Discovering Naming Conventions
by John Mark Osborne

Naming conventions are so important, FileMaker, Inc. commissioned a white paper from some of the top FileMaker developers in the world. If you haven't discovered this white paper yet, you should consider it required reading if you are creating any serious FileMaker solution.

http://www.filemaker.com/downloads/pdf/FMDev_ConvNov05.pdf

This 87 page white paper covers everything from naming standards for files, tables, fields, table occurrences, layouts, accounts and more. It's a must read technical brief for any serious developer. Having good naming conventions can help you document your solution without actually documenting it. Being able to come back six months later and easily make sense of a solution is what naming conventions are all about.

Naming conventions can also make your development work more efficient. For example, starting each layout with the name of the source table from which it is showing records can help you quickly identify the context of all the fields on the layout. It can also help you script more efficiently. For instance, let's say you have three tables in your solution. You could name your layouts in this fashion:

```
CUSTOMERS_form
CUSTOMERS_list
INVOICES_form
INVOICES_list
PRODUCTS_form
PRODUCTS_list
```

This naming convention would certainly allow you to know more about your layouts just by glancing at the name. In addition, this naming convention will allow you to create two scripts to navigate between your form and list view layouts, regardless of the table from which the layout is showing records. Take a look at this script which navigates to the form layout:

```
Go to Layout [LeftWords(Get(LayoutName); 1) & "_form"]
```

And, this script which navigates to a list view:

```
Go to Layout [LeftWords(Get(LayoutName); 1) & "_list"]
```

Make sure to specify the option, on the Go to Layout script step, to go to layout by name and then enter the formulas shown above.

If you are consistent with your layout naming, these two scripts can be used to navigate from form to list on all your layouts, regardless of the records that are being displayed.

Not only will this save you time creating your solution since you have to create a single script for navigation, it will also save you time if you have to modify your navigation scripts. Instead of modifying one script for every table, you can modify a single dynamic script once.

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