

Dexter Version 3-Networking

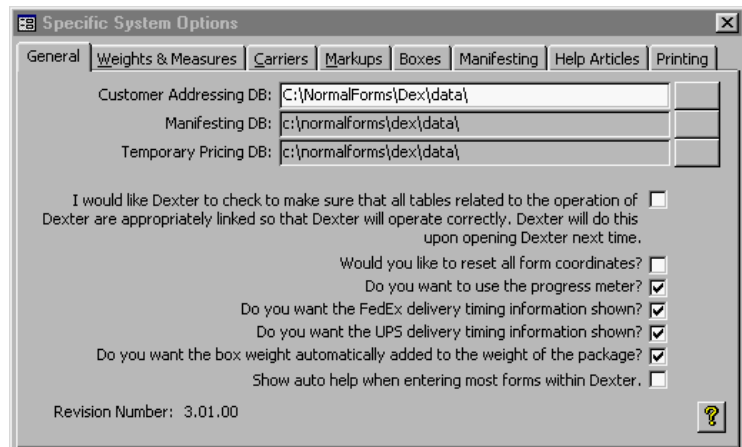
Dexter-Simple Shipping Rate Lookup can be networked so that all machines that you will be using can get information from one source. This can save you considerable time in setting up your markups by having to do it in only one place. Also, the customer and destination address database can be shared between all computers-add a customer on one computer and all other computers will know about this customer.

There are several things that you will have to do to get Dexter networked. Some background first before doing the actual work.

Available Networking Tools

There are two tools that you will need to use to get Dexter networked. Both of these tools are used to steer Dexter to where your data is located. I guess that's the point of networking and there really isn't much else to do-find that data and connect to it.

The first tool is the Specific System Options are (we have all been here many times, I am sure).

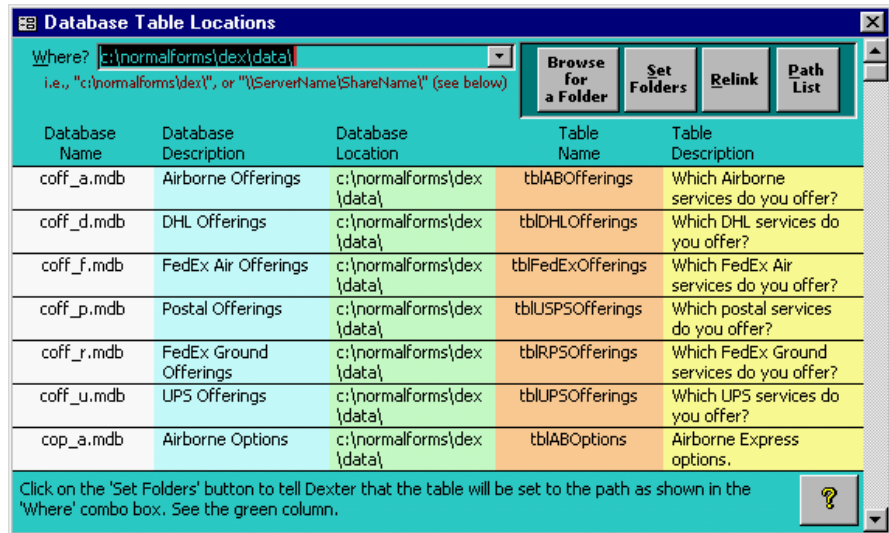


The three items at the top of the General page set the locations where you want find certain data items.

The first item, Customer Addressing DB, locates the file entitled d.mdb, which houses the customer and destination addressing information used by Dexter. Customer and destination addressing information can be attached to shipping manifest information.

The second item, Manifesting DB, locates your manifesting data. After shopping for shipping rates, you can set your customer's shipping preference by clicking on the small button at the end of the carrier shipping service line on the main Dexter form. If you want all computers to use the same manifesting data, you should use this second item to set Dexter to look for the manifesting data on the server computer. The file that Dexter is looking for is called dta.mdb.

The third item, Temporary Pricing DB, locates the file entitled temp.mdb, which temporarily houses the shipping pricing data just after shopping for rates. The temp.mdb file keeps track of the shipping pricing, insurance pricing and the accessorial pricing temporarily (until you close the main Dexter form, or clear the main Dexter form, or shop for different rates). This particular database file should be kept locally on each machine in the system. Why, you may ask. If you have all computers sharing this file on one machine, each time someone using a different machine shops for rates, Dexter will delete all information in the temp.mdb file (the other computers that might have rates on the screen will go blank).



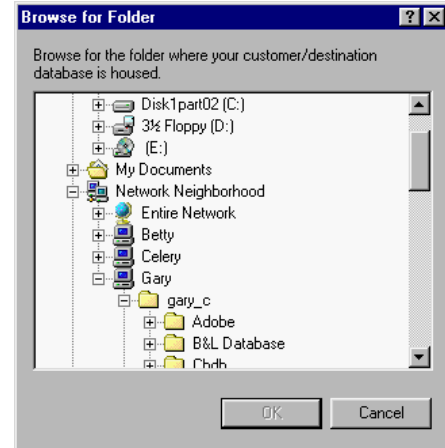
The second tool that will be used to get your network set up is the Data Linking tool.

Every database used by Dexter, other than the ones that you set separately as shown in the steps already mentioned above, can be set with this tool. Yes, Dexter has a large number of databases involved with producing your markup rates. Why is everything separated out so much. By doing this, less has to be replaced at one time when carrier rates change, etc.

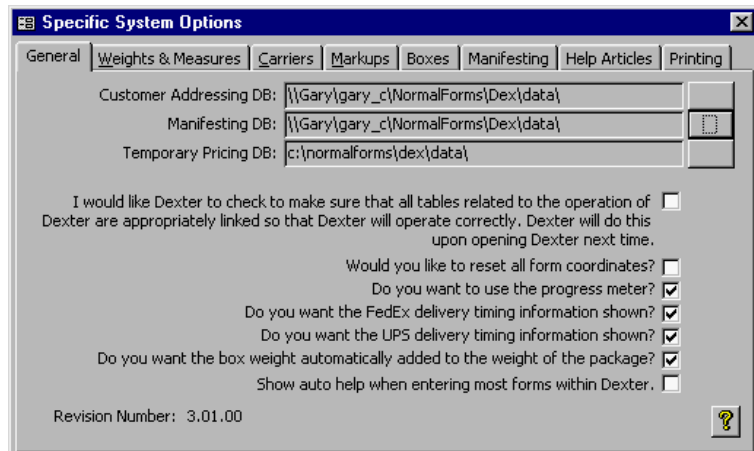
How to Get Dexter Networked

1. Get Dexter Installed, Licensed and Current on All Machines That You Plan to Network. Before getting Dexter networked you will want to have Dexter installed on all of the computers on which you want Dexter. All of these computers should be licensed with us and all should be at the same revision number, i.e., 3.01.00. It is especially important that the revisions be the same. The reason being that we occasionally add new fields to databases. If you miss one of these upgrades, or have not done it on a certain machine, this machine may not read the data correctly.

2. Know Which Machine Will "Serve" Data to the Other Machines. When Dexter is installed, a "Data" folder is created where all of the important data is kept. The "Data" folder is typically located under "C:\Normalforms\Dex." On the "Server," this Data folder should be left as it is, and all other computers will be set to point to the server's "Data" folder.



3. Use the Specific Options Area to Set Locations. You will definitely want to set the Customer Addressing DB to the location of the Server. This will allow all computers to use the same customer and destination database when looking up clients. To set the Customer Addressing DB item, click on the button to the right of the Customer Addressing DB line. The Browse for Folder dialog box will appear where you can find the folder where your Server data is located. You will probably want to use the Network Neighborhood route to find the folder, rather than a mapped drive, since mapped drives are not always set up when turning on a computer. Once you find the folder where your Dexter data is located on the Server, click on the OK button on the Browse for Folder dialog box.



You should follow the same procedure for setting the location of the Manifesting DB, if you want all manifesting to be shared on the Server. If you want each machine to manifest separately, you can skip the routine for setting the location of the Manifesting DB.

The Temporary Pricing DB, as mentioned earlier in this document, should not be shared. You should leave this data as it is already set.

4. Use the Data Linking Tool to Set Locations. Open the Data Linking tool by clicking on the Tools menus and then choosing

Data Linking. The tool will appear (very colorful form). Take a look at it. Most of it is informational, but there are some buttons at the top that you will use to set your new data locations. To set your new locations on the machines that will be looking for the data on the Server, click on the Browse for a Folder button. This will bring up the Browse for Folder dialog box (the same one used with the Specific Options Area tool). Find the folder on the Server just as you had done from the Specific Options Area. Click OK to set the location in the Where? box on the Data Linking tool form. Click on the Set Folders button to set the locations in the area shown on the Data Linking tool form. You will see the new location appear in the green area on the form. Click on the Relink button to link up to this data. This will link up to this data and may take a few minutes. Once this is done, your workstations should be using the same data as the Server machine.

5. Remove the Data From the Other Machines. On all computers, except the Server computer, everything should be moved from the "Data" folder except the temp.mdb file. As mentioned above, this "Data" folder should be located at "C:\Normalforms\Dex." And, if you want each machine to manifest separately, you should leave the dta.mdb file there too. You can use the Windows Explore tool to do all of this moving of files. First, you should create a folder under "C:\Normalforms\Dex" called "UnusedData" and then move all files from the "Data" folder as mentioned above to this new folder.

Advantages and Disadvantages to Networking

Networking is not without a down side. Yes, it is nice to know that you can set your rate markups on one machine and be done with it. All other machines, since they use the same data, will be using the same markups as the Server. Be this as it may, the down side is that these networked machines will take a bit longer to bring up rates when shopping. This slow down will depend on the speed of your network, but there is definitely a performance loss involved, even with a speedy network.

Handling Revisions on the Networked Computers

Revisions, which happen several times a year with Dexter, will have to be handled differently on networked computers. Usually, when doing revisions, there are several files that you will be downloading and unzipping. On the server, you will have to do all files, i.e., dx3_01_00a.exe and dx3_01_00b.exe. The "a" file is always the main file that runs Dexter. The "b" file is data

files. On the Server both files should be unzipped. On all other computers, just the "a" should be downloaded. When you first enter Dexter on the other computers, Dexter will attempt to relink to the Server data, since the data on the non-server machine will not be found. A Dialog box will appear asking you to find the coff_a.mdb file. You should use the dialog box to find the coff_a.mdb file on the Server. Once you find this file, all other files will be found automatically.