

Crystal Reports

How to use a File DSN

Overview

This document provides an overview of File Data Sources (File DSNs). By reading this document you will be able to create a File DSN four different ways, configure a File DSN, and create a report using a File DSN. This document has been written for Crystal Reports 9 and later.

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Introduction

A File DSN streamlines the connection process to a database. The DSN file contains the connection string that would otherwise have to be built by the ODBC Administrator for a call to the *SQLDriverConnect* function.

The advantage of a File DSN is that it can be copied to any computer so identical data sources can be used by many computers as long as they have the appropriate ODBC driver and database client software installed. There are two methods to create a File DSN:

- By way of the ODBC Administrator
- By way of a text editor

This document will examine the two methods.

Before You Begin

The steps provided in this document are based on the sample Microsoft Access database that is included with the installation of Crystal Reports, Xtreme.mdb.

Search for Xtreme.mdb on the Crystal Reports installation disk (CD) or in the folder location where you installed Crystal Reports.

Creating a File DSN in the ODBC Administrator

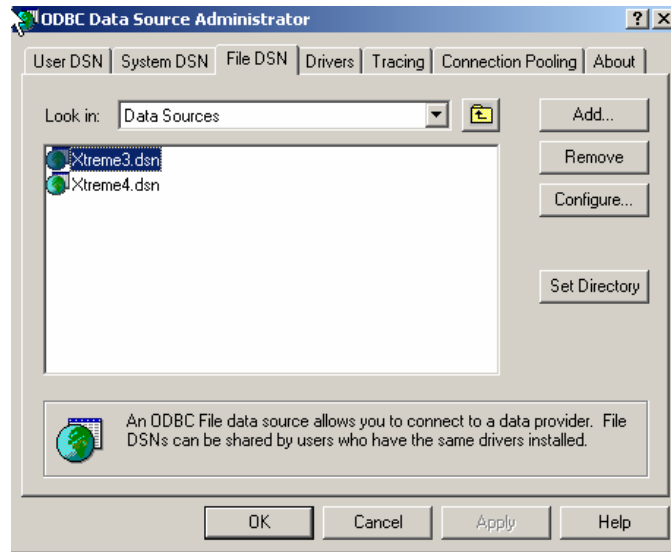
In a Windows operating system environment, you can create a new data source name (DSN) in the ODBC Administrator. You will create a new File DSN with the steps provided.

NOTE	For example, in Windows XP, the ODBC Administrator is located by clicking: Start > Control Panel > Administrative Tools > Data Sources (ODBC)
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Steps to create a File DSN in the ODBC Administrator

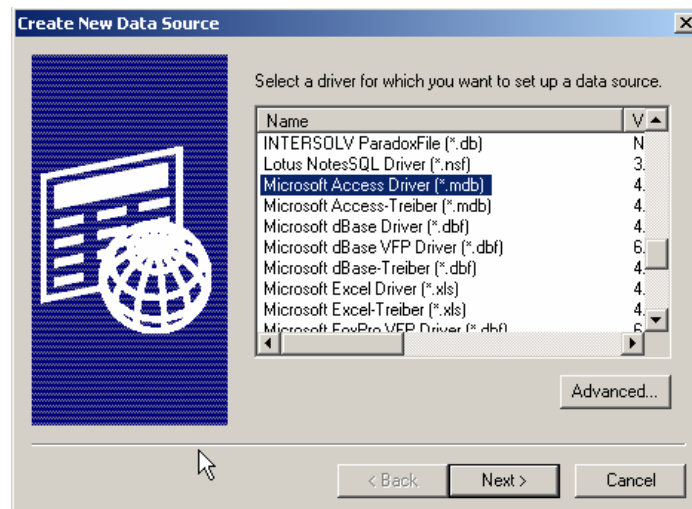
1. In the ODBC Data Source Administrator dialog box, select the **File DSN** tab.

Figure 1: ODBC Data Source Administrator dialog box

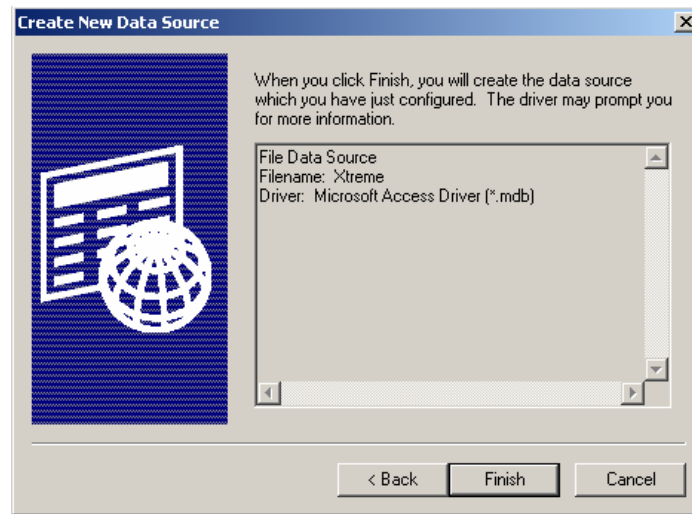


2. Select **Add** and click the driver, “Microsoft Access Driver (*.mdb)”.

Figure 2: Select a driver to create a new data source



3. Select **Next** and you are now prompted to provide a name for the DSN. This will create a File DSN with the specified name. For example, type the name “Xtreme” and then click **Next**.
4. Review the details of the new data source that you have created. Click **Finish**.

Figure 3: Create New Data Source dialog box

Upon completing these steps, you will have successfully created a new File DSN named Xtreme.dsn, that contains the connection information to your data source. You can now create a Crystal report (RPT file) to connect to this File DSN.

Configuring a File DSN in the ODBC Administrator

If you need to change or configure the connection information of a File DSN, go to the ODBC Administrator .and ensure that you are viewing the **File DSN** tab.

1. In the ODBC Data Source Administrator dialog box, select the **File DSN** tab.
2. Highlight the File DSN you wish to configure and click **Configure**.
3. Enter the appropriate connection information for the data source.

Creating a File DSN in a Text Editor

Two types of File DSN's can be created by way of a text editor; shared and unshared.

A shared File DSN contains connection information that is required to connect to a data source.

If you need to change the Machine DSN (also known as a System DSN) that is used by an application to a File DSN, it is easier to change it to an unshared File DSN. This is because an unshared File DSN can simply contain the Machine DSN.

Unshared File DSNs, like Machine DSNs, are only available to users when logged on to that particular computer.

Steps to create a shared File DSN

You can manually create a File DSN using a text editor. The following example will create another File DSN for the Xtreme.mdb sample database.

1. Open a text editor (i.e. WordPad).
2. Type the following:

```
[ODBC]
DRIVER = Microsoft Access Driver (*.mdb)
UID = admin
DATABASE = <path>\Xtreme.mdb
```

- Where the [ODBC] is the connection type
 - Where DRIVER is equal to the required ODBC driver to connect to the data source
 - Where UID is equal to the user identification used to connect to the data source
 - Where DATABASE is equal to the location and name of the data source.
 - Where the <path> is the path to the location of the database
3. Save and name this file. For example, "Xtreme.dsn" (If you already have a File DSN created by this name created from [Steps to create a File DSN in the ODBC Administrator](#), then provide a unique name, such as "Xtreme1.dsn".) All File DSNs are required to have the extension ".dsn".
 4. Save the File DSN to the following location:
C:\Program Files\Common Files\ODBC\Data Sources

Upon completing these steps, you will have successfully created a shared File DSN by way of a text editor. The file can then be copied to the network and shared by all users who have the appropriate drivers installed.

Steps to create an unshared File DSN

An unshared File DSN is located on a single computer and points to an existing Machine data source (Machine DSN). Just as a Machine DSN is available to all users that are logged on to that computer, an unshared File DSN is only available to users that are logged on to that computer, also.

When an unshared File DSN is used, it connects to the Machine DSN that the File DSN points to. You can manually create an unshared File DSN using a text editor. The following example will create another File DSN for the Xtreme.mdb sample database.

Please ensure you have already created an existing Machine DSN by this name.

1. In the ODBC Administrator, create a Machine DSN (also known as a System DSN), to the Xtreme.mdb sample database. For example, name it "Xtreme"
2. Open a text editor (i.e. WordPad).
3. Type the following:

[ODBC]

DSN = Xtreme

- Where the [ODBC] is the connection type
- Where DSN is equal to the Machine DSN created in the ODBC Administrator
- 4. Save and name this file. For example, “Xtreme.dsn” (If you already have a File DSN created by this name created from [Steps to create a File DSN in the ODBC Administrator](#), then provide a unique name, such as “Xtreme2.dsn”.) All File DSNs are required to have the extension “.dsn”.
- 5. Save the File DSN to the following location:
C:\Program Files\Common Files\ODBC\Data Sources

Upon completing these steps, you will have successfully created an unshared File DSN by way of a text editor.

Creating a Crystal report based on a File DSN

The following example will create a report based on a File DSN.

1. Open Crystal Reports.
2. Click **File > New > As a Blank Report**. The **Database Expert** appears.
3. Expand the **Create New Connection** folder, then expand the **ODBC(RDO)** folder and select the File DSN (*.dsn) from the Data Source Name window or select **Find File DSN** to locate the File DSN file.
4. Click **Next**.
5. Continue to add tables and fields from the data source and format the report as required.

Upon completing these steps, you will have successfully created a new report based on a File DSN.

Finding More Information

For more information on the advantages and disadvantages of connection types, search for the technical brief, [Cr_connection_advantages.pdf](#), on our support site at:

<http://support.crystaldecisions.com/search>

For more information, search for “File DSN” in the MSDN Online Library at:

<http://msdn.microsoft.com/library>

Contacting Crystal Decisions for Technical Support

We recommend that you refer to the product documentation and that you visit our Technical Support web site for more resources.

Self-serve Support:

<http://support.crystaldecisions.com/>

Email Support:

<http://support.crystaldecisions.com/support/answers.asp>

Telephone Support:

<http://www.crystaldecisions.com/contact/support.asp>