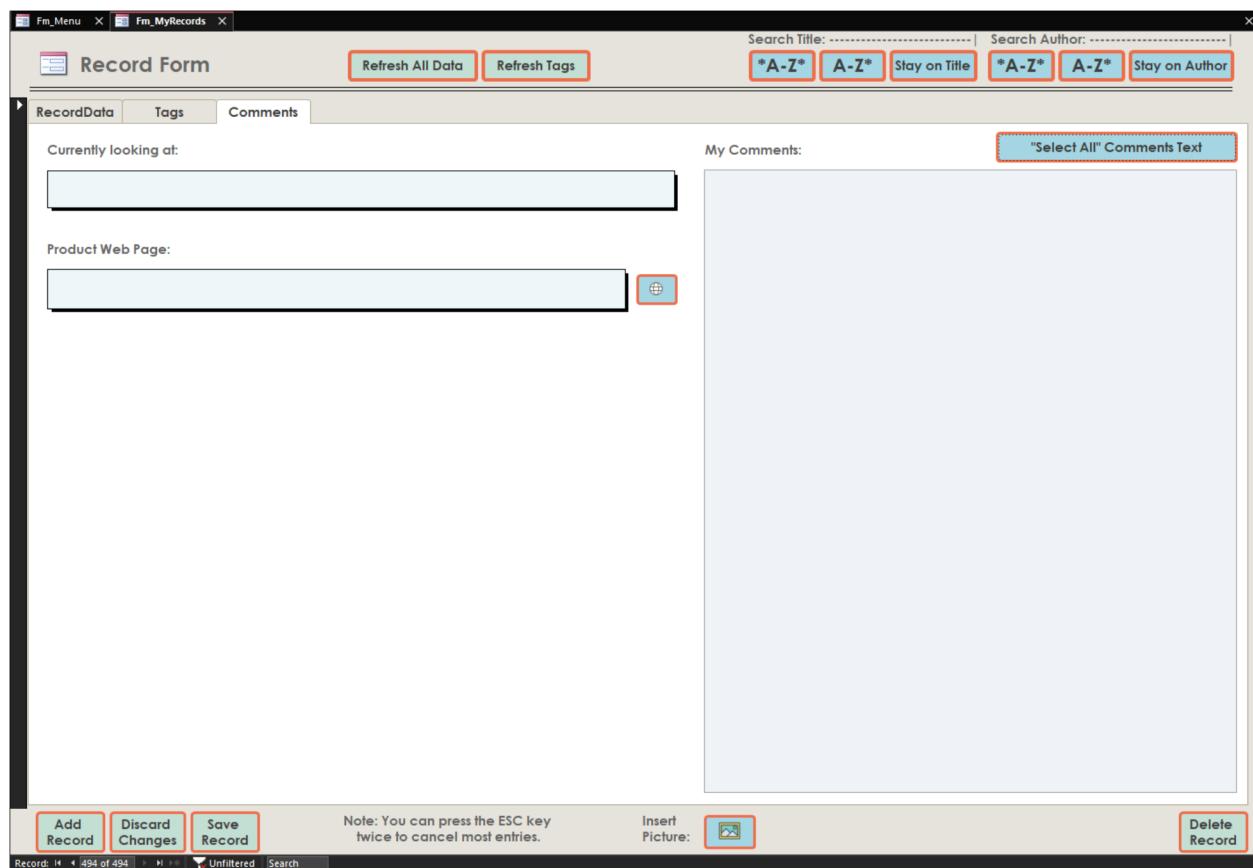
Just like the Product Description field having its own button to highlight all text, so does My Comments have the same function, using the "Select All" Comments Text.

You can format all the text at once or only a partial amount and use either the Mini-menu Text Formatting Controls or use the Ribbon's version of these same controls.

You can only "call" the Mini-menu text formatting menu by highlighting text. It's annoying and unpractical and a function of Access I have no control over as it disappears if you move the cursor away from the highlighted text.

In the tip below I'm only reflecting from my own personal experience with using formatteed text:

Tip: As an addendum for both Product Description and My Comments fields I wanted to explain my own procedures for doing text formatting. In general, when it comes to My Comments, I don't do much text formatting except to use Bold characters occasionally.

To format text in either the MyComments field or Product Descripton and while the text you want to effect is highlighted:

1) Use the **Select All Text button** to highlight all the text in that field all at once **OR** highlight the text you only want to effect:

2) Select the font controls, **Font and Font Size**. Because I'm usually in a hurry I will choose the top font selections which is usually Century Gothic (Detail) and then the font size of 12.

On many sites the text color is white, and the background is black. When copied into Track-It, these doesn't show in the MyComments and Product Description field very well (but they are there). Here is what I do to remedy that. I change the text color and text background to match Track-It's colors.

3) Change **Text Color** to **Automatic**.

4) Change **Background** to **No Color.**

These four suggestions will get you in the ballpark to getting your Product Description field looking first-rate. But this is only the start. You can add indents, bullets, etc. even links (just don't add pictures!).

Main Record Form - Functions

All around the Main Record form are buttons, navigational tools and search functions. These functions are an essential part of Track-It's workflow, so let's cover these. Please use the reference images of the Main Record Form shown in the previous chapter.

To start with, there are two buttons at the top for refreshing data displayed in the Main Record Form. The first, Data, is to be used should data end up not updating that you added via any of the Table Forms or Tags.. The second, Tags, happens when new tag data is added and they aren't updating on the Record Data tab. It's not that the data isn't being updated but rather the record hasn't been saved yet. Once the record has had a proper save everything will update as expected.

Next over are the Record Search functions. There are three buttons each for search, by title, or by author. Both sets of buttons work the same way. The ***A-Z*** button is a wildcard search. You don't type, or include, the asterisk as part of the search. Just type in the letters or numbers you need to find whatever it is you are looking for. An example might be you type in the letters c-a-t to get copycat, polecat, catalog, etc. Any author or title, whichever search type you are using, that includes c-a-t in that sequence will show up in the search.

The second button, **A-Z***, is a simple search with the letters you type in plus the wildcard. As with the previous button, you don't need to type in the * for a search character. Using the example given, "catalog" would be the only record found. With either search you can type in just one letter or one number, or any combination.

When a search is found, Track-It will display how many of the records were found. Be careful when browsing through the search results that you don't advance to a blank new record. If you do advance to a blank (or new) records, simply back track to the previous record and no new record will be added. Either way, once you have finished with the searched records, look down into the **Navigation Pane**, press the button labeled **Unfiltered**, and the search results will be closed. (See the Navigation Pane section for more information)

If a search is completed, and then canceled, Track-It will jump to the first record in the whole record set and no matter what Catalog option might have been chosen, the record display mode will revert to display all records.

Another option when wanting to leave the search is you can press either **Stay on Title** or **Stay on Author** buttons. This option is there in case you want to stay with the current record and close the search. The only downside of this is, if you came into the Main Records form via a Catalog option, the catalog chosen is forgotten and instead the Main Record form is now in display all records mode.

Now let's move to the colored bar running vertically down the left side of the Main Record form. There's a little triangle there called the Record Status and it mostly "acts" like a record pointer. You'll see this same triangle in most of the other forms in Track-It as well. The pointer is always pointing to the current record.

What is most important about the Record Status, is you need to pay attention to what mode it is in. The moment you make any edit to any field, the status pointer will change from a triangle to a different icon that looks something like a pencil. This change means the record is "dirty" or

unsaved because an edit has been made and hasn't been saved, yet. Any changes not saved can be lost if you exit Track-It before saving. With that said, movement to another, record or even exiting a form will force a record and any changes to be saved. To best ensure the changes to a record are saved, use the **Save** button. In any event, keep an eye on that Record Status so you know for sure your edits have been saved.

Tip! In other words, if you see the triangle you're in good shape.

Moving on down to the bottom of the form are four big buttons, **Add** record, **Discard** changes, **Save** record and **Delete Record** way on the other side of the form. The Delete Record button was too easy to hit accidentally so it was pushed away from the other buttons.These buttons only act on the current record displayed.

I need to point out that the **Delete Record** button deletes more than just the current record if there are tags and pictures associated with that record. They get deleted too because leaving them would mean a waste of space in the data file and those information would be "orphaned". Orphan data is not a good thing as its data left within the data tables that aren't associated with any record. Other field data like what's in the Author, Catalog, Vendor and Status field aren't deleted when a record is deleted. That information is only associated with a record. To delete any of those you would have to delete them from the Table forms.

Next door to the big buttons is an important message that says: "**You can press the ESC key twice to cancel most entries.**" This was discussed earlier when aborting new entries into any of the List Box fields. But it also applies to regular fields too. If you're inputting data and then decide to abort that entry, just press the Escape key twice and that field will become empty.

The **Insert Picture** button is a function of the Main Record form and its usage has already been discussed. There's nothing new to point out with this function, but it can't be said enough, make sure there is a path written in the **File/Pic** field when attempting to insert a picture. If there isn't a path in File/Pics the attempt will be aborted.

Next to the Insert Picture button are two buttons for altering the order of the pictures for a record. Labeled **Picture Order**, the two buttons, **Up** and **Down,** these buttons will move a picture up or down within the picture order for a record.

Normally you would want to insert each picture into a record in the order you expect to see them. But it's possible that down the road you need to insert a new picture or move one up or down to perfect the order.

To alter a picture's position the first thing to do is to have that picture you want to move on display. Then press one of the buttons to alter its position. Then, a message will appear saying the picture has moved. The display will refreshed and move to the first picture in the picture order. To move that same picture again, navigate to that picture and then press   one of the buttons again.

Tip: Bear in mind that within the picture order, for each record, you can only move the picture within the limits of the number of pictures for that record. If you press a button, either one, that exceeds the limits of that picture order, Track-It will display a message that you can't do that.

The Table Forms
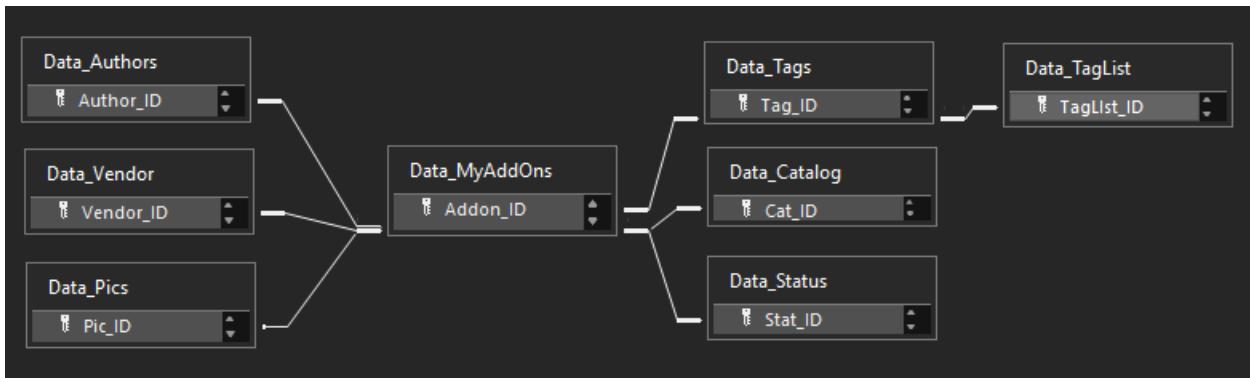
Track-It is what they call a relational database. Very briefly, just as making 3D modeling project, especially with scenes, often we link models in a scene. It reduces overhead and redundancy and gives the computer headroom in RAM for our scenes to be drawn more efficiently.

In a relational database this works the same. By having more tables handling specific information, redundancy is minimized. Each table holds specific if not unique data. Thus the overall data file is smaller, and there's little to no redundancy.

The picture above is all of the Track-It data tables and their relationships. Data_MyAddOns is the Add-on table. All the other tables feed data to the main record through number associations which act as linkages. Meaning, if you were to look into the Data_MyAddOns table, while you might expect to see a lot of repeated words, instead you will see numbers instead. When the Main Record Form is displayed you see names rather than the numbers.

This brings us back to the discussion on how best to input data into Track-It. What I call "standardized" input means "in the old days" we would put data into Table Forms until you had enough data that you would begin adding information into the Main Record form. However, I found it goes much faster and easier to input data instead into the Main Record form, as it fulfills two things at once; 1) filling out the record form is faster and 2), and it puts all the data into the appropriate tables for you.

Tip! In fact, the small forms you use when filling in the list boxes are essentially filling in the associated Table forms.

But that doesn't mean the Table Forms themselves aren't useful. I found the Table forms to be most useful when I encounter issues where I need to fix little things like misspellings or if a entry needs rewording.

Either way the Table forms are your best way to see what is in your data tables. The following pages are about the six Table forms. The accompaniment screenshots use fictitious "demo" data.

The Author Form

Author Table: Review / Edit / Add

Search by first letter/number. To return to "all records," press FILTERED button below.

Search

Author Name	Author Web Link	
Dietrich Laonne	www.dietrichlaonne.shl	🌐
Dontel Midridge	www.dontelmidridgeafterthoughts.new	🌐
Jenz Boolean	www.booleanforlovers.con	🌐
Raybold Cringe	www.cringe.cring.cri.letdown	🌐
Reginald albany	www.reginaldalbany.comm	🌐
Samuel Snodgrassy	www.samuelsnoddygrass.cot3	🌐
		🌐

Add Author   **Discard**   **Delete**   **Save Author**

Demo: Materials Haven 365	Display Only
Demo: UV Camel Trotter with Back Space Fail Safe	Display Only

Cancel search by pressing Filter button. Use mouse double-click in blue box to display record.

Record: 1 of 6   Unfiltered   Search

The Author form is accessed from the Menu and will open alongside any other forms which are currently open. Select the form by mouse-clicking on the Author tab at the top of the form when desiring to give it priority. Depending on how much author data you have will depend on how much of the form will be filled with authors. Since authors are plentiful the list will be most likely be longer than what the screen can display. You can scroll down the list using the vertical scroll bar to the right. Authors are listed alphabetically and not by the order in which they were inputted.

Each row of the listed author makes up an individual record. Note the position of the Record Status pointer, (the little white triangle). Where the triangle points to, that is the current selected record. To select another record, click anywhere on the desired record.

Tip: If you have information to put into any of the author's fields, you can use the copy/paste method of adding data into the Author form the same as you would do within the Main Record form when copying data from the webpage.

Use the search button to find author(s) records quickly. After pressing the **Search** button, a small form appears. Just fill in a letter, or more, but always begin with the first letter of the name. This search function works the same as on the Main Record Form, the A-Z* button. When matching records are found the list will narrow to only those records. This action, by the way, is called a filtered search. To close out the search and return to "all records displayed," press the button labeled **Filtered** down at the bottom of the form and within the **Navigation Pane**. The list will reset to all records displayed mode.

Tip: You can go from one search to another without having to reset the form.

If you want to see the author's webpage or other contributions, press the globe button next to the author's link. Make sure each Web URL entry starts with http:// or https:// or nothing will happen. It has to be a full path included within the field. You only need to press the globe button beside the author for the globe button to open the Author's URL. You don't have to select the author's record first to do so.

The Author form is unique from the other table forms in that as you select each Author, the add-ons', by that author will list in the box below. For lists longer than the box itself, a scroll bar will appear. Double-clicking on the name of the Add-on will open that record in the Main Record form.

Tip: You can jump from form to form, such as from the Author Table form to the Main Record Form by clicking with the mouse on the tabs above. If necessary, you can even drag any of the tabbed forms to a different order by clicking and dragging the form though horizontally only.

There are also four big buttons, and they are standard to all the Table Forms. Though, each Table form will have a couple of the buttons named slightly differently. The four buttons are: **Add Author**, **Discard**, **Delete** and **Save Author**. Let's review the buttons.

There are two ways to add an author into the Author form. The first and easiest way is to use the **Add Author** button. The second is to scroll down to the very end of the list and input a new author into the blank field there. Either way is fine but note that you cannot enter an exact duplicate name of a previous author. Track-It won't allow it and will even undo the attempt with a message compelling you to start over. Even records you only mean to edit, you cannot edit a record with the end result of it matching a previous record. If you suspect you might be inputting a duplicate author, make a typo or a change to it so the entry won't be denied. Then you can always go back to that entry, after you determined what is the cause of the duplicate, and retype the entry so no

duplicate is made.

The **Discard** button works the same as an undo feature. However, it is much easier to use the double-tap of the ESC key to abort.

Delete button. As it suggests it is for deleting an author. You could find there are times when Track-It won't allow you to delete a record if its determined another record is depending on the author you're trying to delete. In database terminology it's called Referential Integrity and it's meant to stop the accidental erasure of information.

Say, for instance, the user wants to delete an author in the Author form. What he/she many not realize is that author could be used in several records. Deleting the author would then leave the author field blank in those records. So referential integrity prevents that from happening.

So how do delete an author in the Author form? Looking down at the bottom of the form you'll see the records associated with that author. You will then have to open each record and change the author for each of those records. Once there are no dependencies on that particular author, you'll be able to delete the author using the Delete button. And this works the same for each of the other table forms where a deleting an author is necessary.

Another way to deal with this issue, if possible, instead of deleting the author, you can put a new author name into the same field. All the records shown below in the blue box will then be associated with the new author.

Tip! The only form that doesn't do the referential integrity check is Tags. Deleting a tag bypasses the integrity check and not only deletes the Tag but it will delete all references to that tag. Be carefule with this! But only in the Tag Table is this check ignored.

Save Author is the same as saving a record.

The Catalog Form

Catalog Table: Review / Edit / Add

Search by first letter/number. To return to "all records," press FILTERED button below.

Search

Catalog Name	Catalog Description	Catalog: Where Abouts
Demo Addon	Where there might have been a question of demo	same hard disk
Status Demo	For the written manual	Track-It packaging folder
Display Only	Visual creativity at its best.	Not nearly as expensive as one would think.

Add Catalog   **Discard**   **Delete**   **Save Catalog**

Record: I◄ ◄ 4 of 4 ► ►I ►* No Filter Search

The Catalog Table Form is an important part of your inventory data. All your records need to be in a catalog. While there is nothing special about a catalog it serves as a means to make sense of your inventory by grouping all the individual records into a larger framework. Track-It starts out with no catalogs and thus it's all up to you to create your own ideas on how to organize your add-on inventory via the Catalog concept.

Starting out with a completely customization database may sound fantastic, but it can be a big source of consternation for those "less than" organize prodigies. If you're naturally organized this will seem easy. However, to make the road to organization a little less rocky, Track-It has a neat feature that makes catalogs much easier to remedy if you didn't get it right the first time. Even if you are a long way towards inputting most of your add-on data, you can rename a catalog that better suits its content at any point. All you have to do is edit the offending Catalog Name field to one that is suited better and every record in that catalog will have that new name instantly. Just as we saw in the Author form, if the name isn't exactly right, you make it right by editing the Catalog record, and every record associated with it is fixed. This works the same in all the Table forms.

For instance, if you have a need to change the first catalog entry in the sample picture from "Demo Addon" to "Instruction Materials", you just type the correction into the Catalog Name field and every record within "Demo Addon" will now show "Instruction Materials" instead.

Knowing this should help alleviate the anxiety when starting from scratch and designing your own Catalogs. At the record level, changing Catalogs is just as easy. Find the record(s) that need changing and then simply change the Catalog field data to whatever the correct catalog should be just by clicking on the correct catalog in the list box.

Looking at the sample picture of the Catalog form it's easy to see that much of it is like the Author Table Form (minus the add-on list display box at the bottom of the form). The search feature behaves the same way as the search function within the Author Form. And this will be a repeated refrain for each of the upcoming Table Forms too.

Regarding the fields on this form, **Catalog Name** is self-explanatory. **Catalog Description** is self-explanatory too. But **Catalog: Where Abouts** does need explaining.

Catalog: Where Abouts is the field which represents where the data actually resides. In my own usage, most of my add-ons are in folders that reside on a portable hard disk. I keep the downloaded install file(s) and a picture from the ad webpage in each of my add-on folders. So for my **Catalog: Where Abouts** I put "external hard disk" in that field.

Tip! Regarding the deletion of a Catalog. Unlike the Author Table Form, listing all the records of a Catalog in a single box might not be practical. So how would one go about deleting a Catalog. You can't just delete a Catalog without resolving all the dependencies. Personally I would use any of the search functions in either the Main Record Form or the Compare Catalog form. Simply select the Catalog in the drop-down box at the top of the form and after doing so, double-click on each record to bring up that record. Then change the Catalog for that record and save it.

The Status Form

Fm_Menu   ✕   Fm_Status   ✕

Status Table: Review / Edit /Add

Search by first letter/number. To return to "all records," press FILTERED button below.

Search

Status Description	Status Explanation
Awaiting trial usage	Addon purchased/free but needs testing first.
In Use	Addon is in use as of this entry
Not In Use	Addons not in use as of this entry
Potentially very good	Addon purchased showing great promise.

Add Status   Discard   Delete   Save Status

Record: ◄ ◄ 1 of 4 ► ►► ►＊   No Filter   Search

A Status Description entry can be best thought of as, "what is the current disposition of the add-on?"

Because Track-It is versatile enough to keep track of any app for any tool you use in graphic design, Status Description, like Catalog, needs a thoughtful discourse on how the description of it will be decided. The list for Status Description can get pretty long if you're not careful.

Just like with Catalog, Track-It offers you a couple of quick remedies should a situation arise where a Status Description need changing. First, you can edit the **Status Description** field and all the records with that same Status Description will be changed to the new edit instantly. Second, and just as easy to do, is you can edit individual records by changing what's in the Status list box field. This can only be done with the help of the Status report which doesn't have the option of opening a record when clicked on. You literally can't because it's a report.

You can have as many Status Descriptions as you need. And if you need to track one down, the Search button opens a Search form, just as in the Author and Catalog forms. Input the criteria and after pressing the Enter key the list will narrow the list to records that match your search. And remember as before, the search criteria follows the example of **A-Z***.

To restore The Status Form to all records displayed, press the button within the navigation pane labeled **Filtered** (shown barely and beside the champagne glass looking icon in the sample form). Doing so will cause the list to refresh back to its original condition as if you had just opened the Status Form.

Note that the four standard buttons are below that have the actions for adding a record (**Add Status**), discarding changes (**Discard**), deleting a record (**Delete**) and save (**Save Status**).

If you need to edit a record, move the cursor to any field in that record and keep an eye out for the white triangle (or **Record Status**). Make sure it is pointing to the row that you intend to edit. In the process of editing the record the record status will change to something that looks like a pencil. That indicates the record is now "dirty" or in the process of a change. In fact, all the forms act this way. Only when the record status changes back to a triangle is that record actually saved. The easiest means to accomplish this is by pressing the **Save Status** button or just move the cursor into another record and click on it.

While on the subject of editing a Status Description, you cannot have two of the same name. That would be a duplication. Track-It does not allow duplication. Also keep in mind that capitalization does not have any bearing as far as duplication goes. The word Cat and cat will look the same to Track-It and will consider them the same.

The Tag Form

Tag	ID
3d model	20
alacrity	12
Animation	27
blurry destiny	7
demo	1
demo2	4
disco unwrap	15
Encryption Schemes	25
fake author	3
fakest author	6
Futeristic	22
Grid system	16
is	11
Mateiral Collection	28
meandering pixels	8
Normals	19
not real	2
not really real	5
PBR Materials	17
Purchased model	21
Rigging	26
sci-fi	23

Tags: Review / Edit /Add — Search

Search by first letter/number. To return to "all records," press FILTERED button below.

Add Tag | Discard | Delete | Save Tag

Record: 18 of 27 — Unfiltered — Search

The Tag form is where you can review, edit, delete or add new tags.

What is a tag? A tag is a word or words, and should be a very few at that, that you use to characterize an add-on or its features for use in a search. We see tags used all the time especially on the internet but mostly we don't pay much attention to them. Track-It's add-ons tags are handled differently and are an important function.

Let's say you are seeking an add-on that you remember has a specific feature. Using a tag as the search word may yield the results of those add-ons that are "like" what you need. Therefore, input good tags for good results. You'll get a better sense of the importance of good tags when you go through the Tags Comparison form.

Looking at the sample Tag form we can recognize the different features from previous Table forms so I won't repeat the instructions for those features. There is one difference, however, in that the Tag ID is displayed.

In the earliest versions of Track-It, while in development, tag duplication was found to be happening frequently and I revealed the Tag ID to distinguish what tag was a duplication and which one was not. There were more pressing needs at that time and only in the later development stages of Track-It that I thought to remove the Tag ID column. But, I didn't. And just to be cautious at that. In the meantime, if a duplicate Tag should arise, use the Tag ID to determine which is the duplicate and which is not. Rest assured I have not seen it happen in a pretty long time.

As mentioned earlier the Tag form resembles the previous Table Forms so there isn't much to say about this form that would be unique except when it comes to deleting a tag.

Unlike all the other Table Forms, deleting a tag bypasses the normal referential integrity check. Remember, the referential integrity check, checks to see if that which is desired to be deleted is in use by any record.

What happens is the user will be asked if they wish to delete the tag. A yes or no is provided. Answering no will abort the process and no records are deleted. Answering yes will continue the process and will produce another message displaying how many records will be deleted. The same message will also ask to continue or not.

Continuing the process will then delete all the records associated with that tag. And a message box appears, again, to confirm that. If the answer Is no, the process is aborted, and no records will be deleted. And a message box will appear confirming that.

If this process is aborted, the user can always use the Compare Tag button on the Menu form to open the Compare Tag form and then list all the records for the "not yet aborted" tag. Then, the user can open each record and manually edit the records to change or delete tag.

In regards to a deleted tag, Track-It not only deletes the tag from the tag list but any reference to that tag as well. Tags of all the Table Forms is probably potentially the most fluid in what might happen over time. It's taken me some time to form a permanent approach as to how to categorize the tag names I use and removing one that is no longer needed or works in that environment seems to be the best way.

The Pictures Form

| Fm_Menu | × | Fm_Pictures | × |

Pictures Table: Review / Edit /Delete

Search by first letter/number. To return to "all records," press FILTERED button below.

Line#   Picture Filename   **Search**

1	smiley2.png
2	royalty_free-picture2.png
3	Royalty-Free-picture.png
4	blurryworld.png
5	smiley3.png
6	future1.png
7	future3.png
8	future2.png
9	smiley2.png
10	smiley1.png

Delete   Note: # is a reference only field, it is not referencing any actual field in the Picture table.   **Save Picture**

Record: I◀ ◀ 1 of 10 ▶ ▶I ▶* ▼ Unfiltered   Search

While the name, Pictures Form, might suggest this is a table of images, that is not the case.

The Pictures Form is a list of just the filenames for the pictures that end up displayed in the Picture Frame. Chances are you will need this form very little since it's very easy to delete pictures right within the Main Record form. But if a filename might need editing, this is the place for that.

Like the other Tables, the Picture Table is likely to get very lengthy. Most file names will probably not be seen unless you scroll down (a scroll bar is available when the number of pictures exceeds the length of the form) to see them purposely or you do a search. Use the Search button to narrow the picture list to make an inspection of a record or to make editing more manageable.

An import aspect of the picture data needs attention at this point. What might not have been so readily apparent when discussing the Main Record Form is how else picture data for different kinds of Catalogs might be saved. I'll give my own experience in this:

When creating Catalogs at first, it's easy to plug-in names that you expect to have a large number of records. In my Catalog entry because I recognized I had a lot of instructional videos purchased from Udemy, I made up a Catalog of just Udemy videos. And that worked fine until I realized, because the videos are stored online, I don't have folders for them. And to complete a picture, you need both a folder and the picture to display it. The solution was simple and I created a folder called Udemy and stored a picture of each video I purchased there. So for all the Udemy records, they have one folder, called Udemy, and I reference that folder in the Files/Pics field.

But this can work for other situations as well. I also created a Catalog called Books & Videos. So I did the same in creating a folder called Books And Videos and I store their pictures there. And then in the Files/Pics field, I located that same folder and linked the Add-on record to it.

You might even be wondering where did I get the pictures for each of these videos to store? It is a little tedious but what I do is take a snapshot of the listed purchases in my account and then crop each picture out and save it to the folder. Then, with that folder full of pictures already created I use the Locate button in Files/Pics to be the link and then press the Insert Picture button at the bottom of the form. You do have to remember that when inserting pictures that you insert them in the order you want them to appear.

The Vendors Form

Fm_Menu ✕ Fm_Vendors ✕

Vendor Table: Review / Edit / Add

Search by first letter/number. To return to "all records," press FILTERED button below.

Search

Vendor Name	Vendor Link
Bring Z Fourth	www.bringztome.lamb
Free	www.freefreefree.com1
Shop Three Market	www.shopthreemarkettoo.nettles

Add Vendor   Discard   Delete   Save Vendor

Record: ⏮ ◀ 3 of 3 ▶ ⏭ ▶* ▼ Unfiltered   Search

The Vendors Form is the where your Add-Ons were acquired from. Anything qualifies as a vendor, even those that are for free. You'll probably want to distinguish those like creating a vendor entry named Free. Since it's your database, it's up to you what qualifies as vendor and most importantly how you wish to distinguish them.

The Vendor Form contains the same functions as the other Table Forms so we'll skip those things rather than repeat them here again.

Overview: Search & Compare Forms

The Search & Compare forms help you to "fill in the gaps" for decision making issues. They're very easy to operate. They weigh heavily in regards to Author, Catalog and Tags. First, we'll discuss the purpose of these forms.

Tip: Opening any of the Search & Compare forms will automatically close the other Search & Compare forms if they are open. Only one Search & Compare form may be open at any time.

Each form operates the same as the other, so learning one and you have learned them all. The Tags version of the Search & Compare differs slightly only in that you have to pick a tag before any list is displayed.

The Search & Compare forms have two featured functions. The forms can be used in other ways but we'll only discuss just the two functions here.

The first function of the Search & Compare forms is to limit the list to the author, catalog or tag selected in the list box. Remember how the Author Table form lists each title of an author when an author is selected? Each Search & Compare form does this too.

The second function, Compare, is because it's likely, if your inventory is large enough, you probably have some overlap in features from the different Add-Ons. Compare gives you a way to compare their records by allowing quick access to a record. This is done via tagging and I'll explain shortly.

Let's see how this works. Before or after a search, click a check-mark box in the record's row you want to comparison made. After its box is checked, that record will move upwards to the top of the list where other compared records will also move when their checkbox is marked as well. Records being compared are, 1) moved to the top of the list, 2) grouped together and, 3) alphabetized.

Records with check-marks are remembered until you clear them. You can build up a group of records to compare even through many searches. To see all the records to check marked for comparison, press the **Show All Records** button.

Once you have gathered all the records to compare, double-click within the title field of each check-marked record and that opens the Main Record form to that record. Go through each record, then access each webpage using the globe button, all the while seeing which Add-On becomes the best choice from your comparisons. While you can only view one record at a time in Track-It, the webpages that open in the browser will allow you for more scrutiny.

To summarize the process, the Search & Compare forms set you up so you are able to go through the check marked records making available to you the resources available to you .

The next three sections cover the Search & Compare forms but all three do what was described here.

Author Search & Compare Form

As the intro section described, the Author Search & Compare form is a two-step process in which the user first selects records to be compared, and then goes through those records in an effort to determine which add-on would best suit his/her needs. Note, this form when opened lists all the records by author, and alphabetically.

And please note as well, the only field available in the listing, for editing, is the check mark field.

The drop-down list box at the top of the form is for selecting an author. When an author is selected a list of all that author's products is displayed. This action will likely narrow the list dramatically.

The next step is to select records for comparison. Do this by clicking the check-box field in a record's row. Records here the Compare field is checked will be grouped at the top of the list automatically. Note: Records both checked and unchecked will be listed alphabetically.

You can continue with subsequent searches even with records selected for comparison, and you can do this without having to reset the list between searches. Records with check-marks will not forget their check-marks.

Once all the selections for comparison are made then reset the list to show all records. Use the **Show All Records** button to do this. As stated before, all the records checked for comparison will be grouped at the beginning of the list and in alphabetical order. The sample image shows this.

You are now able to make the comparisons by double-clicking on each record with a check-mark. This will open the record into the Main Record Form. You'll want to open each of the Add-On's being looked at via its **Webpage**, **Weblink**, **File/Pic** folder **View** button, even the **Author's** page if necessary. These buttons are there to assist you to get to the resource that helps you determine whatever the comparison is about.

Eventually, you'll want to clear all check-marks from all records. The **Clear All Comp.** button will do just that. It wipes every record clean in the whole data file of the comparison check-marks, visible or not. Make sure you want to clear all check marks before doing so!

Think of all that's been discussed here because Track-It works for you in an assistant role helping you to gather the information, all in one place, that you need to make your decision. Whereas in the past you might have had to make a decision depending on just what you were able to remember, or find. Track-It gives you the ability to make comparisons directly and with as much information as possible, all in one place. Your decision-making will be much more efficient and accurate, if not easier and faster.

Below is a list of each button and its function:

Clear All Comps - Clears the whole record set of any check-marks.
Show All Records - Displays all the records within the record set.
Print Comps - Prints a report of all the records with Comps check-marked.
Print This Author - Prints all the add-ons represented by the author listed in the list box.

Below is a a sample report to either/screen or printer using the Print Comps button. It prints a report listing all the Add-On records that have been check marked for comparison. A handy to-do list, if you will.

Compare List   Date: 5/30/2025

	Title	Author Name	Catalog
☑	Demo: 3D Model of Futuristic Bldg	Jenz Boolean	Demo Addon
☑	Demo: Rigging Intensify	Raybold Cringe	Demo Addon
☑	HDRI Randomizer	Samuel Snodgrassy	Status Demo

*Sample print using the **Print Comps** button report (Author Search & Compare (left))*

Catalog Search & Compare Form

Sample 1: Catalog Search & Compare when first opened.

Sample 2: Catalog Search & Compare with records check-marked for comparison.

Sample 3: Catalog Search & Compare with records listed matching a Catalog from the List Box.

By Richard Garber

The Catalog Search & Compare form works the same as the Author Search & Compare Form, except the focus is on the Catalog table. The previous page is three partial screengrabs of samples of how a Search & Compare form might look in various situations. In the first situation, it shows the Catalog Search & Compare form when it is first opened. All the records are listed by Catalog and in alphabetical order with no records checked yet for comparison.

The second sample is of the Catalog Search & Compare form showing three records check marked for comparison. Records with the check-box filled in are always at the top of the list and also in alphabetical order. Note: the rest of the records, which are unchecked, are in alphabetical order too.

The third sample shows the Catalog Search & Compare form with a catalog selected within the List Box. Only records that match the catalog shown in the List Box are listed. And they too are in alphabetical order.

Let's cover the steps of comparing records. Normally, when this form is opened the listing should be complete void of any records that are check marked. So the first step is to gather up all the records that need comparing to the top of the list. The reason for doing this is to make it easier for you to follow along knowing what records have been compared.

So to begin the process of gathering records to compare is to find those records either by selecting a **Catalog** from the drop-down list and then selecting each record, or, scrolling through the list finding each record to compare and then placing a check mark in the record's row that needs comparing. Doing the first option, find records by using the Catalog drop-down list is the easiest and made even easier that you can re-select another Catalog without having to reset the list. This will keep the list shorter and it won't deselect any records that have a checkmark. If at any time you need to reset the list, you can do so by pressing the **Show All Records** button and the list will then update to display all records but your checkmarks will remain intact.

So the last step, or steps, is to see each record with the check mark. voa the Main Record form by double-clicking on the **Product Title** field. Doing so will open or refresh the Main Record form to the checkmarked record. All the functions of the Main Record form will be at your disposal allowing you to use every resource you have for that Add-On to work on your behalf helping you to eventually decide which Add-On is best suited for the purpose you were looking for when you first started the comparison.

The **Print Comp** button is for your wish to see a version of the list of all the check marked records in a report. The same thing was discurssed in the Author Search & Compare Print Comp button feature. Note: It prints to the screen first but you also have the option to print to a hard copy or PDF via the **Ribbon's Report Options** section.

When you're finished, you have the option to clear all comparisons. Use the **Clear All Comp**. button to do this. But be aware that this action clears all check-marks, visible or not through-out the data file.

Tag Search & Compare Form

The Tag Search & Compare form is very similar if not exactly the same as the two previous Search & Compare forms however there are differences visually and internally. Let's first remember that Compares create basically a to-do list for the user. The user does all the comparing but what Track-It does is group those records that need comparing, together, so if you will, everything is in one neat tidy grouping.

The first thing that happens when the Tag Search & Compare button is pressed (i.e. from the Menu), is, Track-It will first search to see if any records are already marked for comparing. If so, a message will opt the user to delete or keep the current Compares. Should the user opt to keep the Compares then opening the Tag Search & Compare form is aborted. If the user opts to delete the Compares, then all the check-marks will be deleted and a second message appears that the user needs to select a tag from the List Box when the form opens.

An explanation here is needed. Comparisons for Tags is handled differently than comparisons for Author and Catalog.

Unlike the previous Search & Compare forms, there is no "all records displayed" mode. Our goal here is to do comparisons based on a tag(s). Did I just say tags? Yes, with this form you can search on different tags and not just one tag. You'll check-mark records just as you did with the previous Search & Compare forms. However, they all won't appear all at once until you press the Only Comp button.

Next to the List Box are five buttons:

Clear All Comps (Clear All Compares) – Pressing this button will clear all records of any Compares as if, creating a "brand-new slate" to work with. There is an option to abort this function with an "Are you sure?" message if it's necessary.

Only Comp (Only Compares) – This function replaces the display all records mode with "display all Compares" instead. As in the other Search & Compare forms this function groups all the records given a check-mark into a list. From here the user would do their comparing between the records by double-clicking the record title (blue box) and if necessary, clicking on the globe button to open the add-on's webpage in the browser.

Print Comp (Print Compares) – Sometimes it might be a good idea to print the **Only Comp** list for reference. As with all the other print options you'll have the ability to print to screen or to a hard-copy.

Reset – This button is more optional and less necessary as the user gets used to the way this form operates. When someone is first getting used to this form, it can feel almost necessary to press the

Reset button after each search. But that is not necessary. And note that the Reset button doesn't clear check marks so it doesn't effect anything but it does clear the screen for more searching. So, you can do one search right after another using the Reset button or not.

Print Tag – If you need a print-out of a tag and the records that include that tag, you can press this button. Initially it will print the print-out to the screen, or you can use the Ribbon print functions to print hard-copies.

Tip: A word about the List Box. You can type the first letter of your tag target as the list is displayed to get your selections nearer to your tag. However, the List Box will likely insert the first tag which matches your letter or number input. And you probably won't want that. Click the List Box down-arrow again and this time the List Box will now show a listing closer to your intended tag. This is done to keep the List Box speedy. Tags is likely to be the longest list of all the tables, by far, and keeping Track-It speedy is important.

About the ID field to the right. This is the same ID number you will or would find in the Tag Table form helping you to determine which tag might be a duplicate. Since adding the duplicate prevention routines throughout Track-It, I have not had an issue with duplication since. But if you do have an incident, comparing the ID(s) will assist you in determining which of the duplicates needs to be deleted.

How does one select a record for comparison? You only need to click on the checkbox. Where there is more than one record for that tag, checking the checkbox for that record will group that record to the top of the list or near it with other check-marked records (i.e. if there are any). Clicking the check box again will clear the check box and the record is no longer tagged for comparison and will return to its place with all the other records that are unchecked.

And as with the other Search & Replace forms, double-clicking on the Product Title will open the Main Records Form to that record.

The listing is alphabetized.

Below is a sample screenshot of a Print Comp listing.

Compare List		Date: 5/30/2025
Product Title	**Tag Name**	**Catalog**
☑ Blender UV Unwrapping Disco	Grid system	Display Only
☑ Demo: 3D Model of Futuristic Bldg	Futeristic	Demo Addon
☑ Procedural Materials	Material Collection	Demo Addon

Sample print of Print Comp (button) report from Tags Search & Compare form
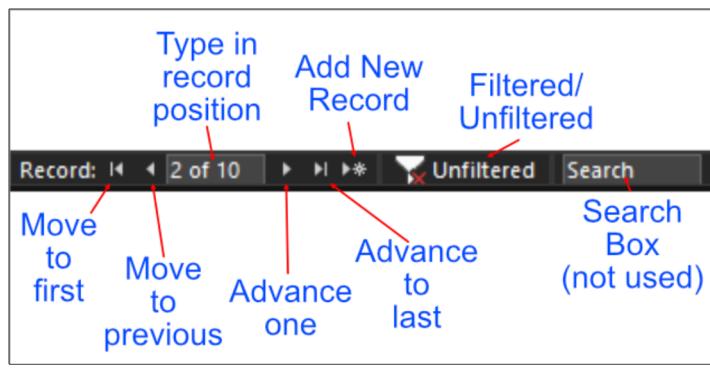
Navigation Pane

Navigation Pane: Example 1

Navigation Pane: Example 2

Pictured above is the Navigation Pane seen where the function to move from one record to another is available. If a search is in process, the Navigation Pane will then look like the second example above. The best example of the Navigation Pane is in the Main Record form where the user can move from one Add-on record to another, and in the Picture Frame field where the user can move from one picture to another..

Let's cover this navigation tool from left to right. This is very much the same as the typical icon controls you see in a media player. In Track-It, the first icon when clicked takes the user to the first record of a data set. The second icon when clicked takes you back one record. If you are at record five, for instance, this action will take you back to record four. Note that when you can't go backwards any further, the icon is grayed out like in the second example above (example 2).

The third icon isn't an icon but a field. And this field represents the record position within a record set. Using the Example 1 from above, the user is on position 2 of 10 records. Do not mistake the record position as the record ID. For one thing, records are displayed in alphabetical order. Second, a record can be in different record positions depending on the record set displayed.

The fourth icon, when pressed, will advance the user to the next record. Take care when using this icon because if you move past the last record in the record set, that is potentially a new record, even more so if you start adding information into it. If you do advance into a new record, just advance backwards and that new record, because it was not saved, will be discarded.

The fifth icon, when pressed will advance you to the last record in the record set.

The sixth icon or the triangle and the asterisk, is where you can also add a new record. Personally I never use this since there are much easier ways to do add a new record.

The next icon that looks like a champagne glass is the Filter/Unfiltered toggle button. Normally this button will have the look of the Example 1 which reads Unfiltered. It's when it takes the look of Example 2 and reads, Filtered, then you want to take notice.

The Filtered/Unfiltered is a Search indicator but also acts to cancel a Search. If you see Unfiltered there's no search in progress. But if you see Filtered, then a Search is in progress with records

found and only those found records will be displayed. To exit the search, you only have to click the **Filtered** button and Track-It will cancel the search and return to the first record of the data set and all records are displayable.

Tip: A useful feature for this button is you to toggle between the last search results and all records displayed. As an example, say you hastily exit from a search too quickly and need a moment to see the search results again. Pressing the Unfiltered/Filtered button again will revert back to the last searched results.

The last field box, Search. is for instances where you want to find a word, in any field, that matches the word you inputted into the field box. This will search through all the fields on the form and through the data set. There's no prep to this search, simply type the word into the search box and Track-It will find the matching word, whatever field it might be in, and display that record.

Tip: Regarding the Search box field, it's a function of the Navigation Pane which is a function of Microsoft Access and not tailored directly to Track-It. Hence I've had little satisfaction in getting the results I would normally expect. Hence, use this function at your own discretion. It won't harm anything to use it though.

Reports Intro

The **Menu** provides a section to print reports based on:

- **Author**

- **Catalog**

- **Status**

- **Product Title**

- **Vendor**

Tip: Each report covers the whole of your inventory data so be aware these reports can be very long if you have a large inventory.

All the reports print to the screen initially. You'll only see the first page but each page of a report is viewable using the Navigation Pane found at the bottom of the screen. The options for all the reports are explained below.

Tip: The options are, and with the report open and in conjunction with Report Options (Ribbon), the following are available:

1) **View Report** - most economical because it prints to the screen with no page breaks and displays the whole report. (default option)

2) **Preview Report** (like a print preview) - displays to screen one author, per page.

3) **PDF** - highly recommended of all the hardcopy options, Allows you to see the whole report, even offline, and at your convenience because it creates a PDF file. Great for a back up solution substitute too.

4) **Quick Print** - immediately and without hesitation or warning, prints a hard copy of the whole report, no options given. Not a good option but it's there if you need it.

5) **Print** - opens the Windows print dialog where you have options like print a single page to range you specify.

The following pages show a sample report screen snapshot of each report. The sample database was used.

Report: Author

Author Report		Date: 5/2/2025
Product Title	**Status**	**Catalog**
Dietrich Laonne		
Demo: UV Camel Trotter with Back Space Fail Safe	Not In Use	Display Only
Demo: Materials Haven 365	In Use	Display Only
Dontel Midridge		
Demo: Boolean Or Not (Etched Lines)	Not In Use	Demo Addon
Jenz Boolean		
Demo: First Addon in Track-It	In Use	Status Demo
Procedural Materials	In Use	Demo Addon
Demo: 3D Model of Futuristic Bldg	Awaiting trial usage	Demo Addon
Raybold Cringe		
Demo: 2nd procedural vortex materials	Not In Use	Status Demo
Demo: Rigging Intensify	In Use	Demo Addon
Reginald albany		
Blender UV Unwrapping Disco	Awaiting trial usage	Display Only
Samuel Snodgrassy		
HDRI Randomizer	Not In Use	Status Demo

*Choosing the **Author** report button from the menu will print to screen and/or hard copy something like the above. Each author and their contributions in your inventory is included.*

Report: Catalogs

Catalog Report   Date: 5/2/2025

Demo Addon

Title	Author
Demo: Boolean Or Not (Etched Lines)	Dontel Midridge
Demo: 3D Model of Futuristic Bldg	Jenz Boolean
Procedural Materials	Jenz Boolean
Demo: Rigging Intensify	Raybold Cringe

Display Only

Title	Author
Demo: Materials Haven 365	Dietrich Laonne
Demo: UV Camel Trotter with Back Space Fail Safe	Dietrich Laonne
Blender UV Unwrapping Disco	Reginald albany

Status Demo

Title	Author
Demo: First Addon in Track-It	Jenz Boolean
Demo: 2nd procedural vortex materials	Raybold Cringe
HDRI Randomizer	Samuel Snodgrassy

*Choosing the **Catalog** report button from the menu will print to screen and/or hard copy something like the above. Each catalog in your inventory is included.*

Report: Status

Status Report   Date: 5/2/2025

Product Title	Catalog
Awaiting trial usage	
Blender UV Unwrapping Disco	Display Only
Demo: 3D Model of Futuristic Bldg	Demo Addon
In Use	
Demo: First Addon in Track-It	Status Demo
Demo: Materials Haven 365	Display Only
Demo: Rigging Intensify	Demo Addon
Procedural Materials	Demo Addon
Not In Use	
Demo: 2nd procedural vortex materials	Status Demo
Demo: Boolean Or Not (Etched Lines)	Demo Addon
Demo: UV Camel Trotter with Back Space Fail Safe	Display Only
HDRI Randomizer	Status Demo

*Choosing the **Status** report button from the menu will print to screen and/or hard copy something like the above. Each Status Description in your inventory is included.*

Report: Product Title

Product Title Report   Date: 5/2/2025

Product Title	Author	Catalog
Blender UV Unwrapping Disco	Reginald albany	Display Only
Awaiting trial usage		
Demo: 2nd procedural vortex materials	Raybold Cringe	Status Demo
Not In Use		
Demo: 3D Model of Futuristic Bldg	Jenz Boolean	Demo Addon
Awaiting trial usage		
Demo: Boolean Or Not (Etched Lines)	Dontel Midridge	Demo Addon
Not In Use		
Demo: First Addon in Track-It	Jenz Boolean	Status Demo
In Use		
Demo: Materials Haven 365	Dietrich Laonne	Display Only
In Use		
Demo: Rigging Intensify	Raybold Cringe	Demo Addon
In Use		
Demo: UV Camel Trotter with Back Space Fail Safe	Dietrich Laonne	Display Only
Not In Use		
HDRI Randomizer	Samuel Snodgrassy	Status Demo
Not In Use		
Procedural Materials	Jenz Boolean	Demo Addon
In Use		

*Choosing the **Product Title** report button from the menu will print to screen and/or hard copy something like the above. Each title in your inventory is included.*

Report: Vendors

Vendor Report   Date: 5/2/2025

Product Title(s)	Status	Catalog
Bring Z Fourth		
Blender UV Unwrapping Disco	Awaiting trial usage	Display Only
Demo: 3D Model of Futuristic Bldg	Awaiting trial usage	Demo Addon
Free		
Demo: 2nd procedural vortex materials	Not In Use	Status Demo
Demo: Boolean Or Not (Etched Lines)	Not In Use	Demo Addon
Demo: First Addon in Track-It	In Use	Status Demo
HDRI Randomizer	Not In Use	Status Demo
Procedural Materials	In Use	Demo Addon
Shop Three Market		
Demo: Materials Haven 365	In Use	Display Only
Demo: Rigging Intensify	In Use	Demo Addon
Demo: UV Camel Trotter with Back Space Fail Safe	Not In Use	Display Only

*Choosing the **Vendors** report button from the menu will print to screen and/or hard copy something like the above. Each vendor in your inventory is included.*

Update Notifications Review

Many vendors often send emails regarding their product(s) updates. If you have a large enough inventory this can get daunting to try to keep up with all of them. With Track-It, you have a solution with the **Update Notifications Review** form which is accessible from the Menu.

When you receive such a notice and you don't have the time to do the update, click the **Notified Of Update** check box on the Main Record form. That's all you have to do. Doing so flags the record as needing attention. This form acts as a to-do list so you can keep track of all records needing attention because of an email or even some other reason. Here, you can also double-click the Product Title field to bring up the Add-On record in the Main Record form.

Tip: Keep track of the update particulars in the My Comments field!

If you need a hard copy of this list or just wish to print the list to the screen, press **Show Report** and a report will open (see sample report below).

In time when you're finished doing the update, remove the check mark from either the Update Notification form or the Main Record form and that record will no longer appear on this list.

Tip: The add-on appears on the list as long as you leave that box check marked on the form. If another notification happens, annotate that in the My Comments field (include date) as well.

Sample print from Update Notifications Review form (Show Report button)

Always Install

In the event you have to do a reinstall of any of your graphic tools and there are add-ons involved that need to be reinstalled with it, Track-It gives you a handy solution to keep track of those "essential" Add-Ons. Just as with the Update Notifications Review form, click the check box **Always Installed** on the Main Records form. Doing so flags that record to appear on the Always Installed form which like Update Notifications Review form, acts like a to-do list when its time to upgrade your software.

Tip: You can use the MyComments field to explain what software tool the Add-On is for, if necessary.

To open this form, press the **Always Install** button on the Menu. This form operates the same way as Update Notifications Review. You can access any record listed by double-clicking on the Product Title. Clicking the check mark box on/off will affect the record's listing but when the form is opened the next time. Or you can use the Refresh button in the Ribbon for faster updating.

You can create a hard copy or screen report (see below) of the list by pressing the Show Report button.

Sample print from Always Install form (Show Report button)

The Ribbon Intro
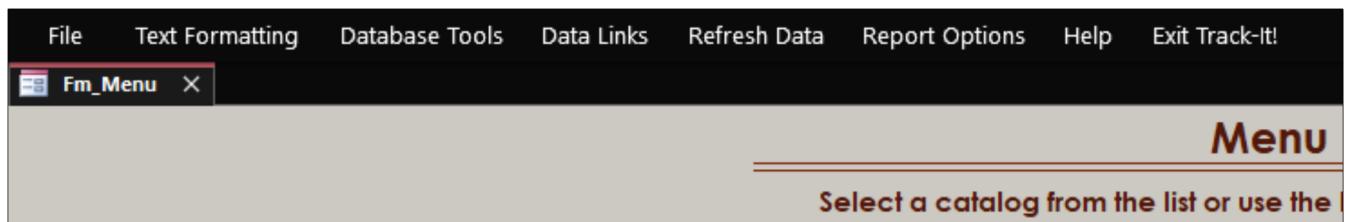
And finally, the last section to be covered is the Ribbon. It is just above each form and changes its appearance depending on the form or report. Basically the Ribbon is for special situations such as formatting text, database functions, changing database locations, report options, etc. There are functions which will invoke forms that complete the function. All this will be covered in the following pages.

<u>The Ribbon - Text Formatting</u>

Text formatting is mostly intended for the Product Description and My Comments fields on the Main Record form. There is instructions of how the Text Formatting controls are used for both fields in the Main Record section.

For these controls to work, first, text needs to be highlighted, then select the text formatting option you wish to use.

<u>Controls are</u>:

- **Font** - will list those fonts available on your computer.

- **Font Size** - will list those size changes available to that font.

- **Font Color** - will change the text to the color selected.

- **Background Color** - will change the background of the text to the color selected.

- **Bold** - changes text to bold.

- **Italic** - changes text to italics.

- **Underline** - will underline text.

- **Align Left** - text selected will will shift left.

- **Center** - text selected will shift to the middle

- **Align Right** - text selected will shift to the right.

- **Bullets** - for all text selected will create a period in front of the text

- **Numbering** - for all text selected a line number is added to the front of the text

- **Increase Indents** - for all text selected will indent the line(s)

- **Decrease Indents** - for all text selected will remove the indent for the line(s)

The Ribbon - Database Tools
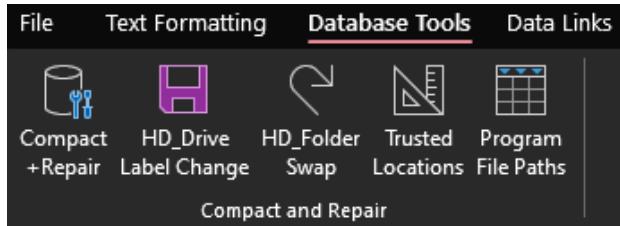
The Database Tools section contains some handy tools for maintaining the database and fixing possible issues. Each tool is covered but briefly let me explain them here.

Compact And Repair - This tool is intended for the data file. What this tool does is reduce the data file size and scour the data file for issues that could become problematic. The maximum size of a data file is two gigs. While you're likely to never see a file size this large the reason to compact a database is to reduce some of the overhead that builds up inside over time. Before doing any function that effects the data file like this, it's best to do a backup of the data file. The Compact And Repair function includes making a backup of the data file.

Drive Label Change - This is meant only for hard disk locations, internal or external. I've encountered this issue a lot where because I use a portable hard disk to hold the archives, if I change to a different USB port, Windows might change the drive letter. This would invalidate the paths in the database file causing 'things', like links or pictures, to be obsolete. In the event you have this happen to you, if the drive letter is the issue, changing the drive letter will fix it.

Folder Change - This too, is only meant for the hard disk. This features allows you to change the folder name on both the hard disk and within the database – at the same time. It's an easy and safe function to use but some caution should be exercised in that you are altering the contents of a hard drive. However, **Folder Change** will not let you alter, create or delete any parental directories or drive paths for the folder you are changing. The only change you can effect is the folder name.

Trusted Locations - You're likely to encounter this issue where a security message appears when you run Track-It. MS Access, full version or Runtime, if it isn't familiar with the location Track-It is running from, will produce a message saying as such. To get MS Access to trust the folder the front-end file is running from, use this function.

Program File Paths - This form is strictly used for referencing the two files Track-It uses. Both the front-end and back-end file paths are displayed. There is no editing allowed on this form.

Tip: A singular behavior of each of the Database Tool forms, when they are opened, is they will close all open forms (including the menu) which are currently opened. No other Track-It function will be available while the Database Tool form is opened. But when the Database Tool form is closed, the Menu form will reopen and all Track-It functions are back to normal usage.

Compact And Repair

This function is for the data file (back-end) and what it does is reduce the size of the file. How often you effect this function is up to you. This function also creates a backup of your data as a separate file so you're actually getting two benefits from this procedure.
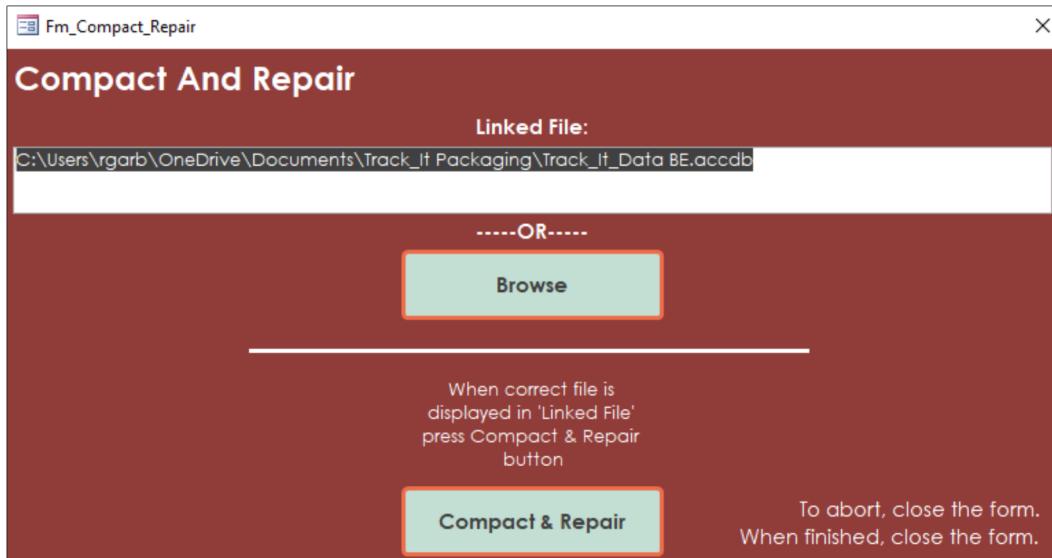
Clicking on the **Compact + Repair** icon within the ribbon will bring up the form above, but it also closes every other form/report that is open. It also automatically inserts the linked file location of your data into the **Linked File** field.

Normally, the first step is to press the Compact & Repair button. A message box will appear that the process has been completed and acknowledges a backup has been made as well.

The backup dat file has an unusual extension. It's actually embedded the current system date after the accdb extension. Subsequent backups will accumulate after each running of the Compact And Repair form. It's perfectly fine to use this feature for a backup routine.

However, should you have other data files you'd like to compact and backup as well, use the **Browse** button to locate those files and press the Compact & Repair button again. Wherever the data file is located it will be compacted and a backup is made.

When you are finished, either to abort or to finish, close this form using the Window (x) button in the upper right. As soon as you do this the Menu will reappear.

Drive Label Change (Hard Disk)

For any reason the hard disk drive letter has changed for your archives, you can use this form to quickly remedy the issue.

After pressing the **HD_Drive Label Change** icon in the Ribbon, the form (below) opens. In the first field you will insert the drive letter you are changing. In the second field you will type in the new drive letter. For normal operation, don't include any special characters like the colon or slash. Just the letters are all that is needed.
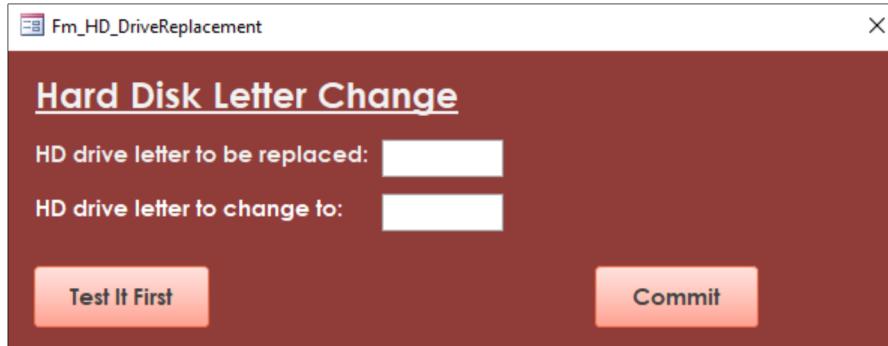

The **Test It First** button gives you the option to see what the change will look like without any edits being made. Two message boxes will appear, one after the other. The first one explaining that no change to the data will take place for the test. And the second message box will show what the new path will look like with the new drive letter in place. This is just a little added extra reassurance everything will go as planned when the **Commit** button is pressed.
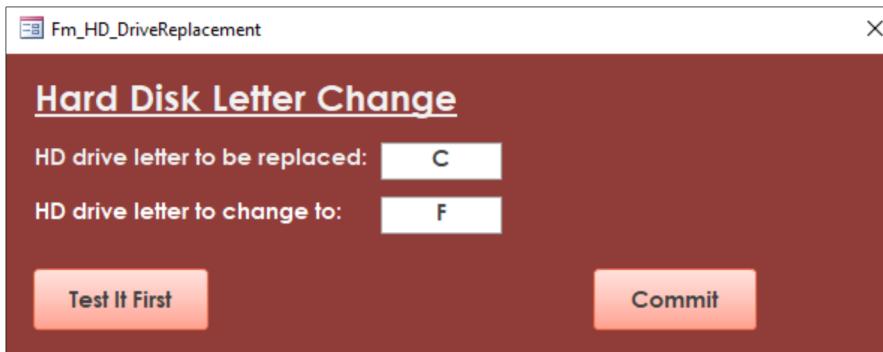

Above is our example before commiting. Drive letter C is being replaced with drive letter F. To see what the results will be without editing the data, press the **Test It First** button. Let's do that.

After pressing the **Test It First** button, the first message box (next page) will explain this is only a test and no data will be changed.
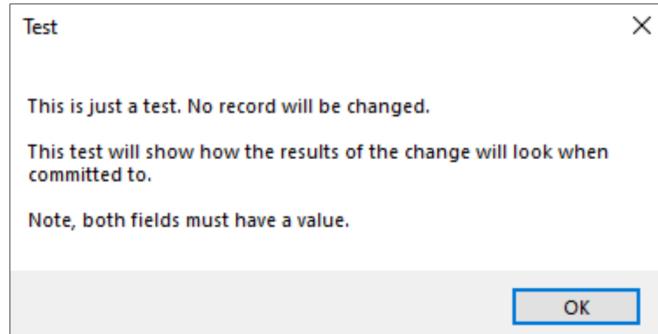
Pressing **OK** will replace the first message box with a second message box showing the result of the test. (see second message box below)
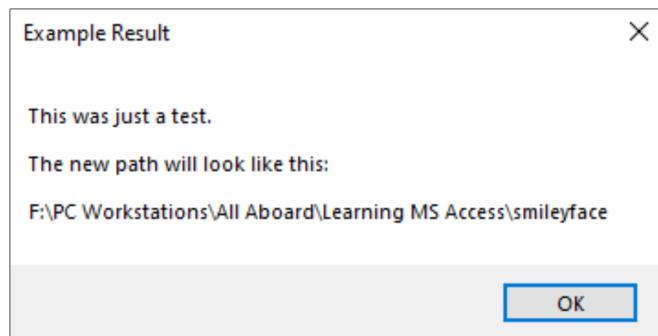
Not until the **Commit** button is pressed will data actually be changed.

Tip: You might be wondering what happens if more than one hard disk location is used and there are different drive letters in use? Depending on your needs, you'll need to run the Hard Disk Letter Change form for as many times as you have different drive letters that need to be changed. Only the letter set to be changed, will see a change.

For instance, let's say you have records pointing to data on different drives, like C and D. You would run the form twice for each drive letter to replace. In other words, drive paths for C won't be changed if you've selected D as the drive path to change.

And what if you want to combine two drive letters to just one? You can do that by making sure both times the form is run, that both times the drive letter to change to, is the same letter.

Keep this in mind. **Only the letter you typed in the first field, will those records be effected**. So in the first example regarding the drive letter C, Track-It only changed those paths that started with a "C". If you had paths that started with a D, those records are ignored.

Folder Change (Hard Disk)
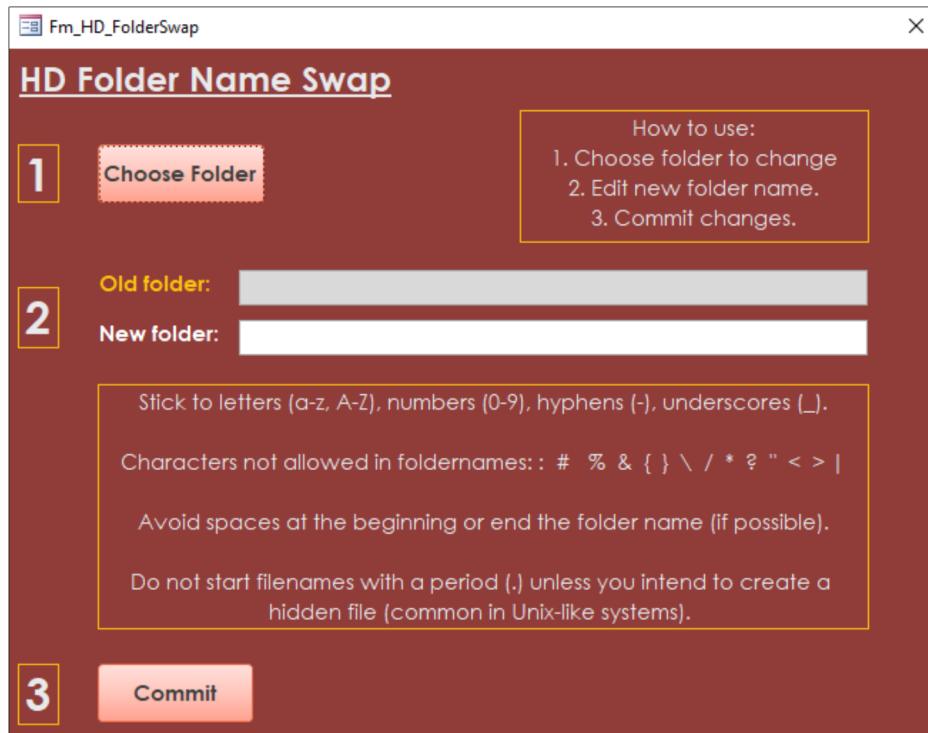
There might come a time when all you want to do is change the name of a hard disk folder for an Add-on. To do so you would need to change the folder name on the hard disk and then in the data table. You can do both right from this form. There are only three steps to do.

Step 1: Choose the folder you want to change. First, press the **Choose Folder** button and the File Explorer dialogue will open allowing you to navigate to the folder you want to change. Then, select the folder by pressing the **Okay** button, and that folder name will appear in the field, **Old folder**. You can't edit the contents of this field. It's meant to show the original folder name only throughout the process. But the folder name also appears in the **New folder** field too. This is where the editing of the folder name takes place.

Step 2: Give the old folder name its new name. Overwrite the old folder name by typing over the contents. There are restrictions in what characters you can use, and those restrictions are displayed in the box below the Old Folder and New Folder fields.

Tip! For reasons unknown to me, Windows won't always reject a character like the ampersand (&). While I would suggest to be prudent and to be on the safe side, don't use special characters (though I have often used the ampersand myself with no ill effect).

Step 3: Once you have edited or replaced the folder name in the **New folder** name field, you can now press the Commit button. A message will display what you're about to do. Confirm by pressing **YES** or **NO** to abort.
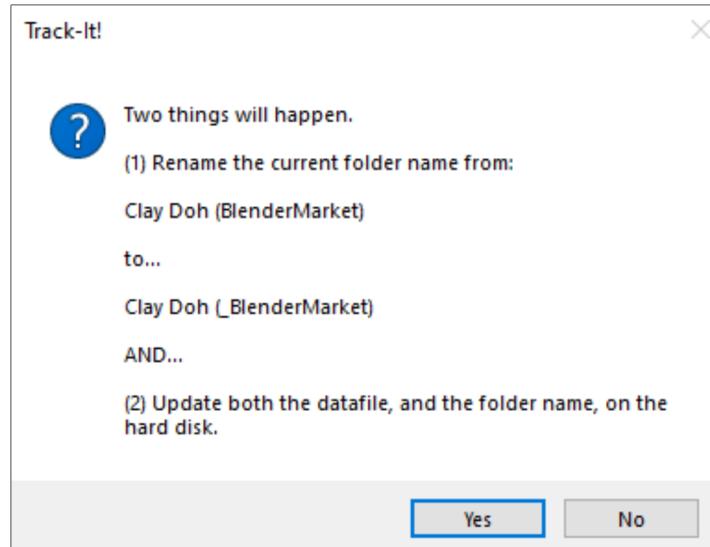
Let's do an example to demonstrate.

In this example I'm using an Add-on I have and I want to make a slight change to the folder name.

I've already completed the first two steps (choosing the folder and editing the folder name). The third step is to press the **Commit** button. A message then appears (above) of what will happen. The message describes two things to happen and offers me a: **Yes** to continue or a: **No** to abort. If I chose Yes, the process continues and will display another message that the task has been completed.

It's pretty pretty straight forward and happens fast compared if you did this manually.

Just as a reminder, what you don't get to do on this form is change parent directories or the drive letter.

You can only change the folder name you selected with the Choose Folder button.

After the routine is finished you can exit the form by pressing the Windows Close button in the upper right hand corner of the form. Note that any access to the rest of the application are suspended until you close this form.

Trusted Locations

If you encounter this security notice, it is telling you that the Track-It program file (i.e. front-end) is in a folder Microsoft Access doesn't recognize as a trusted location. To stop this message from appearing when you run Track-It, use the Set Trusted Location form (below).
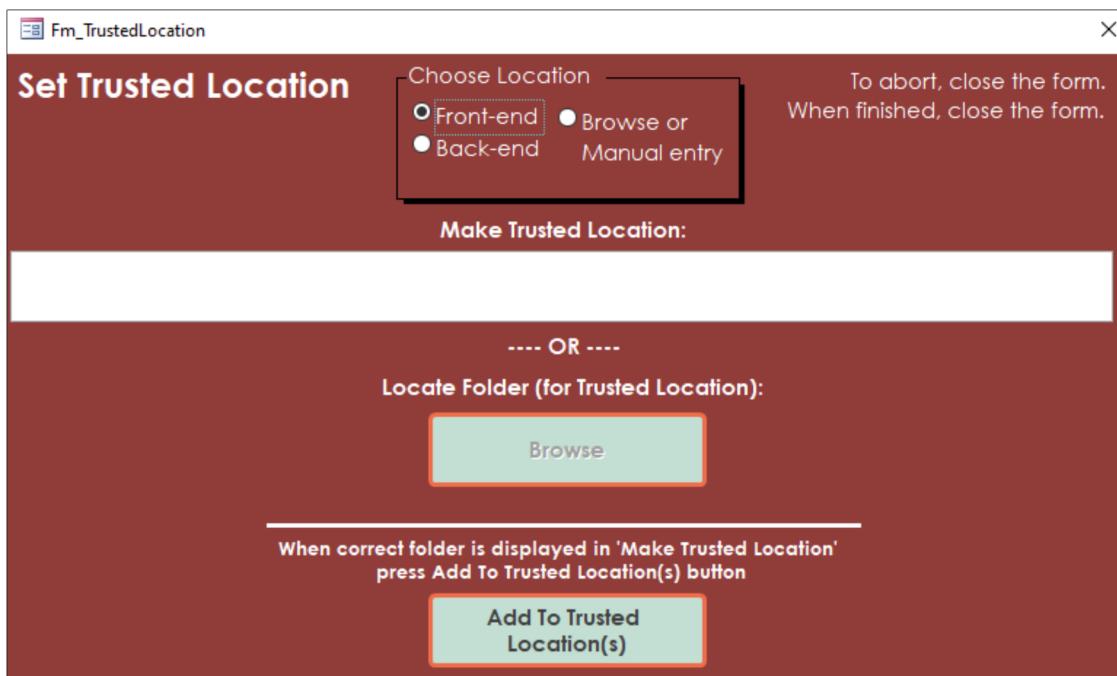
The Set Trusted Location form eliminates the message permanently by adding the Track-It folder as a Trusted Location into your Window's registry.

When you installed the Access Runtime, it created a folder in the registry much like the following:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Office\16.0\Access\

When the **Add To Trusted Location(s)** button is pressed, a routine will add the necessary

information and the path within the Make Trusted Location field, to your Window's registry.

Normally you will only need to add the program file (i.e. the front-end) to Trusted Locations in the Window's registry.

The Set Trusted Location form defaults to this option (i.e. **Front-end**) and you should see Track-It's folder path in the first field when the form opens. Should you want to also make the back-end folder, your data file, a trusted location, you can do that by choosing option 2 (**Back-end**). Note that both of these options will automatically fill in the Make Trusted Location field for you.

If there is another folder besides the front end and the back end that you wish to make as a trusted location, choose option 3 (**Browse or Manual Entry**), and the Browse button will enable and it will also clear the **Make Trusted Location** field. Press the Browse button, to continue, and a Window's Dialog will open. Move to the location you wish to make as a trusted location and press **OK**.

Now you are ready to execute making the Location a Trusted Location. Press the **Add To Trusted Location(s)** button and you're finished.

There are four things that need mentioning:

- The first is, when the Set Trusted Locations form opens, all the other forms are closed. Only the Set Trusted Location form is visible.

- Second, you can only do one location at a time and you should close the form after doing each location. Closing the form is done by clicking on the X in the upper right hand corner.

- The third thing I want to mention is if you accidentally chose a location that's already been added to the registry, it won't affect anything adversely if you add that location again.

- The fourth thing I want to mention is if you need to abort the procedure, close the form using the X button in the upper right hand corner. Same as closing the form naturally. Nothing is effected by this form until you press the Add To Trusted Location(s) button.

Program File Paths

The **Program File Paths** form is for displaying the file paths of both the front-end and back-end files used by Track-It. If there comes a need to quickly look-up the folders and filenames currently in use, this is the easiest way to find that information. Neither of the two fields are editable; they are for reference only.

Tip: Normally these fields will be filled with a folder path and filename. Only for the purposes of instruction are these fields blank in the above screen capture.

The Ribbon - Data Links
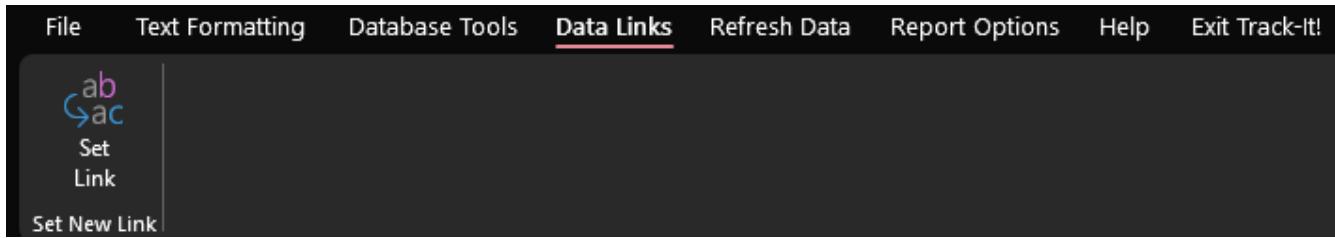
If you ever need to move the data file to another location, you can do that via **Data Links**. First, why would you want to do this? In my own personal use I store programs I use on the C drive, and keep my data on the D drive. This way, if I need to do a Windows re-install, I won't have to move my data to keep it safe during the re-install. So let's say as an example, we did just that. There are two ways to fix the data link.

1) Close Track-It and move your data file. Then reopen Track-It, and Track-It will see the previous path to your data is no longer valid. Track-It will display a message box offering you a means to remedy the situation. A dialogue will ask where the new location of the data is. Via the dialog navigate to the location and click on the data file. Track-It will store the new path internally, and then Track-It will open as usual.

2) Or, you could move the data while Track-It is open. If you move your data file with Track-It still open, then do the following. Press the **Set Link** icon within the Ribbon under Data Links, and the form to the left will opens, All other forms will close at the same moment.

Press the **New Table Link** button, and a Window File Dialog will open and as done before, you'll need to point the dialogue where your data is located. Once you click on the new location the dialog will close and the **Menu** will reappear with your data showing, and you're all set.

Tip: You can even use this to link to a whole new different set of data if you want to. While preparing this manual I often had to revert using different data files, one to make pictures examples for this manual and another one for my own personal data.

Tip: You can also rename the data file to whatever you like, just as long as you keep the extension intact (accdb).

The Ribbon - Refresh Data
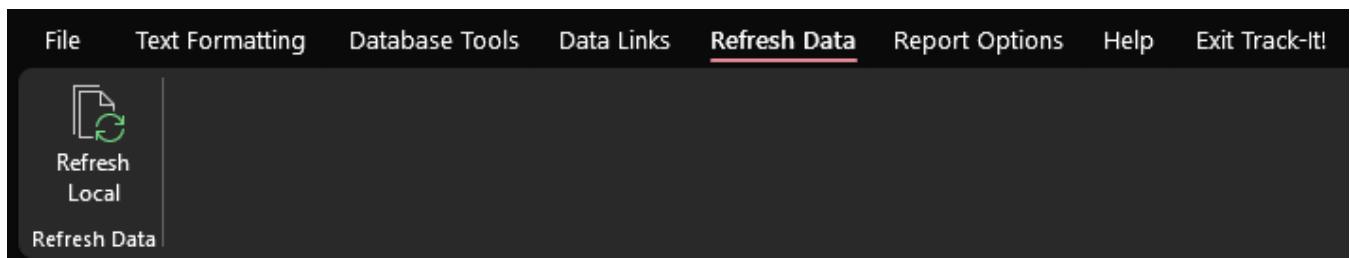
They'll be times when working within a form, when data is changed, a refresh will be needed so the form updates to what you expect to see. Most of the time this happens before a record is saved. You can force the data, on screen, to update by pressing the Refresh Data option in the Ribbon.

The Ribbon - Report Options
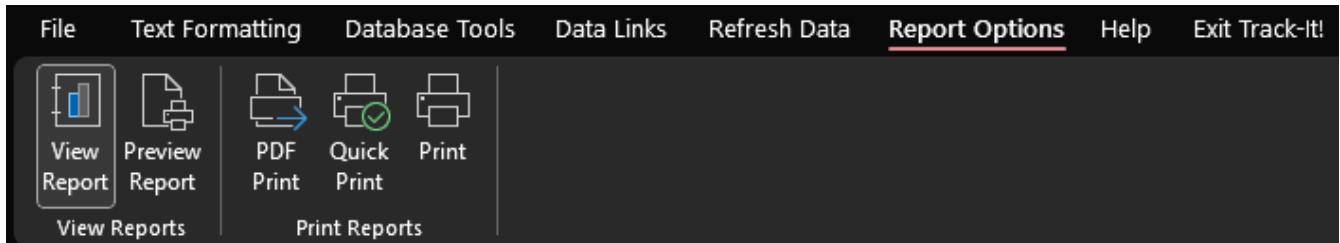
When viewing a report, you have several options to "print" the report to screen, or to a PDF, or to a printer.

Here are the options explained:

View Report - By default, all the reports in Track-It open in View Report mode. And in most cases that should suffice. To see the whole report, scroll downwards, and each subsequent page will scroll into view until you reach the end of the report.

Preview Report - This option displays a "print preview" of the report in total. The one caveat is you need to use the Navigation Pane to move from page to page. The record position box (see Navigation Pane section) will only look like there's one page in the report, but ignore that (unless there is only one page in the report). It's just referring to the page in view. Move to the next page, via the Navigation Pane, and the total number of pages will be displayed in the record position box.

PDF Print - If you're familiar with the PDF "printing" option in other programs, this is just like that. When accessed, a file dialog will open and you'll be prompted to give a filename for the PDF. Once that is done Track-It will create the PDF file with the name you provided.

Quick Print - Be careful with this one because the moment you press the Quick Print icon, your printer is printing the report. Hence, the name, Quick Print. Make sure you have enough paper as there won't be any warning before your printer starts printing.

Print - This is the most commonly used function for printing a hard-copy of any report. A standard Windows print dialog opens with a number of features that you will be used to for customizing the print. To actually print, there is a button on the dialog that starts the printing.

With the use of Report Options all the reports in Track-It are printable.

The Ribbon - Help
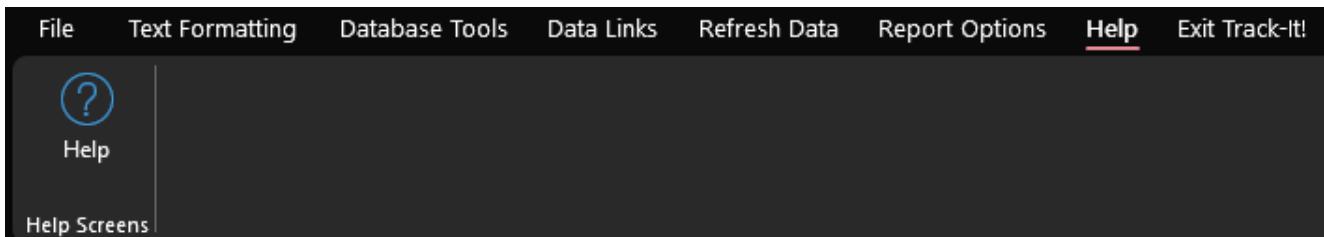
Help in Track-It is a collection of screen captures of forms overlaid with text snippets to briefly describe the functions of that form. There's just a few of these screen captures covering the more important functions so if you get into a pinch and are unsure what action might result from a button, you can easily consult these screen captures from the Help icon. This feature is always available from the ribbon. The Help function also allows you to add your own help pictures.
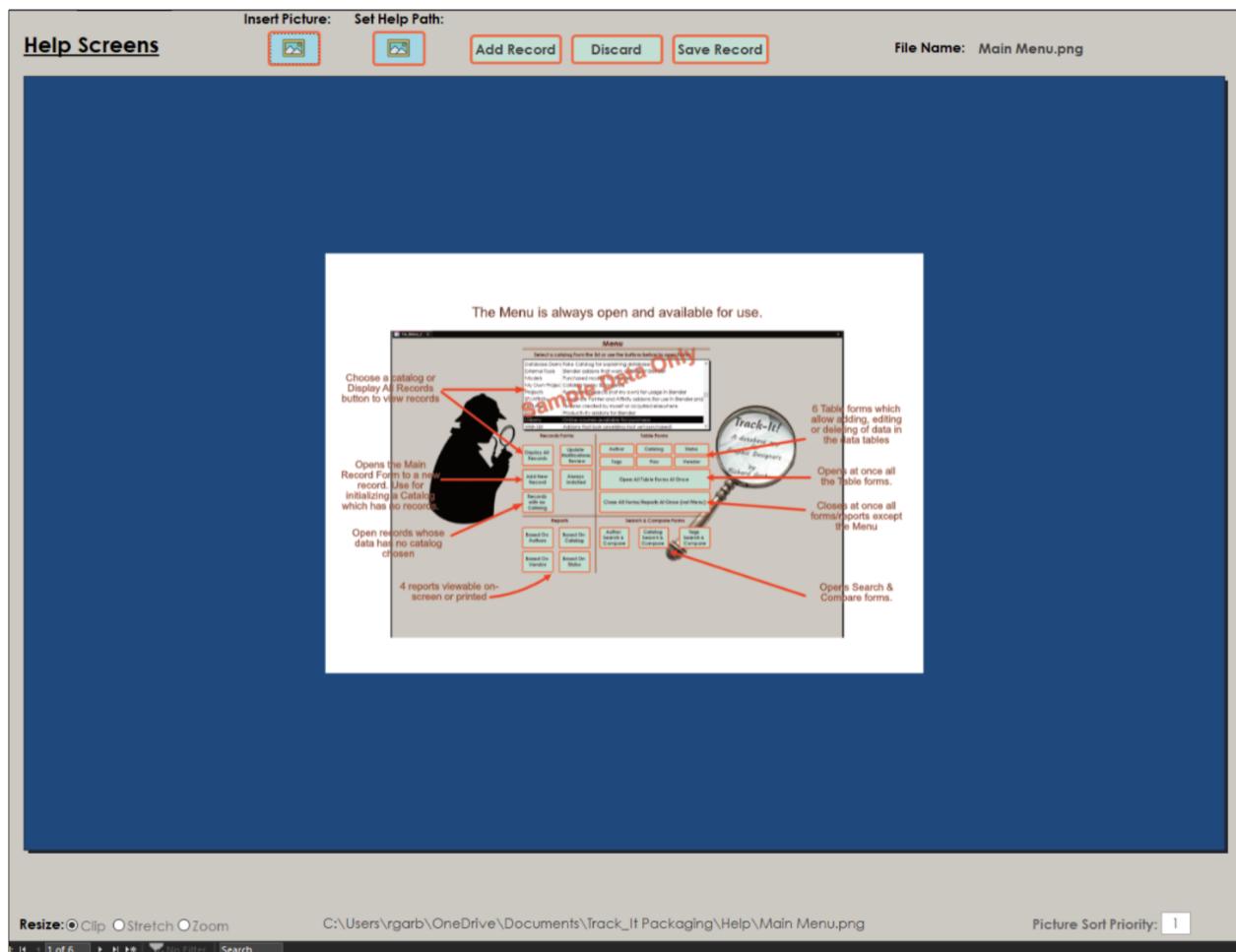
There are some things you will want to know about the Help form so let's dive into it and see what's there.

The first thing you ought to know is that the screengrabs reside in a folder called Help in your root Track-It folder. If you move the Track-It folder you'll need to move the Help folder too to the new location and then reset the Help path. This is discussed shortly.

Left is the Help form with the Menu help screen as an example. We'll go around the form to cover the different functions.

Insert Picture: You can insert your own pictures into the Help Screens gallery. Be sure to read to the end of this section to get the full instruction on how to do this.

Set Help Path: This button is how you change the path for the help files should you change the location of Track-It, hence the Help folder too. Once you press this button, a dialog will open. And with the dialog you'll trace the steps to the new location. After you close the dialog a message box will display showing you the new help folder path at the bottom of the form. If you don't see the new path shown use the Refresh Data option in the Ribbon.

New, **Discard**, **Save** and **Delete** record. Before a picture can be inserted, you first need to add a **N**ew record. The new record acts as a container for the picture. This will cause the screen to be blue but once you insert the picture, the new picture will be displayed. **Discard**, allows you to undo the picture insertion, it does not delete the record however. Once a picture is inserted you need to **Save** the new record. To delete a record, make sure the record is displayed and then press the **Delete** button.

Filename: This is the name of the filename of the picture displayed. This is notated in the upper right part of the form.

Moving down to the bottom of the form:

Resize: As seen in the Main Records form picture frame, it works the same to resize a help picture. The last chosen resize picked will be remembered with that picture.

In the middle of the bottom of the form is the path and filename of the picture in the display.

Picture Size Priority: Each picture is sorted via this number. So if you prefer a different order to the pictures, change the number in the field to reflect where you want that picture to show. Currently the pictures numbered 1 to 8 with 1 as top priority.

If, for example you inserted a new picture, Track-It would assign it as 9. If you want that new picture to be shown as the first picture, you would need to give it a 1. And then you would need to assign new numbers for the rest of the gallery.

79

The Ribbon - Exit Track-It

To exit Track-It click on the Exit icon in the Ribbon. However, I prefer close Track-It using the Close button (X) in the upper right hand corner of the screen.

The Ribbon - File

In each of the previous sections for the Ribbon, I included a screengrab highlighting the title featured, but not so for File because the File option doesn't really do anything for you. There's nothing to cover, in fact, but do note that depending which version of Access (full or Runtime) you are using, the visual will be different.
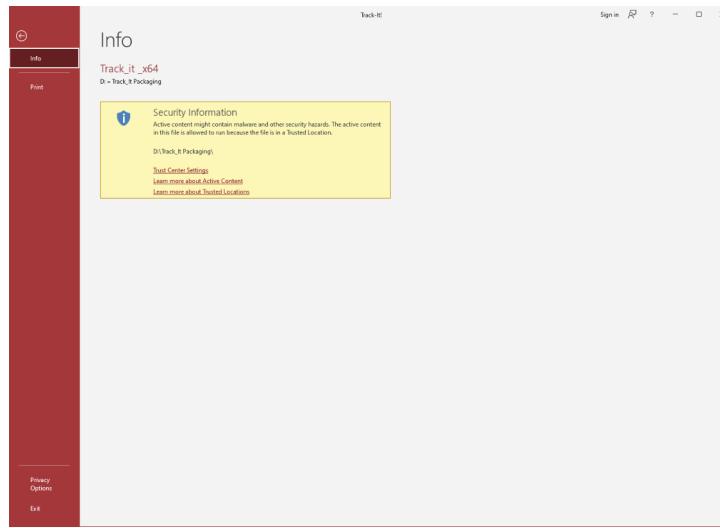
Above: File option for the Runtime version of Access
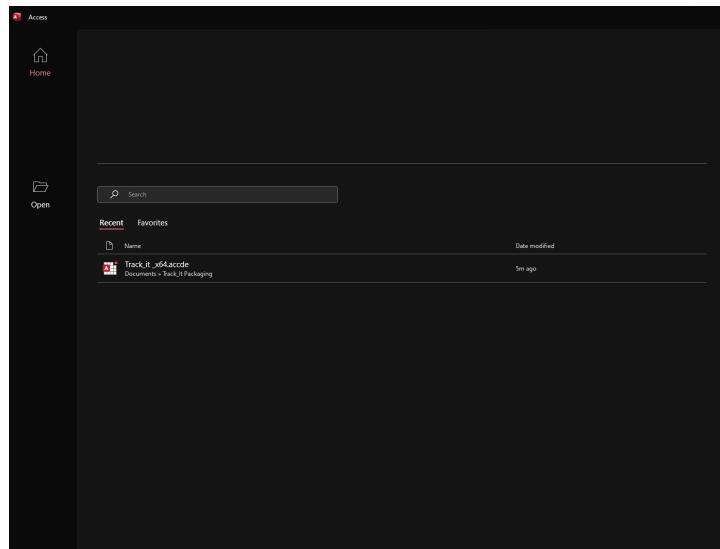
Above: File option for the full version of Access

Tip: Note some elements of the File option screen in the full version of Access were removed to avoid confusion for what's needed to see in Track-It.

Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful to the Lord Jesus Christ for the gentle nudge that inspired me to address my long-standing issue of being disorganized with the many add-ons I have. For years, I underutilized the remarkable work of developers whose tools could have streamlined my experience with my preferred 3D modeling program, Blender.

What I had originally envisioned was a much smaller application. However, as I marched to the finish line my vision for Track-It completely changed adding in more to accomplish more. As an avid user of Track-it myself, it has been such a major blessing to me finally achieving a long desired goal, to have a means to have a pulse on everything in my add-on inventory. For that I am truly grateful for our Lord in this work.

It's greatly worthwhile to have an inspiration as the Lord is in everything you do. Please consider that He said:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

On a human level, my heartfelt thanks go to Richard Rost and his gang at 599cd.com. Which is the Computer Learning Zone. His dedication to teaching Microsoft Access, as well as other Microsoft software, has been invaluable to me and countless others. His guidance and insightful teaching elevated Track-It into a more polished and professional product. Richard's ability to break down complex concepts into practical solutions was instrumental in improving my database.

Lately I have been using Grok, AI, to enhance Track-It. I know some folks have issues with AI, but it does have its place where support is concerned. I would say it's almost indispensable.

My gratitude also extends to my patient family and friends whom I bombarded religiously with updates about my progress, at all hours. Their encouragement, their listening ears, even when they didn't fully understand my ramblings, helped a lot to keep me going.

Finally, I hope Track-It brings you as much satisfaction as it has brought me. By patiently cataloging your Add-Ons in Track-It, you'll quickly discover the power of having critical information at your fingertips. The ability to instantly look up details about my Add-On inventory, without sifting through countless folders has been transformative. I'm confident it will be for you too.

Richard Garber