

Inside **OUT**

Access 2013 introduces a new way of thinking about data, with a focus on the most important parts of your data. This book shows you how to use the new features of Access 2013 to create a database that is easy to use and understand.

Microsoft Access 2013

Searching for web app objects

In web apps with a large number of objects, locating a specific object can be difficult, so Access 2013 includes the Search Bar feature to make this task easier. By default, this feature is turned on; however, if the feature is turned off for your Access installation, you must turn it on through the Navigation pane. You can enable this feature by right-clicking the top of the Navigation pane (where you see the text All Access Objects) and then clicking Search Bar, as shown in [Figure 2-25](#).

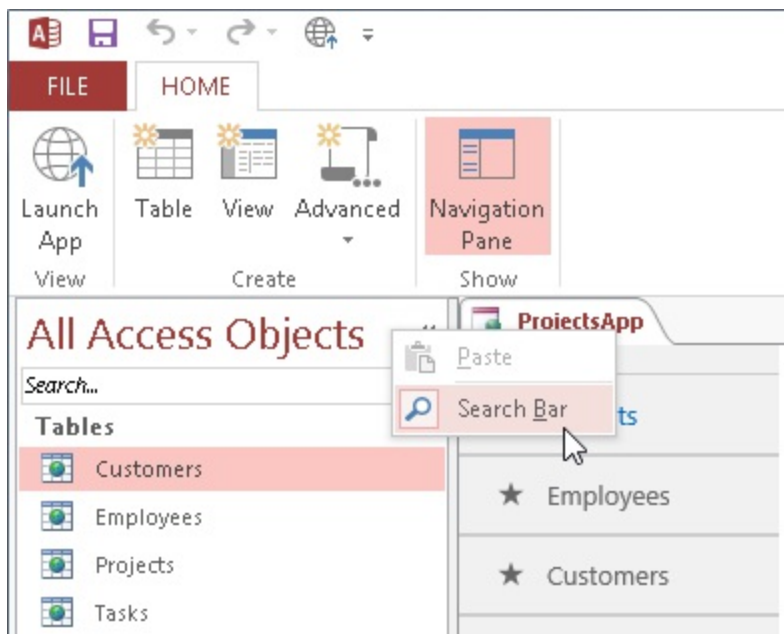


Figure 2-25. Click the Search Bar command to display the Search Bar.

Select the Show Search Bar check box, and then click OK. Access displays a Search Bar near the top of the Navigation pane, as shown in [Figure 2-26](#).



Figure 2-26. The Search Bar in the Navigation pane helps you find specific web app objects.

Rather than “search” for objects that match what you type in the search box, Access filters the list in the Navigation pane. As you begin to type letters, Access filters the list of objects to those that contain the sequence of characters you enter anywhere in the name. For example, if you want to find an object whose name contains the word Employees, type the word **employees** in the Search Bar. As you enter each letter in the Search Bar, Access begins filtering the list of objects for any that contain the characters in your search string. With each successive letter you type, Access reduces the list of objects shown in the Navigation pane, because there are fewer objects that match your search criteria. Notice that as soon as you have typed the letters **emp**, Access reduces the list to three objects—Employees, Employees Datasheet, and Employees List. The names of these objects contain the letters *emp*.

After you finish typing the entire word *employees* in the Search Bar, the Navigation pane should look like [Figure 2-27](#). Access collapses any group headers if it does not find any objects that meet your search criterion. In this case, Access located three objects with the word *employees* in its name. To clear your search string if you need to perform another object search, either delete the existing text using the Backspace key or click the Clear Search String button on the right side of the Search Bar. Clearing the search box or clicking the Clear Search String button restores the Navigation pane to show all displayable objects.

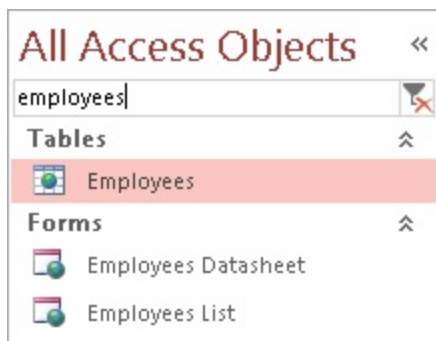


Figure 2-27. The Search Bar collapses any groups if it does not find any objects in that group that meet your search criterion.

Working in the web app design environment

The design environment for working with web app objects includes many new elements that differ substantially from working with objects in desktop databases. We'll briefly discuss these new elements and their purpose in this section, and then we'll explore each of these elements in more detail in this chapter and subsequent chapters.

Add Tables screen

Everything to the right of the Navigation pane in the main application window in web apps is actually an HTML page hosted inside the Access client shell framework. The Add Tables screen, shown again in [Figure 2-28](#), is your starting point for creating new tables in web apps.

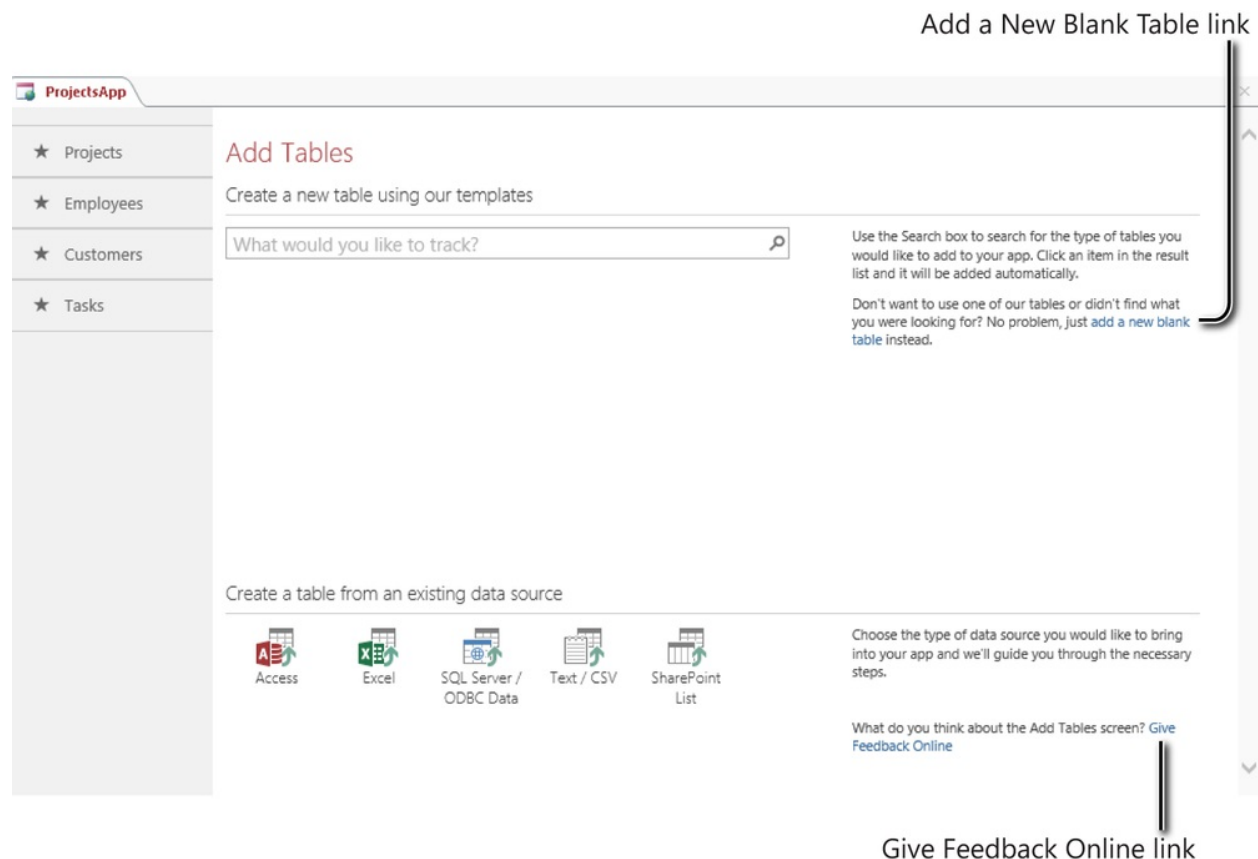


Figure 2-28. You can create new blank tables, use a table template, or import

data into your web app from the Add Tables screen.

On the Add Tables screen, you'll see a search box where you can search for a table template you'd like to add to your web app. Each table template contains one or more table definitions with data types, relationships, and field properties already prepared for you to begin data entry. If you want to start from scratch and create your own blank table, you can click the Add A New Blank Table link on the right side of the Add Tables screen.

At the bottom of the Add Tables screen, you'll see five buttons—Access, Excel, SQL Server/ODBC Data, Text/CSV, and SharePoint List—which you can use to import data into your web app. When you import data from another data source into a web app, Access creates a new table in your web app for each data source. The last button, SharePoint List, creates a read-only link to SharePoint lists within the same SharePoint site as your Access web app. At the lower-right corner of the Add Tables screen, you can click the Give Feedback Online link to provide feedback to the Access development team about your experiences with using this screen.

Table Selector



To the left of the Add Tables screen and to the right of the Navigation pane, if you have it expanded, is the Table Selector. Access displays the name of each table in your web app in the Table Selector, along with a small default icon to the left of the name. Next to the selected table name in the Table Selector, Access displays two floating buttons called *charms*. You can click these buttons to open property callouts with different options and actions on the selected table. We'll discuss these options in the next chapter.

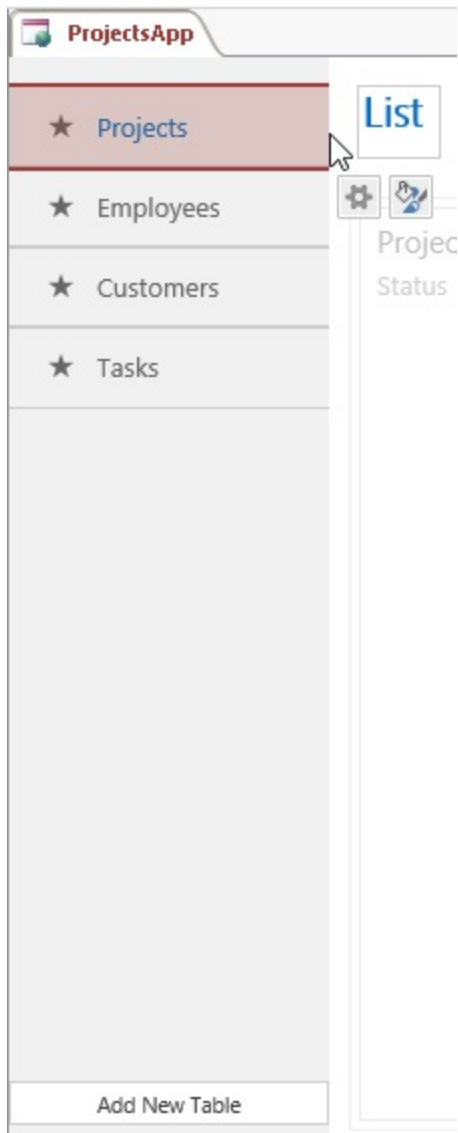


Figure 2-29. The Table Selector displays a list of all tables in your web app.

At the bottom of the Table Selector, Access displays the Add New Table button. When you click this button, Access displays the Add Tables screen again in the application window, where you can create new tables in your web app. If the Add Tables screen is currently displayed in the main application window, Access hides the Add New Table button in the Table Selector. You can also toggle displaying the Add Tables Screen at any time within Access by clicking the Table button in the Create group on the Home tab of the ribbon.

App Home View

Whenever you click on any table in the Table Selector, Access closes the Add Tables screen and then displays the full App Home View, as shown in [Figure 2-30](#). Microsoft refers to the App Home View as a framework consisting of several elements—the Table Selector, the View Selector, and any views associated with the selected table. When you are working within Access, you see the App Home View in design mode. When you open your web app in a web browser, you see the App Home View in run-time mode.

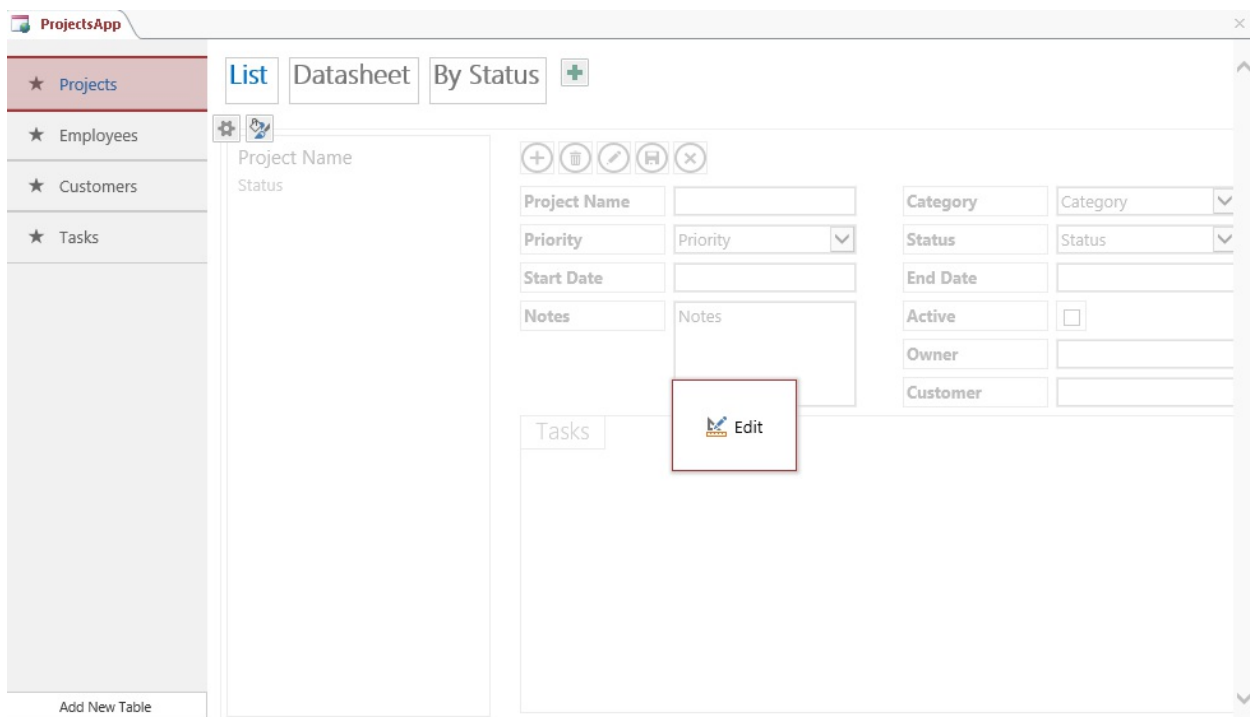


Figure 2-30. The App Home View displays tables and views in your web app.

View Selector

The View Selector displays horizontally, across the top of the App Home View window, a list containing each view attached to the selected table in the Table Selector, as shown in [Figure 2-31](#). A view in an Access web app is an HTML page that users of the application use to interact with the data in your app in a web browser. In [Figure 2-31](#), you can see that there are three views

attached to the Projects table in the Projects Management web app template—List, Datasheet, and By Status. Whenever you click a view in the View Selector, Access displays a single charm button next to the view name that you can click to take different actions on that selected view. On the far right of the View Selector is the Add New View button. You can use this button to create a new view attached to the currently selected table in the Table Selector. We'll explore the view options and creating views later in [Chapter 6](#) and in [Chapter 7](#).

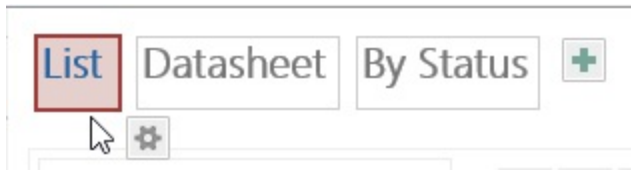


Figure 2-31. The View Selector lists all views attached to a table.

View preview window

Beneath the View Selector, Access displays a preview of the selected view, as shown in [Figure 2-32](#). In the preview window, you can see that Access displays a preview of all the controls and layout for the currently selected List view. All of the controls in preview mode appear dimmed because you cannot edit them in this state. In the center of the view preview window, Access displays an Edit button. You can click the Edit button to open the selected view in Design view to make changes to that view. Whenever you click a view in the View Selector, Access changes the preview image in the view preview window to match the selected view.

Project Name
Status

Project Name

Priority

Start Date

Notes

Category

Status

End Date

Active

Owner

Customer

Tasks

Edit

Figure 2-32. You can see a preview of the controls for each selected view in the center of the application window.

Viewing your web app in a web browser

So far in this chapter, you've looked at your web app from a design perspective within Access. You created a new web app by using the Projects Management template, but you've been working with the app only within Access. Let's take a quick look at what this web app looks like in a web browser.

Click the Launch App button in the View group on the Home tab of the ribbon. Access opens your web app in your default browser and displays the App Home View in run-time mode, as shown in [Figure 2-33](#). Now, you can begin to see how all of the pieces of the web app fit together. The tables in your web app are displayed in the Table Selector along the left, the views associated with each table are shown at the top of the App Home View in the View Selector, and each view used for data entry is displayed beneath the View Selector. (You'll learn about the runtime experience for web apps in the next few chapters.)

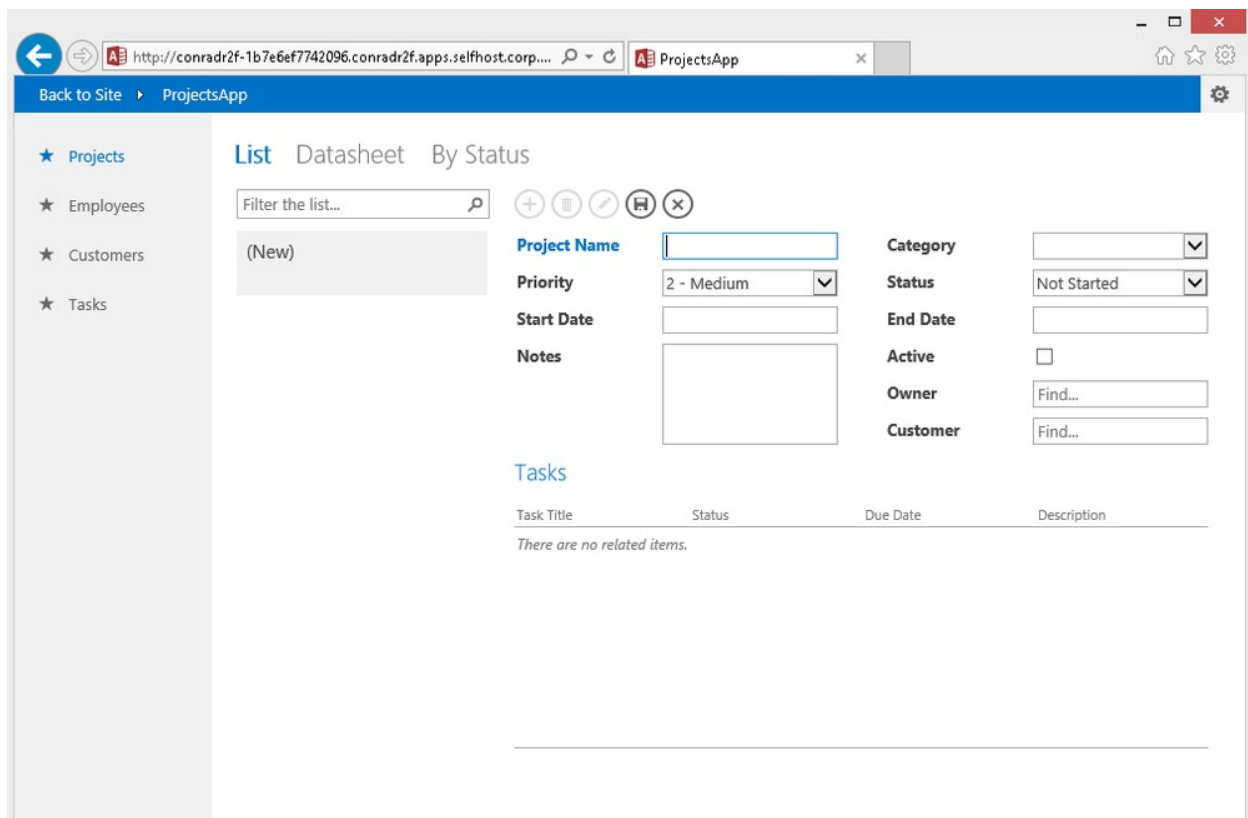


Figure 2-33. Clicking the Launch App button in Access opens your web app in your default web browser.

Saving a web app as an app package

If you want to save a copy of your web app, perhaps as a backup or to move your web app to a different SharePoint server, Access 2013 includes the ability to save a copy of your entire web app into a file called an *app package*. An Access app package has the .app file extension and contains all of the objects and the definition of your web app and even data, if you choose to include it. After you save your web app into an app package, you can upload and install that app into your company's internal SharePoint corporate catalog, where other people in your organization can install a copy of your web app. App packages can be reused to create additional, identical copies of an Access web app. You can also upload Access app packages into the Office App Marketplace or SharePoint Store where people in the community can purchase and install a copy of your web app for their own use.

Let's create an app package out of the Project Management web app that you've been using so that you can see how this process works. To create an app package of any completed web app, click the File tab on the Backstage view, click the Save As tab, click Save Database As under File Types, and then click Save As Package, as shown in [Figure 2-34](#).

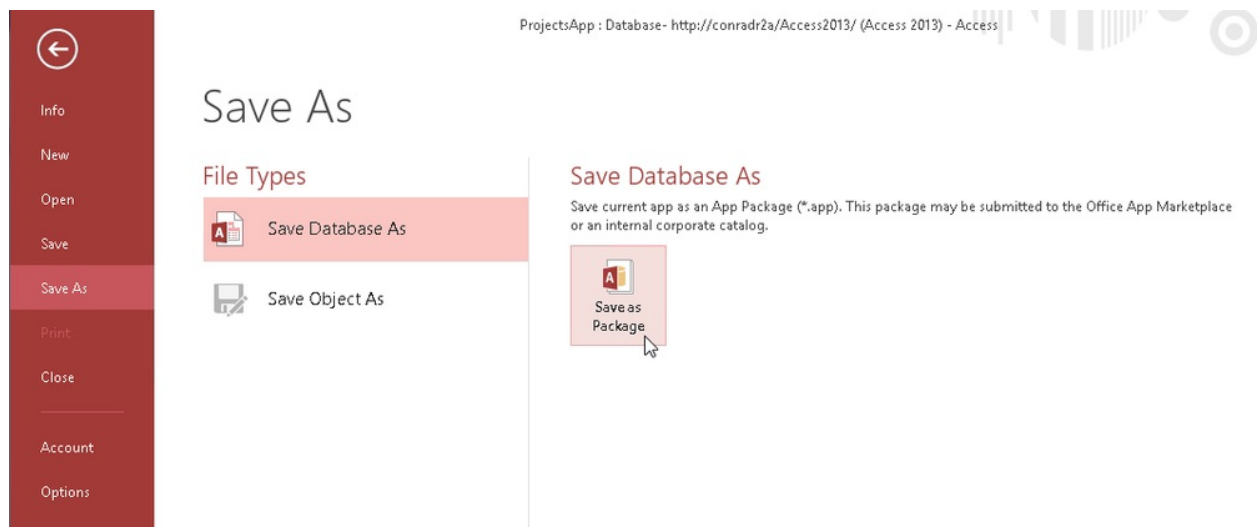


Figure 2-34. Click Save As Package on the Save As tab of the Backstage view.

Access opens the Create New Package From This App dialog box, as shown in [Figure 2-35](#). Enter a name for your new app package in the Title text box. For this example, enter **My Projects** as the name of your app package. If you want to include all data from the tables in your app package, select the Include Data In Package check box (cleared by default).

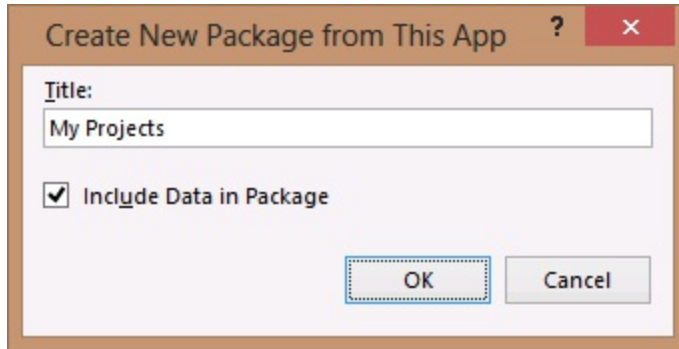


Figure 2-35. Enter a name for your new app package, and select the check box to include data.

Click OK, and Access opens the Save Package dialog box where you can browse to a location to save the file, as shown in [Figure 2-36](#). You can select the drive and folder where you want to save your app package by clicking the links on the left and browsing to your destination folder. If you decide at this point not to create the app package, click the Cancel button to stop the process. After you select the specific folder to which you want to save this app package, click OK, and Access begins the process of creating this new app package.

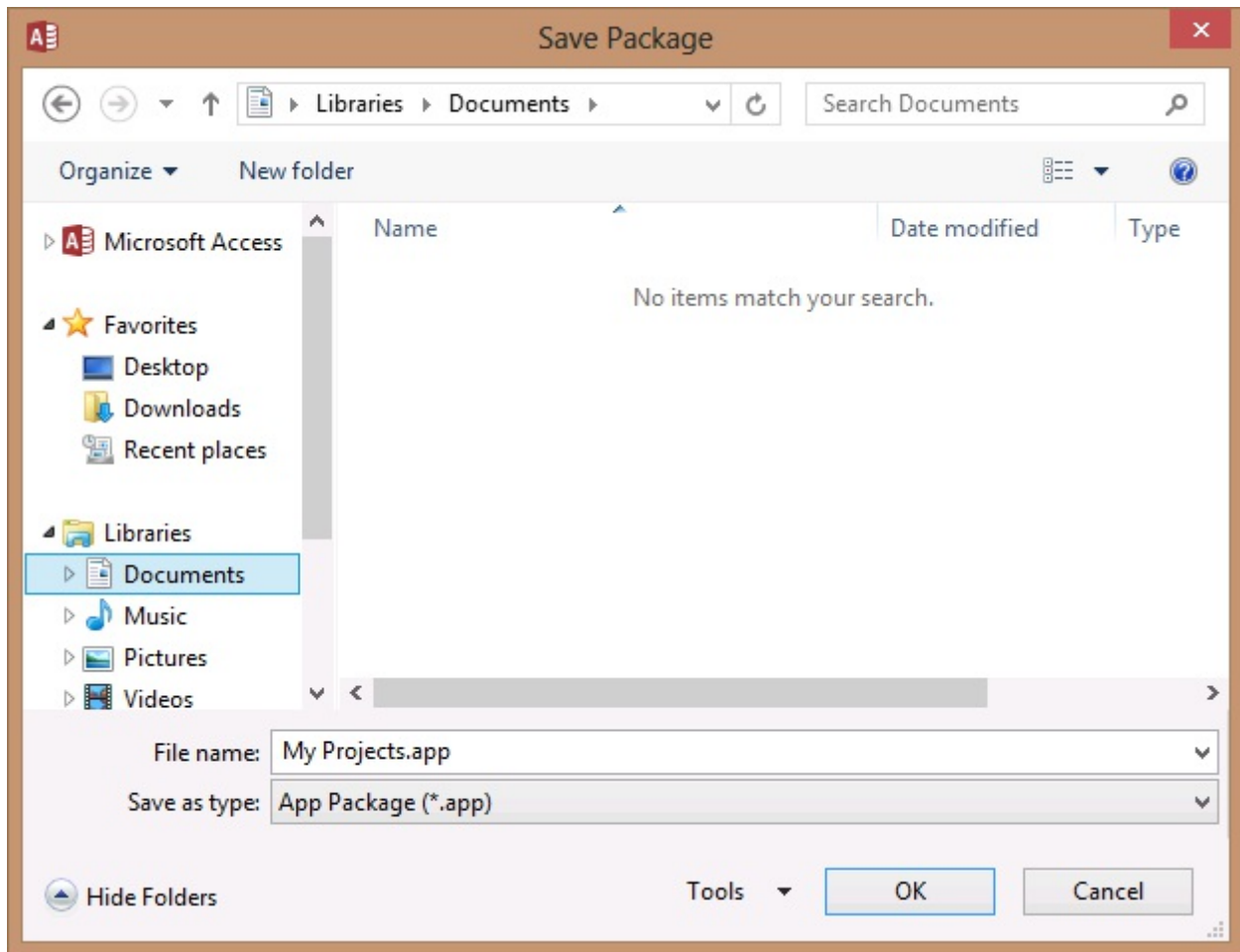


Figure 2-36. Use the Save Package dialog box to select a folder for saving the new app package.

Access displays a progress bar on the screen asking you to wait while Access 2013 creates the app package, as shown in [Figure 2-37](#). When completed, Access closes all the dialogs and returns focus to the application window. You should now find your app package in the location you provided earlier.

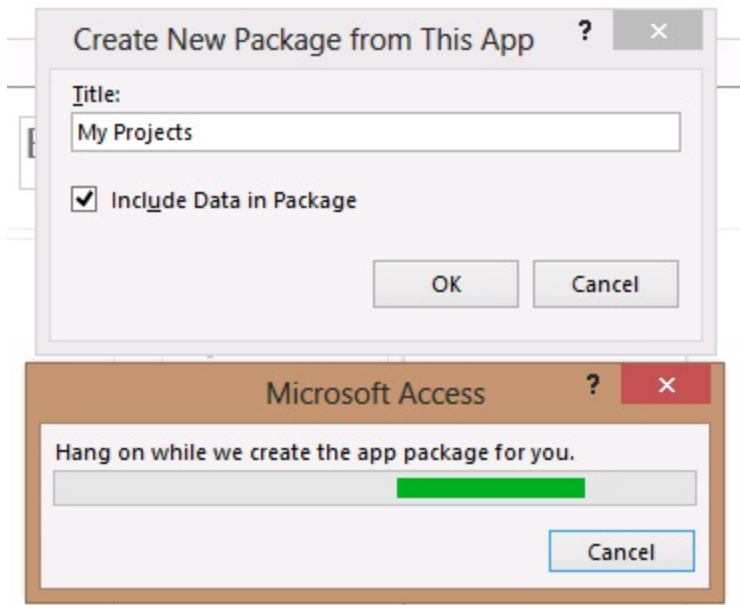


Figure 2-37. Access displays a progress bar while creating your app package.

INSIDE OUT: Including a custom app icon in your app package

Each app package includes a default Access app package icon. When you install an Access app package in your SharePoint site, SharePoint displays the package icon on the Site Contents page. (You'll learn how to install app packages in the next section.) If you'd like to replace the default Access icon with your own, you can open the app package and swap out the default app icon with your own before uploading and installing the app. You can find examples of custom app icons in some of the sample app packages included with this book, which can be downloaded from the book's catalog page located at <http://shop.oreilly.com/product/0790145367969.do>.

To include your own custom app package icon, change the app package file extension from .app to .zip, using Windows Explorer. (If you haven't set options in Windows Explorer to show file name extensions, you won't see the .app extension next to your app package.) Next, extract all the contents from the zip file into a file folder. Inside the folder, you'll see an image file called accessapp.png. Create your own 96x96 pixel-sized .png image file, and then replace the default icon with your image in this folder using the same file name. Finally, save all the contents with the new icon to a zip file, and

then change the file extension from .zip back to .app. When you install the app package in your SharePoint site, SharePoint displays your custom app package icon on the Site Contents page.