

# **BUILD AN INDEX TO ACCOMPLISH A FAST FILE SEARCH**

Indexing the contents of your PC helps you get faster results when you are searching it for files and other things. Learn how it works.

## **What is indexing?**

Indexing is the process of looking at files, Outlook email messages, and other content on your PC and cataloging their information, such as the words and metadata in them. When you search your PC after indexing, it looks at an index of terms to find results faster.

When you first run indexing, it can take up to a couple hours to complete. After that, indexing will run automatically in the background on your PC as you use it, only re-indexing updated data.

## **How does indexing make your searches faster?**

Much like having an index in a book, having a digital index allows your PC and apps to find content faster by looking for terms or common properties such as the date a file was created. A fully built index can return answers to searches such as "Show all songs by Sinatra" in a fraction of a second, versus the several minutes it could take without an index.

## **What information is indexed?**

By default, all the properties of your files are indexed, including file names and full file paths. For files with text, their contents are indexed to allow you to search for words within the files.

Apps you install may also add their own information to the index to speed up searching. For example, Outlook adds all emails synced to your machine to the index by default and uses the index for searching within the app.

## **Which apps use the index?**

Many of the built-in apps on your PC use the index in some way. File Explorer, Photos, and Groove all use it to access and track changes to your files. Microsoft Edge uses it to provide browser history results in the address bar. Outlook uses it to search your email.

Many apps in the Microsoft Store also depend on the index to provide up-to-date search results for your files and other content. Disabling indexing will result in these apps either running slower or not working at all, depending on how heavily they rely on it.

## **Why does indexing automatically run on your PC at all times?**

Your Windows 10 PC is constantly tracking changes to files and updating the index with the latest information. To do this, it opens recently changed files, looks at the changes, and stores the new information in the index.

## **Where is the index information stored?**

All data gathered from indexing is stored locally on your PC. None of it is sent to any other computer or to Microsoft. However, apps you install on your PC may be able to read the data in the index, so be careful with what you install and make sure you trust the source.

## How much space is used by the index?

A rule of thumb is that the index will use less than 10 percent of the size of the indexed files. For example, if you have 100 MB of text files, the index for those files will be less than 10 MB.

## Which file types can be indexed?

There are two options for how much of each file will be indexed: either properties only, or properties and content. For properties only, indexing will not look at the contents of the file or make the contents searchable. You'll still be able to search by file name—just not file contents.

Choosing not to index the contents of files can reduce the size of the index, but it makes files harder to find in many cases.

To choose an option for each file type, go to the *Indexing Options* in the Control Panel select **Advanced > File Types**. You will want to check the box *Index Properties and File Contents*.

