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InfoPath — The Journey Begins

InfoPath is a new journey for both users and developers. If you are like many people, you may have many questions about just what InfoPath is and how it will help you in your work. That is what this chapter is all about. In it you will:

❑   Learn what InfoPath is, and how it can be used for various solutions.

❑   Read about different ways to connect data to InfoPath.

❑   Understand deployment requirements of InfoPath forms.

❑   Take a look at a typical InfoPath form.

What Is InfoPath, and How Can It Be Used?

InfoPath is a forms management tool that enables you to create forms and publish them in a number of different ways. InfoPath enables you to use forms that are attached to various types of existing data, and to use data that is self-contained within the form. Before going into more detail, take a look at what the problem was before InfoPath came about.

The Challenge of Forms Management

Over the last decade there have been a number of attempts, both inside and outside of Microsoft, to enable users to create forms quickly, yet responsibly, to work with data. You can see this with database systems such as Access, and the form tools in Word and Excel. However, these tools have either come up short in helping users control and share their data, or they are too confusing to use to create forms that can handle data made up of more single-table solutions.