



Searching Just Became Easy

Notwithstanding the danger of oversimplification, the whole point of computers is to make laborious and difficult processes quick and easy to perform. So it is with the phenomenal rise and rise of Google and its search engine. What in the past may have taken vast amounts of time to achieve can now be displayed in a fraction of a second.

Perhaps an unanticipated by-product of this success has been to show the downright lack of success by Microsoft applying search technology to our desktop computers. It's not fun waiting to find that old document you know you wrote two years ago but not quite sure where you put it, as the traditional search facility in Windows reluctantly goes off to find it, and hopefully locates it some time in the not too distant future.

It could be that all of this has changed. As the drumbeat announcing the launch of Windows Vista becomes ever louder, Microsoft has decided to allow one of Vista's new features to be incorporated within Windows XP. Although not strictly speaking new, Microsoft's Desktop Search once downloaded, installs on your computer and starts to index upwards of 200 different types of files held locally. This will include emails within Outlook and Outlook Express, as well as the old suspects such as documents, spreadsheets, and PDF's.

What's more, the indexing occurs at times when the user is not actively using the computer so as not to cause performance issues.

Key to the success of this latest release is that it works, and works well. It starts searching, live, while you press keys. Start typing the words "John's forecast", and any contact within your Outlook address book called "John", any document with the name "forecast" in its title, or any spreadsheet of that description, will appear as a categorised list of options for you to choose from.

Cynics out there might say "Well, what's all the fuss about? Google themselves have allowed their technology to work on desktop machines well in advance of this release." Yes, that's true, but if you listen to the comments coming from the IT media fraternity and online blogs, worries about Google's ability to extend its own search facilities beyond the web and on to our local machines, has caused a conspiracy theory frenzy.

Microsoft state clearly in their privacy policy (<http://privacy.microsoft.com/en-us/msn.aspx>) that their search tool does not reveal any information beyond the confines of the local machine. In this respect the Redmond giant has surpassed Google on the home front. With Windows Live Search on the Net, we will have to see how Microsoft fairs on the world wide stage.

In the meantime, thank you Microsoft, perhaps the search is over.

You can download Microsoft Desktop Search from:

<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/prodtechnol/windows/search/dtsinstall.msp>

For further information about this product, or any of our business consultancy services, please call **Moshe Zeidman** on **020 8731 0840** or visit www.LatSol.co.uk

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