

Five Apps

Five fast Windows desktop search utilities

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Takeaway: Wasting time looking for a file is a huge aggravation. Here are several tools to keep you from falling into that trap.

Over the years I have accumulated a lot of file data. Even though I keep it well organized, there are times when I have to use a search utility to find what it is that I am looking for. Since I'm sure that there are others who are in the same boat, I thought that it might be helpful to talk about some desktop search utilities.

Before I begin

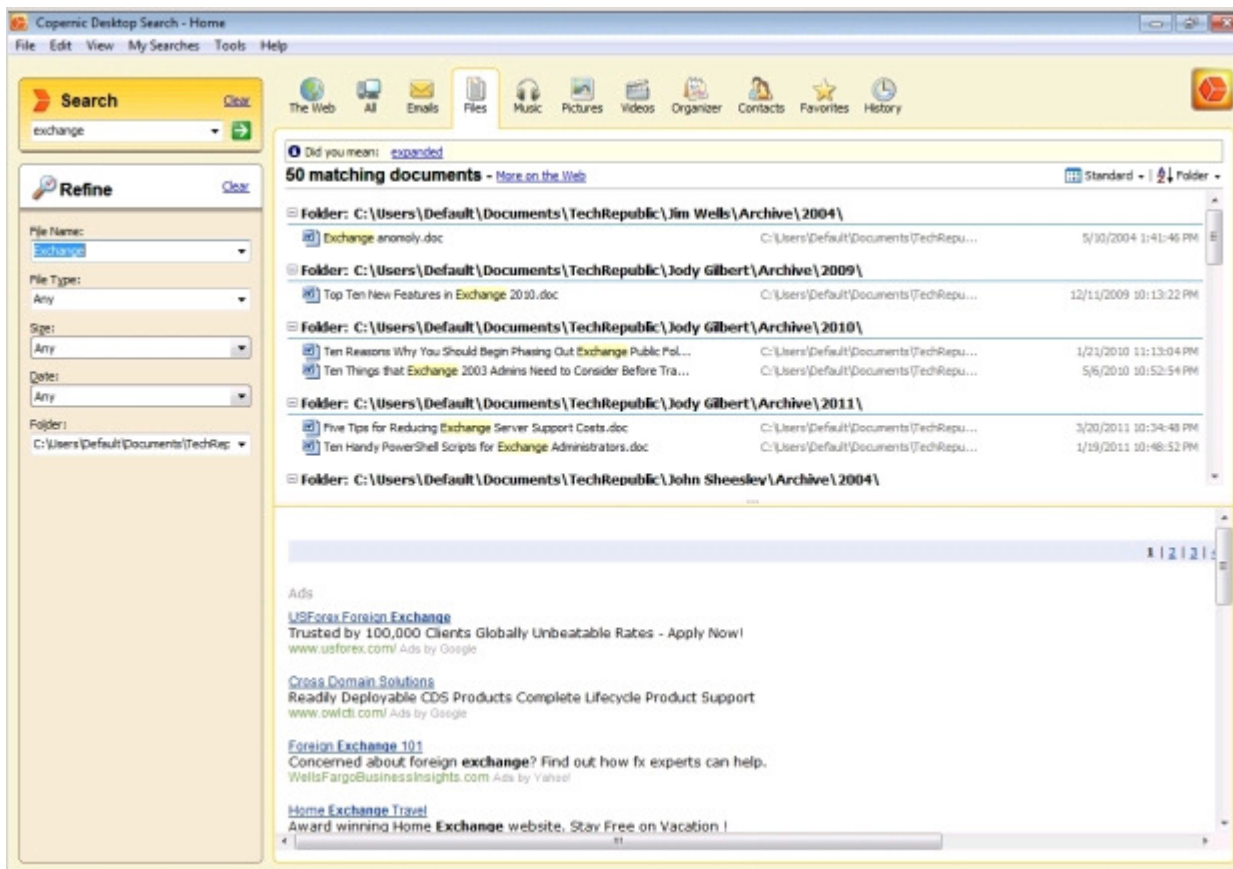
Before I get started, I want to clarify my definition of a desktop search utility. For the purpose of this article, I am defining a desktop search utility as any utility that is used locally to help find specific data on either the desktop or on an on-premise server. In other words, I'm not talking about Internet search utilities, but everything else is fair game.

Note: This list is also available as a [photo gallery](#).

1: Copernic Desktop Search

[Copernic Desktop Search](#) (**Figure A**) is a free utility that has a clean and intuitive interface, although it is ad driven — and the ads can sometimes be a bit distracting. But my only real complaint about this software is that it doesn't initially index your entire hard drive. You may have to go in and add some non-default folders for your data to be indexed properly. After you do so, however, the software works really well.

Figure A

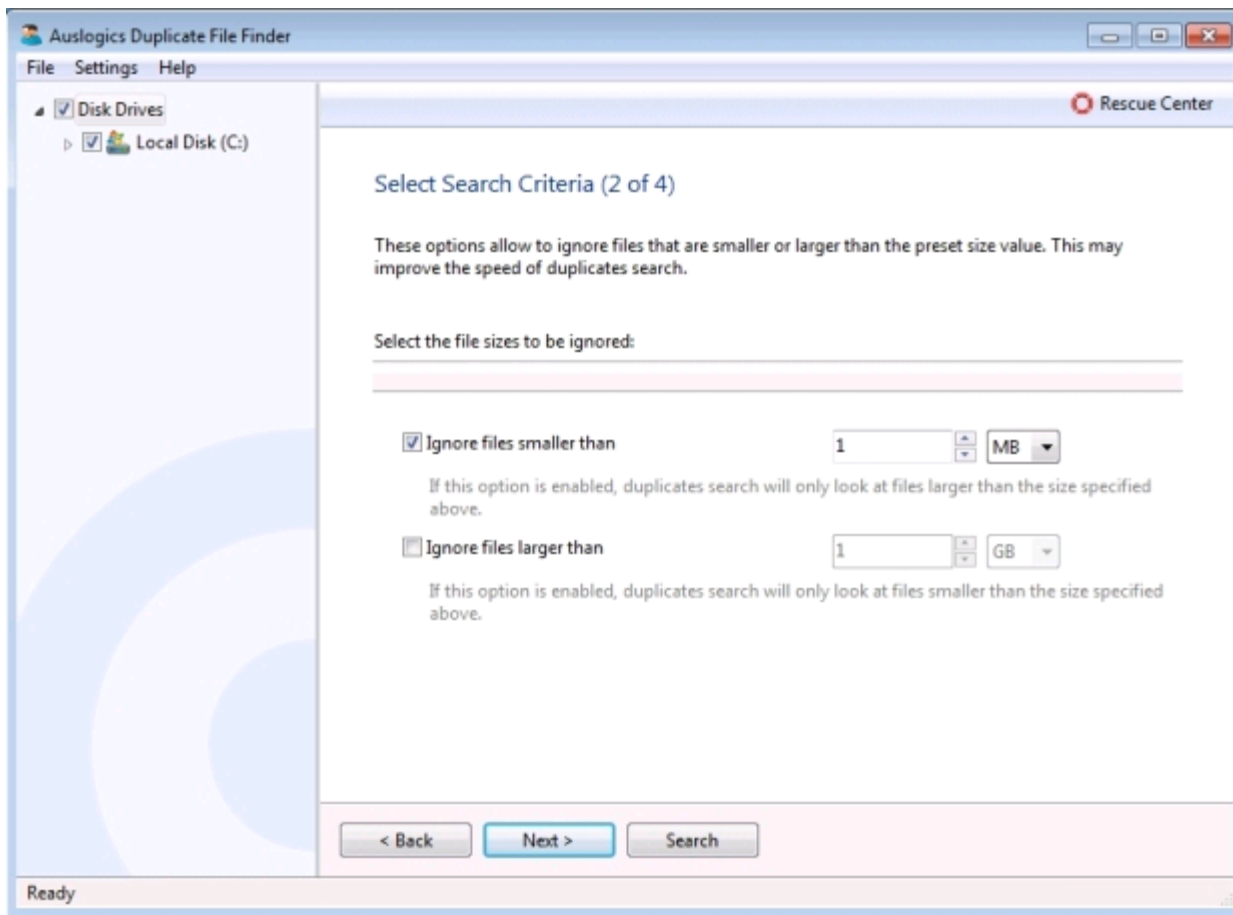


Copernic Desktop Search

2: Auslogics Duplicate File Finder

[Auslogics Duplicate File Finder](#) (**Figure B**) is a free utility for searching your hard disk for duplicate files. The search engine does a really good job and it lets you opt to ignore things like file dates. The search engine can even peek inside files to locate ones that might be duplicates even though they have different names.

Figure B

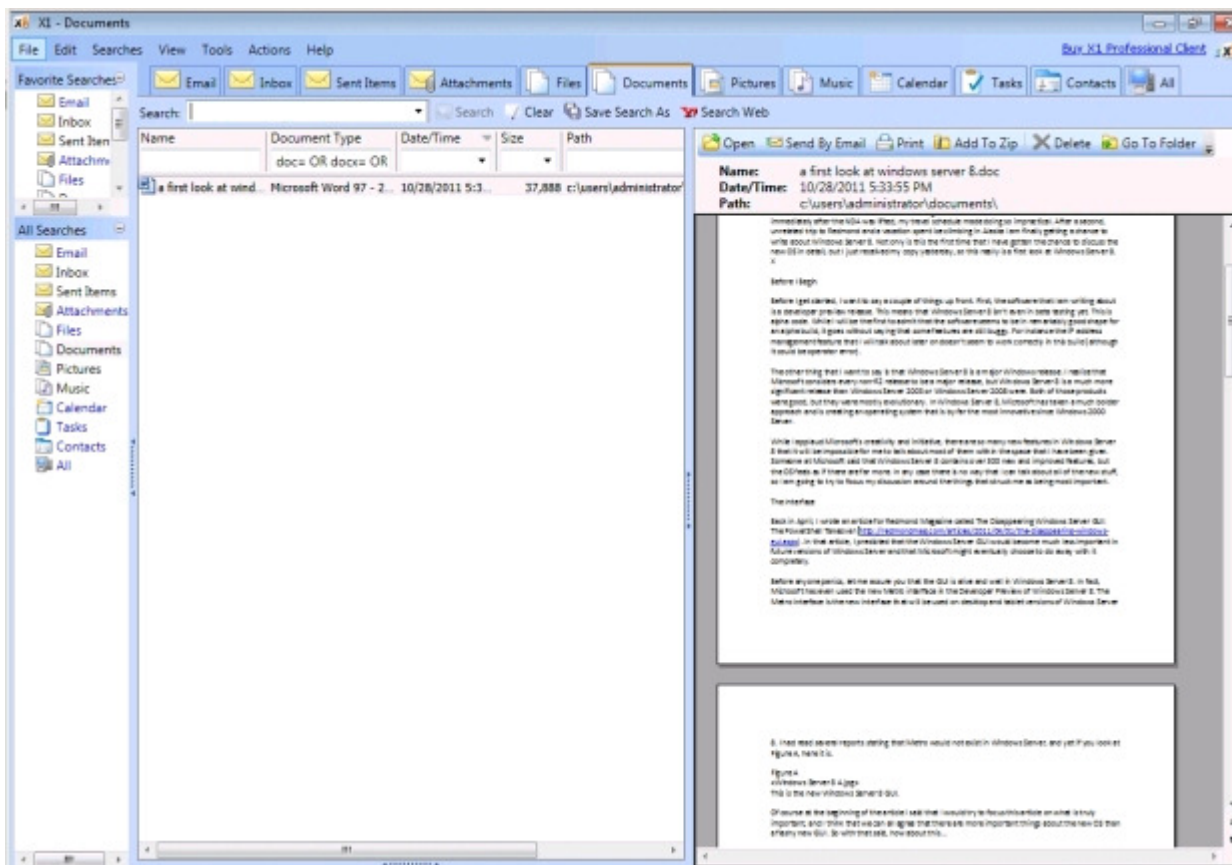


Auslogics Duplicate File Finder

3: X1 Professional Client

[X1 Professional Client](#) (**Figure C**) is another desktop search engine that can find various types of files and email messages. While the functionality might seem routine, a few features help justify the price tag.

Figure C



X1 Professional Client

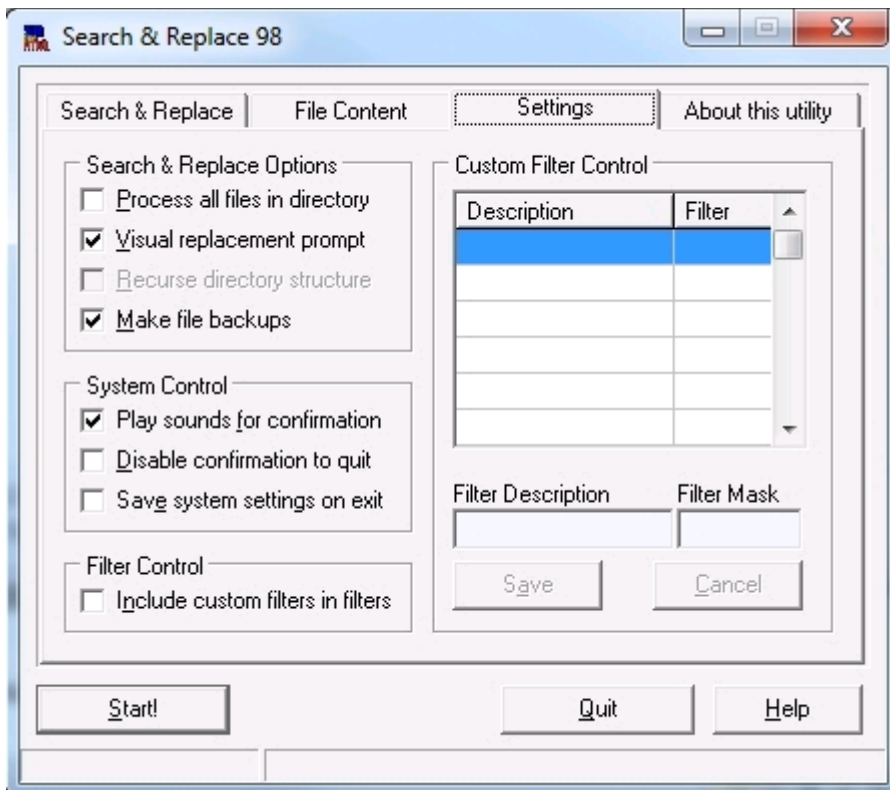
For starters, the search engine is blazing fast. The search actually occurs as you type. Furthermore, you can use a variety of search commands to help narrow your search results. My personal favorite feature is the preview window that shows the currently selected item. Finally, X1 Professional Client has options to do things like copy, email, and zip selected items.

X1 Professional Client retails for \$49.95, but a free 14-day trial is available.

4: Search and Replace 98

Search and Replace 98 (Figure D) is a bit different from other desktop search utilities, in that it can find and replace specified text in your files. It's extremely useful when you need to make changes to a lot of documents.

Figure D



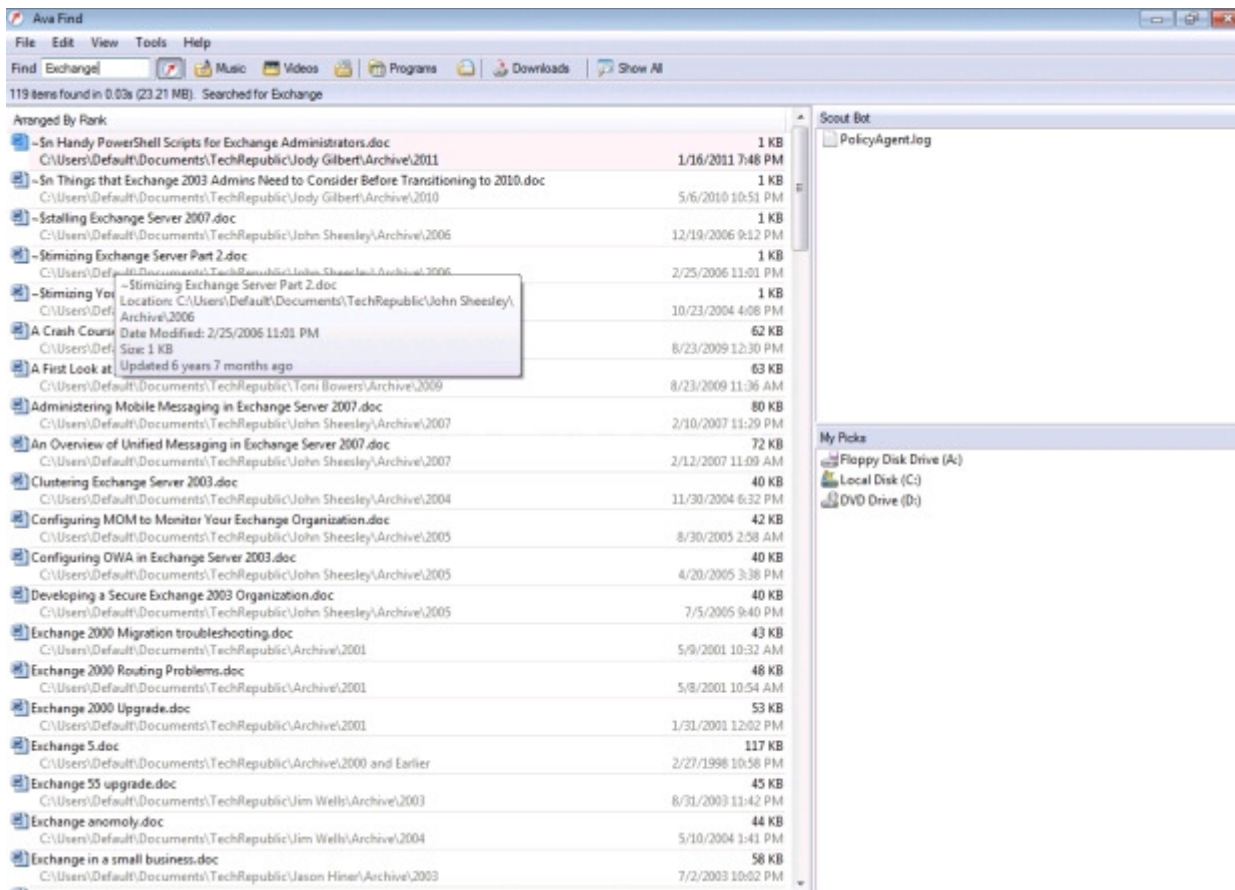
Search and Replace 98

I first found Search and Replace 98 many years ago when I was developing a Web site. The site I was developing consisted of nearly 4,000 ASP files. As the site was approaching completion, my lawyer informed me that certain blocks of text that appeared on several pages had to be rephrased. I needed an editor that could perform a search and replace across multiple files so that I would not have to dig through all 4,000 files by hand. Search and Replace 98 did exactly what I needed it to do. I'm pretty sure that Search and Replace 98 used to be a commercial product, but today it is available for free.

5: Ava Find

Ava Find (Figure E) is a free utility for finding files, messages, and other resources on your computer. Ava Find is nearly 10 years old. In spite of its age, however, the software still works really well. It has a simple interface that lets you quickly find documents, messages, music, and videos simply by searching for them or by clicking the Music or Videos button.

Figure E



Ava Find

Other picks?

Do you have a favorite desktop search app that didn't make this list? Share your recommendations with fellow TechRepublic members.

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